

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 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

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

Bill Legare, Valley Transportation, 664 Front Street: He prepared a document that he hoped the WSC will look at in considering the bids for Woonsocket's student transportation contract. Legare stated that he saw several items in the proposals from the two other vendors with lower bids that will end up costing the district more money in the long run. He noted in the bids from First Student that they listed bus monitors at a cost of \$72 per hour, not \$17 per hour. Legare distributed this information to the WSC.

Therese Desautel, WHS 10th Grader, 79 Woodland Avenue: She has been a band members since 5th Grade and gave testimony about how the music program has helped her. She feels that music is very important and asked that they please save it.

Adam Eddy, Autistic Music Student: Stated that Mr. Ethier, Band Director at WHS, has been like a father to him and a great inspiration to him and many others. Because he is being cut from the high school, they will lose a great friend. He spoke about how the WMS music program is the feeder program for the WHS program and that the WHS program will surely suffer.

Amelia Miles, 46 Lydia Avenue: She plays the clarinet and it has been an awful two years because the music students are always wondering if they will have a music program. "It's the way I express myself and it's the main reason I go to school." She will be so miserable if they take it away.

Kelly Hubert, 72 Belliveau Avenue: She's a bus driver for Valley Transportation and thinks that the WSC should take into consideration all that Bill Legare has done for this community. "He cares. You won't get that from another company."

Zachary Fortier, Mendon Road: Spoke about how kids look forward to band and chorus in school. "Everybody needs a little break."

Hayley Heroux, Student: Plays the flute in band and started in the 5th Grade in All City. Now she helps to teach them. She said that if music is cut, 75% of the kids probably won't continue with it.

Stephanie Godin, Farm Street: Said that it's unfair that kids are required to be in gym everyday exercising their bodies, but music exercises their minds and souls. "Your body grows old and weak, but your mind keeps growing. Where are the kids for the WHS band and chorus going to come from?"

Samantha Tondreau, Lincoln Street: She has been in band since 5th Grade beginning in the All-City Band. Before band, she didn't get very good grades, but after she got into band, her grades went up. "You can't take it away from kids like me that need that extra incentive to get the good grades."

Damien, student: Said that it's wrong to cut the middle school music program and strongly urged the WSC to reverse their decision to cut music.

Erin Marcet, student: Started off in flute in 5th Grade. She said that all the students who worked so hard won't have it next year.

Melanie Cotnoir, St. Barnabe Street: "We are pushed to decide what we want to do in the future. If there's no music, what about kids who want to be music teachers?"

Daniel George, 65 Lambert Avenue: Stated that he's a music education major at RI College with one year to go. "It was the music teachers at the WMS and WHS who helped shape me into the person I am today."

Barbara Lataille, 83 Mill Street, Valley Trans. Bus Driver: Wanted them to remember that Valley has done a great job. She noted that there have been no fatalities or children left on the bus. "Don't only think about the money. Think about what you have gotten from us. There are bus drivers that really care."

Angelica Dubois, Mt. St. Charles Avenue: She is a member of the WHS Chorus and has a younger brother who is also in chorus and doesn't want to see it done away with. If she doesn't have music, she doesn't know what she'll do. Without it, she doesn't think she will want to go to school. "I make time for music and I have given up a lot for music. I want to let the music live on."

Kelly Fortier, 1264 Diamond Hill Road: She has two children and one is too young for middle school. "Music is his outlet to get out his energy and be able to focus on his other work. My other son is in the 6th Grade band and has really improved his grades." She believes band has helped him and he's really stressed out wondering whether he will have music next year. "Many of us can't afford to provide private teachers for our kids. I work and can't take him before or after school."

Sarah Gamache, Oakton Street, Music Student: Asked what will happen to the parades if the music program is cut. "It won't even be worth putting them on." She said music has also help with her grades.

Devon Cournoyer, 2nd Avenue, Student: His best friend is in band and when they started talking about taking it away, his brother and him got involved. "It's really important to them. It's their life."

Daryl Wolney, student: Plays the flute in the middle school band. Said if it's cut, she will probably not succeed the way she has so far.

Diane Dicoste, WHS Music Boosters Vice President: She's extremely disappointed that music was cut and sports was not. "Not everyone is an athlete. Not that sports aren't important. Without good grades, these kids can't participate in sports or band and chorus. We need to keep music. In these tough times, we need the arts. If these kids don't have anything to join, they'll find something else—like gangs."

WHS Student: Said she plays the saxophone in the band and feels it's a privilege to play in the performance band. She takes private lessons for guitar, but there isn't the same challenge. "There isn't a big group of people that you have to play in time with."

Josh Renaud, Band Student: He joined the middle school band this year and plays the flute. "Music makes me what I am and keeps me from getting in trouble. It brings out the best in me. If you take it away, I won't be the same person."

John McGee, Rosco Street: He's disappointed that the middle school may lose it's band and music program. Said he used to live on West Park Place and saw the band practicing outside all the time. He doesn't live there anymore, but it makes him sad that he won't see them practicing outside at the new middle schools.

Jenna Paquette, Noah Drive: Spoke about how the sports program at the WMS was kept and the music program wasn't. "The music students were the ones here at all the meetings fighting for our program. I'm also an athlete." She knows kids that want to go into band or chorus, but they don't know if they will have the program next year. She knows how expensive private lessons are and a lot of people won't be able to afford them. "For the parades, we won't have our own band in the parade. We'll have Burrillville, Cumberland, and other school bands."

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Robert Gerardi

"Teacher of the Year Award"- Dr. Gerardi/K. Lombardo (TABLED)

"Student Recognitions for WHS SIT Team" – L. Filomeno: Mrs. Filomeno recognized three WHS girls who were very vocal members of the School Improvement Team and not afraid to bring forward their fellow students' concerns. She presented awards to Jintana Souvannavangsa, Jenna Paquette, and Joanna Cohen. "They are three of the finest students I have met in my life." Jintana spoke about how serving on the SIT Team help them.

"Presentation to the Band Boosters" – P. Plante: She presented the Music Boosters with \$1,927 from Union St. Jean the Baptiste and Catholic Life Insurance and a spaghetti dinner fundraiser that was held featuring the Jazz Band and Choral Ensemble. Over 260 people were served and she thanked all the students who helped out. She pledged to do it again next year.

Gerardi commended all the students who spoke under Public Good & Welfare tonight. He clarified again that middle school students will still have General Music classes during the day, adding that it wasn't the ideal situation but we have a legal obligation to have a balanced budget. Dr. Gerardi congratulated five students in Mr. Gruetzke's Applied Math class at the WACTC who were honored last Wednesday at a luncheon reception at the Elms in Newport. Team members Paul Hewey, Adam Kalf, Tiondra Martinez, David Thompson, and Evan Scott placed second in the State in the Stock Market game sponsored by the Providence Journal. He also reported that teachers at Governor Pothier Elementary held a fundraiser to raise money for the new marquee sign for the school. In addition to the teacher fundraiser, Tim Horton's Coffee Shop and Alan Feinstein made donations towards the new sign. He thanked Mandeville Signs for the great work and everyone for their support and contributions. Gerardi announced that Kathleen Lombardo, Director of Human Resource and Compliance, was presented with the "Ron P. Clare Award" at the annual meeting of the International Personnel Management Association, RI Chapter. Lombardo was recognized for her involvement in bringing new school department members to this group and in recognition of her artwork which is being used for the website and materials for the upcoming IPMA Regional Conference. Ms. Lombardo also received a \$250 scholarship that can be used towards professional development. Dr. Gerardi congratulated her for her accomplishments.

Motion to receive and place on file: A. Forcier

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: May 14, 20, 21, & May 27, 2009 OPEN/CLOSED

Motion to approve: A. Forcier

2nd: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:**Motion to approve Consent Agenda with the following exemption: M. Williams**

- *Field Trip/Conference Requests: STEPS Prof. Development removed by L. Majewski*

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Personnel Actions
 - Certified Appointments
 - Non-Certified Appointments
2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000
 - Advanced Tele-Connect Services, Inc./WMS/Phone System/Local
 - ASCD/Ed. Supplies/Elem/Title I Grant
 - Carolina Biological/Ed. Supplies/Title I Grant
 - CBE Technologies/Tech Switches/WMS/Local
 - CBE Technologies/Technology/Elem/Local
 - Heinemann/Ed. Supplies/Elem/Title I Grant
 - JMB Mechanical, Inc./Boiler Repairs/WACTC/Local
 - Kaplan/Ed. Supplies/Elem/Title I Grant
 - Keystone Infor. System, Inc./Financial Software/McFee/Local
 - Lakeshore/Ed. Supplies/Elem/Title I Grant
 - Nasco/Ed. Supplies/Elem/Title I Grant
 - Scholastic/Ed. Supplies/Elem/Title I Grant
 - Signet Electronic Systems, Inc./A/V Systems/WMS/Local
 - Spencer Technologies/Wiring/WMS/Local
 - STEPS Prof. Dev/Prof. Development/District/PRIMES Grant
3. Field Trip/Conference Requests
 - NECC Conference, Wash, DC/Technology/Title I
 - STEPS Professional Development/McFee/District Elem/PRIMES Grant – Removed by L. Majewski*
 - Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI/CMP2 Training/Prof. Dev./Feinstein/Self-Funded/Title II
4. Disposal of Obsolete Equipment

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

EXEMPTION FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

- **Field Trips/Conference Requests: *STEPS Professional Development – District Elementary (PRIMES GRANT)***

Mrs. Majewski said she thought that this grant had ended already. Mrs. Filomeno explained that it ends on September 30, 2009. "It's a continuation of the PRIMES Grant," she said.

Motion to approve: L. Majewski

2nd: A. Forcier (Unanimously Approved)

COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Mrs. Majewski reported that the PAC met last week and looked at the Parent Involvement Policy again. There were no changes made. She noted that some new people attended, which was nice to see. SELAC also met last week and discussed the transportation contract for the out-of-district bussing. "There are many concerns about it," reported Majewski. The Uniform Committee met last night and discussed either doing a vendor fair or sending a letter to families with lists of vendors where the uniforms are available for purchase. The Uniform Committee would also like to be involved in the policy construction. They are requesting a specific workshop for this issue. Majewski thanked all the parents who attended and the new parents who came and voiced their concerns. They are still waiting for the legislature to vote on the bill.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Caruolo Action Plan Update - Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi reported on any new information regarding the Caruolo Action taken by the school department.

2. Discussion/Approval of New WMS Promotion Policy -2nd Passage– Dr. McGee

Dr. McGee reported that one change that was recommended was that in addition to the policy was adding the part where a student would have to pass one year of each of Science and Social Studies. Mrs. Majewski thought that they had discussed a requirement that students must pass two Science and two Social Studies. Mr. Dubois clarified that it was two of one and one of the other. Mrs. Majewski asked about exit criteria and if it was put in. She would like to see some sort of chart that shows the number of credits a student would need to pass. Dr. McGee said that it can be added easily. Majewski wants kids to know coming into the middle school what is expected of them. McGee noted that this new policy will apply to the 6th Graders coming into the middle school in September 2009.

Motion to approve: L. Majewski
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.

2nd: E. Nadeau
APPROVED

NEW BUSINESS:

1. BID AWARD:

- **#10-08 Educational Consultant Services – Title I Evaluation Program**

Dr. Gerardi explained that these services are used to evaluate academic performance in Title I schools.

Motion to approve that the 3-year bid be awarded to New England Educational Consultants of East Greenwich, RI for a total of \$51,000: M. Dubois

2nd: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes. **APPROVED**

- **#10-01 Transportation Services**

Dr. Gerardi reported that bids were received from three vendors: Valley Transportation, Durham, and First Student. The bids from Durham and First Student were significantly less than Valley Transportation. Gerardi sat with Dina Dutremble to further analyze the bids today and he recommended that they not consider Valley Transportation since the other two bids were lower and very competitive. Because Durham's bid has an add/deduct option, he recommended approval of Option #4 for Durham. Mrs. Forcier asked if Dr. Gerardi had looked into the questions that Mr. Legare had raised. Gerardi said Legare's main issue was with the bid from First Student and he was pretty confident that he was recommending the right company. Ms. Williams asked where Durham is going to keep their buses. Steve Smuck from Durham said that their intentions are to park the

busses in the city of Woonsocket. They are looking for properties right now. He knows there is concern from the bus drivers for Valley and they will try to make every effort to offer them jobs with Durham. Paul Nieves, Customer Service Manager for Durham, addressed a question regarding the number of buses for different sizes. "The pricing is the same for each size bus. That's why the bid was put in that way," he said. He answered other questions from Mrs. Forcier pertaining to Mr. Legare's communication to the WSC. "We serve Johnston, Cumberland, Worcester, Holyoke and Connecticut. Cumberland has not left children at a stop without a parent there—especially if a parent is normally there," said Nieves. Dr. Gerardi said he contacted the superintendent in Cumberland and she said they are extremely pleased with Durham. They had Laidlaw/First Student providing their bussing before that. Mr. Dubois said that if money were no object, they wouldn't even be doing this tonight. He has been very happy with Valley since he has been on the WSC. "Your drivers are very courteous. We have to do what we have to do. There is a \$500,000 difference," he said. Mrs. Majewski also said that Valley has been wonderful to us and served us well, "but that the times being what they are, the Mayor is telling us she wants us to eliminate all bussing."

Motion to approve Durham Bus, Option #4, for the school transportation contract: M. Dubois 2nd: M. Williams	Roll call Vote: 5 yes. APPROVED
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2. Discussion/Approval of REVISED School Calendar 2009-10 – Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi noted that some revisions had been made. The teachers' professional day was moved to the 14th of Sept. to save on substitute teachers that would be most likely be needed. The new start date for students is now Sept. 1st. Mrs. Majewski had concerns about getting out so late if there are snow days. Dr. Gerardi said that people would rather start on the Monday and have a full week instead of having to come in on the two days the week before.

Motion to approve: A. Forcier
Roll Call Vote: 4 yes –1 no (LM)

2nd: M. Williams
APPROVED.

3. Discussion/Approval of WHS Restructuring – Dr. Gerardi/Dr. Garcia - TABLED

4. Discussion/Approval of Attendance Policy for WHS – 1st Passage – Dr. Garcia – TABLED

CONFERENCES: School Age Coalition – T. Cheney-Kids' Klub

Cheney reported on the name change from Woonsocket School-Age Coalition to Woonsocket Afterschool Coalition (WASC). She gave the history of how and why the coalition was formed and who its members are. Cheney gave an overview of the meetings they have had this year, saying that at the last meeting, they started to focus on youth ages 10 to 18 years of age. They really want to help that age range become productive members in society and to increase parent involvement. She noted that the Kids' Klub has had a great relationship with Valley Transportation. Kids' Klub provides services for kids whose parents aren't there to meet them at the bus stop and they keep those kids until a parent is reached. She looks forward to working with Durham to continue this service.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi reminded everyone about some of our upcoming events such as the Teachers' Job Fair taking place at the WHS Auditorium at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 11th, and the Teacher Assistants' and ESY Job Fair taking place at the WHS Auditorium at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 17th. He noted that the Senior Prom takes place on Friday, June 12th at the Crowne Plaza starting at 6:00 p.m. and Friday, June 19th is the WHS Class of 2009 Graduation Ceremony at 4:00 p.m. at Barry Field. (In case of inclement weather, the graduation will take place at the WHS gymnasium). The Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center Senior Recognition Night is Tuesday, June 16th at 6:00 p.m. at Wright's Farm. The WMS 8th grade graduation ceremony is Thursday, June 18th at 4:00 p.m. at the WHS gym. He also noted that dates and times of some elementary school graduations. He thanked the WTG and Local 1137 for agreeing to pay 100% of the expense for the annual Retirement Party on Monday, June 22nd at 3:00 p.m. at the Bocce Club, while acknowledging that this is another example of our unions volunteering to help reduce the FY09 budget deficit. He announced that the next School Committee meeting is Wednesday, June 24th, which is also our last student day of this school year.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

M. Williams: Thanked Bill Legare for the tremendous job he has done in Woonsocket. "You will be missed." She welcomed Durham and told their representatives that we have a high rate of neglect and Valley and Kids' Klub have worked hard to make sure that these kids are taken care of. Paul Nieves told her that they plan on continuing these relationships also. Williams spoke about working for the Woonsocket Housing Authority and how she's in charge of the Morin Heights Housing Project. She always hears people saying that the those living in subsidized housing projects have a lot of children in the schools and that they don't pay taxes, leaving the rest of us to carry the burden. Williams noted that the Housing Authority pays an amount to the City in lieu of taxes. She asked if the government also provides aid to the City for children who are in subsidized housing. Dr. Gerardi said that we have housing aid, but he isn't sure if it's in reference to what she is asking. She asked if we have done something illegal by asking for a certain percentage of last year's appropriation. Atty. Ackerman told her that we can ask for whatever we feel we need to run the school department. "The WSC makes the recommendation to the City Council. If the City doesn't approve giving us the money we need, we would have to make a decision about whether or not to go to court again," he said.

M. Dubois: Thanked everyone who spoke, mostly the students advocating for their music program. "The middle school band isn't being cut. It will be a before- or after-school program. We are doing our best. It only cost \$30,000 to reinstate the middle school sports program. To put music back into the school day, it would cost three teacher salaries." Dubois said he's looking forward to the graduation on Friday. He welcomed Durham on board and looks forward to seeing them at future meetings. "It has been about a year since Dr. Gerardi came on board and I give him credit for jumping in and tackling the job. Congratulations on your first year. Hopefully, next year will be a little easier."

L. Majewski: Thanked Mrs. Plante and Catholic Life for their support. Congratulated all the people who are retiring and wished them well. Thanked Dr. Gerardi for everything he has done this year. "You have kept us informed and have been honest and straightforward." She said that as a professional musician, she works every day with speech pathologists, occupational therapists, etc., and she knows the power of music. "In all of our societies, we have to start looking at music as more than fluff. I will continue to do my best to support the music program."

A. Forcier: Thanked everyone for speaking tonight. Added that they aren't cutting music. "It's going to be before- or after-school, which sports are also. They aren't part of the BEP. Maybe we need to work on getting these activities part of the BEP." She spoke about the stimulus funds and the dirty politics going on that the state is trying to use to get these funds. "If you think the cuts are hard now, it looks like it might get a lot worse! We are between a rock and a hard place." If anyone wants to see the information regarding Cranston, she will provide them with it. She also has information from Information Works. She said that they humiliated Dr. Gerardi when he spoke at the hearing. She isn't holding hope on this fair funding formula and is very disappointed. Forcier thanked Dr. Gerardi for taking the abuse he did. "They didn't want to even listen."

E. Nadeau: Thanked Mr. Legare for his years of service. "It's tough times and we are making tough decisions." She is really offended when she goes to hearings and hears that we haven't done anything. "It seems that education is the scapegoat for everything. We are the ones causing all the problems. The teachers make too much money. Everyone is greedy. We just have to keep up the good fight. We are suing the state with some other communities and will shame the state into paying attention to us!"

Motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.: A. Forcier

2nd: L. Majewski (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary