

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2008
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

Roll Call:	Marc Dubois, Chairman	Present
	Michelle Williams, Vice Chairwoman	Present
	Anita McGuire-Forcier	Absent
	Eleanor Nadeau	Present
	Linda Majewski	Present

By a consensus of the committee, Recognitions & Announcements was moved up on the agenda.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Macera

Dr. Macera recognized several students at Coleman Elementary for their participation in the Art Miles Mural Project on March 12, 2008. These students were recently chosen to represent the State of Rhode Island. Congratulated Sabrina Villanueva on being the first cadet chosen to attend HQ AFOATS/JR. Honors Camp, located in Oklahoma. She was selected based on her grades, leadership potential, and work with the ROTC Drill Team. Sabrina was selected as one of only 400 cadets chosen nationwide. Congratulated Marissa Silva, a WHS Junior, who finished first in the Music Theater and Songs and Aria competition of the "RINATS Song Festival. Macera noted that tonight was the Spring Festival Concert. Unfortunately, she and the WSC members were unable to attend due to the already scheduled School Committee meeting. She extended her regrets to the Woonsocket High School Music Department and Jazz Band for not attending and asked that in the future, an effort is made to coordinate dates so that members of the School Committee and the public can attend these special events. She thanked the students and staff of the WHS and WACTC for their behavior and cooperation during today's bomb scare. She thanked Bill Legare for his assistance in getting the buses there for the early dismissal.

Winter Athletic Recognitions: George Nasuti, Director of Health, Physical Athletics and Wellness

He recognized student athletes at the WHS from the cheerleading squad, wrestling team, basketball teams, and track and field. Nehru King, Boy's Basketball Coach, introduced three players who improved their game and their grades by making the honor roll. He noted that there were more players, but he couldn't get them all here tonight. George Coderre, Girls' Basketball Coach, introduced three players who were among approximately half of the team who made the honor roll. He said that many others just fell short of it. Coderre noted that the Coaches' Board voted Woonsocket to receive the Sportsmanship Award for their behavior throughout the season. Some athletes who were also members of VAASA (Varsity Athletes Against Substance Abuse) spoke about this organization and why they joined. They want to be positive role models for other athletes coming up. Dr. Macera congratulated all of them and Mr. Nasuti and their coaches for their great work.

WMS Students of the Quarter: Dr. McGee

Dr. McGee announced the Students of the 2nd Quarter at the Woonsocket Middle School and had those that were present stand up. These students are nominated by their teachers.

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

- **Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street:** In regards to the bomb scare today, she liked the way the policy is done to evacuate the building; however, she would like them to re-visit the policy because her son was in gym class and had only a muscle shirt and shorts on during the evacuation. She asked that students be dismissed immediately so that they don't have to stand outside. "Some of the kids in gym can't wear their IDs in those classes and now they don't have them to get back into school tomorrow." Dr. Macera told her the administration will be meeting with the police chief next week to see what needs to be improved. She explained that the state protocol is to have the dogs come in and no one can come into the building. A student has been arrested and will be prosecuted in connection with the incident.
- **Brittany Richer, National Honor Society Member:** Invited the WSC to the May 15th Honors Night Ceremony at the WHS.

- **Michele Croft, Parent of Harris School children:** Spoke regarding the budget cuts and asked what direction this city is moving in since it's a "City On The Move". She doesn't understand why education has to suffer when there is a budget crisis. Cuts were made in the arts and music programs as well as in special needs. "Speech therapists and occupational therapists are being laid off and I don't see how these students will receive their state-mandated services." Croft asked that the WSC make sure these children receive the services that they so desperately need.
- **John Boudreau, WTG Vice President:** He read a letter he wrote to Mrs. Nadeau and Mrs. Majewski regarding the Superintendent Search Committee and the past practice of having the president of the Woonsocket Teachers' Guild on this committee. He requested that either Mr. DiPardo or his designee be invited to serve on the Search Committee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Open/Closed 3/12/08

Motion to approve: M. Williams

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion to approve Consent Agenda: E. Nadeau

2nd: **M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)**

1. Personnel Actions - NONE

Certified Appointments/
Non-Certified Appointments

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Fesco Fire Extinguisher Co./Fire Extinguisher Inspection and Recertification/District/Local

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests

NAFEP Annual Conference/Washington, D.C./McFee/Special Ed./Title I Funds
URI/Smile Club/WMS/Smile/URI Grant
URI/EPA/Smile Club/Narragansett, RI/WHS/Smile/URI Grant
National Urban Debate Championship/Chicago, IL/WHS Debate Team/Grant
New England Kindergarten Teachers, Boston, Burlington, MA/Bernon/Article 18

4. Home Schooling**END OF CONSENT AGENDA****COMMUNICATIONS: NONE****COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH COMMITTEE:** Mrs. Majewski said she sent out preliminary letters asking that people be involved in the interviewing process for the superintendent search. They are looking at a three-stage process for hiring a new superintendent and are still waiting for a couple of responses. Mrs. Nadeau read the names of some of those on the committee: Dr. Patrick McGee, Dr. Lynne Bedard, Dr. Lourenco Garcia, Mike Ferry, Dotty DeRemer, Diane Lafrenaye, Mary Keegan, Pat Dubois, among others. Majewski thanked Kathy Lombardo and Jonathan Gallishaw for their help. Mrs. Nadeau read the letter sent to Mr. DiPardo and Tom Lambert requesting them to attend the interview sessions. They asked for three names from each segment. There is a website online and ads will be coming out in the newspaper.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS**1. BID AWARDS:**

- **#08-16 – Roof Repairs – Pothier**

The repairs are needed because there is a design flaw in the roof. Mrs. Nadeau asked if there was a warranty on this roof. Atty. Ackerman didn't know. Dr. Macera said that we can have Mr. Fontaine address that question because he has been up on that roof. Mrs. Majewski and Mrs. Nadeau wanted to know if we would be compensated for the costs

resulting from this. Atty. Ackerman said that was a very good question. He believes that Bacon Construction completed the job and they would probably know. The work of McKenna Roofing is warranted for one year. Ackerman felt it would be beneficial to know if there is a warranty before any remedial work is done on the roof, since it may void the warranty.

MOTION TO TABLE: M. Dubois
Roll Call Vote: 4 yes

2nd: M. Williams
TABLED

2. Proposed Draft School Calendar 2008-09 – Dr. Macera/J. Gallishaw

Motion to approve: L. Majewski

2nd: M. Williams (Roll Call Vote: 4 yes)

Dr. Macera said that the schools may not be used as polling places on April 22nd. She'll have a decision at the next WSC meeting.

3. Discussion/Approval of Transfer of Student Policy – WHS/WACTC – Dr. Garcia

Dr. Garcia's PowerPoint presentation could not be presented due to problems with the equipment. He read from the information that was provided to the WSC in their packets. He thanked the Design Team for the effort they put forth and the long hours they worked to develop these policies. Ms. Williams asked if each school district has to develop their own policy. Dr. Garcia confirmed that each district is required by the state to develop their own policy. "Wouldn't it make more sense to have one policy for the state?" asked Williams. Dr. Macera agreed. "It seems like it's just a whole lot more work for everyone," said Williams. Dr. Garcia didn't know what the rationale was behind it. "All the districts face the same demographics basically – special needs, ESL, etc.," said Garcia. Mrs. Majewski asked if they could explain when someone transfers in what common tasks are, rubrics, etc. She suggested adding criteria stating how many credits are needed for admission as a sophomore, junior, etc. "How many is **all** PBGR requirements?" asked Williams. Dr. Garcia told her that there are 26. Dr. Macera said that 26 is at the high end of the bar. Woonsocket is the only district in Northern RI that requires 26. Donna Houle, parent, said that her son is a freshman and he doesn't know how many common tasks he has completed, etc. She suggested putting something on the report card to let parents know. Dr. Garcia said that was a good suggestion and maybe a progress report could be added to the report card. Mrs. Majewski asked that these two policies be approved as guidelines. Dr. Macera explained that RIDE wants them approved as policies. Garcia added that if we approve them as guidelines, we will be in trouble with RIDE.

Motion to approve: L. Majewski

2nd: M. Williams (Roll Call Vote: 4 yes)

4. Discussion/Approval of Graduation Portfolio Exhibition Appeals Policy-WHS/WACTC – Dr. Garcia

Dr. Garcia again read the policy from the information provided to the WSC in their packet. Mrs. Majewski asked if this policy is being presented for the final approval in June. She also asked about common tasks because there weren't any specifics mentioned. Dr. Garcia told her that they are embedded in the policy. "Just because we have the policy right now, doesn't mean we are implementing it right now," he said. Majewski suggested streamlining what the WHS and WACTC requirements are so students know exactly what they need. She asked who made up the Portfolio Committee and whether it is a volunteer committee. Garcia explained that it is made up of school staff. The administration is trying to use the persuasion strategy and the staff has been responding very well. "It's a cooperative effort," said Garcia. Majewski would like to see strict guidelines along the way so that a student isn't told in their junior year that they aren't graduating because of their portfolio being deficient. Dr. Macera told her that each teacher will be requiring the students to have samples of their best work. "It's an embedded requirement within every course taught. It's that culmination that is submitted," explained Macera. "Learning expectations are harder to evaluate. Do we have rubrics in place for those criteria? How are we going to evaluate these areas?" asked Majewski. Garcia explained that rubrics are in place and they need to be updated, which will be done tomorrow. Majewski thinks that putting the final decision on the principal of whether or not a student graduates is too much responsibility to put on one person. Dr. Macera explained that the principal, the chairman of the WSC and the superintendent are the only ones authorized by RI Dept. of Ed. to sign the diplomas. "Ultimately, it's the principal's responsibility. No one else is authorized by RIDE to sign diplomas. I know what RIDE's answer will be if it's assigned to a committee," said Macera. Majewski asked whether guidelines have been set for special needs students. "Yes. These are kids where exceptions will have to be made," said Garcia. RIDE said that what we need to be concerned with is the improvement model. That's why Dr. Macera believes that RI is deficient in not having a GAP test for special needs and ESL students.

Motion to approve: L. Majewski

2nd: M. Williams (Roll Call Vote: 4 yes)

5. Discussion of Relocation of the Feinstein Elementary Program – Dr. Macera

Dr. Macera read her memo regarding this item citing the reasons for this move. It involves moving the two elementary classrooms at Second Avenue School to the lower-level of the Social Street School. There would be more support for those teachers both instructionally and administratively when someone is out due to illness. Also, to consolidate expenses, the early childhood screening programs have been moved to Second Avenue already. This move has been very successful. The Technology Department located in the basement of the McFee Building is going to be moved there also to give them more space. There is plenty of room at the Social Street School for the alternative programs. The move of the Feinstein elementary classrooms is scheduled to take place during April vacation. Everyone involved is pleased with this decision.

CONFERENCES: NONE

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Macera

Dr. Macera responded to comments made under Public Good & Welfare. Tomorrow at 9 a.m. in Room 313 at the State House, she will be present for discussion of the new funding formula. This formula would be based on the populations we serve, which would be of great benefit to Woonsocket. There would be weighting for poverty, ESL and special needs. We would gain \$13 million. There is a move to have this implemented by July 1st. It's what they do in other states. She fully supports this formula. It's the best way that parents can help us get the funding we need. She had a meeting yesterday with the Board of Superintendents and the Collaborative regarding the return of approximately \$558,000 to the districts that were overcharged. She thanked Atty. Richard Ackerman, Miriam Goodman and Anita Forcier for being there. "Hopefully, we will see some funds returned from this. The audited financial statements of the school department indicate that because of our cost-saving measures, we have a \$792,000 surplus. We also saw a 0% increase in health care costs this year due to the changes in the health coverage that the unions agreed to in the last contract." She is very, very proud of this. She spoke about the lay-off of 101 people in the district. Announced that Miriam Goodman accepted a new position in her home community with fewer schools and for more money. "She will be sorely missed and we wish her well."

Motion to receive and place on file: E. Nadeau

2nd: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

L. Majewski: Congratulated the Debate Team and wished them well in national competition. Asked about bids for dishwashers at some of the elementary schools. Goodman said that the bids have not gone out yet. Majewski thanked Bill Legare for his help with the buses today. Wished Miriam Goodman well. Asked her about a new chart of accounts and where we are in the process. Spoke about closing schools on April 22nd since there is only one person on the ballot. Asked everyone to be patient with the process of searching for a new superintendent. They have put in a lot of work and time.

E. Nadeau: Said that Atty. Ackerman got a letter to be involved in the superintendent search, but didn't respond. He just said that he would do their bidding. "When Dr. D'Acchioli was here, did he put in a policy for resignations and retirements in regards to a 90-day waiver?" asked Nadeau. Dr. Macera said that he did. She said that there are many, many anxious people that don't know what's going to happen and has spoken to the unions about holding our employees harmless because of it. Nadeau would like to see that people who are really serious about retiring do it by June for the stability of the system. Dr. Macera told her that people who have retired have already submitted their letter for June 30th. This would be only if there's a shift in the retirement benefits. She doesn't think it will happen July 1st—probably by January 1st of 2009. Nadeau is concerned that we will be caught short.

M. Williams: Reminded everyone about April 2nd Minority Concerns Meeting, which will be held in this room at 6:30 p.m. She will email the flier to Dotty. Asked about a grant by Feinstein that was given to the WMS for inter-generational activities such as pen pals. There were some proposals made with outside agencies about doing something like this, but they were told that the grant was used for something else. There was a meeting scheduled for today of the Negotiating Committee at 2:30 p.m. She wasn't asked what was convenient for her. She was just told. Williams said she sent to Dotty what her availability is. Thanked Mrs. Nadeau and Mrs. Majewski for their hard work on the search committee. Hates to see Miriam Goodman going. "She has done a great job. Good luck in Franklin."

M. Dubois: Wished Miriam the best of luck and congratulated her. "Thank you for 8 years of service. They started knocking down one of the mills on Hamlet Avenue today. It was a beautiful sight!" Wanted to acknowledge the passing of Ed Boucher and neglected to mention him during the moment of silence.

Motion to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.: M. Williams

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary