

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2005
7:00 P.M. -OPEN SESSION
WACTC-ROOM 303
MULTI-MEDIA ROOM

Call to Order at 7:20 P.M.

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Marc Dubois-Chairman	Present
Michael Bileau-Vice Chairman	Present
Allen Auclair	Present
John Ward	Present
Michelle Williams	Present

GOOD AND WELFARE-PUBLIC: None

RECOGNITIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dr. D'Acchioli congratulated Ruth Plante for being selected female Coach of the Year in R.I. Ruth is the Villa Novan's volleyball coach and her outstanding efforts and coaching ability personifies what the Villa Novan athletes are about. This is the second time in three years that Woonsocket has received such an honor. Congratulations Ruth.

Although the Geography Bee was held last month, Dr. D'Acchioli didn't remember formally recognizing Ashley Geraldo as the Middle School's Geography Bee winner. Congratulations, also, went to all of the school's Geography Bee winners.

Kudo's to the Coach Dawn Castonguay and the Woonsocket High School Varsity Co-ed Cheerleading team for placing 1st at the Rhode Island State Cheerleading Championship!!

Dr. D'Acchioli commended Mike Ferry for his presentation at R.I. College for the Clean Water Festival. Over eleven hundred students were in attendance and 300 were from Woonsocket. The Festival was a collaboration between Woonsocket High School, Blackstone Valley Rivers Project, the Blackstone River Coalition, and the Mass. Audubon Society whose goal was to have high school students and local organizations and businesses teach middle school students about the importance of clean water and environmental issues in the Blackstone Valley. While other High schools produced small activities, their students actually managed workshops. Kudos to the following students who participated in the Festival: Brittney Baillargeon, Amanda Belanger, Joseph Beoudoin, Stephan Canestrari, Jessica Chapdelaine, Linell Greaney, Shane Harnois, Nicholas Heroux, Joseph Leal, Katarayna Linek, Hanna Mowry, Michael Peletier, Mimi Phouaykoumpa, Nora Schachte, Justin Smith
Christina Smith, Samantha Tessier, Andrew Trottier.

Congratulations went to Ashley Guiney for being selected to participate in the R.I. All State Music Festival on Sunday, March 20th at the Vets. Ashley played piano with the 2005 Senior Division All state Jazz Ensemble.

Garrett Lambert is in Mrs. Ferrucci's Grade 1 class at the Leo A Savoie School. His time capsule was chosen as the first place winner in the K-2 division of the Providence Journal's Reading Week Statewide Contest. Garrett will be honored at a special celebration on April 9th and presented with an award certificate for his accomplishment. Congratulations Garrett!

Bringing further recognition to the district, Linda Filomeno, Sandra Bordalo, and Denise Rogers have been invited to present T.I.M.E. teacher's positions at the International Reading Association Conference, Title I Strand on May 3rd 2005 in San Antonio, TX. This model is unique and impressed RIDE officials who placed the nomination.

On Monday's Professional Development Day, a video presentation "View of Student Work Session" held at Coleman Elementary School was featured. The presentation was well received by everyone and the following teachers are to be commended for their effort and willingness to share with their colleagues. Teachers were: Alison Almond, Kimberly Cloutier, Diane Brown, Karlynn Grenier, Lisa Tenreiro, Jennifer Gagner, and Linda Limoges.

Motion to receive and place of file
Unanimously approved

MB Second: AA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the Open Minutes of March 9, 2005

AA Second: MB

All Approved except Mr. Ward who abstained due to not being present at said meeting.

Mr. Ward asked the Recording Secretary that in the future, when Committee Members are absent, that the initials of those who vote and how they voted would be listed with the motions in the minutes. When 'Unanimously Approved' or 'All Yes' is used in that case and if an extract is taken from the minutes, it may appear that all the Committee Members were present and voted when in fact, they were not.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Personnel Actions: (See Attached)
Certified Appointments
Non-Certified Appointments

Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Local

Beacon Charter School/Tuition/District/Local-\$22,000.00
Educational Testing Serv./Para Tests/McFee/Local-\$4,000.00
Northern Energy Serv. Inc./Energy Program/District/Facilities/Local-\$86,795.00
Rizzo Ford/Repairs/Facilities/Local-\$2,641.41

Grant

Benchmark Education/Ed. Materials/District/Grant-\$4,229.40
Exemplar/Ed. Material/District/Grant-\$17,050.00
Heinemann/Ed. Material/District/Grant-\$13,502.50
LANIT Consulting/Electronic &/Digital App./WACTC/Grant-\$4,940.00
Learning Resources/Ed. Material/District/Grant-\$2,027.80

Lunch Rev.

School Link Technology/Maintenance/District/Lunch Rev.-\$2,168.25
Weidenhammer System Corp./Software &Hardware/District/Lunch Rev.-\$28,811.00

Field Trips/Conference Request

Reading Recovery Conference/Arlington, VA/Gov. Pothier/Title II

Home Schooling Requests (1)

Mr. Ward asked that the Beacon Charter School purchase be removed for discussion. Dr. D’Acchioli stated that the amount on the Heinmann Ed. Purchase should be \$13,502.50.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda except the Beacon Charter School Purchase and with the mentioned amount change **MB Second: JW/AA**

Unanimously approved

Motion to approve the Beacon Charter School purchase **JW Second: MW**

Unanimously approved

Mr. Ward asked if the price for the charter school tuition is negotiated? Dr. D’Acchioli stated that they were automatically bussing these students and then they found out that the law does allow them to negotiate with the charter schools and bussing is part of the tuition price all ready and not a separate cost. Mrs. Goodman is working on this.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Chairman Dubois read from a letter dated March 4th that he received from Ms. Margaret McNulty of Jaffrey Avenue, a parent whose son is in the Middle School, and she praised the ARAPAO team and the teachers Lisa Mello, Fran Capaluzzi, Karen Smith, Natalie Brennan and Rebecca Ducharme. Her son is excelling and she thanked them for their hard work.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Auclair reminded everyone that there would be a PAC (Parent Advisory Council) meeting in this room on April 6th at 7:00 P.M. *

*Mr. Auclair stated that along with Mr. Bileau, Dr. D’Acchioli and Mr. Gallishaw they would be looking to start up a Technology sub-committee.

Mr. Bileau stated that last Friday, he along with Mr. Ward, Dr. D’Acchioli and Mrs. Goodman, met with the accountants and are working on some on-going problems and he has all ready given the Members some information for further discussion.

CONFERENCES:

Mr. Vachon answered questions from the Committee regarding the dropout rate at the High School. Mr. Auclair had referred to the NEASC report, which listed the dropout rate at 29-30% and asked how that number is calculated. Mr. Vachon explained that pre 1987; the number was calculated by the number of dropouts that year. After 1987, the State starting using the Cohort Survival Method, which takes the 9th-grade enrollment minus the graduation, rate and averaged it over four years, which boosts the rate. Four years ago, he along with the School-Improvement Team and guidance counselors went to the State House to talk them about this and they wouldn’t budge, claiming this was the most correct way of doing it. For example, if a student drops out, that counts as one and then he comes back to school and drops out again, that counts as two. He did research this and the actual rate is about 8-9% based on the old calculation and that rate is about what it has been as far back as 1980 with some spikes and drops. He used raw data. Only five states use this new method. They tried to explain the State and even local realtors the negative impact this has on perspective residents or business coming to the State or the District when they see 30% dropout rates. The two major reasons for dropouts are mobility and credit deficiencies. Sometimes a student is simply too old for high school. He has talked with the elementary principals about not keeping children

back. If a child is kept back one year, he has a 50% chance of dropping out and if two years, almost a 90% chance of dropping out. Teen pregnancy, parental structure and financial problems are, also, a cause of some dropouts. He believes a lot of dropouts do end up going for their GED. If a student is transferred to another school, that is not considered a dropout. Most dropouts occur in the tenth grade. The State is trying to make it mandatory they will have to teach a child until the age of seventeen. The State of Kentucky has a program that a child must remain in school or they cannot get a driver's license. He likes that idea. The dropout rates based on the old calculation are '04 - 8.2%, '03 - 7.9%, '02 - 8.2%, and '01 - 8.0%.

Motion to receive and place on file said report

MB Second: JW

Unanimously approved

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Dr. D'Acchioli recommended that the Committee approve the handbooks. Mr. Auclair is concerned about the promotion policy at the elementary level. They still have some time before the handbooks will be printed. So, they could pass this and make the necessary changes and amend it prior to printing or an addendum could be added if the printing deadline that would be passed out after the printing.

Mr. Auclair proposed that the promotion policy change be placed on the next agenda.

Mr. Ward commented on the Megan's Law form in the high school handbook should be changed to automatically default that parents will be listed on the directory and they can opt out rather than giving them the choice. It will be corrected and checked on all handbooks.

Motion to approve the Elementary & High School Handbooks-1st Passage JW Second: MB

Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

Motion to approve Bid Award #05-10 to Automatic Temperature Controls Inc. in the amount of \$416,733.00 for HVAC Modifications at Citizens Memorial Elem. School

JW Second: MB/AA

Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

Dr. D'Acchioli stated that our student transfer policy was brought to his attention when a student's request was denied and the student and his family appealed. The Superintendent found our policy was a violation of the law. Legal reference is 16.16.8. The Superintendent recommends amending the policy so they are in compliance. The law allows a student to complete the semester and that is the change. Choice schools supersede this. Mr. Ward thanked the family for bringing this to the Administrations attention.

Motion to amend P41.5 Out of District Assignment-Transfer Policy-1st Passage

MD Second: JW

Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

The day after the last School Committee meeting, Dr. D'Acchioli attended the NRI Chamber of Commerce Legislative Reception at the State House. The time was well spent explaining their needs to the various Legislators in attendance.

Last Wednesday, the NRI Collaborative held its annual meeting. Attorney David Kane spoke about changes in special-education laws and regulations. This is one event the Committee should plan on attending. The NRIC provides instructional services for approximately thirty Woonsocket students.

Their annual Legislative Breakfast was held last Saturday. Thanks go to Councilman Brian Blais, Senator Marc Cote and Representative Roger Picard for participating in this event. Special thanks are, also, extended to Mr. Tim Duffy, Executive Director of the RIASC and the principals and directors who, also, attended.

Following the breakfast, the Committee devoted four hours to student discipline hearings. He mentioned this only to let the Public know that the Education Department does indeed enforce school rules and levy appropriate discipline to those who fail to meet reasonable expectations of appropriate behavior. On behalf of the Administration, he has made continual pleas to parents to speak with their children about respect, rules and procedures and to make sure that children are not bringing contraband items to school. Unfortunately, he doesn't see any improvements. Last Friday, two more Middle School youngsters took a pellet gun to school. Today, another fight broke out at the High School. This Committee is going to be very busy until the home-school partnership starts working.

Monday was the last professional development day of the school year. The high school staff spent the day with representatives from the RIDE reviewing the new regulations. Middle School staff spent the day at the NELMS conference in Providence. Elementary teachers assembled at the high school in the A.M. reviewing new RIDE regulations and district initiatives. The afternoon was spent in their respective schools. Special thanks go to Mrs. Filomeno and Mr. Gallishaw and their respective support teams to ensure that the day was productive.

Monday evening, Mr. Auclair, Mr. Bileau and Dr. D'Acchioli addressed the City Council to request adequate fiscal support for the FY06 School Budget. Parents are encouraged to follow suit and let their City leaders know that their children need the City's support now.

Following the City Council meeting, Mr. Auclair, Mr. Bileau and he met with the district's Technology Committee to review goals and initiatives. It was a productive first meeting with much work to be done.

Tuesday, Dr. D'Acchioli attended the Legislative Finance Committee hearing on local aid. The enforcement of fire code occupancy limits prevented him from making a case for an adequate appropriation and relief from the employer's contribution to the ERSRI. He reminded the Public that this single item is in excess of \$1M and severely impacts our FY06 Budget. Spending more than two hours in a crowded corridor was Commissioner Peter McWalters; Deputy Commissioner David Abbott; Jim DiPrete, Chairman of the Board of Regents; and, Tim Duffy, Executive Director of the RIASC among scores of others.

Tomorrow morning, barring a major snowstorm, he will be attending a session with the Treasurer Tavares regarding pension issues and finishing the day at a State Facilities Directors' meeting with Mr. Fontaine.

There are only fifty-five school days left this school year. Parents are encouraged to monitor their child's progress, work closely with their child's teacher and help their child make this school year rewarding.

He closed by reminding everyone that this Friday is Good Friday so their schools will be closed.

Motion to receive and place on file said Superintendent's Report
Unanimously approved

AA Second: MB

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD AND WELFARE:

Chairman Dubois stated that last Wednesday, he along with Ms. Williams held a Minority Concerns meeting regarding communication and translation and it was well attended. The High School's Hispanic Club was there and explained what they are about, their goals and mission and they sell food on Fridays. He congratulated Mr. Panu who is retiring at the end of this school year after forty-four years. He had him as a teacher and he is a wonderful teacher. He thanked the City officials, Senators and Sodexo for participating in their legislative breakfast. He asked that parents contact their city and state officials to support their schools.

Mr. Ward thanked Mr. Panu for going beyond the thirty-five years most folks put in. He, also, attended the Legislative Breakfast and thanked all who prepared and attended especially Representatives Picard and Cote who always attend. There are two or three proposals regarding pension reform and he will be extending an opinion in the next couple of weeks on this issue. It is essential this item be taken care of for the survival of the Districts. He thanked the Committee and Dr. D'Acchioli for attending the Council meeting and expressing their needs. He was unable to attend but will be talking with them directly. It is time for the City to look at them as a partner. He extended special thanks to the parents who came in on Saturday for discipline hearings.

Ms. Williams apologize that she was unable to attend the Legislative Breakfast. She thanked the Globe Park staff for their spaghetti diner and the huge turn out they had. Well done. She congratulated Mr. Panu on his retirement, as well. She would like to hold another Minority Concerns meeting in the next month or so because she has heard from parents at Harris and Citizens that the flyers were only received the day of the meeting and they didn't have time to arrange for babysitting. She stated there are several bills going into legislation regarding the health and wellness of students and staff and she would like to spearhead a sub-committee if O.K. with Dr. D'Acchioli and would be looking for volunteers such as parents and principals.

Mr. Auclair thanked Ms. Linda Filomeno for going above and beyond last Saturday at the student discipline hearings where she stayed four and a half hours and translated for several parents. He thanked Brian Blais, Tim Duffy, Mark Cote and Roger Picard who attended the Legislative Breakfast and he thanked Dr. D'Acchioli for organizing the event, along with principals and School-Committee members who attended. He offered a farewell to Mr. Panu and Mr. Vachon and stated they are both leaving the school in a better state. He heard on a local radio station the other day, a caller asking why they need new schools? Schools like Brown, Moses Brown, Mt. St Charles don't need new schools, why do we? He stated those schools hand pick who attends and they don't service the number of students that they do. He asked parents to please speak and listen to their children and to find out what is going on at home and in the neighborhoods and to talk to their child's teacher. He asked Dr. D'Acchioli to update him about the number of middle-school children at the risk of failing. On Thursday, March 31st at 11:30 A.M., at the State House, The R.I. Autism Coalition Awareness Day will be taking place. You can contact Sue Constable at 222-4600 x 2014 for more information. He thanked everyone for coming out this evening.

Mr. Bileau congratulated Mr. Panu for his years of service. He, also, thanked Ms. Linda Filomeno for her efforts last Saturday. They would have been lost without her. She went above and beyond. He strongly advised the general Public that the Education Department does not have a 1.8M surplus like the City Administration keeps claiming. He keeps being asked why they are making cuts when they have money. They don't have the money and will be lucky to end up in the black. If they received the 5% increase that all the other departments received, he would be happy. But they are in this position now because of many years of leveling funding. He just wants what the others receive. He wished everyone a Happy Easter.

Chairman Dubois declared a five-minute recess at 8:28. Open Session reconvened at 8:33 P.M.

Motion to convene into Executive Session in Accordance with R.I. Law: 42-46-5 (a) (8) Student Privacy Issue
Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

MD Second: AA

Motion to adjourn at 10:08 P.M.
Unanimously approved

MD Second: AA

Respectfully submitted,

Denise St Germain
Secretary to the School Committee