

MINUTES  
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2008  
7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION  
Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center  
Multimedia Room 303

**Call to Order**  
**Moment of Silence**  
**Pledge of Allegiance**

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

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**PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:**

**Lori Dickerson, 650 Third Avenue, Woonsocket:** Spoke regarding a bussing issue she has regarding her daughter. Her daughter has been rejected for bussing and has medical issues. "We live 1.6 miles from the school. My daughter was on a bus last year and I had the same exact note from the doctor as I had last year. There are five sex offenders in the neighborhood through which my daughter has to walk. Is the school going to be responsible for my child if she gets grabbed by one of them?" she asked. Mr. Dubois asked who rejected her request. She said that it was Mrs. Engels. Dubois explained to her that she is going about getting an appeal the right way when she said she went to McFee to file one. Mr. Dubois will check with the superintendent's secretary tomorrow about when the appeal will be heard.

**Evelyn Mack, 440 Second Avenue, Woonsocket:** Spoke on behalf of a program for high school students called Straight Up. It's a community-based program that deals with prevention of HIV, Aids, STDs, and unwanted pregnancies. "Basically, everything you can't talk about in schools—we can." She urged the WSC to contact them about outreach programs that they offer.

**Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street, Woonsocket:** She noticed that there is a special budget work session next week. It's scheduled for the same night as the Parent Advisory Council Meeting and many parents will probably want to attend. Mr. Dubois asked if the WSC members would be agreeable to moving the budget work session to 5 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. Mr. Strom couldn't determine how long it would take for the work session. Ms. Williams pointed out that McFee isn't handicapped accessible and people that are handicapped may want to attend. Dr. Gerard said he will check to see if the meeting has already been advertised and if not, we can move it to 5:30 p.m. and hold it at the WACTC. Mr. Dubois asked people to submit questions to Mr. Strom ahead of time for the work session.

**Allen Auclair, 24 Florida Street, Woonsocket:** He said he spoke before the last City Council Meeting and repeated what he said there concerning current state law that mandates meetings between the City Council and WSC being held. Auclair referred to Chapter 16-2, Section 21 of the General Laws that pertains to a pre-budget consultation between the WSC and City Council 60 days prior to budget submission. He also spoke about a three-year budget forecast meeting with the Mayor and the WSC that should be held on or before November 1<sup>st</sup> of every year. An annual meeting no later than December 31<sup>st</sup> should take place to discuss the revenue and projected annual budget. He thinks it would help a great deal if these meetings were held. "Unfortunately, there is no penalty if these meetings aren't held." He again requested a copy of the high school graduation rate and drop out rate based on the new formula. Mrs. Majewski said that they did have a pre-budget hearing in January with the City Council.

**Richard DiPardo, 134 Huntington Avenue, Woon.:** He commended the administration on the smooth opening of school this year and credited the new superintendent for being out and about in the schools. He doesn't know how he does it.

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**RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Robert Gerardi, Jr.**

Dr. Gerardi recognized the school secretaries and custodial and maintenance staff for their hard work in getting the schools ready. Congratulated Karen MacBeth, Principal of Leo Savoie Elementary School, on winning the Democratic nomination for District 52 seat in the RI House of Representatives. He wished her well in November. Congratulated George Nasuti, Director of Health and Athletics, and Jennifer Amaral, Student Assistance Counselor, on being honored for their work with the Woonsocket Prevention Coalition on Substance Abuse. He also congratulated WHS students Hannah Alegbeleye and Nicholas Chipppo and Carnell Henderson, Vice Principal at WHS, for being elected to the Woonsocket Prevention Coalition Board for the 2008-09 season. Congratulated

DeAnne Owre, Chairperson of the WED Speech/Language Pathology Department, on being named the "Outstanding Alumnus of the Year" by the University of Wyoming Communications Disorders Dept. and the Health Sciences College. He recognized DeAnne for serving as a Vice President for the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA). Congratulated Ms. Cheryl Sexton and Ms. Ann Richards, teachers at Pothier School, in conjunction with Ms. Linda Filomeno, Director of Literacy and Professional Development, and Ms. Pat Dubois, Director of Grants & Assessment, who submitted a proposal to the International Reading Association on the effectiveness of teaching strategies in Reading and Writing connections with young children. Ms. Sexton and Ms. Richards will be presenting this proposal at the International Reading Association Conference to be held in Minneapolis, MN in May 2009. He congratulated them on the great honor of being chosen to present their proposal at this national conference and thanked them for their many hours of hard work.

Motion to receive and place on file: E. Nadeau

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 27, 2008 OPEN/CLOSED**

Motion to approve: M. Williams

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

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

- *Field Trip/Conference Requests: Otis Air Force Base, Cape Cod, MA – Removed by A. Forcier*
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau **(Unanimously Approved)**

**1. Personnel Actions**

*Certified Appointments*

*Non-Certified Appointments*

**2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000**

Jeanne Troutner/Prof. Dev./Mt. St. Charles/Title II

Konica Minolta/Copier Usage/District/Local

NCS Pearson/On-line Subscription/e-Learning/Local

Tech Depot/Computer Equipment, Printers/Bernon, Globe, Pothier/Local/Article 18

**3. Field Trip/Conference Requests**

Leadership in Education Conference, Chicago, IL/WHS/Article 18

***Otis Air Force Base, Cape Cod, MA/AFJROTC/WHS/Air Force Funding- Removed by A. Forcier***

McDougal Littell, Chicago, IL/WHS/McDougal Funding

**4. Home Schooling Requests (7)****END OF CONSENT AGENDA****EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:****3. FIELD TRIP/CONFERENCE REQUESTS:**

- ***Otis Air Force Base, Cape Cod, Mass. – WHS AFJROTC Students***

Lt. Col. Dan Richards addressed the WSC about this trip and what a great experience it is for the cadets. He explained that part of their responsibility will be to make up the work they miss. Time will be set-aside for that during the trip. The cadets get to go up in a helicopter, get up at 4:30 a.m. every day, and exercise as some of the activities. Mrs. Majewski said a parent wanted a number to call for him. Col. Richards told her they can call 767-4788.

**Motion to approve exemption from the consent agenda: A. Forcier**

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

**COMMUNICATIONS: None**

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** Mrs. Majewski gave a report.

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**1. Approval of Policy P4-1.1 Age Requirement for Admission of Kindergarten - 1<sup>st</sup> Passage – Dr. Gerardi, A. McGuire/Forcier**

Dr. Gerardi read the changes proposed. Mrs. Forcier read the letters from Atty. Richard Ackerman regarding the new policy being consistent with RI law after he reviewed it, as well as a letter from Jennifer Wood, Chief Legal Counsel for RIDE. Forcier asked whether or not an amendment should be added about how a child would qualify for a waiver. Dr. Gerardi said that an amendment could be added stating that the superintendent could submit a waiver. Forcier asked that Dr. Gerardi read part of Jennifer Woods' letter and asked if the child in question was screened. Dr. Gerardi said he hasn't found a screening. He thinks an amendment should be added that a screening must take place in order for a waiver to take place. Mr. Dubois fully supported that waiver policy and the amendment by Mrs. Forcier. He wants to make an amendment to make sure that this policy cannot go retroactive to affect students that have started school already.

***Motion to approve the policy with the amendment that a screening must take place in order for a waiver to be issued by the Superintendent and will apply only for future registrations: A. Forcier***

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

**Roll Call Vote: 5 yes**

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Presentation of District Negotiated Agreement- Dr. Gerardi**

Dr. Gerardi presented the District Negotiated Agreement with the RI Dept. of Education for the schools under Progressive Support and Intervention. It was shown that only a portion of the House Leader salaries are funded by a grant. Mrs. Forcier and Mrs. Majewski were in attendance at this meeting with RIDE. Forcier asked Dr. Gerardi to explain the roles of House Leaders. He said they are a catchall place for kids to help with discipline problems for the administration and the teachers. From his understanding, the discipline has improved since the institution of the House Leaders. Forcier asked Mr. Dubois if they use police officers at the Training School. He told her they have a highly-trained staff that is part security guard, social worker, counselor, etc., called JPWs. Forcier found out that the JPWs don't make \$35/hour. "Maybe we can get one of those instead of a police officer to do security for the after-school programs at the WMS," she said. Dubois explained that the pay is per contract. "We aren't taking someone off the road. It's someone who works nights usually. At the training school, it's a controlled environment. Here, the kids can leave the building and there are other factors," he explained. "The District Negotiated Agreement has been in place since we have been under correction action. I would like to see it renegotiated before we open the new middle schools. The other factors that have helped with the decrease in discipline problems at the middle school are the new programs that have been put into place. I would like to see each cluster assigned a special education teacher and teacher assistant," she said. Majewski supports bringing the counselors back, while noting that the district has been under correction action for 5 years and has gotten the same amount of money from the state.

Mrs. Nadeau asked if the stipends that they had eliminated were put back into place. Mr. Strom's understanding is that they are not in place right now. Dr. Gerardi said that the state indicated that if there's no Director of Teaching and Learning, these stipends should be given. RIDE's funding only pays about 35% of the House Leader positions—not 100%. "Why can't we vote on it if we have to pay for part of it? We're paying for part of the House Leader salaries and three teachers to replace them. We should have a chance to say whether we want them or not," claimed Nadeau. Dr. Gerardi noted that this is why it's good that we have the liaisons now. "This is the first time I have seen this plan. I was under the impression that the state totally funded these House Leaders. When can we decide if we want this or not?" she asked. Gerardi said that it might be done when they negotiate the new agreement for the new middle schools. He believes that the state provides these funds as seed money for these positions and the district would take them over fully later on. "These positions are what they dictate as part of the correction action plan and we can't do anything about that," said Majewski. Nadeau asked for the amount of what the WED pays for our part of the House Leaders and the salaries for those who replace them. She wants to know what it's costing us for these positions. Mr. Dubois was also under the impression that RIDE was funding these positions 100% and thanked Dr. Gerardi for bringing this agreement to them. Dubois thinks we can still pull these positions and wants Mrs. Forcier and Mrs. Majewski to relay this discussion to RIDE and see what their response is.

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**CONFERENCES: None**

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Robert Gerardi**

He was happy to hear the reports about the smooth opening from many of the school principals. He was not able to meet all the staff members at the WHS in one day, but eventually, he will. Gerardi was very impressed with the teaching he so going on in the schools during his visits.

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

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**SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:**

**L. Majewski:** Reported that there's no copy machine at the WMS middle school office on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade side. She mentioned it to Mr. Strom and was wondering if we could look into leasing one or moving one from somewhere else. "It's really necessary." Mr. Strom spoke to Pat McGee and he is checking on it and will recommend what they might need. Strom said that the City went out to bid on copy machines and he asked that they send him a copy of their RFP. Majewski asked that the contract we have with Konica be forwarded to Atty. Ackerman to see if we have to go with them exclusively. She spoke about a video by a 12-year-old that was given to 20,000 teachers in Texas and used at the WHS during our teacher orientation. She asked that a flow chart be provided showing all the positions at each school and who they report to in order to see the impact of eliminating positions at each building. Majewski also asked about bus waivers where parents whose child is eligible for a bus but gets driven to school can waive their right in order for another child to take their place on the bus. She thinks that maybe the law doesn't allow it, but asked that it be checked out.

**A. Forcier:** Passed.

**E. Nadeau:** She appreciates the District Negotiated Agreement; however, she doesn't like to be deceived. It just reinforces what she originally believed. "If you're not straight with me once, you won't get the opportunity to do it again."

**M. Williams:** Someone called her about the ongoing problem with the dishwasher at Globe Park School and the fact that it's not working again. She thanked the two members of the WSC who sat on the Building Committee. She heard Mr. Ward speaking about how they have stayed under budget and it sounds like he was patting himself on the back, but it's the entire committee that should be credited.

**M. Dubois:** He asked that if any other WSC member has received a name to be on the uniform subcommittee to give it to him. "Certainly, PAC should be involved. Once we find out who is interested, we can direct them to a PAC meeting." He congratulated Karen MacBeth on her win for District 52 in Cumberland and wished her well in the November election. He welcomed Mary Keegan back. "She's often referred to as the 6<sup>th</sup> WSC member." Congratulated everyone on the smooth opening of the schools. He didn't have one call when he got home on the first day. Thanked Dr. Gerardi for being out in the schools and being hands-on.

Motion to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.: A. Forcier 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary