

**MINUTES**  
**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2006**  
**7:15 PM – OPEN SESSION**  
**WACTC –ROOM 303**  
**MULTI MEDIA LAB**

**Called to Order by Chairman Marc Dubois**  
**Moment of Silence**  
**Pledge of Allegiance**

<b>Roll Call:</b>	Marc Dubois, Chairman	Present
	Allen Auclair	Present
	Michelle Williams	Present
	Eleanor Nadeau	Present
	Anita McGuire-Forcier	Present

**PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:**

- **John McLaughlin, 631 South Main Street, Woonsocket – WMS Teacher:** Said he went to a SIT meeting recently and heard the suggestions that Mr. Berman had. Mr. McLaughlin thinks the size of the middle school creates many problems. "It's overwhelming. It must go down in size. The Mayor said she was for a new middle school. Now it has gone back to a new high school. I think we are moving too fast." He doesn't think it's appropriate for the principal to say that they should go for a new high school instead of a middle school. "I think he just doesn't want to decide who goes where!" McLaughlin would like to see two new schools placed in highly populated areas, such as Bourdon Boulevard. "These aren't wealthy areas. The kids can stay after school and not get into trouble. The wealthier areas aren't as densely populated and can drive their kids to school. A new school at Barry Field will cost a lot in transportation."
- **Richard Picard, 734 Bound Road, Woonsocket:** Congratulated the WSC and Dr. Macera on their appointments. He spoke about the middle child theory, saying he was a middle child and got all the hand-me-downs. He was sad to read an article about a new high school planned for Barry Field. It reminded him about the middle child. "They always get the hand-me-downs." Spoke about community schools and how kids would be more comfortable going to a smaller school within their own community. He posed some interesting questions, such as; "How many kids live on each side of the river?" He has been advocating during his past campaigns for school committee for two middle schools.
- **Margaret Glover, WHS Librarian:** Spoke in support of Donna Valentine and was glad to see her come back to the WHS. She related that she had an embarrassing incident happen in the library that she didn't feel comfortable going to Bob Vachon with that Mrs. Valentine handled very professionally. She spoke about Mrs. Valentine's studies on poverty and what she brings to the Villa Novan family.
- **Linda Majewski, parent:** She was very upset with the proposed non-union wage increases in light of the fact that a few months ago, 16 students were sitting on the floor asking for money to keep WMS sports and Karla Lister was begging for \$2,000 to maintain her program. "This room was overfilled with people pleading with you not to cut the teacher assistants." Urged them not to give away raises because there needs to be something left for their kids. "Put the kids first!"

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**RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS – Dr. Maureen Macera, Interim Superintendent**

Congratulated Sylvia Natale, Principal of Gov. Pothier Elementary school, for being featured in the December issue of "She Shines.", a newspaper put out in conjunction with the Providence Journal. Sylvia was shadowed by Lisa M. Piscatelli during the Principal for a Day Program. Sylvia has many years in the teaching profession and is well versed as Principal of Gov. Pothier School. She is on the boards of RI School Principals Association and RI Children's Crusade and gives her all to her staff and children. Sylvia is a true asset to her profession. Gave kudos Ms. Margaret Tincknell, Principal of Bernon Heights Elementary school, for her time and service in participating in the Woonsocket High Schools Community Service Program. Ms. Tincknell participated in this program by conducting interviews of all students who participated and spent her own time preparing, planning, and coordinating every aspect of each student's community service program while at Bernon Heights. Ms. Tincknell gave willingly of her own time and expertise to develop each program for every student.

Congratulated Keli Allen and Katherine Champagne for being selected to the Rhode Island All State Field Hockey team and Anthony Gagne and Patrick Gauthier for being selected to Rhode Island All State Football team. This is a very prestigious award and their hard work and dedication to their sport has made all of them worthy of this award. Recognized all the athletic teams who won championships over this past season. A list of athletes who have been selected to the Rhode Island All Division and All State teams have been placed in the informational packet. Gave kudos to all Coaches and to all the athletes for their outstanding performances and dedication to their sport. Woonsocket Middle School held their sixth-grade social studies fair and 100 winners were awarded a first, second, or third place award for their outstanding work on their visual projects, many of them three-dimensional, depicting the "Seven Wonders of the World." Three special awards were given out to; First place winner was John Bednarz for his five-foot oil on canvas of Zeus; second place was given to Ian Bosquet for his mosaic of Zeus, and third place to Shannon Heil for her Hanging gardens of Babylon, made from popsicle sticks. Special thanks to Principal, Bruce Berman and fair coordinator Corey Lamoureux for putting on a great exhibit for all the students. She thanked all the teachers who participated in making this project a great success.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams

2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Auclair (Unanimously Approved)

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 1/11/06 OPEN**

Motion to Approve: M. Dubois

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Motion to approve with the following exemptions by M. Dubois:**

- Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000 – Visconti & Boren, Ltd.
- Field Trip/Conference Requests – American Federation of Teachers Conference

2<sup>nd</sup>: **A. Auclair (Unanimously Approved)**

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**1. Personnel Actions** -Certified Appointments  
Non-Certified Appointments

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

Apple Computers/Computers/District/Local/Grant  
Dell Computers/Computers/WHS/Local  
Lesley University/Prof.Development/District/Local  
Norton & Associates, Inc./Speech Services/Sp. Ed./Local  
Overland Supply/Supplies/District/Local  
Systematics, Inc./Tables/Mt. St. Charles/Grant  
Tech Depot/Computer Equipment/WHS/Grant/Local  
Visconti & Boren, Ltd./Promac/McFee/Local – **REMOVED**

**3. Field Trip/Conference Requests**

YMCA of NRI/Woonsocket Cheerleaders/WMS  
American Federation of Teachers Conference, Brooklyn, NY/WMS - **REMOVED**

**4. Disposal of Obsolete Equipment**

**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**EXEMPTIONS TO CONSENT AGENDA:**

- Motion to approve payment to Visconti & Boren Ltd.: M. Dubois  
2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

Ms. Williams wants to know the total cost to date for the Promac litigation.

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- Motion to approve conference requests for American Federation of Teachers Conference in Brooklyn, NY:  
A. Auclair 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

Ms. Williams asked why, if this is a teacher's conference, is Mr. Berman going. She questioned whether it is a good idea for him to be out of the building since he is a new principal. She also asked if the WED is paying for coverage in his absence. Dr. Macera explained that Mr. Berman was asked to attend by the AFT; and a school redesign was mandated for the middle school by the state. Mr. Berman has plenty of coverage with his assistant principals, so no one else will be paid to come in for him.

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Mr. Dubois told Richard Ackerman that former superintendent Anthony D'Acchioli went to the Verizon store and bought some equipment in September totaling \$658 which he charged to the district. He purchased a top-of-the-line cell phone with PDA software for \$500, a \$59 headset, \$37 charger, a \$22 car charger and \$12 carrying case. The plan that came with the equipment was \$132 a month. Mr. Dubois said D'Acchioli had a pretty good idea he was leaving at the time of purchase and also signed up for the plan to go with the phone. Dubois asked whether this should have come before the WSC for approval since the equipment and the plan probably would have totaled more than \$2,000. Plans usually are for either a one- or two-year period and there's a penalty for cancellation. Part of his buy-out agreement was that all the accessories would be returned. The WED just got all the accessories back. The WED also got a bill from the Kirkbrae Country Club for a breakfast he attended more than two months after he left the district for \$25. Dubois stated that the WED will not pay for this. He also noted that Dr. D'Acchioli is still attending meetings of the RI School Superintendents Association. He wasn't sure whether or not you have to be an active superintendent to attend these meetings, but Dr. Macera was there to attend as Woonsocket's superintendent and it was very disconcerting. Dubois requested Atty. Ackerman draft a letter to Dr. D'Acchioli regarding his participation in future RIASS meetings representing Woonsocket.

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- Ms. Williams announced that a Minority Concerns Meeting will be held at the WACTC in Rm. 303 at 7 p.m. There will also be a CLAC meeting.
- Mr. Auclair gave an update for the School Building Committee regarding the RFP for a construction manager. He was alarmed when he read in the paper that everything was a done deal. "The subcommittee is working on all the options available and will be presenting them to the full School Building Committee in the beginning of February. It's far from a done deal. Told people to call Joel Matthews at City Hall with any ideas they may have. He announced that the next PAC meeting will be held at the WACTC on Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> in Rm. 303 at 7 p.m.
- Ms. McGuire-Forcier announced that the next Safety Committee Meeting will be held at the WMS in the Annex Library on Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>, at 2 p.m.

Mrs. Nadeau asked Mr. Auclair if the subcommittee meetings are open to the public and he thought that they were. He'll check with Joel Matthews. Auclair announced that they (Subcommittee "B") are meeting next Monday and Tuesday. They are supposed to get back all the bids by this Friday for construction manager. They will interview on Monday and Tuesday. Dr. Macera reported that Subcommittee "A" is busy analyzing twelve different building sites to come up with three potential sites and present them to the full committee. Her meetings are open to the public and Dr. Macera believes they are also posted. The meeting tomorrow is at 4 p.m. at McFee. There are 18 members on the full School Building Committee, with 6 members on Subcommittee A and 6 members on Subcommittee B. Dr. Macera assured the public that no decision has been made regarding a site at all. She pointed out that any site for the middle school has to be approved by the Board of Regents also. Nadeau questioned why there weren't 9 members on each subcommittee. Mrs. Forcier stated that everyone had a chance to jump on a subcommittee. Everyone can be involved in the final committee.

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**CONFERENCES: Bus Appeal for Marissa Mitchell**

Ms. Katherine McAulisse presented her case regarding busing for her daughter since they live 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile shy of the 1-mile limit required for busing. She read her appeal letter in which she states that it's very dangerous for her daughter to walk on the icy streets, since most people don't shovel their sidewalks. She is currently 6 months pregnant and has slipped on the ice walking her daughter to and from school. Her daughter is an excellent student and looks forward to going to school every day. Dr. Macera asked if there are other parents in the neighborhood that could take her to school. Ms. McAulisse said she doesn't feel comfortable having her daughter walking or riding with just anyone in the area. She said she's willing to walk her to the corner to get the bus. Dr. Macera explained the

policy and agreed that people don't clear their walks. The mother just requested help until the end of this year. Ms. Williams suggested that she approach a City Council member about the sidewalks not being shoveled. "It's the type of law that isn't enforced," said McAulisse. "If more parents speak up, maybe something will be done," said Williams. "But it won't help my daughter right now," replied McAulisse. Mr. Chevrette from Valley Bus said that there is a bus in that area, but it's a special education bus. There would be room for one more person. Mr. Auclair brought up his "Kids Walk To School" Program to work with city government to make the city more user-friendly to the walking public and bicyclists. McAulisse is willing to support the program, saying, "You need people to speak out or nothing will be done."

Motion to allow busing on a temporary basis until the winter is over for Marissa on the closest bus provided that her mother walks her to the bus stop: M. Dubois 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams

Roll Call Vote: MD-yes; MW-yes; AA-yes; AF-yes; EN-yes Passed 5-0.

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None**

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

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**1. Approval of Fundraiser for WACTC/Health Occupations Program:**

Motion to approve: 2<sup>nd</sup>:  
Roll Call Vote: MD-yes; MW-yes; AA-yes; AF-yes; EN-yes Passed 5-0.

Charlene Bedard, student, explained what the program was. They want to education elementary school kids about diabetes and make them aware. They will put cans in the elementary schools to collect money. Teacher Eleanor Pieranunzi explained that it's a pretty tamper-proof system. The students will not handle the money at all. Mr. Auclair asked that they report back on how they do and contact the local newspapers for coverage. Mr. Dubois stated that his daughter is not part of the group doing this fundraiser so he didn't have to recuse himself.

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**2. Proposal for School Calendar 2006-2007:**

Dr. Macera presented the preliminary school calendar. Mr. Auclair asked if there was any reason why we have to maintain a February vacation. He and Mr. Dubois would both like to see school go back to starting after Labor Day. Dr. Macera explained that it is more of a political issue. "Every time the Superintendents' Association tries to introduce the subject, it doesn't go over very well," she said. When Auclair asked if we have to go along with what the others do, she explained that it creates problems when we have students from other communities. The calendar consists of 186 days including professional development days, orientation, and parent/teacher conference nights.

Motion to approve: 2<sup>nd</sup>:  
Roll Call Vote: MD-yes; MW-yes; AA-yes; AF-yes; EN-yes Passed 5-0.

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**3. Kids Klub Rental Agreement:**

Dr. Mary Ann Shallcross presented the Kids Klub proposal requesting a 3-year contract and rent reduction. She pointed out that every school that has before- and after-school programming has had their test scores go up. She provided a history of Kids Klub in Woonsocket, saying that they offer a safe place for kids to and describing the types of services they offer. Shallcross listed a number of other services they would be able to offer if they are given a rent reduction. They have a difficult time retaining staff when they only have a one-year commitment. Auclair asked about the cost to the WED for Kids Klub to take in kids on show days. Dr. Macera explained that it's being done in-kind at no cost to the school district. All the parents have to do is pre-register with Kids Klub and fill out a health form prior to being provided with the service on snow days. When asked, Dr. Shallcross stated that Kids Klub pays the most in rent to Woonsocket. Mr. Dubois asked if there could be some flexibility in the areas used to allow for the cleaning of the buildings. Dr. Macera said she has spoken to Mr. Fontaine and this can be arranged.

Motion to approve the proposed rental agreement: E. Nadeau 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois  
Roll Call Vote: MD-yes; MW-recused; AA-yes; AF-yes; EN-yes Passed 4 yes, 0 no, 1 recused.

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#### 4. Approval of Non-Union Wages:

Dr. Macera was asked to read her memo to the school committee accompanying her non-union wage proposal. She explained the timing of this preliminary proposal, which is due to budget deadlines, etc. She reported that the cost of non-union wages has gone up every year for the past seven years. This is the first year that cost will be going down. This proposal reduces costs by approximately \$297,000. The average percentage increase is 2.5%, which is less than the average percentage increase from last year. She explained any increases higher than that for certain employees due to either the reorganization of Central Office or additional responsibilities being added to their position. They will add one extra week of vacation time, which can only be taken with the permission of the superintendent. When asked if these employees have individual contracts, Dr. Macera said that they do and that an amendment will have to be made for the vacation days and any other changes if the proposal is approved. She noted that one of the Assistant Special Ed Directors will not be replaced and a part-time hearing officer will be hired instead. When the current Athletic Director and Supervisor of Health/Physical Education retires shortly, that position will be replaced by a part-time Athletic Director and stipend positions for Health/Physical Education Supervisors. The current Athletic Director has agreed to work as the part-time AD within the guidelines of the Retirement Board. A technology position that was vacated earlier this year will not be replaced also. The principals will receive a 2.5% increase for performances that meet the standard. They will also receive one week of additional vacation time to be taken only during the summer. Auclair asked if these increases will be included in the budget posted at the Harris Library. He was told they would be. He also asked if these increases would negatively affect the students and programs currently being offered. "If the increases of the past seven years had been allowed to continue, it would have affected them. I don't believe this will be the case now, but we don't know what the state will give us yet either," replied Macera. Mr. Dubois was very happy to see a proposal that will save the district money. Ms. William listed some of the salary increases for the past 4 or 5 years: 5%, 7%, etc.

Motion to approve: M. Dubois

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams

**Roll Call Vote: MD-yes; MW-yes; AA-yes; AF-yes; EN-yes Passed 5-0.**

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#### 5. Discussion of FY07 Budget/Personnel Supplement

Mrs. Goodman explained that the report was a draft, which shows a 2.8% total system-wide increase in salaries for FY07. The largest savings is the elimination of the deputy superintendent's position and non-union wages. Mr. Auclair said he'd heard that there aren't enough textbooks and asked if there is money allocated for that. Dr. Macera told him that major expenditures have been made in the past few years on textbooks and she asked that he refer any situations he is aware of to her. Mrs. Goodman said that an inventory of all the district's textbooks is maintained. Auclair suggested having the principals review their inventory list for their building.

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#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – Dr. Maureen Macera, Superintendent**

The superintendent stated that many of the things she had in her report had already been covered. She thinks they are off to a good start with collaboration between the schools. They are looking at ways to seek more funding and get more support services in the district. "The number one priority is what happens in the classroom. That's our main focus." Macera assured the public about the WMS building and that they are trying to do the best thing possible for the students. She asked the public to call her office if they have questions or concerns because she has been dealing with a lot of rumors lately and it takes time away from other things.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams

2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Auclair (Unanimously Approved)

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#### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE**

**Forcier:** Thanked everyone involved in the Martin Luther King celebration. She got a chance to visit the WMS with Suzanne Vadenais and met a lot of the staff. She said that the students were well behaved and engaged in learning. The teachers said they were very happy there and wouldn't want to go anywhere else. Thanked Mr. Nasuti and Mr. Berman for getting together the presentation for the teachers on gangs. She would like to bring this presentation to the parents because she feels that they need to hear it. She is hoping they can work together with the PAC to achieve that.

**Nadeau:** She was invited to judge the 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Spelling Bee recently, which she enjoyed very much. She also toured the 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Grade side of the building. On the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade side, the kids have supervised bathroom visits. The 6<sup>th</sup> Graders are unsupervised. There were vast differences in the way the bathrooms looked. She would like to see something done about this situation. Nadeau also visited the Saturday detention at the WMS. There were over 50

students and she was very impressed with the silence in the cafetorium. They all had work to do. It seemed to be very well controlled by the staff.

**Williams:** Announced a C-Lac Meeting at Pothier on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Wished the cast of Jesus Christ Superstar good luck this weekend. She will be attending and expects it to be fantastic. Congratulated the Rev. Sammy Vaughn of her church on a recent award. She attended the Martin Luther King celebration and commended everyone on his or her hard work, saying it was very informative. Williams served as a Spelling Bee judge at the WMS and wished the finalists well. Regarding the use of Barry Field for a new school, she found out it used to be a trotting park when she looked up the deed. She feels we need to deal with the middle school—not build a state-of-the-art high school. “Housing aid doesn’t cover furniture and equipment. The WMS kids would be getting the high school’s hand-me-downs.”

**Auclair:** Told the public that the WMS will be having a rummage sale in March and to be on the lookout for a notice. Congratulated Bernon Hts. for coming in second in Pennies for Literacy. He’s looking for information on how the elementary schools are doing with the new promotional policy. He noted that we have two representatives in Congress who are pushing for us—Jack Reed and Patrick Kennedy. They are pushing for more funding for NCLB in RI. Spoke about the rumors spreading around the city—especially about money. He has been asking for a workshop with the City to talk about funding and has yet to get a response. He read a bylaw that states: “A joint pre-budget meeting must be held between the WSC and the City Council”. “There are state laws that we are supposed to abide by but there are no consequences for not doing it.” He said these guidelines can be found online and asked if anyone wants to help to enforce the state laws that are on the books. “We have to all work together.” Urged people with legislative concerns to contact Tim Duffy. “No decision has been made in regard to the location of a new middle school.”

**Dubois:** He will be at Harris School tomorrow at 7 p.m. for the finals of the Spelling Bee. Said that “Jesus Christ Superstar” this Saturday at the WHS will be great. Asked about recycling cardboard not being done at some schools yet. Dr. Macera will check into it.

Motion to adjourn at 9:40 p.m.: M. Williams

2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Auclair (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle  
WSC Recording Secretary