

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 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	Late
	Linda Majewski	Present
	Anita McGuire-Forcier	Present
	Eleanor Nadeau	Present

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

Allen Auclair, 24 Florida Street, Woonsocket: He said he sent an email regarding a request for a copy of the new graduation rate report using the new formula. He was formally requesting that report this evening. In regards to the NECAP data for the past year, he noted gaps between Title 1 and non-Title 1 Grade 5 students' reading and writing scores. At the time, he was told he was incorrect and that someone would be making a presentation regarding these results. He would like that discussion to take place at some point, because he took his information right off of the NECAP data sheets. He also asked as a taxpayer that the WSC seriously reconsider approving the raises for administrators, saying, "Before any raises are issued, performance criteria should be considered."

Cindy MacNeill, PAC Co-Chair: MacNeill asked a few questions regarding wage freezes and increases in wages. She doesn't understand how the WED is going to pay for raises if it can barely afford to educate the children of Woonsocket. "Parents are very concerned about how this is going to be accomplished. If we don't have it, how can we give it? Not that they don't deserve it," she said.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Macera had Carole Lerner, Special Education Director, announce that Judge Frances Murray called her and Dr. Janet Sullivan to court in order for them to explain how our alternative education programs (FACTS and FOCUS) are being run and how they can be duplicated elsewhere in RI. Word is spreading throughout the state about what successful programs we have here in Woonsocket. Dr. Macera also mentioned the Feinstein Academy at the WMS and the e-Learning Academy that we are getting positive feedback from RIDE about. "It's very important for the public to realize that we are graduating more students than ever. The results of the state report are based on a 4-year window. A student is still labeled a drop-out if they graduate in August," said Macera.

Motion to receive and place on file: L. Majewski 2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously approved)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 11, 2008 OPEN/CLOSED – REVISED
June 25, 2008 OPEN/CLOSED

Motion to approve: A. Forcier 2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion to approve Consent Agenda with the following exceptions: A. Forcier

- *Purchases/Transfers over \$2,000 – Apple Computers; Dell Computers; Margaret Venditoui; Roderick A.J. Cavanaugh; and Tech Depot – All removed by L. Majewski*
- *Home Schooling – Removed by L. Majewski*

2nd: M. Dubois

(Unanimously Approved)

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments

Non-Certified Appointments

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Apple Computers/Computers/Technology/Article 18 – Removed by L. Majewski
Atlantic Elevators/Maintenance/Facilities/Local
Dell Computers/Computers/Technology/Article 18 & E2T2 Grant – Removed by L. Majewski
Lindenmeyr Monroe/Paper/District Wide Printing/Local
Margaret Venditouli/PBGR Specialist/WHS/RIDE – Removed by L. Majewski
New England Mechanical/Compresor/WHS/Local
Roderick A.J. Cavanagh/Prof. Services/Sp.Ed./Local – Removed by L. Majewski
Sally Morris/Medical Reimbursement/McFee/Local
Scott Foresman/Supplied/Globe/Local
Sonitrol/Security Monitoring/Facilities/Local
Tech Depot/Computers/Technology/Article 18 – Removed by L. Majewski

2. Field Trip/Conference:

Harvard Principal Institute - Urban Leaders, Cambridge, MA/WMS/Article 31 – Removed by L. Majewski

3. Home Schooling Requests – Removed by L. Majewski

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

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

- ***Apple Computers, Dell Computers and Tech Depot Purchases***

Majewski asked what the breakdown was of local funds and Article 18 funds being used for these purchases. Mr. Gallishaw told her that these purchases are mostly out of Article 18 funds from all the schools. Some are from the E2T2 Grant. The purchases are to upgrade the designated facilities in order to save us money down the road.

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- ***Margaret Venditouli--PBGR Specialist/ WHS***

Majewski asked what her position is. Dr. Macera told her that Venditouli is a PBGR Implementation Specialist at the WHS being paid for by RIDE.

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- ***Roderick A.J. Cavanagh***

Majewski asked what services this person provides. Carole Lerner explained that he is a Hearing Officer involved in a case involving RIDE. Majewski asked why the WED is paying for it. Atty. Ackerman explained that it's the law.

3. FIELD TRIPS/CONFERENCES:

- ***Harvard Principal Institute, Cambridge, MA – Patrick McGee, WMS Principal***

Majewski noted that this conference costs \$4,600 and asked if staff pay any part of this cost. Dr. Macera explained that she served on the committee for three years and that it's quite an honor to be asked to participate in this conference. It's a 5-day conference and is being paid for out of Article 18 funds.

4. Home Schooling: Majewski asked for an information packet regarding what is required from parents for home schooling.

Mrs. Nadeau asked what a CASTLE teacher was. Linda Filomeno explained that it's an elementary summer school teacher and means "Creating a Safe Teaching and Learning Environment". "We have always used Title 4 money for our elementary summer school. There are approximately 10 to 12 students per grade level participating," said Filomeno. Nadeau said she would like to do an on-site visit to see what this program is about.

**Motion to approve all exemptions from the consent agenda: L. Majewski
2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved).**

COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Mrs. Nadeau and Anita Forcier attended a Building Committee Meeting recently. It is felt that a discussion is needed as to whether or not we want to do an all-boy and all-girl school because it would affect the number and type of bathrooms that would be needed, etc. Mrs. Majewski noted that later on the agenda they will be discussing a RIDE Liaison. Dr. Macera said that we are receiving federal housing reimbursement and we can't change what was put on the application. Her sense from RIDE is that they want to be involved in all of these discussions. Macera thinks that they should wait to get the RIDE Liaison on board. This item will be discussed at the August 27th WSC Meeting. There will be a Transportation Committee Meeting on July 18th. Mrs. Nadeau reported that there has been considerable concern in the community regarding the WSC's negotiations with the WTG about the contract. She doesn't want the public to think that the WSC didn't sit down and try to negotiate. Nadeau didn't know if she could say anything about the negotiations since they are closed. "There was a survey done and there are questions about how many people answered the survey, etc.," said Nadeau. Mr. DiPardo said that both sides worked to the best of their ability to come to an agreement, but they just didn't get there. "There was an honest effort on both sides to negotiate. The process has never been made public over the last 30 years. The result is given, but not what occurred in the private meetings during the process," he said.

Unanimous consent was given to take Conferences Out of Order.

CONFERENCES:

Back to School Celebration in Woonsocket – Erica Moore/ Brenda Galvin/Jackie Dowdy

Jackie Dowdy noted that Woonsocket is the newest site added to this celebration in which organizations work together to provide information to parents and students are given a free backpack full of school supplies. This is the first year they are not having it at a Woonsocket public school. It will be held at the St. James Baptist Church on August 16th this year. Dowdy didn't know what happened with the school location that they have had in the past. She asked again for donations from the WED to help support this event, but realizes it's difficult at this time. They would like to see more WSC members, teachers, etc., at this event. Dr. Macera commended them for their efforts.

Michelle Williams arrived during the following presentation.

Five Year Teacher Mentor Report – Renee Fluette/Jackie Geoffrey

A PowerPoint presentation was given on the Mentor Program over the past five years and how the mentors assisted new instructors. The three mentors that RIDE provided for the PS&I will not be funded due to budget cuts at the state level. Four mentors will be re-hired with the district's Article 18 funds. Dr. Macera said that their work has been extraordinary.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

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

Dr. Macera requested that this item be tabled to the August 27th meeting. A request on tonight's agenda for a RIDE Liaison will help with this discussion. She said that Dr. Gerardi is okay with tabling this until then. "His first meeting is August 27th and he wants to engage in the discussions with RIDE about this position. RIDE is in transition as well and they may not be ready to discuss it yet either," said Macera.

Motion to Table: M. Dubois
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

2nd: M. Williams

2. Approval of 504 Plan – 1st Passage – C. Lerner

Mrs. Lerner reported a revision as of yesterday, which she noted. She thanked Diane Engels for her hard work on this and for working with the Special Education Dept. "It was a long and arduous process," said Lerner. Majewski asked if there was a timeline set forth between the hearing and a response from RIDE. Lerner told her that it's in the other piece not included in their packet. "When parents want to appeal, who do they contact?" asked Majewski. Lerner explained that it's mentioned in the other piece which is on the website. There are also pieces of the Plan in the handbook as to where parents can get further information.

Motion to approve for 1st Passage: A. Forcier
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

2nd: M. Dubois

NEW BUSINESS:

**1. BID AWARD:
#09-03 Uniforms & Uniform Cleaning Services – WACTC**

Motion to approve to Coyne Textile Services of New Bedford, MA: A. Forcier
2nd: M. Williams Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

2. Discussion and Approval of Ayotte Field Proposal from City – P. Fontaine, G. Nasuti, Dr. Macera

Peter Fontaine and George Nasuti asked that this item be tabled in order for them to be able to speak to Joel Matthews about questions they have. Mr. Nasuti had just returned from vacation and has not had a chance to speak to anyone about it. They have many issues that need to be discussed with Mr. Matthews. Mr. Dubois said he would make himself available to sit on the subcommittee for this. Ms. Williams said that there are specs in the deed for Barry Field when it was considered as a site for the new middle school that that area is to be used only for the children of Woonsocket. Atty. Ackerman said he didn't think it specified **only** for children of Woonsocket. Nasuti believes it reads, "for school department purposes". He thinks the deed needs to be looked at again. Dr. Macera recommended that Mr. Ackerman be involved in some capacity. Mrs. Majewski said that Items 4 & 6 of the Memorandum of Agreement seem to be in conflict. She will forward questions she has to Mr. Dubois to bring up.

Motion to Table until August 13, 2008: A. Forcier 2nd: M. Williams/E. Nadeau
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

3. Approval of Wage Increase for Non Union Administrative Positions – Dr. Macera, R. Strom

Dr. Macera as well as Dr. Gerardi recommended a 4% wage increase for Non-Union Administrative positions for the 2008-2009 school year. Dr. Macera explained that the WED has realized tremendous savings from the health care benefit changes that were negotiated with the bargaining units in the last contract. She credited Miriam Goodman as being a very instrumental member of the RIGHG and for her excellent money management skills. She reported that we have a surplus of \$792,000 and will be receiving \$384,000 of our first payment from the NRI Collaborative. We will be receiving \$193,000 in reimbursement to be paid in July from the Governmental Health Group and are realizing a \$230,000 savings with our health care plan. The state has promised us an extra \$700,000 for next year and the city an additional \$300,000. She believes that the difference of \$34,718 in the Non-Union Administrative position salaries would be well spent on those who give so tirelessly of their time, effort and dedication. "It would be an insult not to recognize our leadership team with this increase. We owe it to them," said Macera. She noted a letter from Dr. Gerardi in support of the raises and read it to the public.

**Motion to approve for discussion: M. Dubois 2nd: A. Forcier
Roll Call Vote: 5 no Motion fails.**

Mr. Dubois recalled asking at the last meeting about what administrators would be more comfortable with—a 4% increase or a 2-year contract. "They said – a 2-year contract," reported Dubois. "Now this is before us. We have no idea how much our transportation costs will be next year. I cannot support this," he said. Mrs. Forcier was not comfortable supporting a 4% increase either. She would rather wait to see the anticipated money that is coming in. She appreciates all their hard work, however. Ms. Williams commended all the administrators in this district, but cannot support a 4% increase. "We have to answer to the taxpayers of this city. When their taxes go up, they come to us. What do you say to people on a fixed income that can't even afford to open their pool this summer because they can't afford it?" asked Williams. Dr. Macera said that she respects Williams' position, but that she couldn't do otherwise than to advocate for her leadership team. "The Mayor is asking for a wage freeze and we are going to give out a 4% raise?" asked Williams. Dr. Macera maintained that "these people have worked very hard to be where they are today. They shouldn't be treated like second-class citizens!" Mrs. Nadeau said she could not support this increase. "We cannot continue to do business as usual. If the teachers are getting 4%, then everyone else feels they should get the same thing. Well, I don't agree with the teachers getting 4%, but I can't control the teachers' union. If they had accepted 2%, then there would be that much more money in the budget. I am not happy to give 4% to the teachers and I cannot support it for anyone else," said Nadeau. Mrs. Majewski would like to see what the reconciled budget for 2007-2008 looks like. "Fuel costs are going up. I would like to see what the Medicaid reimbursement is. Electric and gas rate increases were just approved. I have many questions that need answers before I can make a determination. I can't support the increases based on what I know right now," said Majewski.

4. Discussion of Preliminary Approval of PBGR & Face-to Face meeting with RIDE – Dr. Macera, Dr. Garcia

Dr. Garcia gave a report on what measures will be undertaken to meet the GSEs at the WHS and the new graduation requirements. Dr. Macera received a letter from Commissioner McWalters on their face-to-face meeting. There are some commendations, but there are also consequences that are made clear if the requirements are not met.

5. Discussion to form Sub-Committee Liaison to RIDE – M. Dubois

After receiving the report from RIDE following the face-to-face meeting, Mrs. Majewski called Mr. Dubois about developing a subcommittee to serve as a liaison to RIDE. She volunteered to serve on it and there is room for one more person. Mrs. Forcier also volunteered to work on it with her. Mrs. Nadeau will fill in when necessary. She recommended not going alone to RIDE. "Always go in pairs," she cautioned.

Motion to approve formation of subcommittee: A. Forcier 2nd: E. Nadeau Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

Mr. Dubois assigned Mrs. Forcier and Mrs. Majewski to serve on this subcommittee.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Macera

Dr. Macera said she's meeting with all of the leadership team and completing evaluations. They also have their own self-evaluations. She has been meeting with Mr. Strom on a regular basis and getting ready for the audit. Mr. Strom added that he understood the WSC's position on the non-union wages as former Finance Director for the City of Woonsocket. He also proposed that for some of those positions, such as secretaries and technology people who don't make the higher salaries, if they could be considered separately. Mr. Dubois had no problem with that item being placed on the agenda. Mrs. Nadeau feels that it's a good idea. If she could pick and choose, there are some people who would get a raise—not 4%, but something. Mr. Strom and Dr. Macera will work on a proposal for this smaller group.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams 2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

Nadeau: "Unfortunately, not everyone on the non-union wage list deserves your loyalty Dr. Macera," said Nadeau. "I know it has been a very difficult meeting for you. If the negotiations had turned out differently, maybe this would have turned out differently. It's unfair to the people who lost a job, but life's not fair. I was extremely disappointed and I think it's a huge mistake that will come back to bite them," Nadeau said, referring to the outcome of the meetings with the union.

Williams: She was driving by Globe Park School and said that the schoolyard is really a mess. "There's a lot of sand and an abandoned car." Dr. Macera said that the custodians are concentrating on the inside of the buildings right now and will tend to the grounds last before school starts. Ms. Williams asked if a city sweeper could come by. She would also be glad to attend the professional development offered by RIDE as long as it's not going to interfere with her work schedule. She received a letter dated May 27th that no one else received and another letter went out in June that she didn't receive. She doesn't know why she didn't get that letter. Dr. Macera will check with Dotty.

Dubois: Thanked the four mentors who presented this evening. Thanked Mr. Gallishaw for getting the PowerPoint presentation hooked up. Dubois said he supports the Gap Test also and hopes that the people responsible will wake up and make the necessary changes. Wished Ray Dubois, custodian at McFee, well in his retirement.

Majewski: She had a couple of calls about the school uniforms. She was asked if they have to buy the uniforms for September. Majewski announced that parents should buy school clothing that meets the dress code in their handbooks because a subcommittee needs to be formed and a uniform approved. "That won't happen by September," she said. She asked if the backpack program will be in effect next year at the WHS. Dr. Garcia assured her that it would be. "It doesn't operate during the summer," he told her. Majewski said she will try to participate in the professional development offered by RIDE and bring back CDs or whatever she can for those that can't attend during the day.

Forcier: She said that parents have heard that the uniforms have gone through. She asked that a letter go out or a press release notifying parents about what can be expected. Mr. Dubois said it's on the next agenda and word will get out because the press will probably be here.

Motion to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.: A. Forcier 2nd: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary