

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2009
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	Present
	Eleanor Nadeau	Present

By unanimous consent, the WSC took Unfinished Business #1 out of order.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Discussion and Update of Corrective Action Plan – Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi announced that the Mayor informed him on Monday that the City of Woonsocket is facing a serious cash flow problem and that by March 10th the City will be \$1.124 million short. The Mayor expects that under these conditions, no paychecks will be issued for all city employees, including the school department, for 3 weeks after that date. She also expects to reach a similar situation in June when the city will be 2.2 million dollars short. Gerardi felt it was important to report this information during tonight's discussion so that everyone in attendance will understand the magnitude of the financial problem in the City of Woonsocket and why such drastic cuts have already been considered in previous meetings and will be expanded at tonight's meeting. He also reported to the full school committee that he and Mrs. Forcier attended a workshop on Caruolo Actions and were fortunate enough to sit with the RI Auditor General. He told them that it is not likely that he can give us any more extensions on our Corrective Action Plan after February 28th. Therefore, Gerardi said that they must schedule a meeting with the City Council to explain exactly what we have cut from our budget shortfall and what additional actions must take place after that.

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE: The Chairman asked for a limit of 3 speakers to represent the WMS Music Dept.

Diane Engels, School/Nurse Teacher Coordinator, WED: Advised the WSC that she holds a B.S. in Nursing and a Masters Degree in Education, and has other specialized training as well. She spoke on behalf of the school nurse/teachers of the district who all received termination notices. She noted that the nurses that are employed for the WED are all highly qualified and uniquely skilled to instruct a certain demographic—school children. She listed the numerous courses required for their certifications and other specialized training. "Most have gone above and beyond the state requirements. We are trained in the medical aspects of the professional, as well as the educational aspects. Each area of nursing requires specialized training. There is no such thing as certified nurses. They can be certified in a specialized area, but there is no such thing as a certified nurse, which the Governor proposes substituting for school nurse/teachers." Engels listed all the ways school nurse/teachers benefit the children of Woonsocket. "They counsel students day in and day out. Students and families will feel abandoned if transient nurses replace school nurse/teachers." Engels listed all the voluntary services the school nurse/teachers provide on their own time. She asked that the WSC consider the needs of the students in Woonsocket. "Please be aware of false, inflated cost savings that are being thrown out there to tempt you. There are more than 600 vacant nursing positions in RI and these wages are higher than a Top Step school nurse/teacher makes working for the school department."

Parent of 2 children at Harris Elementary School: She told the WSC that one of her children is handicapped and she is very worried about what will happen without the school nurse/teacher there. "They provide the support to the children, parents and the staff. Who is going to be there to make sure my daughter has the support she needs when she goes to the middle school? The nurse at Harris School knows my daughter and knows what to put in the 504 Plan for her. What is going to happen to the children with disabilities?"

John McGee, Parent of WHS Senior: Stated that his is a member of the Music Boosters and spoke in defense of the music program. He asked the WSC and everyone to fight to save the music program at the middle school.

Tracy Belliveau, Parent: Stated that we are the last urban district to have a music program and we have been excellent since 1941. "We have grown up listening to them play in the parades and the concerts. We need to keep that program in the middle school—not General Music. We need the kids that want to be in the band and the chorus. are a lot of parents that need this to stay."

Stephanie Godin, WHS Band President: She said it upsets her and hurts the WMS students that the music program might be cut. "We try so hard and it will affect us bad. The kids that are in band and chorus really want to be there. It's not like Math or English. If it's made before or after school, many kids probably won't be able to get a ride. The music teachers really care about us and are like second parents. If they get cut, there's nothing to look forward to. It would be a big loss. I have been in music for eight years and they have been the best years of my life. I have gone to many competitions and won awards. I believe we are just as big as sports. We are the only one left and I don't want to see it taken away."

Adam Brunetti, 10th Gr. WHS Student: He told the WSC that he has autism and the music program really helps him. "It makes me feel like I am like any other kid in band. The teachers know just what to say to me to help me. It makes me feel better just being in band. I went to West Virginia last year and it was the best trip of my life. I have played the trombone for five years. Please keep band in the school."

Mr. Dubois thanked everyone for coming and stressed that they don't like having to make these cuts. "If we sue the City for more money, they will only fund what they have to fund like English and Math," he explained.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Robert Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi recognized Keith Mercado Lazarski for taking it upon himself to bring students of the Feinstein Learning Academy to a new level in their education through a unique, all-inclusive teaching idea. Mr. Lazarski has turned the physical activity of the students into a competitive, indoor learning environment for students. His students transformed the top floor of the Feinstein Academy into a table tennis hall. The students helped in the building, budgeting, and designing of the tables and learned how to use basic hand held tools. The students became team members and have planned a league tournament and a school-wide tournament. Each student has also used their math skills to figure out the ranking of each team by the winning number of games. He thanked Mr. Lazarski for his efforts. He announced that Ms. Jennifer Zecher, Secretary at Governor Pothier, accepted the award for their participation as the first school in Woonsocket to participate in the Rhode Island Mentor Program. Each mentor is asked to participate one hour per week to a child. This program has allowed 110 children in Woonsocket and Warwick to be paired up with a mentor. He thanked everyone who participates in this worthy program. Gerardi congratulated our 2009 Spelling Bee winner; Sagarika Prajapati, a 6th grader at the WMS. She will compete at the 56th annual RI Spelling Bee sponsored by the Valley Breeze on March 14th. He wished her well. Gerardi also recognized Brittney Keophoxay's debut on the wrestling mat. Brittney is the only girl wrestler on the Woonsocket High Wrestling Team. Brittney is a sophomore and shows great promise in her ability to be the best that she can in her league. He encouraged her to keep up the hard work.

Motion to receive and place on file: A. Forcier

2nd: L. Majewski (Unanimously Approved)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 28, 2009 OPEN/CLOSED

Motion to approve as corrected: M. Williams

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

Mrs. Majewski wanted the minutes to reflect under her Good and Welfare on Pg. 4, last sentence, that she asked "**Dr. Gerardi to really look at putting band and music back into the WMS schedule somehow, with the possibility of using administrators and house leaders to instruct one class.**" The underscored words are the corrections in the statement.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

- *Personnel Actions: Removed by L. Majewski*
- *Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000: RINet removed by M. Williams..*

2nd: **A. Forcier (Unanimously Approved)**

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Personnel Actions: Removed by L. Majewski

- Certified Appointments
- Non-Certified Appointments
- Non-Renewals/Terminations

CONSENT AGENDA: (continued)

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

Norton & Associates, Inc./ Special Ed./Local/Contracted Services
Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities/Special Ed./Local/Contracted Services
RINET/WHS/Technology/Local/Electronic Portfolio System – Removed by M. Williams

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests:

New England Catholic School Principal's Conference/Newport, RI/OLV, Gadoury/Title II Grant
International Reading Association Convention, Minneapolis, MN/Gov. Pothier/Title I Grant

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

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

- ***RINET/WHS/Technology/Electronic Portfolio System: \$12,551 LOCAL***

Ms. Williams asked what this expenditure was for. She was told that it's for electronic portfolios required by the state Dept. of Education. Dr. Gerardi explained that it was a grant program that we opted to do. "And now the grant has run out and we must fund it?" asked Williams. Mrs. Majewski had spoken to Jonathan Gallishaw and he said that a decision needed to be made in December about whether we wanted to continue the program and it was to be paid out of Article 18 funds. "Now these funds have been frozen," said Majewski. "Mr. Gallishaw is looking to continue this with what we already have internally. They are using the program at the WACTC and the WHS," said Majewski.

Motion to approve RINET: A. Forcier
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.

2nd: M. Williams

2. PERSONNEL ACTIONS: Certified Appointments, Non-Certified Appointments, and Non-Renewals/Terminations

Mrs. Majewski said she couldn't support these actions tonight. "We are laying off all the nurse/teachers tonight because of the Governor's Plan. There are no real figures to show that we would save any money if we hire per diem nurses. Speech pathologists are very, very hard to find. I don't want to lose some of these people. I think we should look more at the entire district and not just certain areas such as the nurse/teachers and special education personnel. We still have time and one more meeting," said Majewski. Dr. Gerardi explained that the lay offs were done relatively strategically. "The special education issue is more complicated because we don't have the enrollment numbers before March 1st. In some communities, everyone with ten years or less got laid off. They do that every year. I explained to these teachers that the rescinds will be done as soon as possible. Many are on emergency certification. The 96 number is not actually the real number. Many have to be laid off and the positions re-advertised. I know how lucky we are to have the nurse/teachers that we have. We have an obligation to balance the budget and we may go before a judge. Then things will be even worse. If the judge tells me I have to balance the budget, then I have to consider it," said Gerardi. Mrs. Nadeau had asked under previous administrations that there be more of an explanation next to the non-renewals. "We have no reason behind it," she said. "Sometimes you will see English and Math, because classes need to be maxed out. I can't run an English elective with 8 students. It's very complicated and I can talk to Human Resources to see if they can add a column for an explanation. These were extremely targeted cuts," said Gerardi. He explained about being understaffed in the Central Office also. Ms. Williams said that, after reading the Providence Journal this morning, it looks favorable for education as a whole. "If money does come to us, can we disburse some of it to school nurse/teachers and special education?" she asked. "That's the one bright spot. A significant portion would have come to IDEA, but usually these are very targeted funds. We have heard rumors that we might be able to use these funds to help alleviate some of these other problems," said Gerardi. Williams asked about the electricians and two of them working together in the truck. She said that the WHA has over 1300 units and they have one guy. She sees these guys tooling around and we only have how many buildings? She doesn't feel that this department needs two electricians. Dr. Gerardi explained that we have one electrician and one helper. "In some cases, the cost of unemployment makes it prohibitive. It's better to not fill through attrition.

Motion to approve all Personnel Actions: A. Forcier
Roll Call Vote: 3 no – 2 yes (AF; MD)

2nd: M. Williams
Motion Fails.

Atty. Ackerman informed the WSC that they can be held liable for spending money they don't have. "It's important that that March 1st notice be adhered to. Failure to give the March 1st notice makes it very difficult to terminate. They have to receive them by March 1st. March 2nd is too late," cautioned Ackerman. "Is the next meeting too late?" asked Mrs. Nadeau. "The notices would have to be hand delivered before March 1st. If there is a snow storm, then what?" he asked. Mrs. Forcier asked if just the TIME teacher could be taken separately because it's Title 1. M. Dubois said it couldn't because all the appointments were covered by that vote.

Motion to reconsider: M. Williams
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.

2nd: E. Nadeau

Motion to approve all the Personnel Action: M. Dubois
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

2nd: A. Forcer/M. Williams
APPROVED.

Mrs. Majewski said that the point she wanted to make about the nurse/teachers is that we don't know what the Governor is going to do and the per diem rate probably won't save us any money. "A lot of things are being acted upon without being looked at beforehand," she said.

END OF EXEMPTIONS.

COMMUNICATIONS: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Mrs. Majewski said that SELAC met in February and they had a question and answer session with the Superintendent. "It was an informative meeting for all who attended. Questions were asked about the 4-day school/work week and concerns about day care."

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Special Education Staffing Policy – 2nd Passage – C. Lerner, L. Majewski

Motion to approve:
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.

2nd:
APPROVED.

2. Discussion of Corrective Action Plan - Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi reported that he will be acting on the following cuts tomorrow unless the school committee has any objections.

1. Notifying parks and recreation that our buildings will not be available for their use in an effort to save \$2,083.00 in custodial overtime as well as ancillary heat and electric savings.
2. Elimination of Saturday detention at WMS in an effort to save the cost of the teacher stipends, custodial overtime as well as ancillary heat and electric savings.
3. Elimination of 50% more for a total of 75% of administrative Cell phone usage.
4. Begin the process of eliminating Kindergarten Teacher Assistants.

He is expecting possible vacancies in the maintenance staff before the end of the year and will not fill those positions for cost savings. In addition to those cuts, he recommended that we must advise the City Council of the additional cost savings that may have to be implemented if the school committee is forced to resolve this deficit through a Caruolo Action because these are not required under the BEP.

#1) He recommended that we maintain the policy of allowing the various groups listed on page 4 of the School Facility Policy Handbook to use the facilities at no cost during weekday evenings because we do not incur custodial overtime cost when our second shift is working. He believes those groups and any other groups should pay the listed fees for times when we do not have a custodian on duty and recommends that we increase the fees that we are currently charging to be more in line with what other communities charge. The next two items are cuts that he and the school committee have stated that they don't want to implement because they believe that these activities are an integral element of a progressive education. However, these activities are not required under the Basic Education Plan and therefore might be considered by a judge to be excessive spending.

#2) Elimination of High School spring sports.

#3) Termination of all year long extra curricular activities at the end of February and prorating the stipends that would be earned. Including but not limited to the following 23 activities:

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| 1. Senior High Yearbook (format and content) | 14. Science Club |
| 2. Senior High Yearbook (Business Manager) | 15. Dramatics-Middle School |
| 4. Senior class advisor | 16. Dramatics – High School |
| 5. A-V Coordinator | 17. National Honor society Advisor |
| 6. Band Director | 18. RI Honor Society Advisor |
| 7. Choral Director | 19. Student council Advisor |
| 8. Jazz Band Director | 20. Debating Club |
| 9. Assistant Band Director #1 | 21. Junior Class Advisor (11 th grade) |
| 10. Assistant Band Director #2 | 22. Sophomore Class Advisor (10 th grade) |
| 11. Select Choral Director | 23. Freshman Class Advisor |
| 12. Assistant Choral Director | |

The termination of some of these activities would prevent rights of passage like junior proms, senior proms, and yearbooks from happening and the academic loss of activities like band, chorus, drama and Honor societies would be devastating to our students. However, the RIDE has not included any of these activities in the Basic Education Program and, therefore, a judge might consider this excessive spending. Mrs. Forcier questioned the elimination of TAs in the Kindergarten classes, saying she knows we don't have a choice but to eliminate them if we get down to the BEP. She asked if we could keep one TA for each school and split it for the Kindergarten classes. "May be we could add reading specialists if we got some grant money to go in and help. Dr. Gerardi said that it's something they can look at. Forcier asked about organizations not using the facilities on the weekend, but whether they can use them during the week. Dr. Gerardi said, "Yes." "If they want to use it on the weekend, they could pay to use them?" asked Forcier. "Yes," answered Gerardi. Mrs. Majewski asked if a letter will be sent to the Athletic Director if all the buildings will be closed. Dr. Gerardi said that it's for city programs—not school programs. After reading the Mayor's letter and her suggestion that even retired employees pay 15% of their insurance, she says that we are in jeopardy of not getting paid. "If we go Caruolo, the City doesn't have any money," said Williams. Dr. Gerardi said that the Governor could order the City to raise taxes. Williams doesn't see why this bill isn't changed without going to court. "I pay 25% of my insurance," she said. Dr. Gerardi said that he has contacted the unions with the new proposal and he hasn't gotten word back yet. Williams thinks that greed and people wanting everything has gotten us into the situation we're in. "How many teachers of ours don't have a co-pay?" asked Dubois. Dr. Gerardi estimated around 200. People hired before 1994 don't have a co-pay. "Doesn't everyone have a co-pay—including administrators?" asked Nadeau. Dina Dutremble said she would have to look into that. Nadeau wants to know about how many people don't have a co-pay and how much it would bring in if they had to start paying. She thinks everyone should take the hit.

In regards to the 30/50 tax cap, Mrs. Forcier said that when this bill was passed, we were promised a fair funding formula. "That's why it's not working. Because we have been so lean, we have no more places to cut. Other places haven't been so lean, and have more places they can cut. Would this be a good time to put together a Task Force to work with the Auditor General? If we all work together, maybe we can figure something out," suggested Forcier. Mr. Dubois said they have been meeting with the City Council and believes they have been working together and not bickering. He has no problem with forming a subcommittee to meet with them more often. Dr. Gerardi will talk to the Mayor and City Council to see if they would meet with us at a more accelerated pace.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of New Attendance Guidelines for WHS – Dr. Garcia

Dr. Garcia made a presentation on the new Attendance Guidelines for the WHS. The reason for the new guidelines is that they have been witnessing a great number of students not coming to school. After research they have conducted, they believe they need an attendance policy. "Before the guidelines, we had about 150 to 200 kids coming in around 9 a.m. Parents call the school and say they are taking their child on vacation to Puerto Rico for two weeks. As a principal, I cannot tolerate that. This plan was developed by a committee. Students were interviewed. All the stakeholders were listened to. It's being used at the WHS right now, but it's not yet a policy. I'm just here to inform you of these guidelines," said Garcia. Mrs. Majewski asked about what happens to students who leave early because there's nothing noted for that. She asked about parent notes and only two being accepted. "If a student is sick for three days, only two notes are accepted. If they are sick a second time, their notes have already been used. I think that it undermines parental discretion. I may cause a hardship on families if they have to take their child to the doctor just so they will have a note when it's obvious they have a flu. The notes for appeals, parents will have to keep copies of all of the notes they sent to schools. It may create a burden for the staff and secretaries to keep track, etc. I think for kids missing 10-15 days, it won't mean too much to them. It will affect the kids who happen to get sick," said Majewski. Mrs. Forcier agreed with Majewski and thinks many children will be put at a disadvantage. She spoke about her children being sick and not wanting to take them to the doctor when it was obvious they had a

stomach virus and pay \$30 for each visit. “Kids may say after 5 days or 10 days, why come in? I’m going to fail anyway,” said Forcier. Dr. Garcia said that sometimes if you leave it up to the parents, every single snuffle they keep them home. He spoke about Brockton, which has the same demographic as we do, and they have the same guidelines. “That’s the reason we have to have guidelines,” he said. He is willing to go back and bring them these concerns. Forcier said that many of our students have Thundermist and you can’t get an appointment right away. They don’t have a private physician.

2. Discussion of Middle School Administrator/House Leader Teaching – Dr. Gerardi, L. Majewski

At the last School committee meeting, committee member Majewski urged us to think outside the box in regard to finding a way to support the Middle School performance music program to remain during the school day. One suggestion that she had was to ask the Middle School Administration and House leaders to teach one period a day which would free up the schedule for the smaller class sizes that performance music requires. Gerardi asked the Middle School Administrators for their opinions on this and they were concerned that the school discipline would suffer if they could not devote their full attention to it. Gerardi knows that we are proud that the most recent RIDE School Support System that occurred earlier this year validated that the school discipline has improved significantly as opposed to their report from five years ago when they labeled WMS as a toxic environment. When Gerardi was an assistant Principal at Jenks Junior high School, he didn’t think that he could have taught a class a day and balanced parent conferences, morning duties, lunch duties, as well as emergencies that may have taken place while he would have been in the classroom. He had invited Rick Richards to speak in regard to the idea of having the House leaders teach one period a day as well, but he was not present at tonight’s meeting. When Gerardi spoke to Richards about it, he was not in favor of it. He did ask to see the job description and was shocked to find that there were only three starred items that were educational in nature. He said the job description doesn’t fit what RIDE had in mind and that it be redone for the next school year so that they are more instructional in nature. “However, he doesn’t see this as a viable option,” said Gerardi. “There are three house leaders and they each teach one class. I don’t think that is too much to ask for them to give up 1/6th of their day—especially if we are paying a large part of their salaries. If RIDE wants to dictate what they can and can’t do, then they can pay their entire salary!” said Dubois. Mrs. Nadeau agreed with Dubois, adding, “If people in the middle school can’t pitch in when their programs are being dismantled, then shame on them! I am glad the job description was provided because it’s like I thought—they were another layer of administration. If the test scores have gone up, it’s because of the teachers—not the house leaders. I recommend that one assistant principal be eliminated from the WMS. We will need another administrator to oversee the Feinstein Program because it’s growing. We have to spread people around. I wish Mr. Richards was here to hear the parents tonight. PS&I is an industry at the Department of Education,” Nadeau said. Ms. Williams thinks that before when there were team leaders, it was a better way to do it. She asked Mr. Benjamin, who spent 29 years at the WMS, how many assistant principals there were when he started. “There were two assistants and a principal. It wasn’t easy, but we did it,” he said. “Now we have three assistants and a principal and three house leaders. Then you think about a kindergarten teacher in a class with 28 kids that can’t do a lot by themselves and cutting their teachers assistants who make a lot less money. I agree with Mrs. Nadeau that it’s the teachers that are helping increase the scores—not the house leaders,” said Williams. Dr. Gerardi disagreed and gave his reasons why. “There are four assistant principals—we forgot Mr. Ferguson,” said Nadeau. Mrs. Majewski said that reason she brought this up was to save a program. “If house leaders are instructional leaders, what better way to show instructional strategies than to have them instructing classes and have teachers come in on their planning time and observe?” asked Majewski.

3. Discussion of New Middle School designated for Boys & Girls- Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi said that this had been discussed before at the Building Committee Meeting and it would cost more to equip them for use by either boys or girls. If programs have to be duplicated for boys and girls separately in each building, it would increase costs for salaries. Mr. Dubois said he has always been a strong advocate for doing this. It has been found to help at this age level. If it will increase costs, then he will accept the Building Committee’s decision, but if we have the funds in the future, maybe it can be reconsidered.

CONFERENCES: NECAP REPORT – WHS, WMS – Dr. Garcia & Dr. McGee

Dr. Garcia gave the test results for the WHS. He was glad to say that this year, the test scores—especially in ELA—went up. Most notably, in writing. He explained the four categories in the report. Some of the SIT members spoke about some of the interventions they have put together to help increase these test scores. Ron St. Pere, special education teacher, spoke about these measures and the School Improvement Plan. They have formed subcommittees to address numeracy, etc. Lt. Col. Richard said the goal is to get everyone involved in the process. He noted that the SIT is comprised of 25 members and they are in the middle of setting up various subcommittees and developing a school improvement plan that is something that will be used on a daily basis—not just sit on a shelf. Neru King, teacher, said he feels lucky to be here as a teacher. “We are here to try and improve the school,” he said. Mrs. Majewski noted that in Math 60% of our students are significantly below proficiency. “Is there talk about providing Algebra 1 in three semesters rather than two for students that have real difficulty?” she asked. Mr. St. Pere

said that the NECAP is taken in the fall of Junior year and there may be a gap in between when students have Algebra and taking the test. "We would like to see two full years of writing and reading and Math before they take the test. They are being tested in subjects that they haven't had in a while or haven't had yet," said St. Pere. Dr. Garcia reported that in Massachusetts, they have the MCAS tests and they prepare their students for that. "We need to prepare the students well before it's time to take the test. There isn't enough time to prepare the students in September for the test in October. We need to do it throughout the year," said Garcia. Lt. Col. Richards said that "in the armed forces, we have an adage: Train how you are going to fight. Train for all situations before you put the test in front of them." Dr. McGee gave the middle school results and compared the scores against the last three years' scores. They have made improvements everywhere. Very impressive gains have been made and he explained why the scores have increased. "The staff has worked very hard and have gone above and beyond. Parent support has been better than it has in years. The students believe they can achieve. I am very proud to be principal at the WMS. A Dunk Tank was used as an incentive. House leaders help prepare the students for the NECAP. Assemblies were held to promote the NECAP. I have kissed a pig. In regards to the house leaders, when a school committee member uses the word 'useless' about my faculty and my house leaders, I feel that it's unprofessional and sad," said McGee. He invited the WSC members to come and see how valuable they are to his staff and students. He was highly insulted by Mrs. Nadeau's comment. He has the data to show that there are wonderful things going on at the WMS instead of believing everything you hear or read in the paper.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Robert Gerardi

Gerardi noted that these are very difficult financial times in our city, the state, the nation and internationally. He hopes that everyone understands the difficult position that he and the school committee have in their responsibility to provide a balanced budget at a time when financial resources are diminishing internationally. One of the more difficult meetings he had this week was with the teachers who received lay-off notification letters last week. Because not everybody could attend, he wanted to go on record as saying that we will recall as many teachers as we can, as soon as possible, as we work out the budget and funding for next year. Another difficult decision that he had to make this week was in regard to teacher retirement letters. The Governors proposal included disincentives that may force veteran teachers to retire and it has caused great consternation amongst our staff. As a result, he has received many retirement letters with multiple conditional requests; and, unfortunately, due to our budgetary constraints and the need to develop the upcoming budget, he will not be able to honor the multiple requests. It is important for our certified staff to know that the deadline for standard retirement notification letters is February 20th. Therefore, anyone who sent in a letter with multiple requests should replace that letter with a standard retirement notification letter advising us that they will retire in June. The only conditional request that he would consider allowable in any retirement letter is that he will waive the required days needed for teachers to be eligible for local benefits if they had to retire before the end of the school year as a result of legislation passed. Teachers are our most valuable resource and he doesn't like giving some of our best and brightest newer teachers the opportunity to look elsewhere for jobs while the Governor's proposal may force some of our best and brightest veteran teachers to retire prematurely. He hopes the teachers understand that it is with great regret that the school committee and he must focus all of their efforts on attaining a balanced budget.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams

2nd: L. Majewski (Unanimously Approved)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

E. Nadeau: Pass.

M. Williams: Pass.

M. Dubois: He was chosen as a judge for the Spelling Bee at Harris Elementary and congratulated Donna Blais and Linda Filomeno for putting the program together this year. "The champion was a returning student. Mr. Ackerman—Promac is over?" "Yes. For the most part," said Ackerman. Dubois extended a special thanks to him for picking up on things at the meetings like the Personnel Appointments vote tonight and giving them his advice.

L. Majewski: Thanked Dr. Gerardi for all the hard work that he's putting in and being willing to listen. She was wondering if there's a possibility of putting the SIT minutes on the website. Dr. Gerardi said that we lost one of the secretarial staff that did that for them. Majewski asked if maybe someone from the School Success Coalition could do it. Gerardi told her she should check with Jonathan Gallishaw. Majewski thanked Globe Park School for the Community Reading Day. She asked about putting all the music students in one school and doing it that way. That's just one other possibility we could pursue.

Motion to adjourn at 10:10 p.m.: M. Williams
Approved)

2nd: L. Majewski/E. Nadeau (Unan.)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary