

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 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	Absent
	Anita McGuire-Forcier	Present
	Eleanor Nadeau	Present

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

Claudette Kalf, parent: Stated that she is the parent of two WACTC students—one of whom attended the E-Learning Academy during the summer after he found Mr. Ferry. She said that this program is definitely worth the WSC’s and administration’s time and consideration. “If you need to cut any program, you should think about cutting the summer school program at the WHS.” Her son, Adam, was very behind and went to the E-Learning Academy to get caught up. “He now has hope of graduating this coming year.” She thanked Mr. Ferry and his program for accomplishing this with her son.

Tracy Doire, WMS Nurse: Stated that her heart is broken that Dr. Macera is leaving. She will miss her, saying that Dr. Gerardi has big shoes to fill. She wished them both well.

Allen Auclair, 24 Florida Street, Woonsocket: Gave his best wishes to Dr. Macera and her family and thanked her for her service. He also welcomed Dr. Gerardi. Auclair is happy to see that the student dress code is coming up. If the subcommittee is open to the public, he would like to sit on it, if possible. He is still concerned about the NECAP test scores and the Grade 5 test scores in relation to Title 1 and non-Title 1 funded schools. “We get \$10 million from Title 1 funds.” He would like to hear from Pat Dubois regarding this issue. He asked the WSC if they would do a homework exercise and describe the school district they see 5 years from now. Dr. Macera told Auclair that she thought it would be appropriate for Pat Dubois and Linda Filomeno to come forward to address the issue he had with the NECAP scores. She explained that part of the problem is that there is no GAP test in RI as there is in many other states. “They don’t have the funding to develop it and some children are taking tests that aren’t appropriate for their level,” she said.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Macera deferred this report until later in the meeting during her End of Tenure Report.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 16, 2008 OPEN/CLOSED

Motion to approve: M. Williams

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unan. Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

- *Purchases/Transfers over \$2,000 – Diane Lynch & Instrumentation Services of NE- Removed by MW*
- 2nd: E. Nadeau **(Unanimously Approved)**

CONSENT AGENDA: continued

1. Personnel Actions

***Certified Appointments
Non-Certified Appointments***

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

AD&D Welding & Boiler Works/Repairs/WMS/Local
Diane Lynch/Med. Reimb./McFee/Local – Removed by M. Williams
Downes & Reader Hardwood Co./Ed. Supplies/WHS/Local
Follett Library Resources/Library Books/Citizens/Local
Gregory P. Piccirilli/Prof. Services/Sp.Ed/Local
Industrial Refrigeration Corp./Repairs/HVAC Unit/WACTC/Voc.Rev.
Instrumentation Services of NE,LLC./Testing Equip/Sp.Ed/Local – Removed by M. Williams
MacGill School Nurse Supplies/Med. Supplies/Sp. Ed/Local
NEASC/Annual Dues/WHS/Local
Nettie Alexander/Consultant/Grants & Curr/PRIMES Grant
Norton & Associates, Inc./Speech Therapy Services –June/Sp.Ed/Local
Printerworks/Printers/Technology/ WMS/Article 18
Santillana/Ed. Supplies/Citizens/Local & Feinstein Grant
US Games/Ed. Supplies/WHS/Local

2. Field Trip/Conference:

NAFEPA Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN/ Prof. Development/McFee/NAFEPA

3. Home Schooling Requests (5)

4. Disposal of Obsolete Equipment

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

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

- ***Diane Lynch, Medical Reimbursement - \$2,674.08***

Williams asked if this reimbursement for this retiree was because she chose not to receive medical benefits. Mr. Strom explained that it is for one year's medical coverage she chose not to take.

- ***Instrumentation Services of NE,LLC.--Testing Equip - \$3,353.58***

Williams asked what this is for. Carole Lerner explained that it's for the Child Outreach Program and is equipment that's needed to test the hearing of students in this program.

**Motion to approve all exemptions from the consent agenda: M. Williams
2nd: E. Nadeau/M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved).**

COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

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

Motion to approve: A. Forcier
Roll Call Vote: 4 yes

2nd: M. Williams

NEW BUSINESS:

1. BID AWARD:

- **#09-01 Janitorial Supplies**

Mrs. Forcier asked if the district is going “green” with the cleaning supplies. Mr. Strom couldn’t comment without speaking to Mr. Fontaine, who was not present at the meeting. Dr. Macera said she believed that in the bid specs they specifically request “green” products, if possible. Forcier asked if this could be tabled until this question is answered because she has had parents tell her that their kids feel sick at school and not at home and think it has something to do with the chemicals used. Mr. Strom didn’t know if these supplies could wait to be awarded until the next meeting. Mr. Dubois said he is for green supplies, but he doesn’t want the custodians to not have the supplies they need either.

Motion to Table: A. Forcier

No Second. Motion Dies.

Motion to approve to various vendors for a total of \$129,576.24: M. Dubois
2nd: M. Williams

Roll Call Vote: 3 yes – 1 no (AF)

- **#09-02 Nursing Medical Supplies**

Motion to approve to various vendors for a total of \$8,669.81: A. Forcier
2nd: M. Williams

Roll Call Vote: 4 yes

- **#09-04 Athletic Supplies**

Motion to approve to various vendors for a total of \$11,845.20: A. Forcier
2nd: M. Williams

Roll Call Vote: 4 yes

- **#09-05 Athletic Uniforms**

Motion to approve to various vendors for a total of \$11,774.92: A. Forcier
2nd: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 4 yes

- **#09-07 Athletic Medical Supplies**

Motion to approve to various vendors for a total of \$3,511.19: A. Forcier
2nd: M. Williams

Roll Call Vote: 4 yes

2. Approval of District Food Service Program Agreement – R. Strom

- **#09-06 School Food Service Program**

Mr. Strom reviewed the bid process and gave his reasons for recommending the award of a one-year contract to Sodexo with (4) optional one-year extensions on a year-to-year basis, which included the fact that they provide a dedicated team of five people to oversee the day-to-day operations of our food service program. They have also provided the district with excellent service and product for the last 15 years. Ms. Williams agreed and thinks Sodexo has done an outstanding job. “They go above and beyond,” she said. Mrs. Forcier thanked them for helping the district get the school bond passed. Mrs. Nadeau thanked them for the buffets they provided for the Superintendent Search, adding that the people are very

cooperative. Mr. Dubois echoed the other WSC members' sentiments. He was impressed the most by the Backpack Program they run. He will gladly support re-hiring them.

**Motion to approve Sodexho Food Services for 1-year with 4 optional 1-year extensions to follow:
A. Forcier**

2nd: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 4 yes

3. Approval of Non-Union Wage Increase for Clerical/Technicians – Dr. Macera, R. Strom

Dr. Macera read her request for the public, which noted that these workers don't make the large salaries that administrators do, work long hours, and are not paid overtime for the extra hours they work. She feels they are very deserving of the same pay increase that their Union counterparts are receiving. The total cost for this increase would be \$15,500, which can be funded through local savings in various categories. Mr. Strom added that the teachers and Local 1137 members received a 4% increase. "These non-union individuals should be categorized with the clerical union employees. They shouldn't be penalized for being grouped in with the administrators," he said. Mrs. Nadeau asked when the last time was that they received a raise. Mr. Strom told her it was two years ago. When asked if they will be grouped separately from now on, Mr. Strom said he would like to have a Category "A" and a Category "B". Ms. Williams asked if these employees were ever in the union at one point in time. Mrs. Nadeau said that the superintendent's secretary was not in the union for as long as she can remember. "The technical people we probably didn't have back then," she added. Mrs. Forcier wanted them to know that she appreciates the hard work they do but can't support raises for anyone at this time. "You deserve it though," she said. Mrs. Nadeau said she knows that Mrs. Majewski asked if there was a reconciliation of the budget. "Is that ready yet?" Nadeau asked. "We are still getting figures in. I would like to meet with Dr. Gerardi and the WSC about the figures for 08-09. There could be a shortfall. Two weeks ago, it looked like a considerable deficit, but we closed the gap," said Strom.

Motion to Table: E. Nadeau

No Second. Motion Dies.

Mr. Dubois thinks it was unfair to lump these positions in with the administrative personnel and believes they can support the raises for them. Mrs. Nadeau said that when they interviewed and looked at resumés for the WSC secretary recently, she found that we were paying under what that position should be paying. Ms. Williams couldn't support the 4%. She stated that she has worked three years at her job and hasn't gotten a raise and is a salaried employee. She is grateful to have a job. "People have to do more with less these days," she said. She appreciates all that they do, but feels that the taxpayers can't afford to be stretched any more.

Motion to Approve: M. Dubois

2nd: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 2 yes – MD/EN; 2 no – AF/MW

Motion dies.

4. Discussion of Implementation of School Uniform Law – Dr. Macera, Senator R. Picard

Dr. Macera thanked Senator Picard for spearheading this bill. "This legislation allows the WSC to adopt a dress code," said Dr. Macera, reading from a copy of the bill itself. She suggested that Dr. Gerardi and the WSC select the subcommittee to start working on this. Macera explained that we have students that are trying to compete with the movie and music icons and are wearing very expensive and sometimes inappropriate clothes to school. "The focus needs to be on their education—not on their dress," Macera said. She is very proud of this administration for standing up for this and applauds the WSC. Senator Picard said that when he was asked to put this legislation in, he did some research and found that many other states have dress codes in their public schools. Mrs. Forcier mentioned that there are children in the district who are in and out of homeless shelters and was concerned about their being able to afford uniforms. Dr. Macera said that we have been successful in getting donations for some of our alternative programs for polo shirts. "We have been very successful in getting donations for children who can't afford the uniforms," said Macera. Forcier just wants to make sure these kids don't get disciplined if they don't have a uniform. "That's why there is a subcommittee being formed to discuss all of these issues," Macera told her. Williams pointed out that the clothes in the malls are very skimpy and she is a huge advocate for uniforms. She was in Cleveland, Ohio, which is a depressed area; and in the majority of the public

schools there they wear uniforms. "If they can manage to put their kids in uniforms, so can we," said Williams. Mrs. Nadeau is delighted that this is taking place. "If you have any doubt, sit outside the WMS at dismissal time. Dress is very subjective. Uniforms put everyone on a level playing field," she said. Mr. Dubois thanked Senator Picard and Representatives Brien and Baldelli-Hunt for submitting this legislation.

5. Cost Savings on E-Learning Proposal – Dr. Macera, M. Ferry

Mr. Ferry gave an update on his program, reporting that 46 students attended summer school for the E-Learning program. The WHS summer school "Ramp Up" program is for students that received a grade of more than 60 in a class and don't have to repeat the entire course. His students had gotten less than a 60 and had to repeat the entire course. He reported that last week 29 young women were signed up through the YWCA's PIP Program. The YWCA received a grant and got computers so that while the kids are downstairs in day care, their mothers can be upstairs working on the computers doing e-learning. "The curriculum providers are very happy to come in and show us what they have. NovaNet has provided us with a \$39,000 grant pilot program," said Ferry. He's asking the WSC to accept a 3-year contract with NovaNet for 15 portals and allow him to go out and hustle to get the funding for the other 15 portals they will need. "We will no longer have to deal with the NRI Collaborative. Pearson is also offering another \$45,000, 6-month grant pilot for us to use in our elementary schools. I wrote a grant from AT&T and I am hoping that it will come in to pay for more portals," he said. If it's awarded to him, it will be the biggest grant he's ever written that was funded. Ferry commended the teachers who work with him and said he wouldn't be able to do anything without them—especially Ruth Plante and Suzanne Leja. They had a professional development day with the staff yesterday for the new provider. "Their concern and dedication is great," said Ferry.

Motion to approve the NovaNet proposal: A. Forcier
Roll Call Vote: 4 yes

2nd: E. Nadeau

CONFERENCES

Update of Summer Street Professional Development Center – L. Filomeno, J. Gallishaw

Dr. Macera said that we have a building that is not suitable for instruction for regular students, but can be used for adults. Mrs. Filomeno explained that the building had been used for technology storage. "When the Technology Department moved to Second Avenue this summer, this building became available. There are two classrooms. We have decided to have our professional development activities there. New hire orientation can be done there. The other room can be used as a lending library. We want to have LCD projectors set up and computers for the teachers to use also. Hopefully, it will be ready within 6 months," said Filomeno. She noted that the building can't be turned over to the City because of issues with the title. Mrs. Nadeau asked why Second Avenue isn't being turned over to the City. Dr. Macera explained that Child Outreach has been moved out of the basement at McFee into that building. "Also, with the number of elementary students we have in the district, we can always use it as a backup if necessary," said Macera. "The deed stipulates for the Summer Street building that it can only be used for educational purposes and, if not, must be returned to the family trust. It would take over \$1 million to bring Summer Street up to the handicapped codes for use by school children," she said.

Overview of Athletic, Physical Education, Health and Wellness Programs – Dr. Macera, G. Nasuti

Dr. Macera said the Mr. Nasuti has exceeded all of the administration's expectations. He is Director of the Athletic Department, which encompasses 41 teams. Nasuti reported that there are over 700 students involved in some activity. He said that our athletic programs have been very successful. "Our boys' and girls' basketball teams did very well this winter, as well as our track and football teams. Our students are doing well academically and socially. There has been a high turnover in the coaching staff this year—mainly because of retirements," he said. He spoke about a Coaches' Handbook that has been developed. He reported on some fundraising ideas to purchase uniforms and pay for transportation and awards. Nasuti wants to improve the WHS gym and get Barry Field updated. In the Health and Physical Education area, one of his goals is to increase the amount of physical education students have. He wants teachers to incorporate games that involve movement into their classes at the elementary level. There are difficulties at the WHS because of the block scheduling. The most work needs to be done there. Sodexo has played a big part in helping to promote healthy foods and healthy snacks in the

schools. Mrs. Forcier said that Barry Field hasn't looked better in all the years she can remember attending events and games there. She thinks he's doing a wonderful job. Mr. Dubois thanked him. Ms. Williams asked if working with the Health and Wellness Committee has changed him in any way. She thought she caught him in the supermarket reading labels. Nasuti admitted he didn't focus too much before on nutrition, but now he is.

SUPERINTENDENT'S END OF TENURE REPORT – Dr. Maureen Macera

"It has been an honor to have served this district for nine years," Macera began. She gave the highlights of some of the accomplishments during her tenure. When she came, there was no curriculum written anywhere. "The teachers developed a curriculum in their particular areas. All of those documents were put online. We received grant funds for an in-depth strategic planning procedure. A comprehensive Strategic Plan was developed. We have attained professional development through grant funding. We have made great strides in numeracy and literacy at the WMS. I am extremely proud that we have been able to get the WMS bond legislation passed. Eight of our nine elementary schools went from moderate performing to high performing. We started the before-school and after-school programs that are completely self-sufficient. There have been major strides made in special education in this district under the direction of Carole Lerner." Macera spoke about the alternative programs that have been developed and become a model for the rest of the state. She thanked Dr. D'Acchioli for hiring her from North Providence and thanked the WSC for being very supportive, thoughtful and demanding of her. She thanked the Mayor for being supportive of our efforts. "I respect the Mayor and have a unique perspective on it from my husband being a former Mayor in Johnston." She thanked the City Council and Representative—now Senator—Picard and the others who have helped our initiatives. She thanked the Fire Department, the Police Department and Public Works. She thanked Valley Transportation and the faculty and staff of this district, the parents/guardians, and students. She thanked Atty. Ackerman, who has been a stabilizing voice for her, saying "he's the best of the best". Mr. DiPardo and she have had a respectful relationship, as well as with other union officers. She thanked all the custodians, secretaries and clerks, adding that they work so hard and do a great job. Macera thanked her secretaries—Elaine Maculan, Dottie and Kim. She spoke about the principals, directors, coaches, nurses, counselors, etc. She thanked Nancy Belisle, WSC Recording Clerk. Macera said she wouldn't be sitting where she is today without the support of her family. She thanked her husband for being here tonight and her sons Philip and Andrew for their support. Her advice for Dr. Gerardi was that "we need to keep going the vision of looking for pathways for children to succeed. I think we need to keep the 'can-do philosophy' that this district has. We have always tried to maintain a win-win philosophy whenever there's a controversy. Please continue to utilize the 14 Principals of Professionalism."

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

2nd: E. Nadeau/A. Forcier

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

Williams: Said she respects Dr. Macera for trying to do everything she can to benefit the children of Woonsocket. "You really understand the difficulties these kids face in this community. You have done a tremendous job for this district. We have done more with less because of you and your staff. I hope you can take some time off and relax and enjoy your family."

Dubois: He received a call from a parent also about the kind of uniform they had to buy when school starts. "Do we know how the Kindergarten registrations are going?" Dr. Macera said they are pretty solid. He received a call from City Councilman Schneck inquiring about getting the WSC and City Council meetings aired live. It costs \$800 a month and we could split the cost. He wants this item place on the next agenda. Congratulated Dottie DeRemer for winning one gold medal and two bronze medals in the National Rollerskating Competition. Welcomed Dr. Gerardi to the table. "Dr. Macera, when you took over as superintendent, you were like a breath of fresh air. There had been a lot of secrecy and dissension before that. The district is in much better shape because of your time here." He wished her the best.

Forcier: She asked for a list of all the kindergarten students registered and their ages. "We never updated our policy for admission to kindergarten from December 1st to September 1st and I've heard that

certain politicians in the city can have their children get into kindergarten even if they aren't age 5 by September 1st." Dr. Macera said that if a child is very close to that age and they test off the charts, it would hurt the child to be held back. She can only think of two kids that were accommodated and neither one was a politician's child. Forcier wants this item on the next agenda to update our policy. She told Dr. Macera, "You gave our children hope. You explained everything to me. I can't thank you enough. I wish you a long, healthy, peaceful retirement."

E. Nadeau: She mentioned Dr. Macera's efforts to get the money back from the NRI Collaborative. "I wish you well, good health and enjoy your time."

Motion to adjourn at 9:45 p.m.: A. Forcier
(Unanimously Approved)

2nd: M. Williams

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary