

**MINUTES**  
**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2007**  
**7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION**  
**Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center**  
**Multimedia Room 303**

**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

Motion to take the Superintendent's Report out of order: M. Dubois All members consented.

---

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

Speaking on the recent incident at the Woonsocket Middle School, Dr. Macera stated that it was a "tragic, isolated incident." She congratulated the staff and students that helped contain the situation. "There are many wonderful things going on at the WMS and it's disturbing that an incident like this receives so much attention. This is the month of Martin Luther King and the celebration of non-violence. Violence doesn't solve anything." Macera said she met with the Chief of Police and stated that the police department has been very supportive with this issue. She added that Dr. Patrick McGee, Dr. Jane Condon, someone from Family Resources, the Parent Advisory Council, Progressive Latinos, among others were present at the meeting to discuss how to make sure this never happens again. "We tried through mediation to bring the parties together and reach some understanding, which did not work out. We are reaching out to various community organizations to help us promote the message of non-violence." She commended the students who every day conduct themselves in a respectful and responsible manner. She wants the public to know that despite this tragic incident, we will move forward on a positive message of non-violence.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

---

**PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:**

- **Pauline Clancy, 547 Clinton Street:** Spoke on behalf of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders at Citizens Memorial School regarding the movement of classes and substitute teachers. She stated that the substitute teacher in a particular class there is outstanding and the parents are thrilled with her. "This position has been posted three times for various reasons. Just before Christmas, this substitute was told that most likely she would be appointed if another person didn't get their certification. Now she has just been told that the position will be posted for the fourth time. This will be the fourth teacher these students have." Dr. Macera said they have to go by seniority. The teacher with the higher seniority decided not to take the position. It needs to be posted according to the guidelines of the union contract.
- **Nicole Laferriere, 347 Pond Street:** She wanted to know why the teacher assistants were pulled out of the inclusion classrooms. Dr. Macera explained that the students have been assigned to Resource teachers. She met with the teacher assistants and explained that no one was being terminated, but that they were being reassigned. "We gave them the opportunity to review the positions. Some of them are at the middle school." Dr. Macera asked Elaine Hazzard to speak. Ms. Hazzard explained that state regulations don't mandate that teacher assistants be used in Resource models. "We reviewed our numbers and saw that we have eight Resource teachers at the WMS. Each Resource teacher can service 30 students each. We have between 164 to 170 students with IEPs for Resource services; therefore, our Resource teachers have very low numbers. We had to ask ourselves if we are using our staff appropriately," said Hazzard. Dr. Macera stated that the reassignments were made based on very serious needs throughout the district. Mr. Auclair asked if SELAC was included in these discussions. Macera explained that when dealing with changes in students' schedules, the discussions take place with the parents of those students. "We may be getting more funding from the state for the special education reorganization. This was one area that jumped out at us of other classrooms that could use the help of Resource teachers. We can use SELAC's advice on these issues; but we don't need their approval to make an administrative decision. Mr. Auclair asked that they be included as the district moves

forward in this process and asked if we were just reorganizing. Dr. Macera told him, "Yes. No one is being laid off."

- **Maribel Santiago, 75 Village Road, Woonsocket:** Stated that she was the mother of one of the students involved in the fight on Monday at the WMS. She said she was charged with assault on a vice principal, but she doesn't remember doing that. If she did, she apologized for it. Santiago asked about getting her daughter's work so that she wouldn't be behind when she gets back to school. She said she was told her daughter may not be going back and that she couldn't get her work. Santiago explained that her daughter was in school that day—the other student wasn't. She maintained that kids were calling her house over the weekend saying that someone was going to jump her daughter. "I went to the school to pick up my daughter and make sure she was safe. I get there early to get parking. I didn't go to start a fight. When the teacher said my daughter might not be coming back to school, I don't think that's right. I didn't bring anyone to fight. That wasn't my intention. When I spoke to the principal in the morning, I thought that there would be someone there when the kids were getting out. Now the cops are all over the place. I don't think it was fair what happened to my daughter when she was in school and the other girl wasn't."
- **Dr. Patrick McGee, Principal, WMS:** Echoed Dr. Macera's comments and hopes this incident doesn't cloud a very good school with excellent staff, teachers and students. "Unfortunate incidents like this occur. We do our very best to reach out to the community. We feel we are partners in educating your children and hope people will see the positives of what's happening at the WMS also."
- **Carmen Boucher, PAC:** Announced that the next PAC Meeting will be held at 7 p.m. next Wednesday night here at the WACTC. Said that there was an information night held last Thursday at the WMS. "Everyone involved did such an excellent job. The PAC was involved in being proactive in our schools and providing information and improving communication and that happened last Thursday night." Last Saturday there was a non-violence training in which her daughter participated and loved. Announced that Monday is Martin Luther King Day and there will be activities from 10 am to 2:45 pm at the WHS with key speakers. "There are wonderful things that are happening in our district. Let's not let one incident bring down our schools and community."
- **Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street:** Spoke regarding the Connected Math Program being used at the WMS. She said she spoke to people at RIDE. She also spoke to Judy Keeley and expressed her concerns regarding the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students still working on 7<sup>th</sup> grade books. "She said they should have been done those books in six weeks and that the 8<sup>th</sup> graders must finish the 8<sup>th</sup> grade set by the end of the year," said Houle. "My son has 23 weeks to finish the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade set. Who will be held accountable if they don't complete them? Why weren't parents notified of this new curriculum?" asked Houle. Dr. Macera responded that it was because the district was under PS&I. Houle was told there was no regulation under PS&I about the district being forced to use a curriculum. "It's up to the district whether or not a curriculum will be adopted. I am very concerned about this because I have been told otherwise. This curriculum was never brought before the school committee," said Houle. She asked that the Connected Math Program be put on tonight's agenda (quoted some statute) regarding having it placed on the next agenda as a pilot program for the next school year. "It's disheartening that we have been discussing the fees for use of facilities for three meetings now instead of discussing the curriculum of our children," said Houle. Mr. Dubois asked Atty. Ackerman to look up the statute to see if the WSC would be in violation of the open meetings law if they comply with her request. Atty. Ackerman believed she was right. Mrs. Nadeau did not recall hearing about this program. She had not heard any details about it until she looked into it after the fact. Nadeau agreed with Houle. Mr. Auclair said he met with Commissioner McWalters regarding a district being under PS&I and the role of the school committee in this case. "RIDE makes recommendations. There are laws we must follow, but we can review the recommendations," said Auclair. He is trying to get a reading form RIDE in regards to their recommendations, adding that it's a "gray area". "Physics First didn't come before the WSC," he said. Dr. Macera told him that Janet Miele made a presentation to the WSC on it. Auclair acknowledged that, but he said they didn't vote on it. He believes that the WSC needs to know what their role is when a district is under PS&I. He is waiting for an official opinion from the Commissioner.

Dr. Macera stated that she serves at the pleasure of the WSC. She brings forward the recommendations as the superintendent. The WSC either accepts or rejects the recommendations. "When the state makes a recommendation to us and attaches money to it, this was an honor for the district to be able to introduce this program (Physics First) in an earlier grade," explained Macera. She said she will look into the specific situation that Ms. Houle references. "This Connected Math Program aligns perfectly with the NECAP tests. This was provided by a grant. If you want me to bring all grants to you for approval before we even apply, then I will do it. A presentation was made about Physics First," Macera said. "I don't have a problem with it being grant money. I think you need to give the WSC the opportunity to research it. That's what we pay them for. There's plenty of information out there on it. What are we paying them for? We voted them in! Give them the opportunity to research it and then decide whether to pilot it or not. It's not fair to them, to the parents and to the students," said



**EXEMPTIONS TO CONSENT AGENDA:**

**CERTIFIED APPOINTMENTS:**

***Motion to approve appointment of David Conti as a full-time Math Teacher at the Feinstein Academy at Bachelors Step 3: A. Auclair***

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

---

***Motion to approve appointment of Kimberly Nickles as a full-time English Teacher at the Feinstein Academy: A. Auclair***

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

Mr. Auclair questioned the start date and salary being specified as "To Be Determined" for Nickles. Dr. Macera said that Nickles could start next Tuesday at Bachelors Step 4. She also explained that Mr. Berman will be doing only the Science instead of both Math and Science. "So this will involve the salaries for two new teachers with benefits?" asked Auclair. "Yes. We have brought about \$830,000 back into the district with this program, but it will cost some money to fund the program also," explained Macera.

---

**PURCHASES/TRANSFERS OVER \$2,000:**

***Motion to approve purchase from ATR Treehouse for drapery at Citizens Memorial: M. Williams***

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

Ms. Williams asked if this was for stage drapery. Mr. Fontaine explained that it's the background drape that goes in the back.

---

**COMMUNICATIONS:** None

---

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None

---

**CONFERENCES:** None

---

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**1. Request for Fee Waiver for Woonsocket Redskins:**

**Motion to Approve Fee Waiver: M. Williams**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau**

**No vote on this motion.**

Dr. Macera read a memo she wrote to the WSC about waiving fees for all non-profits and her concerns based on an analysis that was done. She suggested an additional day of free service as a compromise for all profit and non-profits instead. Mr. Auclair requested that the fees be waived for the Redskins for this year and then review and revise the policy for the coming summer. He would not support having it free for all non-profits, believing that we would have not control at that point. "There's a stipulation in the policy that if a fundraiser is being conducted, it's not considered non-profit," he pointed out. "If they want a waiver next season, they have to come before us again?" asked Nadeau. "That's why I want a review done in June and July," said Auclair. Mr. Dubois was not comfortable with a total waiver of all the fees for all the non-profits, but was open to opening up another day for the non-profits. Auclair's concern was that the extra day a week would have to be written into our policy. Dubois suggested amending the policy to make it two days a week. "Then we have to go two more meetings to get this policy changed. I suggest that \$504 be waived for the fees in addition to adding an additional day per week," said Auclair. Dr. Macera told them that we have not billed the Redskins and their fee can be held in abeyance until the policy is modified. Mrs. Forcier noted that there are three other non-profits that aren't paying rental fees for the gym—just custodial fees for use on the weekends (referring to the rental analysis). "How could this not be noticed? It should go to the Facilities Committee. Just because it's non-profit doesn't mean they aren't being paid to teach our children," said Forcier. Macera noted that Blue Cross is a non-profit agency. Mr. Dubois asked if Bernon Little League and East Woonsocket Little League get their rental fees returned to them if there's no damage. "They get their deposit back," Mr. Fontaine told him. Mr. Auclair reiterated his suggestion to review and revise the policy to see what best serves our community. He doesn't want to rush into

changing the policy. Mr. Fontaine said he would be glad to meet with the Facilities Committee as soon as possible and hold the fees for the Redskins in abeyance.

**MOTION TO TABLE: M. Dubois** **2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams**  
**Roll Call Vote: (AA/yes; MD/yes; EN/yes; MW/yes; AF/yes) MOTION TABLED.**

---

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **1. Approval of Fundraiser for Math Night at WMS**

Motion to approve: A. Auclair 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau/M. Williams  
Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AF/yes; EN/yes; MW/yes; AA/yes) 5 yes. Motion passed.

---

### **2. Approval of Revised FY07 Capital Budget**

Motion to approve: A. Auclair 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois  
Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AF/yes; EN/yes; MW/yes; AA/yes) 5 yes. Motion passed.

Dr. Macera read her memo requesting an adjustment in the Capital Asset Plan for FY07 under the category of District-wide Expenditures. She is requesting a reduction in that \$625,500 line item of \$300,000, leaving \$325,500. Miriam Goodman explained that they would like to use the \$300,000 for special education costs. We would still receive housing aid reimbursement on the \$325,500. Mr. Auclair was concerned about losing \$350,000 in housing aid reimbursement for the following year and what its impact would be. Mrs. Goodman gave him the projections for housing aid revenue, which will be more than what they had originally posted. The projects are reimbursed over a number of years depending on the cost of the projects completed. Dr. Macera said that the housing aid reimbursements also went up for us and will be more than what was projected. Starting next year, there's a cap of 5.25% that can be given to the districts by the state. Woonsocket has never been given 5.25%.

---

### **3. Approval of Capital Budget 5-Year Plan (2008-2012)**

Motion to approve: M. Williams 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau  
Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AF/yes; EN/yes; MW/yes; AA/yes) 5 yes. Motion passed.

Peter Fontaine, Facilities Director, presented the 5-year Capital Budget Plan, adding that they were projections. He noted that zero dollars were allocated or projected for the WMS. If the bond isn't approved, then he will be back begging for money for the current building. Fontaine noted that he is very concerned with keeping the roofs in good repair, adding that the Pothier School roof has leaked from Day 1. Mr. Auclair asked if the heating systems, fuel tanks, boilers, etc., are going to hold up. Fontaine said he has the roofs and boilers inspected every year and assessed for their condition.

---

### **4. Recommendation for Change in Bussing Contract**

Motion to approve amendment to the contract: M. Williams 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau  
Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AF/yes; EN/yes; MW/yes; AA/yes) 5 yes. Motion passed.

Mr. Auclair asked if the contract has to come before the WSC in order to keep it valid if an amendment is made. Atty. Ackerman thought that the amended contract should be approved by the WSC.

---

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE**

**Nadeau:** Proposed a policy she and Ms. Williams would like to submit regarding acceptance of gifts to the administration and WSC members from the bargaining unit. "It has been accepted policy to do so in the past, but this practice gives the appearance that dealings between the two bodies are ethically unsound. They asked that Atty. Ackerman prepare something in that regard that can be placed on the next agenda.

**Williams:** Hoped everyone goes to the Martin Luther King celebration at the WHS next Monday, saying it's a nice day to mix with different cultures.

**Auclair:** Asked that the School Safety Committee be involved with the non-violence initiative and possibly the parent who spoke with them tonight. He requested for the Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> meeting to put on the agenda to have a presentation on the healthy beverage law, with a status update on where other districts are and the state. He spoke to Linda Filomeno and is requesting that they have a three- to four-hour workshop on Literacy in Woonsocket Schools in April. There will be a meeting of the RI Board of Regents next Thursday, Jan. 18. He urged people to attend and give their input regarding middle and high school regulations and reform. He asked Mr. Dubois to arrange a meeting with the City Council and the Mayor on the pre-budget before the WSC meets to approve the budget. "I may come off negative sometimes, but we have a lot of very talented people in our district. There are a lot of questions that I feel I have to ask as a watchdog for the district," he said.

**Dubois:** He also asked for the joint meeting last year and it never happened. "You can't force people who don't want to meet with you to meet with you. They received both of our invitations last year, but you can't force them," he told Auclair. Congratulated Dr. Macera on her Excellence in Mentoring Award, which she will receive on Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> from Governor Carcieri. He was very disappointed when he found out about the incident at the WMS. "The mother here tonight seemed rather sincere, but the truth is that she was involved in the fight." He thanked the staff that helped to break up the fight and said he couldn't believe that two adults would get involved in a fistfight at the school. "It gives us a black eye. I hope the newspaper publicizes the meeting that we had with the police department as much as they do the negative stuff." He met with Atty. Ackerman regarding grumblings that go on about what gets picked to go on the WSC agenda. "I don't want to become a dictator and say what gets on the agenda or not. If anyone is requesting a workshop or presentation, the request should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting and the WSC can vote on it. If the majority wants to hear it, we will schedule it. If not, then we won't. I know the work involved to prepare for these presentations and workshops and I think they are already overworked at the administration building."

**Forcier:** She agreed with Mr. Dubois about the presentations. She said they offered "Street Smarts" at the WHS to 9<sup>th</sup> graders recently and she thought it was very informative. She went to the WMS for the after school program to talk about violence and bullying and wants to be included in these safety meetings. Mr. Dubois told her he found out about it at the last minute. Dr. Macera apologized for that. Forcier said she should be part of that group. Announced the Financial Aid Night tomorrow night at the WHS.

Motion to adjourn at 9:45 p.m.: M. Williams

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

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle  
WSC Recording Secretary