

**MINUTES**  
**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 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

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**PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE**

**Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street:** The next School Success Coalition meeting will be March 25<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 at Family Resources. Parent/Teacher Conferences will be: WHS- March 18<sup>th</sup>, Elementary – March 30<sup>th</sup>, & WMS – March 31<sup>st</sup>. The next PAC meeting will be Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> from 7:00 to 9:00 at WACTC.

**Lee Forcier, 210 Cottage Street:** Thanked Mr. Dubois for not voting to eliminate full day kindergarten. Bernon has been without a guidance counselor since September. If they can manage without one, other schools can. Eliminating full day kindergarten is a step backwards for academic success. The kids in it now are learning to read & write. There is no more naptime. Are the GLE's going to be the same without it? Test scores will drop. First graders will need more support staff. Her daughter has been attending a full day preschool & it is not fair that she will have to attend a half-day kindergarten next year. Lee Forcier suggests cutting guidance counselors. No disrespect to Mr. Garceau, she questioned the need to hire a deputy superintendent if we did not have the funds to do so.

**Dr. Gerardi:** Stated it was a difficult decision for this committee to cut full day kindergarten. We will save on transportation. The commissioner has told us to reorganize our funds. These are extremely difficult times. Many guidance counselors are paid through grants. It is all about the mandates & more will be discussed in the superintendent's report.

**Jeff Hardy, 243 Carnation Street:** Has a child going to kindergarten next year. Everyone who voted to approve half-day kindergarten has failed the kids. Where are the reps? It is your responsibility. It was mentioned a month ago the test scores have gone up. The proposed day care program is not going to work.

**Dr. Gerardi:** The WSC has invited state reps to joint budget meetings with the city council. The problem is, we are still mandated. We are working in collaboration with our Mayor & city council.

**Jeff Hardy:** For the public record, who has gotten invited to meetings & doesn't show up?

**Dr. Gerardi:** All of the state reps have heard our complaints about money & nothing is getting done.

**Tom Tetreault, 581 Fourth Avenue:** Speaking on behalf of his wife Jane & their son. He works in a school district in Mass. He wants to reinstate full day kindergarten. Maybe there are other options to fund it, such as grants. Mr. Dubois should be commended for standing tall & not taking part in this vote. His son is currently in intensive resource at Pothier & has cerebral palsy.

**Dr. Gerardi:** At one point Mr. Tetreault was my boss. IEP's will be honored.

**Jennifer Lee, 359 Jillson Avenue:** Asks that everything be done to reinstate full day kindergarten. Her son came to a school committee meeting three years ago to read a story that he had written when he was in Ms. Duquette's kindergarten class. Last month she came to a meeting to protest full day kindergarten being cut, but it was not being cut at the time. At the last meeting it was cut.

**Robert Blake, 243 Lydia Avenue:** His son is having a wonderful experience this year because of full day kindergarten. He would not be getting the same educational needs if he were in a half-day kindergarten.

**Michael Berard, 175 Lilac Avenue:** Has a son in all day kindergarten this year at Bernon. He then passed around some samples of the work his son is doing in school. If you change this to half-day kindergarten, when the students get to 1<sup>st</sup> grade, the teachers will have a lot of catching up to do. The job these all day kindergarten teachers do now is truly amazing.

**Karen Belcher, 55 Hawthorne Circle:** Her daughter will be going to kindergarten next year. She is currently in preschool at Governor Pothier. Is there a letter we can draft or phone calls that can be made to save full day kindergarten? The student's skills will suffer from this cut.

**Tracey Bellevue, 243 Carrington Avenue:** Since band & chorus has been cut from WMS, the amount of interested students in band & chorus at WHS has dropped dramatically. Tracey has been fighting to save band & chorus since 2008. She created a free survey on line asking should band & chorus be restored in the curriculum at WMS to replace general music classes. In three days, she received 86 responses - which 98% answered yes. She continued to read many comments from her survey. She then questioned the stipend positions. She asked the criteria to decide on these positions.

**Dr. Gerardi:** Dr. Garcia worked with Mrs. Busby. As a principal, he can decide what gets prioritized to keep.

**Tracey Bellevue:** Were the teachers with the stipends asked to give up a portion of their stipend to help out or if they were willing to volunteer their time?

**Dr. Gerardi:** We are currently in negotiations with the teacher's union. The school committee would like this to be discussed.

**Tracey Bellevue:** Would like to see a different attitude towards it. Maybe, to sit down with teachers before you do it. Not to make them mad.

**Dr. Gerardi:** There are certain legal timelines that have to be met. There are timelines for the budget & layoff notices.

**Tracey Bellevue:** Thinks it's great that you are talking to the teacher's guild but sometimes the teacher's guild is not talking to the teachers. That bothers her. She then brought up the textbook allocation that was approved for \$200,000. Can we just look at what we actually need rather than just throwing out a figure of \$200,000. Are we talking to other districts to see what they need & maybe we can buy them together?

**Dr. Gerardi:** We don't just throw out a figure. Mrs. Busby worked with all the principals to see the age of textbooks they have & what is needed.

**Tracey Bellevue:** Have we been thinking outside the box as Ms. Gist has recommended?

**Dr. Gerardi:** There are online textbooks & online resources. We need grants to get these things. The governor is now proposing a 3.8% cut - which will equal \$1.7 million. The good news is that we will be going back to a 7 period day instead of 6 periods at WMS. This will allow us to bring back band & chorus during the school day. Some people say cut somewhere else. The question is the administration has taken any cuts. We have had less staff every year. The administration & principals have not had a raise in four years.

**Camelia Niles, 46 Lydia Avenue:** A freshman student in WHS band. She said band is her life. She will be going on the Virginia trip this year. She has paid \$500 to go on this trip. On Friday, she will be helping with a chowder & clam cake fundraiser. She said she has dyslexia & her academics have improved because of band. Mr. Plouffe said if band was easy then everyone would do it.

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## **RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Robert Gerardi**

Congratulations to WACTC Automotive Technology Program. They were selected by Lowe's to receive tools for their classroom as part of the Tool Box for Education Program. The value of the tool package is \$1,100. Congratulations to our ice hockey

team & the boys & girls basketball teams for reaching state finals in RI for playoffs. Good luck to all athletes & coaches. Dr. Gerardi would like to recognize a former employee, Mr. Paul Gagnon. He is an outstanding educator & supervisor who worked tirelessly before retiring. He should be commended for working on a grant opportunity for new algebra textbooks with online resources. He worked extremely hard & made this grant a reality.

Motion to receive & place on file: E. Nadeau 2<sup>nd</sup>: L. Majewski (Unanimously Approved)

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## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 24, 2010 Open/Closed**

Motion to approve: M. Dubois 2<sup>nd</sup>: L. Majewski & E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

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### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Motion to approve Consent Agenda with the following exemptions: E. Nadeau**

**1. Personnel Actions**

*\*Certified Appointments/-removed by L. Majewski*

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

*\*Connecting for Children & Families/PAT Prof. Dev./Grants & Assessment/Title 1 ARRA  
ELT Grant – removed by A. Forcier*

*\*Monsignor Gadoury Catholic School/Prof. Dev./Grants & Assessment/Title 11 Grant-  
removed by L. Majewski*

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

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### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

**1. Personnel Actions**

*\*Certified Appointments/-removed by L. Majewski*

Non-Certified Appointments

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

*\*Connecting for Children & Families/PAT Prof. Dev./Grants & Assessment/Title 1 ARRA  
ELT Grant – removed by A. Forcier*

Keystone Information Systems, Inc./Financial Software/Bus. Office/Local

*\*Monsignor Gadoury Catholic School/Prof. Dev./Grants & Assessment/Title 11 Grant-  
removed by L. Majewski*

**3. Field Trip/Conference Requests**

LRP National Institute on Legal Issues/Lake Buena Vista, FL/Sp. Ed/McFee/IDEA Grant

NAFEPA Conference, Washington, DC/Sp. Ed. McFee/Title 1 Sp. Ed. ARRA Grant

The Leadership & Learning Center Conf., Atlanta, GA/Bernon/Title 1 Grant

**4. Home Schooling Request**

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## **END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

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### **EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:**

**1. Personnel Actions**

*\*Certified Appointments/-removed by L. Majewski*

Mrs. Majewski asked for an explanation of the 1.0 MAP Teacher position at WMS. Carole Lerner said that MAP stands for Middle School Alternative Program. This program is for students who have already repeated grades in WMS. It is an e-learning opportunity. These students are high school age but still in middle school. This program will be during the school day & the students can earn middle school credits needed as well as high school credits.

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

*\*Connecting for Children & Families/PAT Prof. Dev./Grants & Assessment/Title I ARRA  
ELT Grant – removed by A. Forcier*

Mrs. Forcier wants to abstain from voting on Connecting for Children & Families because she is on the board.

*\*Monsignor Gadoury Catholic School/Prof. Dev./Grants & Assessment/Title II Grant-  
removed by L. Majewski*

Mrs. Majewski asked since we have to provide funds to private schools under Federal Law does this need to be placed on the consent agenda? Is it because it is over \$2,000? Could it be on FYI? Atty. Ackerman said that it doesn't have to be on the consent agenda, but if there were ever a discretion you have the right to question it if it is on there.

**Motion to approve Connecting for Children & Families: L. Majewski**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau (4. yes) (A. Forcier abstained because she is on the board)**

**Motion to approve exempted items on consent agenda: V. Phongsavanh**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)**

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** None

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** Uniform Committee Report – L. Majewski, E. Nadeau

Mrs. Majewski said she met with principals at each level regarding uniforms for their input. She will have a policy to read for approval. Mrs. Forcier said she was contacted by a few kindergarten parents about uniforms. Since it will be half-day next year, they feel they shouldn't have to wear uniforms.

Mrs. Forcier said she attended the RIDE Board of Regents meeting. She spoke about the Fair Funding Formula but the Central Falls teachers took over the meeting. We may not get the Race to the Top money if we do not get a Fair Funding Formula.

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Approval of School Calendar 2010-11 – 1<sup>st</sup> Passage –R. Gerardi**

**Motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> Passage: A. Forcier 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)**

Mrs. Majewski asked if the catholic schools could follow our calendar to save money. Dr. Gerardi said we can't force them. Mrs. Majewski noticed that there is not a date for WHS graduation. Mrs. Majewski also said she favors to start school after Labor Day. Mr. Dubois agreed. He asked if the catholic schools could start school on the same day

as us. Dr. Gerardi will talk to them. Mr. Dubois would like a response for the 2<sup>nd</sup> passage of the calendar.

## **2. Discussion of School Age Child Day Care Program – Regulations & Licensure – R. Gerardi**

Dr. Gerardi would like to start offering daycare to half-day kindergarten students next year. He has written a draft letter to the commissioner requesting to do this. Mrs. Majewski questioned if the staff would be employees of WED with benefits. Atty. Ackerman said that is a good question & would have to be explored.

**Motion to approve letter: L. Majewski      2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)**

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### **CONFERENCES:**

#### **1. Demo on Parent Portal – M. Ferry**

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, during parent/teacher conferences, WHS & WACTC will issue usernames & passwords to parents/guardians for the Parent Portal of our Starbase program. Parents/guardians will be asked to show identification & will then have access to their child's academic records. Access from any computer connected to the Internet allows parents to view their contact information, child's attendance, schedule, interim grades, report cards, and discipline. Also, when teachers use the portal grade book, parents will be able to view their child's current assignments and grades. In the future, NECAP & other test scores will be posted. Parents will have access to their child's teachers email address in the parent portal. Mrs. Majewski said thank you & was very pleased with this. Mrs. Forcier also thanked Mr. Ferry & Mr. Gallishaw. Mr. Dubois asked if there are safeguards in place to stop students from harassing teachers through email. They already have teacher's email & there have been no complaints at all.

#### **3. Theory of Action – R. Gerardi (taken out of order before demo of math on-line)**

A Theory of Action is similar to strategic planning for a district but it is instead a strategic planning for an individual leader. The RISSA has been offering superintendents advanced leadership seminars where we have learned about and developed our own Theories of Action.

As you can see by the documents that I put into the school committee binders, I have prepared a Theory of Action for each year that I have served as Superintendent of the WED including FY09 and FY10. I also prepared a preliminary Theory of Action for FY11.

You can also see that much of the documents stay the same each successive year with only minor modifications that reflect the results of the previous year and the new needs and challenges in the upcoming year.

What stays the same are my core values which include:

1. Every person (child or adult learner) can learn.
2. Every person (child or adult learner) should have equal access and opportunity to a viable curriculum.
3. Literacy and numeracy are the foundation of all learning.
4. The four systems that I believe are necessary for increasing academic achievement and they include:
  - a. **Managerial leadership** is a foundation that must be solid before instructional leadership can occur.
  - b. **Instructional leadership** is imperative to support increasing academic achievement at the classroom level.
  - c. **Classroom level instructional initiatives** are the primary vehicle for increasing academic achievement.
  - d. **Political leadership** is imperative to sustain increasing academic achievement.

These core values are deeply held beliefs that should remain constant.

The external factors do change as you can see by the opportunities and challenges that I have listed for each year. I would take too long to read through all of the opportunities and challenges but what I find most interesting is that the action plans you see in these documents identify many of the positive instructional decisions that we have made during the last two years. These positive instructional decisions occurred even during difficult financial times.

What I hope these documents demonstrate is that everything I have done as your superintendent has been guided by my core values and the challenges and opportunities that the current times have presented all while always keeping my focus on instructional leadership.

The FY11 Theory of Action is not complete because I knew that I would be doing this presentation and that I would have the opportunity to ask for your input for the goals of the upcoming year. I will look forward to meetings with each of you individually at your convenience to discuss your concerns for the district so that I can reflect these issues in my Theory of Action for FY11.

Mrs. Majewski thanked Dr. Gerardi for the document and likes his core values. Mr. Dubois is very impressed on how much Dr. Gerardi has accomplished and that he is always available.

## **2. Demo of Math On-Line – L. Jacques**

WHS received Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra 2 textbooks and technology resources as part of a pilot program study group with Prentice Hall Publishing. The study is for three years, thanks to Mr. Paul Gagnon, retired math department chair.

Dr. Gerardi thanked Mrs. Jacques for coming in and doing this presentation. The only way this grant would be approved is if the teachers agreed to do the professional development. Thank you.

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

Dr. Gerardi thanked Rick Richards and Dr. Kenworthy from the RIDE for running the commissioner's visits at Citizens' and Coleman over the last two weeks.

Dr. Gerardi would also like to thank Mark Garceau, our Director of Instruction and Assessment, for organizing the local teams to participate in the visits. Mark has discussed with Dr. Gerardi just how valuable these visits have been. He believes that the information collected on these visits will help the schools identify strategies to improve academic achievement.

As discussed during my theory of action how the school committee and I provide global instructional leadership, the Director of Instruction and Assessment was a necessity to translate our global decisions into action. Mark Garceau has done an outstanding job on all of the detailed instructional leadership that one superintendent in a district this large just could not do. Thank you - Mark.

Dr. Gerardi mentioned that the WTG and school committee negotiating team have begun good faith negotiations this week on a contract extension. He is optimistic that whenever a community sees honest collaboration, good things will happen.

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**Motion to receive and place on file: E. Nadeau 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:**

**M. Dubois:** Attended the Board of Regents meeting last Thursday that Mrs. Forcier mentioned earlier in the meeting. There were about 600 people present. He thanked her for speaking about the fair funding formula. Dr. Gerardi's position has become much more involved since he was hired. Especially with all the budget problems we have. His position is too much for one person to handle and Mark Garceau has been an asset to WED. M. Dubois said from day one that he would not support cutting full day kindergarten. He understands why the other members voted the way they did but he felt awkward from the many comments in public good & welfare because of the way he voted.

**L. Majewski:** Encouraged parents to fill out the census form. This will bring money to R.I. She thanked Mrs. Forcier for going to the meeting and speaking in support of the fair funding formula. Tonight was a very difficult public good & welfare. L. Majewski worked in early childhood & knows the value of full day kindergarten. She is not happy with this decision. This city is in crisis. She thanked the faculty in math department at WHS who are participating in tonight's presentation. She thanked Mr. Ferry & Mr. Gallishaw for the presentation on parent portal. She has requested this since 2003. It takes a village to educate children. Her number is in the phone book for any one who questions how she votes.

**A. Forcier:** There was a comment earlier on Mass. Vs. R.I. You cannot compare the two. Mass. has a fair funding formula. Our administration has not had a raise in four years and with contract

negotiations we are looking at pay freezes. We have a truancy problem. She did not want to cut all day kindergarten either.

**E. Nadeau:** When Dr. Macera was here, it was believed that she could do the job of superintendent alone. Now that she is gone, we are finding out that many things were not getting done. Mark Garceau's position has made up for that gap & he is doing a great job. Sometimes you have to spend money to save money. She is thankful for the fact that we now have the right people hired for the right jobs.

**V. Phongsavanh:** Regarding the cuts to the budget, it was a tough decision. She was active in sports in high school. She thanked the administration for being so open & welcome during her first four months. She has been learning a lot. Mr. Ferry & Mr. Gallishaw had a great presentation tonight. She is working on a minority concerns committee. She recently had the opportunity to meet Chief Carey of the police department. He is an amazing addition to this community.

**Motion to adjourn at 9:35 p.m.: A. Forcier 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)**

Respectfully submitted:

Michelle Gatta  
WSC Recording Secretary Sub