

**MINUTES  
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2005  
7:00 P.M. -OPEN SESSION  
WACTC-ROOM 303  
MULTI-MEDIA ROOM**

**Call to Order at 7:00 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:**

Ms. Deborah Duquette, a Kindergarten teacher at Bernon Heights, gave a hand-out to the Committee about Kindergarten and Integrated Kindergartens that was written by the teachers as a group and the situation with half-time assistants, (**SEE ATTACHMENT #1**) Chairman Dubois stated that there is a grievance that will be before them at the next meeting on this issue. Ms. Duquette stated that that only involves the integrated and not the regular Kindergarten classes, which she wants to talk about. Some of the concerns include safety. There are currently twenty-five students to one adult with a split T/A. That is not proper when they are supposed to have a twenty to two ratio. As of this month, they have children that are having problems separating from their parents and or the child hasn't had any formal education and they just want to play Hide and Seek, which is very dangerous in a school setting. This takes times away from academics. Some children never had any formal pre-school and haven't used a crayon or pencil and have a lot of difficulty focusing and that causes the teacher to be taken away from the other twenty-four students. Work expectation in Kindergarten is more like first grade work....add, subtract, write stories, etc. This will take longer now. The Assistants would work with struggling children. She, along with other Kindergarten teachers, agree they are about three weeks behind with instruction due to the lack of support in the classrooms. The City of Woonsocket has done so much such as the all-day K and Integrated K and they have a wonderful opportunity to do it the right way regarding development.

Mr. Bill Schneck, 211 Cherry Hill Avenue, explained that sometimes the action of one or two students can leave a black eye on the school district and no one ever hears about the other 99% of good students and all that they do. This past weekend was the Autumnfest and he, along with Mr. Ward, as members of the Lions Club, fried doughboys. It has been more difficult to get people active and they need manpower. Mr. Ward enlisted the high-school choir and the students worked all weekend long and they had a great time. They met the Public, developed team spirit and he wanted to acknowledge the thirty kids who worked to make it successful even in the rain. The Lions' Club will be donating two \$250 scholarships to the high-school kids.

Mr. Albert Brien, stated he brought up the Superintendent's contract four weeks ago and that two weeks ago, the Members decided to meet with the Superintendent individually and would work to reach some kind of a compromise. He wanted to make the Committee aware that the taxpayers consider this issue a public matter and public funds and should be discussed in public and not behind closed doors. Finance and concerns for the kids are interrelated and you can't spend the same dollar twice. He questioned why Mr. Ackerman was not present this evening. Chairman Dubois explained that he had called and requested to not be there due to the Jewish holiday. Mr. Brien understood and went on to say that two committee members

were appointed to negotiate the contract and that there was an exhibit attached to the contract and at the top it reads Negotiated Superintendent's Contract FY05-07. Yet, in the attachment down below, it refers to '04-current year retro to reposition base in parentheses. He doesn't know what that means and whose language is that? Why are they amending the existing contract when negotiating prospectively. Secondly, Mr. Ackerman stated they were governed by the Minutes and the Minutes were taken and approved and yet the language in the final contract is inconsistent. Mr. Ackerman, also, stated that Delta Dental was not mentioned in the Minutes. Mr. Brien questions who drafted the contract? Thirdly, regarding health benefits, the contract was not written with the correct intent as written in the minutes and transfers the cost of Medical to the salary and if that is the case, the Superintendent would receive that same benefit six times by the end of his contract. He heard a comment at the last meeting that this was not the case...prove it. The Superintendent would realize approximately 42K excess. The taxpayers are very upset and the Superintendent's comment that he was very focused when they negotiated his Health benefits, taxpayers are very focused on this and are outraged and want a solution. The taxpayers are prepared to take the litigious route if necessary.

Mrs. Carmine Boucher, Co-Chair of PAC, reminded everyone that the election is November 11<sup>th</sup> and that flyers have been sent to all the parents. She thanked the PTO and PAC members who worked very hard on the flyers and handling the many responses and questions. There were a lot of similar questions. She asked that the parents and voters attend the debate on October 17<sup>th</sup> at the Middle School from 7-9 P.M..

Mr. Jeff Hardy, 215 Cottage Street, has a daughter in Kindergarten, and had a signed petition and which explains why full-time assistants are needed. His wife volunteers at the school and they need more help. He gave the petitions to the Committee. **(SEE ATTACHMENT #2)**

Ms. Marlene Smith, 15 Monica Drive, Cumberland and Middle-School teacher, reminded everyone that a while back when the process of the contract was going on, they had petitioned the Attorney General and was given an answer. Indeed, it was an illegal meeting and nothing came of it and a comment was made at the time that they were squabbling over 4K and she resented that comment. She thanked Dr. D'Acchioli for bringing Mr. Nasif on and for how there was a smooth opening to school and he publicly redeemed the staff and faculty, who had received a bum rap last year. She wished him the best.

Ms. Margie Connelly, 179 Myrtle Street, has a daughter in Ms. Duquette's class and it is amazing the things they do. However, at that age, they need the assistants and to be attended to. Their attention span is very limited.

Mr. Guy Trudell, 99 Willow Street, has a daughter in Kindergarten, and he, along with other parents, have a lot of concerns and hopes the Committee will act quickly.

Ms. Katherine Bessette, 52 Smith Street, has a daughter in Ms. Duquette's class and she and her husband were present to show their support for the need of full-time assistants.

#### **RECOGNITIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Dr. D'Acchioli congratulated the Early Childhood Staff members at the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center for their recent accreditation with the NAEYC. Accreditation validates the high quality of learning programs at the Early Childhood Center.

Special thanks went to Ms. Carmen Boucher, teachers, parents, city officials, and members of the community for once again taking a special interest in making the Nature Trail at Bernon Heights a special learning environment for their children. Recent vandalism closed the trail for the second time, but with the help from Audubon Society, and these very special people, the trail is once again open and better than ever. Thanks to everyone for their outstanding efforts and community participation.

Although he verbally thanked the Mayor last Friday for the donation of flags for the Middle School, Dr. D'Acchioli would take the opportunity to publicly thank Mayor Menard for addressing the need and for agreeing to provide flags for some of their other schools.

Lastly, he, also, publicly thanked Mr. Joseph Nasif for providing the leadership necessary to get Woonsocket Middle School opened smoothly.

**Motion to receive and place of file**

**MB Second: MW**

Unanimously approved

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Motion to approve the Open Minutes and Closed minutes of September 28<sup>th</sup>**

**MB Second: MD**

Approved (All Yes, AA-Abstain, due to not being present at that meeting)

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Personnel Actions:** (See Attached)

Certified Appointments

Non-Certified Appointments

**Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000**

**Local**

Apple Computer/Computers/District/Technology/Local-\$8,680.00

New England School Services/WHS ROTC/Facilities/Local-\$4,314.00

Rizzo Ford/Repairs/Facilities/Local-\$3,336.00

Velocity Solutions/Support Services/District/Technology/Local-\$4,301.00

**Grant**

Doreen Corrente/Consultant/WACTC/Perkins Grant-\$4,900.00

**Field Trips/Conference Request**

National Council of English Teachers Convention, Pittsburgh PA/Mt. St. Charles/Title 11

The Differentiated Classroom Workshop, South Carolina/Mt. St. Charles/Title 11

National Academy Foundation Leadership Conference, Miami, FL/WACTC/Perkins Grant

ACTE Conference, Kansas City, MO/WACTC/Perkins Grant

Annual Even Start Conference, Washington, DC/Even Start/Grant

National Music Festival, Williamsburg, VA/WHS/Fundraiser

**Home Schooling Requests** (0)

Mr. Ward asked that the purchase for Doreen Corrente and the National Academy Field Trip be removed for discussion.

Ms. Williams asked that the Apple Computer and Rizzo Ford purchases be removed.

Mr. Auclair asked that Tracey Andrews-Mellouise be removed.

Chairman Dubois stated for the record that there was a correction to the start date for Lauren Lemire to October 31, 2005.

**Motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of the Doreen Corrente, Apple Computer and Rizzo Ford purchases and Tracey Andrews-Mellouise under Personnel Items**

**JW Second: MB**

Unanimously approved

**Motion to approve the Purchase of consulting by Doreen Corrente**

**JW Second: MB**

Mr. Ward asked what the consulting service was that she was providing? Dr. D'Acchioli explained that this was to do with evaluation plan, which is required by the State, and she is very familiar with the requirements.

Mr. Ward asked if they went through the normal bidding process and perhaps there were others out there to be considered and is only concerned with the process.

Dr. D'Acchioli stated he is sure she is not the only one.

**Motion to table this Purchase until the next meeting and the above questions are answered**

**JW Second: MD**

Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

**Motion to approve the field trip to the National Academy Foundation Leadership Conference**

**JW Second: MB**

Unanimously approved

Mr. Ward asked about the National Academy field trip and why is states required participation?

Dr. D'Acchioli explained that he believes all national academies entered into a contract and over the course of time, teachers, who went and wanted to remain in the academy, must attend. It is paid through the Perkins Grant.

**Motion to approve the Apple Computer purchase**

**MW Second: AA**

Unanimously approved

Ms. Williams asked how many computers were being purchased and where were they going?

Per Dr. D'Acchioli, nine computers were being purchased and going to Savoie, Citizens, Harris and Bernon Heights schools.

**Motion to approve the Rizzo Ford purchase**

**MW Second: AA**

Unanimously approved

Ms. Williams wanted to know what work was being done on this truck and could they not find a cheaper, local mechanic? The truck is no longer under warranty.

Dr. D'Acchioli explained that this is a 2000 Ford truck and has been through forty to fifty snowstorms and work is being done to the transmission, exhaust system. Ball joints, suspension, brake repairs and what is needed to pass inspection. They did consider having the work done at WACTC but the students only have one block per day and it would tie the truck up for too long. The snowplows are removed from the trucks after winter.

**Motion to approve Tracey Andrews-Mellouise under Personnel Items**

**AA Second: MB**

Unanimously approved

Mr. Auclair just wanted to make everyone aware that Ms. Andrews-Mellouise is the new Special-Ed Elementary Department Chair.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mr. Auclair stated he had asked Chairman Dubois if it would be all right for Directors and Administrators to speak under Communications at meetings so that the Committee would be kept up to date. It was agreed.

Dr. Macera met with Mr. Auclair recently and reviewed recent grants received. They have been approved to receive two self grants for leadership and will be working with Brown University for the second year at Savoie, Harris and Citizens. They work to develop leadership skills and current strategies. They engage the school principal and the school-improvement team. This will be taking place from October 24-27<sup>th</sup>. They are using the UCLA model of a walk-through and they have a good group from Brown University.

Mr. Auclair asked about the bussing two-month trial and that time is almost up. This was to change the calculation of the distance used. Dr. Macera stated that she has met with the Police and Valley Transportation. She met with Lt. Paul and two other detectives and discussed safety issues and went over some specific streets the Police recommend that children shouldn't walk. There is to be a follow-up meeting. The Police have been very helpful.

Mr. Auclair stated that Mr. Ackerman provided him with a rough draft for a by-law amendment regarding contracts. It reads '*All contracts of employment entered into by the Woonsocket School Committee shall be in writing. No original contract of employment, amendment, extensions or renewal thereof shall be binding upon the Woonsocket School Committee unless first presented to the Committee for its review and approval.*' The Committee should never act on anything other than a reviewed and approved final contract. For instance, a new principal was hired for the Middle School and approved at the last meeting and the Committee never saw the contract. He believes the by-law should be changed and asked that this be placed under New Business at the next meeting. Chairman Dubois asked Dr. D'Acchioli to place it on the next agenda.

Mr. Ward requested that the two handouts provided to the Committee during Good & Welfare be received and placed on file with the Minutes.

**Motion to receive and place on file the hand out regarding the full-time teaching assistants and the signed petitions** **JW Second: MB**

Unanimously approved

Mr. Ward stated that they had asked for a list of all cell phones be provided to the Committee and he has been reading many articles about the fact that new regulations from the IRS are coming which will be considering cell phones as income. Some of the articles were from the State of Kentucky, Impact Magazine and a consulting firm. The IRS is making this an issue and cell phones have to be used appropriately. They suggest regulations be amended and he suggests a proposed policy be placed on a future agenda. He provided the Committee with a copy of a proposed policy for their review. (SEE ATTACHMENT #4)

Dr. D'Acchioli asked that the Fund Raiser under New Business be taken out of order. The Committee agreed.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Ms. Susan Grislis, Executive Director of Project Learn, Adult and Family Literacy Programs, Inc, stated that they have for many years conducted the Pennies for Literacy in Northern Rhode Island and the money supports adult literacy. (SEE ATTACHMENT #3) She reviewed the process with the Committee.

**Motion to approve the Pennies for Literacy Fund Raiser** **MD Second: AA/MB**  
Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None

**CONFERENCES:**

Mrs. Linda Filomeno stated that Ms. Sparks was not present and believed the conference on Reading Recovery was to be at another time. She was prepared to review the Summer School Program and the International Reading Assoc. Conference presentation. In May of this year, they gave a workshop in San Antonio, Texas regarding their TIME program (Teachers In Multiple Environments). This provides small group and individual instruction and parent involvement and an extended school day. The conference was covered by Title I and II monies. She gave the Committee a copy of her PowerPoint presentation. **(SEE ATTACHMENT #5)**

Chairman Dubois congratulated her and was proud Woonsocket is the leader in this area.

**Motion to receive and place of file said presentation**  
Unanimously approved

**MD Second: MW/MB**

Mrs. Filomeno, along with Dr. Macera, reviewed the Summer School Program. **(SEE ATTACHMENT #6)** This program was very successful this year. The State prohibits a failed student to be placed back in the same class with the same teacher and you cannot hold a child back more than two times. It is no longer about grading but rather proficiencies and how to integrate homework completion. There is a very compact curriculum and the teacher's work collaboratively and the program is in conjuncture with URI. There are very strong mentoring tutorials from URI and they have been very successful. Of the twenty-six students who participated, twenty-two completed it successfully. At the Middle School, sixty-six students were ineligible for Summer School because they failed all four-core subjects or had more than thirty unexcused absences.

**Motion to receive and place of file said report**  
Unanimously approved

**AA Second: MW**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

Dr. D'Acchioli thanked Mrs. Filomeno and Dr. Macera for their reports.

State testing is taking place in grades 3-10. The testing cycle ends for all students on October 25th. The first quarter for secondary school students ends in three weeks. Elementary school students are on a trimester that closes the first week in December.

Yesterday, the District conducted its second professional-development day. There were many specialty work-sessions offered; however, some of the most significant programs included Video Streaming and Strategic Teaching for PLPs at the elementary level; Action Plans, Sharing Library Resources, Character Development and Assertive Discipline at the Middle School; and the Teacher as Mentor, Setting Limits in the Classroom, and Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements at the High School.

The next Professional Day will be on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

A letter from Finance Director Robert Strom was included in today's informational packet. The letter clarifies the \$255,000 as going to their FY06 budget. An amended InSite report will be filed. On page two of the letter, Mr. Strom indicates that by mutual agreement, the additional money is a one-time appropriation. The acceptance of the funds was never mutually agreed to as a one-time appropriation. In fact, Chapter 16-7-23 is quite specific in defining one-time appropriations. The law, also, designates the Commissioner, not a Superintendent nor a Mayor, as having the ultimate authority to determine whether a

deduction is a non-reoccurring expenditures to be allowed under maintenance of effort.

Beyond that, their football team is having a great year with a smashing success over East Greenwich last Saturday.

In closing, he extended best wishes to all of the candidates participating in the School Committee Candidates Forum scheduled for next Monday, October 17th at the Middle School.

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

**AA Second: MW**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD AND WELFARE:**

Mr. Ward thanked the students and Mrs. Alves for the time they spent at the booth at the Autumnfest and he will continue to support the Lions' Club. One hundred and eleven hours of work was volunteered. There will be a theatrical production on January 6<sup>th</sup> of Jesus Christ Superstar. He thanked all who worked in drafting the letter regarding the assistants and the petition and he will continue to support the work the assistants do. The consistent test results are reflection of their efforts at such a young age and it will be only a short time before they see the negative effect. He recently visited his son in Fairfax County, Virginia and his girlfriend is a high-school Biology teacher and they have 3400 students in that school. They have one Principal and seven assistants. Their district is 1M,52K almost the size of Rhode Island. They transport 100K students a day. A glaring failure of this state, unlike in Massachusetts where every community has control of a public channel and they manage the content, Rhode Island does not. They are able to post events, community items, musicals, etc. and Fairfax does the same thing. Here, we do not get this information to a lot of people including the family of students who don't actually have a student in the schools. They could use this to promote the schools and their programs. Fairfax spends approximately \$11,500 per student.

Ms. Williams thanked Mr. Nasif for his service and Mr. Gray for bringing the flag situation to their attention and the Mayor for assisting them. She attended the Healthy Schools Coalition Breakfast a week ago and it was very interesting. The theme was a student who is physically fit would be mentally fit. Studies show that 85% of learning is done through movement and with the block scheduling at the High School, she is concerned with the 85-minute classes. Studies show that after seventeen minutes, bodies are ready for sleep. Mr. Richard DiPardo was in the audience and a high-school teacher, stated that he, as well as other teachers, stop midway through each class and allow the students to stand and walk around. Ms. Williams stated she would be bringing forward a policy regarding the soda machines. The State is looking at getting rid of them. Soda has no nutritional value and 13% of a child's intake of calories comes from soda and mostly at school. Milk consumption is down by 30% over the last few years. She asked Dr. D'Acchioli if he was able to get a written report on the recycling issue. He will follow-up with Mr. Fontaine.

Mr. Auclair thanked Mr. Nasif for his assistance and has heard a lot of wonderful things about him. He welcomed Mr. Berman to the Middle School. He congratulated all that participated in the Autumnfest including the organizers and the die-hards who sat and watched the parade in the rain. Last week, he was invited to a dinner for IPAY, Institute Poverty & Youth, where their primary goals help women out of poverty and recovery their self-esteem and open their own businesses. He has received information that Sodexo is a computerized service and all students now have their Ids and no one knows who is receiving a free or reduced meal. That is correct. RICAP-R.I. Council on Arts Proficiency, will be developing national standards in R.I. on arts. The district's discipline oversight committee has not yet been activated and he wanted to know when that might be reinstated, even perhaps under the Safety Committee. Mr. DiPardo explained it will be done but there have been many other things going on and he feels this committee should be separate and not under the Safety Committee. At a recent PAC meeting, it was discussed that the custodians should wear a uniform shirt, something simple but enough to identify them and give a professional appearance when greeting parents and others. Dr. Macera said she has been talking with Mr. Fontaine about getting a collared-style shirt for them and is looking into the price and funding. At his job, the Department of Health stopped and he wanted to reiterate that there is no smoking on any school

grounds including vehicles and at sporting events. He hopes that the students follow this policy, as well. The D.O.H. will fine the school department if anyone is caught smoking on school property. He reiterated that Directors and Administrators may give updated information under Communications on the agenda. He has talked to some teachers at the Middle School and he requested a communications audit. He has heard the intercom has major problems along with other things and they need a working communication system. Regarding the elementary schools, it is AYP time and they are collecting state-test scores and they should show their weaknesses and strengths and compare them to other districts. Dr. Macera stated that Pat Dubois does that and she meets with each Principal and the SIT at each school. She will ask Pat to provide him with a book on this. He thanked everyone for coming out.

Mr. Bileau thanked Mr. Nasif for his work and he, personally, went down there and thanked him. He thanked everyone who comes to the meetings and hopes they keep coming. Also, he hopes they will attend the debate on October 17<sup>th</sup> at the Middle School.

Chairman Dubois congratulated Ms. Tincknell and Carmine Boucher for their work in getting the nature trail repaired. He thanked Mr. Gray for bringing the flag situation to their attention and for Mayor Menard for helping to replace them. He is looking forward to the proper flag ceremony. He was at last weekend's parade and was very proud of all their school bands. He was contacted by the R.I. Blood Center regarding a blood drive and if they would sponsor one. It would be at the High School in mid December after school to allow students, teachers and the Public to donate. He asked if they needed to approve that. Dr. D'Acchioli stated the High School has done this before and he will simply check with Mr. Nasuti to see that one gets scheduled. He thanked Mr. Nasif for his work and he would even call him at home when there were problems. He heard from parents that he would even give parents his home and cell phone numbers. Regarding cell phones, there was a purchase that they tabled over two months ago because they were waiting for a list of who had a cell phone and that list has never been provided. How are the cell phones being paid for if they never approved the funding? Dr. D'Acchioli explained that there is a line item in the budget for cell phones. The Woonsocket Education Department did not enter into a contract so the bills are paid monthly.

**Motion to adjourn at 10:00 P.M.**  
Unanimously approved

**MD Second: MB**

Respectfully submitted,

Denise St Germain  
Secretary to the School Committee