

**MINUTES**  
**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2006**  
**7:00 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:**

- **Amy Goudaitis:** Said she has two children who attend Globe Park School and was concerned about the possible cutting of the integrated program. Her son has had an IEP since age 3. He worked his way into the inclusion program and then they decided to put him into the integrated program, in which he has been successful. Her son has Asperger's Syndrome. "With consistent support, he can blossom into a beautiful little boy. These kids need consistency. He has gone to three different schools in three years. The teacher assistant in the classroom is monumental. These children don't experience life the same way we do." Her other son, Justin, has Asperger's also. He has had eleven surgeries and is in an integrated classroom. "A child like him cannot function in a self-contained classroom. They need the appropriate role models. If these boys are put into a regular education room, those teachers don't have the skills to deal with them. They both work very close to grade level and the kids in self-contained will be below their grade level. I know some of the other parents have no clue about what is changing. I know because I work for the school department. When my kids had no teacher assistant in their room for those weeks, their behavior was different. The parents need some answers now. I need to know what's going to happen to my boys. Many of us have been left hanging."
- **Tony Gabriel, Winter Street, PAC Co-Chair:** Announced the PAC meeting next Wednesday at the WACTC at 7 p.m. The PAC has a petition that they hope to have approved to present to the City Council regarding funding from the City for education. He has been sending letters to the legislators and has received some responses. Most of them are that there is no money. He is debating on whether to send his child to private school next year because he doesn't feel safe sending him to public school here. Gabriel has emailed the Mayor and hasn't gotten any response. He encouraged people to come to the PAC meeting next week.
- **Amy Harvey, teacher at Globe Park School:** She is a parent of a child at Globe Park and moved to Woonsocket three years ago. Her son had difficulties at his previous school and was placed into an integrated classroom here. He was struggling with his reading skills. The teacher has enlisted many volunteers to come into the classroom to help with the students. She feels strongly about the integrated program because her son has greatly benefited. Harvey is concerned that if the integrated program is cut, her son won't get the help that he needs.
- **Ms. Forcier, Cottage Street:** She thinks the WSC should have open mike at the end of the meetings because people have questions. "I think that if you would have listened to the parents, the budget wouldn't have been passed by 4 to 1. I don't understand why that budget was approved. I am very disappointed."
- **Ms. Capalbo, Integrated Teacher at Globe Park School:** Spoke on behalf of kids in the integrated classes and Special Education in the system. "I have bragged to people that I think we have the best spectrum of special education programs in the state. If we stop this program, a teacher of 25 is not going to pick up on the small things—especially without an assistant. The teachers would like to know what they can do to save their programs. Please consider reinstating this program. Cut somewhere else if at all possible."
- **Denise Boulay, Special Education Advisory Committee Co-Chair:** She is also a parent of a special needs child that is no longer in special education because of integrated placement. Boulay spoke about her daughter and the issues she has. Her daughter doesn't need special education services anymore. "Isn't this a major impact on your budget that she doesn't need these services anymore?" she asked. She also announced the next SELAC meeting.

- **Denise Houle, 130 Ward Street, Woonsocket:** Expressed concern about the possibility of heterogeneous grouping at the middle school next year. She believes it will affect students adversely. She has read in the paper and heard at meetings that there is a plan to make three small schools within one school for the middle school. Referenced her comments at the last meeting about requiring a 20% copay for health coverage for all school employees. Houle went to the City Council meeting to plead that they level fund us. She also feels we need to reduce fringe benefits. She doesn't think that we can afford to give new administrators 2.5% raises and names the seven new administrators she referenced at the last meeting.
- **Nancy Phillips, Physical Education Teacher and resident:** Invited the public to come to Bernon Heights School next Saturday morning for the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser. Invited the WSC members and administrators to come and maybe participate, saying it's an open house.
- **Richard DiPardo, 134 Huntington Street, Woonsocket, WTG President:** "One thing that a lot of people are missing is that the City has the money. They just don't want to give it to us. As long as we decide that we are going to devour ourselves, City Hall is going to sit there and laugh on a pile of money in a general fund. I have been here for 35 years and I am probably one of the only people in the room who knows the compromises that were made in other areas to achieve the benefits we now have. Over 60% of our personnel pay a higher copay than the rest of the other communities." He urged the PACs to get as many people to go to the City Council meetings as they can. "If parents show up, that's a different story. The ball is in the City Council's court. The City has not come up with their fair share for the past decade!"

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

Congratulated the Woonsocket High School Cheerleading team for taking first place at the Rhody All Star Regional Cheerleading Competition held at Johnson & Wales. Gave kudos' to Roland Ayotte, Woonsocket Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> Grader, who was named student of the quarter. Congratulated Ms. Tincknell, Principal of Bernon Heights, for working closely with the students at Woonsocket High Schools Community Service Program. She took her own time to conduct interviews of interested students who participated and helped to coordinate each student's program. Ms. Tincknell also worked with students from Mount Saint Charles to assist them with volunteering their services to help students with special needs and tutoring. 28 students from Mount St. Charles accepted the challenge to work with the children at Bernon and assisted them to develop different strategies of learning, and encouraging and reinforcing the concepts they have already learned while tutoring students who have difficulty learning. Gave kudos to Bernon Heights for taking 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Pennies for Literacy Campaign. The monies raised will help adult learners improve their literacy skills. The event was sponsored by Project Learn and Adult and Family Literacy Programs.

Motion to receive and place on file: A. Auclair

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

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 2/22/06 OPEN & CLOSED**

Motion to Approve: M. Dubois

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

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

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

- **Disposal of Obsolete Equipment – removed by A. Auclair**

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**

Bob Miller/Consultant/WMS/Local  
Heinemann/Educational Supplies/Social/Local  
University of Massachusetts/Prof. Dev/WACTC/Grant

### 3. Field Trip/Conference Requests

WHS Cheerleading Competition, Richmond, VA/WHS/Fundraising  
NAFEPA Conference, Washington, DC/McFee/Title II  
Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics Conference, Boston, MA/Gov. Pothier/Title II  
2006 Annual ASCD Conference, Chicago, IL/WACTC/Perkins  
21<sup>st</sup> Annual Institute for Experienced AP Teachers, NY, NY/MSA/Title II

### 4. Disposal of Obsolete Equipment – Removed by A. Auclair

## END OF CONSENT AGENDA

### EXEMPTIONS TO CONSENT AGENDA:

- Motion to approve the disposal of obsolete equipment: A. Auclair  
2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

Mr. Auclair wanted to read down the list of items for the public because they may be put up for auction.

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Miriam Goodman read a letter she wrote to Mr. Dubois asking for WSC support of sending a letter to the legislators seeking their support up a group forming to subscribe for health insurance coverage. Dr. Macera explained that this is being requested in order to pool resources to save on health care costs. She supports it and thinks it's in our best interest. Mr. Dubois also supported it. **A consensus was reached to allow Mr. Dubois to sign the letter on behalf of the WSC.** Mr. Auclair asked that the document be posted online and at the Harris Public Library.

Ms. Williams shared a memo with the WSC regarding a school district beverage policy and legislation mandating schools to get rid of soda and high sugar drinks. She would like this item placed on the next agenda for discussion.

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### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Auclair asked for an update on the Building Committee. He has heard various responses on preliminary contracts. "As of now, it doesn't appear that we will have funding for the school because the MED Zone has been dissolved and the funding from Lincoln Park doesn't look like it will materialize." Dr. Macera said that she was not at the recent meeting with the architect and Gilbane. "They are looking to do the site work and come up with all available options. As to who will pay, I have informed Mr. Matthews that we have no funds available in this year's budget. Our capital budget has to be pre-authorized by the state as to eligibility for reimbursement. The money might be in next year's budget under the capital line item. This is going to be a long-range project," said Macera. "We are trying to get the site work done to get a plan before the Board of Regents for approval in October, but we don't have the money to do it," said Auclair. Atty. Ackerman said he spoke to Mr. Matthews today and agrees that there's a contract that will be presented at the next meeting with Gilbane for approval by the school committee. "The funding is a good question," he said. "Why should we put our capital improvements on hold just in case we come to building a school? We still need to get these other things done," said Nadeau. Dr. Macera mentioned a request from the Mayor to use funds designated for the WMS and Barry Field improvements for the site work. Dr. Macera has not yet responded to her because she doesn't know what to respond. Mrs. Nadeau said she wouldn't support signing a contract with Gilbane right now. "It was supposed to be 50/50," she said.

Mrs. Forcier said that the Mayor said she would help us out with the fire alarms and lights outside the high school through CDBG funds because that building is a shelter-in-place. Forcier asked that Dr. Macera include that in her response to the Mayor. Dr. Macera feels that we must move very carefully on this issue. She doesn't know if the grant has been approved. Ms. Williams agreed with Mrs. Nadeau about not signing a contract if there's no money to do the work. "The cart's before the horse," she said. Dr. Macera asked Atty. Ackerman if the schools were owned by the city. "Interesting question. It doesn't matter fiscally because our funding comes from the city and the state. It's more of a control issue," he said. Mr. Dubois asked Ackerman if he could talk to someone at City Hall about who is going to pay for it. Ackerman said he will do that, but also asked if we shouldn't have a workshop before the next meeting. Mr. Dubois doesn't understand the urgency. "It does seem ridiculous that we are even discussing this when there seems to be no way to fund it. I still haven't heard from anyone about whether they understand that there will be school committee people at the meeting tomorrow," said Auclair. Dr. Macera sent an email to Mr. Fontaine to let him know that two members of the WSC will be at the meeting tomorrow regarding strategic plans for the district. Dr. Macera requested this meeting to give them a flavor of what we are about. Mr. Dubois said that the City Council

initiated the meeting. It's being set up by the City Council. Ackerman explained that all the WSC members could attend the meeting if they want to, but only two can participate unless it's posted in advance. Dr. Macera has put together a huge binder with all the information that will be presented. Auclair thinks it's a good first step.

Ms. Williams asked Dr. Macera to see if this room was available on April 5<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm for a Minority Concerns Meeting and she will go into the office to fill out the paperwork to reserve it.

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**CONFERENCES: None**

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None**

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**NEW BUSINESS: None**

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

Stated that she and Miriam Goodman will be presenting at the House Finance Committee tomorrow regarding the budget and our request. She read some of her request for the public. "As Superintendent for two months, I have had a very challenging time." She wants everyone to have a voice and will speak to the special education directors about why there hasn't been more discussion about the integrated program. She will be meeting with the special education staff at the WMS about what they think needs to be done to tweak the services being provided at the level. "As far as heterogeneous grouping, it's a federal mandate. It doesn't mean that we don't have homogeneous grouping, however. It is illegal for us to have tracking." She spoke about differentiated instruction. She also said she didn't ask for more money in next year's budget because she wants to establish her administration as honest and trustworthy. "We need to tell the truth. I believe in this community and my staff. Many, many people told me I would be crazy to take this job without an assistant superintendent. We all need to sacrifice. If you need to be heard, I will listen. I will do everything I can. The services to the children in the classrooms are being put first."

Motion to receive and place on file: A. Auclair

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

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**SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE**

**Auclair:** Announced that the PTO at WMS is planning a rummage sale on Saturday March 18<sup>th</sup>. Donations are needed and can be brought to the WMS cafeteria, Door #5, from 9 am to 2 pm this coming Saturday. Donations will also be accepted Monday through Thursday next week from 2:30 to 6 pm. The money will be used for a field day for the students. He thanked the CALL for allowing Ms. Le to write an article on the good things happening in our schools. He has heard about the integrated classrooms and how well they work. He supports what Dr. Macera has asked for in the budget. Said we were supposed to have Part 2 of the reading program statistics tonight, but Ms. Filomeno had family problems. In regards to the article about students walking in the street, he thinks it's time we take back our city. Spoke to Mr. Ackerman about filing civil suits and wayward petitions for truant students. Dr. Macera said that the Truancy Court has been very successful. She has spoken to the attendance officers and they will be sharing their data in about four weeks. Auclair asked how the RI Dept. of Ed. could supersede the InSight Report. He added that the timeline for budget submission is based in state law. Atty. Ackerman needs to know the details before he can answer that question. "It may just be the result of the human condition," he added.

**Dubois:** He was also surprised to hear from Leo Fontaine about the meeting tomorrow. He is concerned about a senior at the WHS that has been taking the same bus for four years and was asked for her bus pass. She didn't have it and was kicked off the bus. Her parents had left for work and she missed a day of school. Bill Legare told him they are supposed to make sure the kids have their passes. "Sometimes we have a substitute driver and they aren't familiar with the kids who normally take that bus. We hound our drivers to do that," said Legare. "Every driver has a roster of the kids on that bus. Why would the driver not allow that student on if they are on the roster?" asked Macera. Mrs. Forcier said that her daughter just received her ID and there's a sticker on the back of it for the bus pass. "If they misplace their ID, they can't take the bus," she said. Mr. Dubois wants to see a little common sense being used. The parents called the school and were told it was a bus company policy. They called the bus company and were told it was a school department policy. Mr. Legare will make the drivers aware in the morning about use of ID's also. Dubois also heard that the DARE Program maybe coming back into the school system and is glad about it. He's looking forward to the presentation from the attendance officers in April. Said he's glad that our attendance officers are licensed social workers in case of abuse or neglect. He explained that he voted for the budget because he believes in being honest and straightforward. "Nothing was hidden in this budget. We are, by far, the lowest in the state and I agree with the strategy that Dr. Macera is using. The City gets \$50,000 a month in meal taxes that gets put into a general fund and no one knows where that money goes."

**Forcier:** Congratulated the WHS Cheerleaders for taking first place. Thanked the people at Sodexo for having their mascot come to Bernon Heights for the universal breakfast kick-off.

**Nadeau:** She was glad that Dr. Macera addressed the concerns of the parents who spoke about integrated programs. She thinks the person who suggested a Good & Welfare at the end of the meeting for the public has a good idea because many times she would have questions at the end of the meeting before she was elected to the WSC. She supported the budget because it was realistic and honest. She's not satisfied, however, and will keep pushing for the funding we need. "I have dreams about it—sort of like having a revolution like Evita."

**Williams:** Said she can relate to integrated classrooms and the success they have with the special needs students. She has a woman living with her that was institutionalized for most of her life, and because she has been integrated into a "normal household", she has blossomed in the past few years. A friend of hers has a boy with Downs Syndrome and because of being in an integrated classroom, he's doing things they said he would never do. She voted for the budget because it was a completely honest budget. She attended the WMS breakfast with community leaders and thanked the staff that put on the event. Told Dr. Macera her prayers are with her and her husband.

Motion to adjourn at 9:25 p.m.: E. Nadeau

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

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle  
WSC Recording Secretary