



Salve Regina University/Consulting Services/Law Enforcement/WHS/Grant  
Simplex Grinnell/Repairs to Fire Alarms/Harris & Globe Park/Local  
Vinny Laughlin LLC/Educational Supplies/WMS/Local

### 3. Field Trip/Conference Requests

National Science Teachers association Conference/California/WHS/Article 18  
National Association of Secondary School Principals Annual Convention and Exposition/Nevada/  
WACTC/Perkins  
National Association of Elementary School Principals/Texas/Pothier/Title II  
**Massachusetts Association for the Teaching of Speakers of Other Languages Conference/MA/  
Elementary/Secondary/Title III - Removed**  
Alton Jones-Elementary Outdoor Science Weekend/SMILE, Kingston, RI/Harris

## END OF CONSENT AGENDA

### EXEMPTIONS TO CONSENT AGENDA:

- Motion to approve Massachusetts Association for the Teaching of Speakers of Other Languages Conference: M. Williams  
2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Auclair (Unanimously Approved)

Ms. Williams questioned the differences in the meal and transportation allowances for the nine teachers who were requesting to attend this conference. Linda Filomeno explained that some of them are traveling together, some are staying overnight to meet in the evening and will eat dinner there, etc.

- Motion to approve purchase orders for Apple Computer and Dell Computer at \$9,972.50 and \$21,679.61 respectively: A. Auclair  
2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams/E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

Mr. Auclair wanted to know where these computers would be going. Mrs. Goodman said that the Dell Computers would be going to Mt. St. Charles and McFee. She didn't know where the Apple Computers were going, but will find out and let him know. Auclair asked that in the future, the location be specified and the amount of computers being purchased. The WSC members don't have copies of the requisitions.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Mr. Dubois said he received an email from Leo Fontaine today saying he is in favor of a joint meeting of the City Council and the WSC. Fontaine stated that he just received a copy of our draft budget and wants to review it first. He asked that future communications be channeled through him or Mr. Dubois.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Mr. Auclair reported that the Building Committee has now agreed to retain Gilbane as the construction manager and AI3 as the architect for the new school. They now need to figure out how we are going to fund their work. He asked Joel Matthews about it and he said that the Building Committee doesn't have any money and it's up to the City Council and the WSC. The initial estimate to get started is \$50,000 to \$100,000. Dr. Macera stated that there's nothing in this year's budget (FY06) for this. Mr. Matthews called her today about a committee to meet with Gilbane and the draw up the initial contracts for the site work only.

### CONFERENCES:

#### 1. Report on Status of Reading in the District – Part I - Linda Filomeno

Ms. Filomeno stated that this was just a preliminary report, since she doesn't have complete data on kindergarten. She reported that there were 60 1<sup>st</sup> graders who by the end of the first semester needed Personal Literacy Plans (PLP's). By 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, there was a huge increase in children needing PLPs, which is any child reading below grade level. 57% of the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are below grade level for reading. She thinks it may be due to the fact that they start having to read for comprehension in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. The following are the percentages of students in each grade needing PLPs: 42% in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade; 52% in 4<sup>th</sup> grade; 53% in 5<sup>th</sup> grade; 83% in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade or 397 students; 63% in 7<sup>th</sup> grade; and 53% in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. There's another big increase when they go from 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. She said that we need to address the needs of the middle school kids. Many of them are new to the school district also. In the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, there is the Reading Recovery Program to help the kids. For grades 2 through 5, they have reading teachers and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Connecting for Children & Families provides tutoring. Elementary special education teachers are being

trained in the Wilson Method. Filomeno will provide a full report in two weeks. Dr. Macera said that there's a 34% mobility rate in Woonsocket, which contributes to this problem. Filomeno also thinks we need to assess the vocabulary of students which affects their comprehension. In the early grades, the fluency of reading is very important. Reading to children by parents, reading at home by the students and going to the library all help tremendously. Ms. Williams asked how many of the 397 6<sup>th</sup> graders were going to the Read 180, which is a program for kids who are reading two or three years below grade level. Ms. Filomeno explained that they have one ESL lab and one special education lab and it's the second year of the program. Most of the 397 are not more than one year below reading level. The effects of the Read 180 and all-day kindergarten are not yet available because these programs are fairly new.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams

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

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:****1. Approval of School Calendar 2006-07 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Passage**

**Motion to approve: M. Williams**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois**

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

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**2. Public Forum and Approval of FY07 Final Budget – 2<sup>nd</sup> Passage**

- **Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street:** Stated that she has been agonizing for the past two weeks about this budget. Suggested that medical buyback line item for \$148,500 be eliminated, saying we cannot afford it. "We shouldn't be giving out \$1,500 checks for this. Couldn't we use this money to save some personnel in our schools?" As far as the \$706,000 increase in Blue Cross and Delta Dental coverage, she thinks everyone should be paying a 20% copay. She and her husband paid out over \$9,000 for insurance coverage – not including dental and eye coverage. She also doesn't think that the WED should pay the difference between what employees receive from Workers' Comp and their base pay. She asked why raises were given out to administrators two weeks ago, especially when seven of them just started in their positions. "Someone has to give up something!"
- **Linda Majewski, St. Hughes Street:** Said she thinks that Richard Ackerman should also be sitting in with Dr. Macera on the contract negotiations with Gilbane, especially since he is being paid very well to represent the WED. Mr. Dubois explained that with the past administration and school committee, many times Richard Ackerman wasn't even asked to be present. Dubois has spoke to him and since then, he has been present at every meeting he has been required to attend.
- **Carmen Boucher:** Urged the WSC to reject the proposed budget because it will not meet the educational needs of our children. She commended Dr. Macera on the job she did in preparing it. Asked if retiring teachers are not being replaced, where their students are going to be placed. "Is the student/teacher ratio going to go up? The school committee should be looking out for the best interests of our children. Present a budget that will meet the needs of the children. Ask for what we need, then at least you can say we asked and it wasn't given to us. The children deserve it. If we need a 10% increase, ask for it."
- **Dr. Macera:** Explained that in the case of the four school nurse/teachers, that is her top priority. She explained that positions not being filled will not be directly impacting the students. "Last year we asked for 5% from the city and we got 1%." She has tried to show that we are cutting because of the economic times. "We won't be able to retain people if we don't at least offer a 2.5% increase for administrators. We want to present to the City Council a reasonable budget."
- **John McLaughlin, So. Main Street:** Said he went to the City Council Meeting the other night and Mr. Auclair presented the state law governing meetings of the Council. He asked if the meetings of the Council are open to the public. Brian Blais said he would be willing to meet with the WSC and the full committee. He was the only one. "I would like to be at the meeting that is held with the City Council. We don't have enough money to run the school department the way it should be run." He mentioned that every homeowner in Woonsocket just got a letter regarding revaluation during the coming year and taxes will probably be going up. He asked if taxes did go up if we could approach the City after that to request more money.
- **Richard DiPardo, WTG President:** "I have been doing this for 35 years and there has never been a good time to request more money. The reason we are in trouble is because the City of Woonsocket has not been funding education properly. The money is there. The City has a rainy day fund. They have us fighting amongst

ourselves. It's power and politics. We won't get good, quality teachers to replace the teachers that are retiring. We are getting 1.1% from the state because we are being punished for the City not putting in its fair share. Keep the eye on the prize. Every year it's a budget crisis."

- **Kim Broulliard, Park Avenue:** Said she has a daughter in kindergarten and one in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and it breaks her heart when she has to worry about their teachers being taken away. Asked the WSC to try to get more money because she doesn't want to see the kids lose out.

**Auclair:** Asked what is needed to provide the status quo. Dr. Macera said that with 4.1% from the City and 5% from the state we can retain the status quo. She hopes to bring back the out-sourced students to the district with alternative programs to save money also. If the City doesn't fund the WED at cost of living, they are making a conscious decision to have our kids being educated in under-funded schools. "It will be their decision—not ours. 4.1% is the very least we should expect. We can ask for 8% or 10%, but history shows that we will not get it when we have only gotten from 0% to 1.97%. Mr. Auclair proposed providing all the documentation with the budget to show that we are in compliance with the City Charter because these questions have come up. He also questioned the large increase in transportation costs. Mrs. Goodman explained that it's in accordance with our 5-year agreement with Valley Transportation. They have to purchase some new buses because some are over 10 years old and can't be on the streets.

**Williams:** She agreed with Mr. DiPardo that we are trying to always take away from the people who are here to educate our children. "We need to lobby the City and the state. I think Dr. Macera and her administration have done a commendable job with the budget. There are contractual obligations that can't just be taken out of the budget." She encouraged everyone to write their legislators and tell them about the impact on Woonsocket's kids.

**Nadeau:** She hears a lot that young people leave the city because they don't feel that they can send their kids to school here due to the education department being under-funded. They are afraid their education will suffer. "That's one of the first things people and businesses look at when coming to a community. **Woonsocket is a city on the move all right—it's moving backwards!** We are going to stabilize the tax rate, but we will do it on the backs of your children. Not everyone can afford to send his or her kids to private schools. The WMS is a disgrace to this community with 1600 students cooped up like a bunch of sardines in a can! We all need to rally together. Let our voices be heard. **It's your turn Mayor Menard. It's time to support education. Put your money where your mouth is!**"

**Dubois:** He fully supports what the other WSC members have said. "The City has extra money coming in from the meal tax that just gets put into a general fund. We have cleaned our house.

**Auclair:** Said that we have no control over the pension and Blue Cross premiums, which are big budget items. "\$1.4 million is out of our control."

**Motion to approve the FY07 Final Budget – 2<sup>nd</sup> Passage: M. Williams** **2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois**  
**Roll Call Vote: MD-yes; MW-yes; AA-yes; AF-No; EN-yes** **Passed 4 yes to 1 no.**

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## NEW BUSINESS:

### 1. Approval of Job Description – Director of Special Education

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

Mr. Auclair asked what the major changes in the job description were. Dr. Macera explained that it now includes supervision of outside placements. Other changes include state mandated requirements, such as a supervisors' certification in special education. The salary will be the same as it is this year, which is \$95,325, based on the person's experience. It will not be higher than that. Mr. Auclair requested that at least two members of the SELAC group participate in the screening process.

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

She thanked the WSC for the article they sent to her about the KIP program, which is an alternative program out West. She spoke about this initiative to provide alternative education programs. She also believes that one person can make a difference in the life of a child—such as a mentor or coach. Retired teachers and substitutes can help fill this void. There's a committee formed to look at these options. Asked that we keep the dialog open in regards to the

budget. "The number one focus is what's best for the children." Asked the Woonsocket community to rally to provide a good quality education for their kids.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams

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

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### SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE

**Williams:** Encouraged people to attend the City Council meetings. Mentioned the Woonsocket Task Force on Substance Abuse Conference on March 4<sup>th</sup> at City Hall. Told interested parties to call 766-3332. Thanked the PAC and commended them for all they do and going forward with the petition. She thinks we need to put the Mayor and City Councilors' feet to the fire.

**Auclair:** Said that financing will be an issue as far as the Building Committee goes, but he's happy that discussions have begun. "At least we are moving forward." During the interviews with contractors, he said it's interesting to find out how indoor air quality affects student performance due to poor ventilation. He will go to every City Council meeting from now until the budget is passed. "At least two council members acknowledged that he contacted them— Brian Blais and Sue Vadenais. Blais was very supportive and understanding." Auclair asked Dr. Macera to draft a letter to the state representatives and the Governor that the WSC can sign on how we will be impacted if we don't get the funding we need. He said he attended the Health Fair at Harris School and had fun. Announced the WMS breakfast on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Mentioned trying to schedule a meeting with the truancy officers again and obtaining a list of the school improvement team members.

**Dubois:** He also attended the Health Fair and thanked the Woonsocket Police and Fire Depts. and the WACTC Health Occupations class for their participation. He said there was a huge crowd. Got a phone call regarding a 12<sup>th</sup> grader at the WHS and a bus issue. The student was asked for her bus pass and didn't have it so she was asked to get off the bus. She had been taking the bus for a while with no problems. The bus company said it was a school department policy. Dubois asked Dr. Macera to check it out with Bill Legare. Dubois mentioned about Cranston having kids going to its schools who don't live in the city. Asked if we check on this type of situation here. Dr. Macera told him that we have found out about a few cases. Richard Ackerman told him that the first line of defense is at the schools with the principals and clerical staff when a new student is enrolled. Dr. Macera said the truancy officers have investigated these situations.

**Forcier:** Congratulated Jonathan Gallishaw for securing the grant funds. Announced a Learning Differences Awareness Conference being held at Brown University with many different classes. Told people to call her for more info on it. Explained that she voted no on the budget because she feels our kids need more money. She thinks Dr. Macera did a wonderful job on it, however.

**Nadeau:** Thanked everyone for attending. Feels their job is to share their knowledge and enlighten the community. Commended the PAC group for their dedication and for fighting to get more money for our kids.

Motion to adjourn at 10:05 p.m.: A. Forcier

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

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle  
WSC Recording Secretary