

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2010
7:30 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	Absent
	Vimala Phongsavanh	Present

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street, School Success Coalition: Announced a meeting of the School Success Coalition tomorrow night at Family Resources at 4:30 p.m.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Robert Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi congratulated George Nasuti for being named Athletic Director of the Year by the RI Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association. He has been the Director of Athletics for Woonsocket for the past three years and from 1990 – 1995. Under his guidance, Gerardi noted that Nasuti has made Woonsocket one of the leading athletic programs in the State. Gerardi announced that on April 15th at 5:30pm at the Woonsocket High Gymnasium, the WHS will be hosting inductees into the Hall of Fame. Carnell Henderson, WHS Vice Principal, is being inducted. Gerardi congratulated the Division I Woonsocket Girls' Basketball Champions. He congratulated Coach George Coderre and Assistant Coach Mark Lebrun, who guided the team to an outstanding victory as the Villa Novan's defeated LaSalle Academy to a 40 to 34 victory. Gerardi extended congrats to Ashley Dubois for being named "Player of the Game". She grabbed six rebounds along with her nine points. He also congratulated Brooke Coderre who was named MVP for the game and finished with five points, and six rebounds, and Kailey Fugere, who had three steals and two blocked shots. Gerardi congratulated the Woonsocket High School Cheerleading Team for receiving their second place medals in the large school division of the RI Interscholastic Team Cheerleading competition held at Bryant University Saturday, March 6, 2010. He congratulated Halle Rasco for being named a finalist in a T-Shirt contest for the Rhode Island Blood Center. Gerardi explained the contest and noted that the winner of the contest will be selected by a community-wide online secret ballot. Gerardi congratulated Woonsocket High School for being nominated by the New England Secondary School Consortium for providing multiple pathways for our students to succeed. Woonsocket, Coventry and Chariho were the top three high schools selected to give a presentation at the New England Secondary School Consortium's regional Conference in Nashua New Hampshire on April 9th. Dr. Gerardi recognized Globe Park School for participating in the Feinstein Leadership Good Deeds Program and the 16th Annual Pennies for Patients fundraiser with Leo A. Savoie School. Citizen's Memorial and Kevin Coleman Schools were recognized for receiving the School Breakfast Excellence Awards from the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. Based on information provided by RIDE, over 50% of students at each school participated in school breakfast in October 2009. Gerardi also recognized Ms. Clark and her class at Bernon Heights for participating in the American Heart Association's "Jump Rope for Heart" fundraiser. The fundraiser was well attended by students and staff. He also recognized Senator Picard for his sponsorship of the legislation to increase the number of charter schools in the state of Rhode Island. This legislation will bolster the state's chance at the Race to the Top grant that Woonsocket is supporting, but what Gerardi liked about this law is that there are also accountability provisions for charter school. Gerardi recognized Lt. Col. Arthur Floru and Air Force Pilot Jenny Caden for speaking to Team 7-1 at the Woonsocket Middle School about what it takes to be an air force pilot. The Lt. Colonel and Pilot also spoke to the class about the physics of flight and watched a video on the C-300 in action as it flew over the mountains into Afghanistan. Gerardi reminded everyone about the WHS Spring Festival Concert tomorrow evening.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Dubois

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 10, 2010 OPEN

Motion to approve: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: M. Dubois/E. Nadeau (Unan. Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

**Personnel Appts. — Certified Appointments removed by L. Majewski and E. Nadeau.*

**Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000 – Robinson & Clapham removed by L. Majewski NE School Services removed by Dr. Gerardi per P. Fontaine.*

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments – removed by L. Majewski & E. Nadeau

Non-Certified Appointments

Non-Renewals/Terminations

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Fesco Fire Extinguisher/Annual Service/Facilities/Local

Innovative Learning Concepts/Ed. Supplies/Spec. Ed/IDEA

New England School Services/Exterior Doors/Facilities/Globe Park/Local – Removed by Dr. Gerardi

Rifton/Educational Supplies/Spec. Ed/Local

Robinson & Clapham/Legal Fees/Business Office/Local – removed by L. Majewski

Wilson Language Training/Ed. Supplies/Spec. Ed/IDEA

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests

The Newberry Library Picturing Collaboration Conference, Chicago, IL/Mt. St. Charles/Title II

Nova Net User Annual Meeting/Chandler, AZ/WHS/Technology/Pearson & Nova Net

New England Secondary School Consortium Regional Conference/Nashua, NH/McFee, WHS,

WACTC/NESSC Sponsored

SMILE After School Program/URI, Kingston/WMS/Smile Grant

4. Home Schooling Requests

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

1) Personnel Appointments (Certified Appointments):

Mrs. Majewski asked what verification was pending for the appointment of Sandra Lorea. She was told that it was for her Step 2 status.

Hourly, Stipend & Extracurricular Positions: Lisa Marie Henderson

Mrs. Nadeau asked that this appointment as a teacher partner at Harris be tabled.

Motion to Table: E. Nadeau

2nd: L. Majewski (Unanimously Approved)

TABLED

2) Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

- ***Robinson & Clapham for Legal Fees: \$8,311.20 (Local Funds)***

Mrs. Majewski requested an update from Atty. Robinson at the next school committee meeting because she has been looking over the bills.

Motion to approve exempted items: L. Majewski

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Mrs. Majewski announced that the next Uniform Committee Meeting is April 8th at 7 p.m. at the Career Center to review the policy that the school committee is considering tonight for first passage. She announced that the next School Success Coalition meeting is tomorrow night. The PAC met on Monday night and many new parents attended. Majewski thanked them for coming and said many questions were answered by Dr. Gerardi and herself about the kindergarten issue. She announced that SELAC will meet the first week in April and asked parents to watch their emails. Ms. Phongsavanh reported that many parents were signed up for the parent's portal at the teacher conferences last week.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Approval of School Calendar 2010-11- 2nd Passage – Dr. Gerardi

Gerardi reported that our calendar was developed to be as close as possible with the RISSA calendar in an effort to collaborate with other districts in RI. At the School Committee's request, he contacted both Paula Hurteau of the Greater Woonsocket Catholic Regional School System and Mr. Burke of Mount St. Charles to see if we could also coordinate our calendars, which would reduce non-public busing costs for the WED. They both explained that they try to align their calendars with the RISSA calendar as we do. The Greater Catholic Regional School system had not officially adopted a calendar but did say that their proposed calendar was very similar to ours. However, the Mount St. Charles calendar begins and ends about a week earlier than ours. Gerardi had a follow-up conversation with Mr. Burke to determine why they start and end so much earlier. He stated that the early starts were based on two reasons--the first reason being that they believe they have more academic success in August than they do in June and the second reason being because of a graduation tradition. This year, if the WED aligns with one or the other of the non-public schools, we will still have busing expenses because they are not aligned with each other. Gerardi believes that we can learn from each other and if the Mount St. Charles experience proves that increased academic success results from earlier starts, then next year he will try to coordinate a scheduling meeting with the three schools to unify the calendar for all of the schools in Woonsocket. For this year, he recommended second passage of the School calendar for the 2010-2011 school year. Mrs. Nadeau asked if the fact that Mt. St. Charles ends earlier than we do makes up for the fact that they start earlier than us. Dr. Gerardi explained that it doesn't and why. Nadeau asked if we could tell them that they have to align with us or we won't pay for their busing. "We could, but it's illegal," said Gerardi. Mrs. Majewski agreed with Mrs. Nadeau and asked if we can tell them we can't provide the busing for those days because it's going to cost us more money. Atty. Ackerman suggested contacting the state with that question and say we need an answer as soon as possible. Mrs. Majewski noted that Mount has their own bus that they use for their athletic events. Atty. Ackerman suggested notifying them that we intend to contact the state for a ruling. "We are cutting programs and don't charge for students to attend school. I think that they should be able to manage something to accommodate us," said Nadeau.

Motion to obtain a ruling from Deputy Commissioner David Abbott on providing busing that is for a period outside our school calendar: L. Majewski

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

Motion to approve the 2010-2011 School Calendar for 2nd Passage: M. Dubois

2nd: V. Phongsavanh & L. Majewski

Roll Call Vote: 4 yes. APPROVED

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Readiness to Learn Policy (Uniform Policy included) 2010-11 – 1st Passage – L. Majewski/E. Nadeau

Mrs. Majewski read the policy aloud for the public and thanked the Uniform Committee and the principals for their input into the policy. She explained the reason for the name, "School Readiness Policy", saying that it incorporates other requirements for students being ready to learn such as wearing their ID, having their homework with them and completed, arriving to school on time, etc. Dr. Gerardi thanked Mrs. Nadeau and Mrs. Majewski for their hard work on the policy and for soliciting the input of the principals and the Uniform Committee. He appreciated that they provided a list of consequences that get progressively worse for each additional infraction. "The last thing we want to do is take kids out of school," said Gerardi. Majewski said that they tried to leave the consequences open-ended so the administrators would have some discretion. "The bottom line is being ready to learn. It's in that spirit that it was written," she said. "There's a problem where students don't view going to school as a privilege. That isn't the attitude

they have. When you put on a uniform, it's like part of getting ready," said Nadeau. Ms. Phongsavanh asked if this is going to be district-wide. "It's written to be implemented that way, but it's up to the school committee to decide that," said Majewski. "Will the teachers be required to adhere to it?" asked Phongsavanh. Majewski told her that it would have to be addressed during contract negotiations. When Phongsavanh asked about the implementation schedule, Dr. Gerardi explained the plan. Mr. Dubois asked if sneakers are allowed. Majewski said, "Yes." Dubois suggested being more specific about the colors of footwear allowed. Majewski explained that the uniform prototype has already been approved. "If we want to make changes, it would have to come before the school committee again," she said. Mr. Dubois just wants a good job done of informing the public about sneakers being acceptable. Dr. Gerardi suggested that the **majority** of color must be white, brown or black. Majewski noted that the shirts and sweatshirts are to be without pockets and that the dress code can be waived by the principals for picture day, for example. Majewski said that some parents of special needs students brought up the question of waivers and she will clarify that for the next passage. She also discussed the next steps and asked about the process of notifying students that attend the career and technical center from other districts. Dr. Gerardi said that they have been informed about the dress code by the guidance counselors during the application process.

**Motion to approve Readiness to Learn Policy – 1st Passage: E. Nadeau
2nd: L. Majewski**

Roll Call Vote: 4 yes. APPROVED

CONFERENCES: None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi reported that although the WHS Commissioner's visit report has not been delivered, the administration realized that our ESL program needs to be modified to provide more support. They realized that a lot of money is spent on busing students to specialized ESL programs at Citizens/Pothier and Colman/fifth. If the district moves toward a fully integrated ESL model, we could further support our neighborhood school model and reduce our bussing costs. An added benefit is that we would likely distribute the ESL population to many schools and eliminate those targets for state school accountability. Gerardi gave examples of how the integrated model would work. A fully integrated ESL model will require that we hire a kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teacher at each school with an ESL endorsement as well as their elementary certification. Also, at the middle school, we already have a 6th grade ESL team, but we would need to hire a 7th and 8th grade ESL team with their content certification as well as ESL endorsement. At the High School, we would need to hire 2 ESL endorsed teachers in the Core Academic content areas of Math, 3 Science, and 1 Social Studies. He realizes that it sounds like a lot of hiring, but we would only be replacing current positions with teachers who had greater qualifications to work with an important school population. By RIDE regulation, we would have to post the jobs three times to see if we could find certified candidates, but ESL certified teachers are usually hard to find. What would likely happen is that if we cannot find certified candidates, we would hire our laid-off teachers back subject to them working on getting their ESL endorsement and us applying for an emergency certification. He reported that Linda Filomeno also ran this full integration model by PESLO (Parents of ESL Organized) last night and the initial response was very favorable. Some of the parents relayed stories of other friends waiving students from participating in an ESL program because they didn't want their children dealing with a bus ride instead of attending a neighborhood school. They also see this as community acknowledgement and acceptance of other populations. They expect to have an official letter of support by Monday.

At previous meetings, we have discussed the elimination of one of the house leader positions at the middle school and converting the other two into content area coordinator positions. This way, we don't have a Math/Science and an English/Social Studies position, but instead have separate positions for each discipline--one Math, one Science, one English, one Social Studies, and one unified arts. If this change is made, the focus of their positions would be on providing professional development for teachers in content-specific pedagogy, working on content specific curriculum and supervision and expand the responsibilities to K-12. We would change the title to Content Area Instructional Leaders K-12. One other thought is that if we can use federal funding, it may be useful to use the third house leader position as a Reading Instructional leader to this group of content leaders as it would positively impact the reading and writing test scores. Gerardi has been working with Rick Richards on this proposal and Richards checked to make sure that we could fund these positions with Title II money so this would free up DNA money, allowing the school committee to have more input in how that is used in the future. Gerardi said that we had a resignation from the position of English/Social Studies Content Area Coordinator. We also have some carry over Title II money that could be used to help us hire an ELA Instructional Leader and a Social Studies Instructional leader now without impacting our balanced budget this year. He will be working with the directors to get the new job descriptions out as soon as possible and will then post and fill these critical positions.

Gerard reported that principals are concerned that they are seeing a lot of students being dropped off to school from cars with Massachusetts license plates, which may indicate that we are dealing with people who are fraudulently

registering out-of-city students as residents to seek services in RI that they may not be eligible to receive at their current residence. In our financial crisis, he wanted to find some way of cracking down on these people who are costing the city taxpayers additional money to educate children from other communities. He explained that currently, we have a building-based registration process without the resources to verify residency. At the next meeting, he will be proposing a change to a central registration process at McFee with the addition of a residency officer that may work in the evening or early morning when he/she may actually knock on registrant's doors and verify that children are really living at the address they are registered at. If caught, parents will be forced to withdraw students and they may even be charged with the prorated cost of their fraudulent activities.

Motion to receive and place on file: L. Majewski

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

L. Majewski: Congratulated the Girls' Basketball Team, Coach Coderre and the parents. Congratulated the Cheerleading squad and WHS for its opportunity to present at the NESSC Conference. She asked if the ESL proposal will be coming on a future agenda. Dr. Gerardi said it can be, but they want to have a decision quickly because it will affect recalls. Majewski had concerns about asking for one more certification from teachers because many already have more than one certification. Linda Filomeno said that many of our elementary teachers are not certified in special education. "Some are dually certified, but many are general education teachers and the special needs students are serviced by a resource teacher. At the high and middle school levels, they want to have an ESL teacher available for ESL students when they aren't in their ESL class. There is no need for the teacher to speak the other languages in their classroom," said Filomeno. Majewski asked about the house leaders and got clarification from Dr. Gerardi about whether a 6th person will be hired. She asked for copies of the job descriptions and postings for these positions. She also asked about the residency officer and whether our truancy officers could do that. Dr. Gerardi reminded her that the number of truancy officers has been cut and explained his plan.

E. Nadeau: "Under your plan, the house leader positions would change?" she asked Dr. Gerardi. Dr. Gerardi explained that they would be Content Area Coordinators and the positions would have to be reposted with a different job description. "I understand that during April vacation our Debating Team will be going to NYC to compete. I just want to make sure they get the same recognition that the athletes get."

V. Phongsavanh: She mentioned www.goodsearch.com where 50% of the proceeds go to schools. "If people use it, the proceeds go to the schools." She gave the statistics of people using this search engine and how much money it would generate. Phongsavanh encouraged everyone to start using it to benefit the schools. She is willing to show parents how to use it. She reported that they are going after a grant for ELO (extended learning opportunities) and she wants to put it on the next agenda and have Atty. Ackerman review it. Congratulated George Nasuti on his award and the Girls' Basketball Team on their championship win.

M. Dubois: He congratulated the Girls' Basketball Team and Coach Coderre and Asst. Coach Lebrun. "It's a tough thing to do to move up a division and win again this year. It's quite a feat!" He congratulated George Nasuti, saying that he has worn many hats over his years with the WED. Dubois is glad he got recognized for his efforts. He likes the idea of cracking down on out-of-district students enrolling in our schools illegally. "It has been a problem for many years. We're known in Woonsocket for our extensive special education services. I think it would be well worth the investment to put someone in place to address this." He wished everyone a Happy Easter.

Motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.: L. Majewski

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary