

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2010
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
	Eleanor Nadeau, Vice Chairwoman	Present
	Linda Majewski	Present
	Anita McGuire-Forcier	Present
	Vimala Phongsavanh	Present

By unanimous consent, Unfinished Business #1 was taken out of order.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of Elimination of Full Day Kindergarten/Title I Allocation FY11 – Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi reported that there may be a chance that the data used to calculate the percentage of students with free/reduced lunches was faulty and we may not have to eliminate all-day kindergarten. Gerardi thanked George Lacouture for his input on this matter since he used to be the Director of Curriculum and Grants before his retirement. Mrs. Majewski asked that the private school deadlines be aligned with ours so that we have accurate numbers.

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

Richard DiPardo, 134 Huntington Avenue, WTG President: Speaking from his longevity in the school system, DiPardo said that he was appalled by the number of lay-offs. He said he will be very interested to see what the other communities like Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Warwick do to see if they will be coming out with the number of lay-offs we had. DiPardo said he remembers how he felt when he got his first lay-off notice. "I remember how devastated I was. The next year I didn't feel as bad. The day after the notices went out, I was getting calls non-stop from people who never got a lay-off notice before. I can't explain 230 lay-offs. I understand the necessity of doing it, but not the severity in which it's being done. This is getting the reaction I got when the 40 furlough days were requested. If there is any community that can win a Caruolo case on its own, it's Woonsocket. The lay-off notices don't need to be sent out this early. Giving them to everyone with less than 9 years goes up to about 45% of the membership. Many of these people have never seen lay-offs before. Even if you recall most of them, you will lose some of the best teachers we have because they don't want to be threatened with a lay-off year after year. This decision begs to be looked at."

*Dr. Gerardi agreed with Mr. DiPardo when he said that they have had a very harmonious relationship. He disagrees with the comment about the administration growing. "We have reduced in every single category. We are not mushrooming by any stretch of the imagination," said Gerardi. He doesn't want to pit the union and the administration against each other. "We have to follow laws," he said. Gerardi is still not confident that unless we do everything possible we won't win a Caruolo action. "Not after seeing what has gone on with other districts," said Gerardi. "I had received pink slips for six years in a row, so I know how it feels. I'm sorry for that," he said.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Robert Gerardi

Gerardi congratulated Michelle Brayboy as the Papa Gino's "GAME TIME ATHLETE OF THE MONTH" for December. She was nominated by the Woonsocket High School Athletic Department for her athletic abilities by her soccer and basketball team and by her school and community members. Michelle gets to treat her teammates to dinner at Papa Gino's and was also invited to take a private tour of the "Hall at Patriot Place" and meet past Patriot players. He announced that Brooke Coderre was presented with her 1,000 point basketball from the legendary alum Kyshawn Ruff, who graduated from Woonsocket High in 2000 after scoring 1,448 points during her career with the Villa Novan's. Brooke scored 23 points and had 10 assists and six rebounds at the Friday night game against Exeter-West Greenwich, which is outstanding. Gerardi congratulated Brooke and the team on their win. On behalf of Ron Celio, Gerardi recognized Samantha Freyre, Kathy Mall, and the combined Fifth Avenue and Coleman School PTO for a very successful gift basket raffle in December. He also thanked Angela Ryan, Kathy Mansfield, and Samantha Freyre for volunteering at the second H1N1 flu clinic held at Fifth Avenue.

Motion to receive and place on file: A. Forcier

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 6, 2010 Open/Closed; January 13, 2010 Open/Closed;
Revised December 2, 2009 Open (Pg. 1,6), & Revised December 16, 2009 Open (Pg. 5,6)**

Motion to approve: L. Majewski

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

Mrs. Majewski thanked Ms. Belisle for the hard work she does and appreciates the corrections that are made at her request.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion to approve Consent Agenda with the following exemptions: M. Dubois

**Personnel Appts. — Removed by E. Nadeau*

**Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000 – Automatic Temperature Control; City of Woonsocket; Gretchen Hyssong removed by L. Majewski.*

**Field Trips/Conference Requests – Woonsocket Debate Team removed by LM*

2nd: V. Phongsavangh (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments/Non-Certified Appointments – Removed by E. Nadeau

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Apple Computer/Servers/Coleman, Globe/Local

Automatic Temperature Control/Repairs WHS/Facilities/Local – Removed by L. Majewski

Big Tray/Refrigerator & Freezer/WACTC/Perkins Grant

City of Woonsocket/Police Detail, Focus Class/WHS/Local – Removed by L. Majewski

CCF/FY10 Contract/Grants & Curriculum, COZI Grant

Gretchen Hyssong/OT Services/Sp. Ed/Local – Removed by L. Majewski

Paul Sherlock Center/Contract Services/Sp. Ed/Local

Robinson & Clapham/Legal Services/Business Office /Local

Simplex Grinnell/Repairs WHS/Facilities/Local

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests

AAHPERD Conference, Indianapolis, IN/Mt. St. Charles/Title II Grant

RI Federation of Teachers & Health Professionals, Troy, NY/McFee/Grant Sponsored

2010 NABE Conference, Denver CO /Citizens Memorial/Title I Grant

Woonsocket Debate Team, E. Boston/WHS/Fundraiser – Removed by L. Majewski

4. Home Schooling Requests

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

1) Personnel Appointments (Non-Certified & Hourly, Stipend and Extra-Curricular Positions)

Mrs. Nadeau and Mr. Dubois noted that one non-certified appointment was withdrawn on Page 1, (Robert Lizotte). Mrs. Nadeau also said she was not in support of the Teacher Leader positions that were on to be appointed tonight. Nadeau had concerns because we were supposed to give it a year and see how it would go. "You have positions that you propose and if the people in those positions can't do the job, you hire an assistant to help them. This only happens in education that I know of. If you can't do the job, you can't do the job! You don't get an assistant in the real world!" said Nadeau. She doesn't think the original positions have been evaluated to see if the right people are in the positions. Dr. Gerardi disagreed, saying that RIDE did a leadership capacity study and committed that they would pay for the house leaders. "It's a support, but the jury is still out," he said. "One of the roles of teacher leaders is to serve as mentors to the new teachers. When the state cut out our Article 31 funds, they cut out our mentor program. This mentor program is required by law, but now we had no Article 31 funds to pay for it," said Linda

Filomeno. "I don't approve of the house leader positions either," said Nadeau. Dr. Gerardi said that RIDE has increased the percentage of funds they are contributing to these positions also. "As much as we hate to admit it, RIDE is our boss and if we don't work with them, they will force us to," pointed out Mrs. Forcier.

Motion to approve Teacher Leader Positions: M. Dubois Roll Call Vote: 4 yes – 1 no (EN)	2 nd : A. Forcier APPROVED
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2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

- **Automatic Temperature Control, repairs in Principal's Office, WHS: \$4,940 Local**

Mrs. Majewski questioned the amount of hours for labor for this repair (16 hours). "It seems excessive," she said. She asked Mrs. Busby to check on this item.

- **City of Woonsocket, Police Detail for Focus Class, WHS: \$22,040 Local**

Mrs. Majewski asked what the hours of operation for the Focus Program were. She was told that it runs from 1:30 pm to 6:00 pm.

- **Gretchen Hyssong, Occupational Therapy: \$21,805 Local**

Mrs. Majewski had questions about the number of hours for this item.

3. Field Trips/Conferences:

- **Woonsocket Debate Team, E. Boston, WHS fundraiser**

Mrs. Majewski was concerned that there was only one chaperone for ten students. "It's an overnight field trip and if there's an emergency, there isn't another adult. I think they need another chaperone," said Majewski. Tony Cosentino explained that their league is run through Brown University and they send a number of adults who have background checks done also. "There will be a number of adults from the various districts going. We have a parent that was interested in going if necessary," said Cosentino. Since there will other adults there from other districts, it was decided that one was enough from Woonsocket.

Motion to approve exempted items: A. Forcier	2 nd : E. Nadeau/M. Dubois (Unan. Approved)
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COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mrs. Majewski reported that the PAC met recently and discussed the family contact policy and there was a presentation by John Ward. The school uniform committee came up with a list of vendors. SELAC will meet on February 4th with a presentation by David Payne at the WMS Hamlet building. The School Success Coalition meets on January 28th at Family Resources Community Action at 4:30 p.m. Mrs. Forcier reported that last night she and Dr. Gerardi and John Ward attended a meeting on fair funding along with people from all over the state. Dr. Gerardi reported on the "hold harmless" clause and how it hurts kids. She reported that Chris Viera will be training parents on lobbying at the State House on the fair funding formula because sometimes you have less than 24 hours notice. The training is on Feb. 3rd from 7 pm to 9 pm at Harris School. Forcier announced a READY campaign meeting on February 17th at 5:30 pm. The location is unknown at this time. They will be meeting on February 11th from 12 noon to 12:30 pm on the steps of the State House facing the mall to lobby for fair funding. Forcier noted that Tiverton may be joining our battle. Last night they developed a pledge that the districts can sign for a fair funding formula. Ms. Phongsavanh said she has been working on the minority concerns. She is working with people to get translators for more languages than just Spanish.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

2. Approval of Change of School Start Times for Busing FY10 – Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi read his memo to the school committee regarding a change in school start times to reduce bussing costs. He noted that if this change is made, starting the WMS at 7:30 am and the WHS at 8:00 am and ½ of the elementary schools at 8:45 am, we can reduce the number of buses we need from 19 to 13. He will also work with the WTG to

get their approval. "When we changed the times before with the last bus contract, it was so that we could bus the middle school and high school students together," said Mrs. Majewski. Dr. Gerardi explained that the separation means that we can use fewer buses. "The elementary buses always drove the number of buses we needed," said Gerardi. "Why is Bernon with Savoie, Pothier and Citizens?" asked Majewski. Dr. Gerardi said that it's because Bernon is kind of out there by itself.

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

2nd: M. Dubois
APPROVED

3. Discussion of WACTC Funding – Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi reported that in order to address the City Council wishes that we close the WACTC, he has gotten information from RIDE regarding this issue. He explained that when the state originally opened the career/tech schools, communities that wanted them had to apply to get them. "Woonsocket begged the state to put one here," said Gerardi. In other words, the district can't close it. He also noted that the state is working on the funding issues for these career/tech centers. "Do you anticipate when they will finish doing the revision of the funding policies for the career/tech centers?" asked Mrs. Majewski. "No," said Gerardi. Mrs. Busby found out that there are other communities that have found ways to get greater revenue for their career/tech programs, such as increasing tuition. "Have they resolved their lawsuit against the state to takeover our administrative costs?" asked Majewski. Dr. Gerardi wasn't certain about that, but Atty. Ackerman didn't feel there was any value in joining with the other lawsuit because the state doesn't have the money.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of Administrative Re-Organization – Dr. Gerardi (TABLED)

2. Discussion of FY10 Second Quarter Expenditure Report – S. Busby

Mrs. Busby reported that we have only spent about 48% of this year's budget to date and are on target. She reviewed the report for the public and the school committee. Mrs. Forcier thanked her for meeting with her and going over the questions she had. Mrs. Majewski did as well.

3. Discussion of FY11 Budget Concerns – S. Busby

Mrs. Busby reported that our health care premiums will be going up 14.6% as of July 1st. "It's driven by our claims. This increase is from the 2008-2009 fiscal year and I anticipate it will go up again because of the claims from this year," she said. Busby suggested that we reopen negotiations with the unions regarding the health care costs. She would like to schedule a joint City Council/WSC work session for the second week in February. Dr. Gerardi summarized by saying that we are increasing 3.5% over last year, which amounts to about a \$2.25 million increase. He is very concerned about this upcoming year. Mrs. Forcier requested that when we have a joint meeting that we invite the state representatives and senators so that they know what's going on also.

CONFERENCES:

SUPERINTENDENTS THEORY OF ACTION – R. Gerardi (TABLED)

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Gerardi

Motion to receive and place on file: A. Forcier

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

Forcier: Said that they can use all the help they can on February 11th from 12:00 to 12:30 pm at the State House steps facing the mall for the fair funding formula. She is very thankful that we are not in a position that we may have to cut all-day kindergarten. She thanked George Lacouture for going out of his way to help us. "We are bare bones. How can we lay-off 45% of the membership?" Dr. Gerardi explained that the problem is the we don't have accurate numbers from the government and the system the way it's set up requires us to guess a lot. "We have to go through a process legally to show due diligence to prevent a shortfall or deficit," said Gerardi.

E. Nadeau: She thanked God that it's Carcier's last state of the state address. "If the city councils take over the school budgets, basically the WSC would just have to watch out for the kids, which would be wonderful. The city council makes more money for less meetings and less subcommittees." One of them on a talk show said that the WSC members should attend the City Council meetings, but she doesn't see any of them attending our meetings. She hopes that they talk about substance at the joint meeting instead of playing a cat and mouse game. "If they think they could take over our duties, I would like to see them do it. Most of us work pretty hard. For Mrs. Majewski and I, it's our third meeting this week. It's offensive when someone says we should attend their meetings, which I think are useless! How many city councilors attend our meetings? We have parents that attend our meetings and know more about what's going on than they do!"

V. Phongsavanh: She stressed the importance of the fair funding formula and how everyone needs to fight for it. "We are stronger in numbers. It has been a great two months and I'm excited about the changes coming up."

M. Dubois: Thanked George Lacouture for his input and advice even though he has been retired for a while. "His knowledge and expertise is very valuable." Dubois asked Dr. Gerardi about updates on the Race to the Top applications. Gerardi said that Commissioner Gist met with the superintendents and is confident that this grant may still go through. "If we don't make the first round, she would invite the unions to sit down with her and see what can be done to win their approval," said Gerardi. Mrs. Filomeno said she believes that Commissioner Gist is working with the national AFT in order to get this grant approved and that she has a lot of high-level connections. "She is very hopeful that it will be approved in the first round and confident that it will be approved in the 2nd round," said Filomeno. Mr. Dubois said there were complaints about the lay-off notices sent out and explained about the budget deadline. "We don't know what the City and state are going to give us and have to figure on the worst-case scenario. Most of them will be called back. We will be paying \$16,000 each for a family plan next year in health premiums and I have spoken to some senior people who have said that they got it for free all these years and wouldn't mind paying a co-pay now."

L. Majewski: She's glad that we will probably be able to keep all-day kindergarten. She didn't know what the number of lay-offs was until the meeting tonight, but feels that the people who got pink slips need to know that they are valued. "The time has also come when everyone needs to contribute to their health care plan. We can no longer do business as usual." She agrees with Mrs. Nadeau and Mrs. Forcier that she wishes we could use the ARRA funds for what we want and think we need. It would be great if we could look at grant money and determine where we could use it. She thanked Stacey Busby and Siobhan Ryan for their hard work on the budget. Asked Dr. Gerardi about portfolios for the high school. She got dates from Dr. Garcia and the dates for this year are even later than last year—April. "My daughter is a senior and I don't know where she stands. Today was a good day for kids to work on portfolios with the half-day. Maybe next year it will happen earlier. Thanks for coming everyone and have a good night."

Motion to adjourn at 9:10 p.m.: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary