

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 2008
7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION
Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center
Multimedia Room 303

Call to Order
Moment of Silence
Pledge of Allegiance

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

AWARDING OF DIPLOMAS: Two students of the Feinstein E-Learning Academy were presented with their Woonsocket High School diplomas by Dr. Macera and Mr. Dubois. Mike Ferry presented Alexandria Stone, who completed her program in the last two weeks, and Jamie Michael Barry, who was to graduate in 2001. He was injured in a car accident right before graduation and went through many trials since then. He is now ready to join the service and needed to get his GED.

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE: None

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 11, 2008 OPEN/CLOSED; June 23, 2008 SPECIAL OPEN/CLOSED

Mrs. Majewski had two changes on the Open Session of the June 11th meeting minutes—one under the new superintendent's approval item and one under her Good & Welfare.

Motion to approve: M. Dubois

2nd: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion to approve Consent Agenda with the following exception: M. Williams

- *Purchases/Transfers over \$2,000 – Nextel: Removed by M. Williams*

2nd: E. Nadeau

(Unanimously Approved)

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments/Non-Certified Appointments: The first name on Page #4 under Hourly, Stipend and Extra-Curricular Positions for appointment to a WMS Summer School position was withdrawn.

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Century Consultants/Student Info Contract/Local/District Wide
Century Consultants/Upgrade to 10G/District/Article 18
Dell /Upgrade Servers/District/Article 18
Diane Vachon/Contracted Nursing Services/Sp. Ed/Local
Follett/Annual Maintenance. Contract/District/Local
Nextel/Cell Phones/District/Local – Removed by M. Williams
RICSL/Prof. Dev/Curriculum & Grants/Title II
RIEAP/Student Assistant Program/WHS/Local
RINET/Internet Access/District/Local
Robert Fidalgo/Contracted Occupational Therapy Services/Summer
School Dude/Work Order Maintenance. Contract/District/Local
STEPS Professional Development/Prof. Dev./Curriculum &
Grants/PRIMES Grant
Susan Prentiss/Contracted Physical Therapy Services/Spec. Ed./Local
Velocity Solutions/Checkpoint Fire Wall Maintenance/District/Local
World Book, Inc/On-line renewal/District/Get READY Library Grant

2. Home Schooling Requests

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

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

- *Nextel Communications, Wireless Phone Service, District - \$23,429.52 Local Funds*

Ms. Williams asked for an explanation of this service. Dr. Macera told her that it was for the district's cell phone service and that we go out to bid for it. She explained that our actual cost will be a little over \$6,000 after our E-Rate discount.

Motion to approve: M. Williams

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **Approval of Job Description for Director of Teaching and Learning – Dr. Macera** TABLED

A request was made at the last meeting to table this item until the meeting of July 16th.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Discussion and Approval of Change of Status of Administrative Practitioner to Ten-Month Elementary Principal and (2) Ten-Month Assistant Principal Positions – Dr. Macera**

Dr. Macera explained that when the WED has to pay for lost prep time for Administrative Practitioners because they are working at a teacher's salary, it doesn't make sense because it comes out costing a little bit more money than hiring them as an administrator. She noted that there are three very outstanding candidates for these positions who will not re-apply if the positions are posted as administrative practitioners. She recommended the change of status to offer more stability, save money, and prevent losing excellent administrative candidates. Mrs. Nadeau asked how many 12-month Assistant Principals there are in the district now. The only one left is Mr. Benjamin at the WHS.

Motion to approve: M. Dubois

2nd: L. Majewski

Roll Call Vote: 4 yes

2. **Proposal of Renewal for Multi-Year Contract for Principals – Dr. Macera**

Dr. Macera reported that she met with the Principals this morning. "Their 1-year contracts end on June 30th and they're requesting 2-year contracts at this point," she said. "They feel that they will have greater stability with a 2-year contract and whatever percent increase that the teachers get so that the salary gap between teacher's top step and principal's per diem pay doesn't get smaller," Macera explained. Mr. Dubois supported this request because the district is unable to compensate them like they normally would for a good evaluation. Mrs. Nadeau asked what would happen if someone gets just a "good" review. Macera explained that they would have a contingency plan put in place for them, adding that, currently, there isn't a principal in place that she would not give a 2-year contract to. "What happens if they don't perform well during the 2-year contract?" asked Nadeau. Dr. Macera told her that they are counseled, sometimes transferred to a better-suited position, or sometimes they leave the district. "Every principal has a contract that is a matter of public record. There is a "just cause" clause in each contract, which usually involves an egregious act of some kind. Atty. Ackerman drafted the contracts. Mrs. Majewski asked what happens if there's a vote of "no confidence" taken by the staff. Ackerman suggested that it could be number of things that would cause this, but that a "no confidence" vote of the WSC is what should carry more weight. Dubois asked if this was a one-time deal that was being proposed tonight. Dr. Macera recommended revisiting this item in 2-years with the new superintendent.

Motion to approve 2-year contracts for principals: M. Dubois

2nd: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 4 yes

3. Update of Northern Rhode Island Collaborative Surplus - Dr. Macera

Dr. Macera reported that she presented a resolution last week to the Collaborative that Atty. Ackerman took part in drafting to return surplus monies to Woonsocket. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hans Dellith, Superintendent from Pawtucket, and received favorable acceptance. The Collaborative's Board of Superintendents voted not to purchase the building and is looking at lease alternatives. The superintendents have been instructed by their school committees to seek some form of reimbursement of their individual district's surplus monies. Mrs. Majewski thanked Dr. Macera for taking on the role to seek the reimbursement of these funds.

CONFERENCES:

Five Year Teacher Mentor Report – Renee Fluette/Jackie Geoffrey—Postponed to July 16th meeting.

ESL Conference – Linda Filomeno (Taken out of order by unanimous consent.) Mrs. Filomeno reviewed a report from RIDE on Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs). She explained what restructuring has been done by the district in order to raise our proficiency levels on the ACCESS exam and NECAP test for ESL students. After two years of having restructured the special education program, we have met two of the three AMAOs. She explained how proficiency is determined on this indicator and how it's harder to attain the more new ESL students you have in the district. The results of the report showed that the district made the right decision in restructuring our special education program. Mrs. Majewski asked if the new ESL students still have a year before they have to take the ACCESS test. "No, but they have a year before they have to take the NECAP test," answered Filomeno. Students are monitored for two years once they exit the program.

Tardiness Report on WHS – Dr. Garcia/ M. Ferry: Mr. Ferry explained how he was invited to a meeting about the tardiness at the WHS. During the meeting, they examined the problems that tardiness was causing in the school. Kids coming in late during first block were very disruptive to the class in progress. Students would sign in on time and take their time getting to the classroom afterwards and wander the halls. Ferry reviewed the guidelines that were developed regarding the consequences for students who are continually tardy. A consequence after four tardies was implemented where the students attend school after 2:30 p.m. in the E-Learning Academy, for which their parents have to pay tuition. There were only seven students that had to go into the E-Learning Academy. "It has been very, very successful," said Ferry. Before the new tardiness guidelines, the average tardies per week was 166 during a 10-week period. After the new tardiness guidelines were put into place, the average tardies went down to 30 per week for the same period. Ferry extended thanks to those who are helping with the management aspect and Dianne Doire for keeping track of the students and producing the reports. "She has been a great help to me," he said. Dr. Garcia thanked Mr. Ferry for coming forward to work with him on the tardiness guidelines. "By putting extra responsibility on the parents, they know we aren't fooling around. 10% to 30% of instructional time was disrupted. No parent wants to pay extra to send their kids to Mr. Ferry. The school climate has improved significantly. Before, there were kids roaming everywhere. Now, the hallways are always clear. If I see students in the halls without a pass, I remind them about the four tardies and I am able to have a social interaction with them. We all should be congratulated for the effort. Next we will tackle the attendance policy," said Garcia. Mr. Ferry said that the teachers noted that the grades of the students who were now on time were going up. Mr. Dubois thanked him and Dr. Garcia for their hard work and asked if the change in start time made a difference. Mr. Ferry thinks it was about the same. Dr. Garcia said that the kids are actually rushing their parents to get them to school on time. The average attendance rate before the guidelines was 225 absentees. After the guidelines were implemented, the average attendance rate was 247 after 10 weeks. Students try to get around being marked late by sneaking in after the first block and some don't come in after being dropped off. Mrs. Majewski noted that, in her work as a consultant, she goes to many high schools. Some of them have teachers assigned at a desk at the door during their prep time or administrative duties to check students in and make sure they make it in the door after their parents drop them off. Mr. Ferry said he believes they will try to address this issue with the attendance policy and tie it into their grade. Dr. Garcia said there is hallway supervision and teachers walk around in teams. Majewski hasn't seen the data from these schools about whether or not having teachers at a desk is effective or not. "It's just an observation," she said. Mr. Ferry reported that he installed a time clock in his E-Learning classroom so he knows right to the minute when students punch in and punch out.

E-Learning Academy Graduation Update – M. Ferry: Mr. Ferry thanked all the teachers that helped him with the program, especially Ruth Plante for keeping the records straight and the IEPs. He also thanked the McFee staff, Dr. Macera and the WSC for their support. He noted that his program is now recognized for being the e-learning prototype for the state. The E-Learning Academy has graduated 25 students this year. "These are 25 students who will not have to repeat 12th grade, which provides a cost-savings to the district in the form of the tuition for each student," said Ferry. He introduced a student who had a daughter two years ago and was unable to finish school due to babysitting issues. She has been working at Dunkin' Donuts and Walgreens for two years while she has been completing her GED. Ferry reviewed the packet of information he provided for the WSC regarding the advantages of the WriteToLearn Program, which is an add-on to NovaNet that was piloted this year. Next year, the E-Learning Academy would like to renew its contracts with Class.com and Virtual High School and would like to replace Virtual

Learning Academy with NovaNet. NovaNet will be used primarily at the WMS and the Feinstein Academy. He is awaiting news on a grant offered by AT&T, which amounts to \$100,000 per year for four years and will provide funding for equipment and training to design 21st century classrooms for the Math, English and Science departments at the high school and implement an 8.5 program at the WMS. Woonsocket is currently offering courses to Ponaganset High and Johnston High and anticipates going online for a summer program with the newly created Mayors Academy. He is currently in discussion with South Kingston and Coventry high schools to begin their programs this fall. Ferry has many parents calling him about summer school also. A discussion needs to be held about this issue. On the down side, they tried an Algebra 1 test pilot for 9th graders and it failed. It seems to him that it's one of the biggest issues for dropouts in the schools. He thinks the pilot didn't work because the students just aren't ready to do it at that age. "The sequence of courses needs to be changed in my opinion," he said. Dr. Macera fully supported him on the Math issue. "They don't do this in Europe or Asia. We are expecting 13- and 14-year-olds to do these abstract concepts that they aren't ready for," added Macera. Mrs. Majewski asked if there was an opportunity for people to purchase any of these programs at home. Ferry said, "Absolutely. We have been in contact with someone in Pawtucket. I'll give you the information." Majewski asked if he knew the revenue from the program to date (without including grant funds). Mr. Ferry didn't have that information with him, but he can get it for her. Majewski asked about products for the elementary level. Ferry said he is looking for something that's not too "game-y", but not too boring either. He's continually looking.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Macera

Dr. Macera thanked everyone who presented tonight. Thanked the WSC for recalling the art and music people. She announced that the Senate and House both approved our request to have a school uniform policy. She thanked the legislators for giving us this opportunity. Committees will need to be formed to develop a type of clothing and those recommendations will be brought to the school committee for approval. She's very excited about it. It will be more cost-effective for the parents, and it will eliminate a lot of provocative outfits and gang-wear. Hopefully, the WSC will have a proposal before them by January.

Motion to receive and place on file: E. Nadeau

2nd: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

Nadeau: Asked about the dress code being in place sometime next year. Dr. Macera explained that parents will have three months to adhere to it once a proposal is approved. "It could be implemented sometime during the second half of next year," said Macera. Nadeau asked if there would be any more recalls. Dr. Macera told her that they will be getting retirements over the summer so it's too soon to know.

Williams: She's very excited about the dress code, saying that her daughter attended private school until last year, and it was much easier just getting her uniform ready for the week. She couldn't attend the special WSC meeting on the 23rd due to a job commitment. Congratulated her daughter on graduating the 8th grade. She didn't attend the ceremony because her daughter couldn't participate due to sickness.

Dubois: He's extremely excited about the dress code and guaranteed a rise in test scores after it's implemented. "There's a sense of equality amongst the students." Thanked Dr. Macera for her hard work on the NRI Collaborative surplus. He knows that when it started 1 ½ years ago, she wasn't the most popular lady in town. "Thank you for seeing it through." He congratulated the high school graduates on June 13th, adding that it was beautiful weather. He congratulated the students who received diplomas from E-Learning this evening. "Mr. Ferry never ceases to amaze me!"

Majewski: Wished Dr. Macera well in her retirement. Congratulated the students receiving diplomas at the high school and tonight. She went to the 8th Grade Completion Ceremony and it was very nice. She wants to schedule a Transportation Meeting and look at the projected cost of transportation due to the price of gas, etc. She directed Dr. Macera to let Mr. Strom know she will be contact him. She's pleased about the dress code, saying that her kids attend parochial school and can pay a dollar for dress down days. "The teachers noticed a big difference in their behavior on the days they dressed down." She asked Dr. Macera if she has any ideas for the Mayoral Academy, but Macera felt it was premature. Macera also told her that the administration has already had preliminary meetings with Valley Transportation about the projected costs. Majewski wished everyone a good Fourth of July.

Mr. Dubois announced that the next meeting will be held Wednesday, July 16th.

Motion to adjourn at 8:50 p.m.: L. Majewski

2nd: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary