

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 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	Present
	Vimala Phongsavanh	Present

Mr. Dubois reported that in the Closed Session, the WSC voted to hire Normand St. Laurent to analyze our health insurance structure and advise them at the next WSC meeting. He also announced that an assisted listening device is now available for the public if anyone needs it.

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

Mrs. Forcier (PAC member & Uniform Committee Member): She asked about adding something to the Readiness To Learn Policy about the way shirts are to fit because there isn't anything saying there can't be mid-ripts showing as in the old school dress policy. She thinks it should say that the shirt must be properly fitted. As far as a consequence for failure to wear the uniform, she was concerned about shirts being provided and returned and not properly sanitized before being given to another student. She has worked in hospitals and mentioned medical conditions that can be passed on to others from clothing that is shared, such as Aids, skin infections, and head lice. "Bed linens in hospitals are bleached in hot water." She would like the word "new" shirts be added to the consequences of shirts being given out to wear. In regards to all-day kindergarten, she attended a City Council meeting about this issue and said that the City Council has underfunded and level funded us for many years. Forcier was approached after the meeting by some City Councilors saying that they were in support of all-day kindergarten. Dr. Gerardi said he distinctly remembered Councilwoman Brien saying that she didn't have all-day kindergarten and she turned out all right. Forcier said she feels we are taking two steps backwards by eliminating all-day kindergarten. She heard from someone who works in another school district that there is grant money for this purpose. Dr. Gerardi explained that all-day kindergarten was started with grant money, but the Commissioner has informed him that they plan on reducing our grant funds and we are being required to reallocate the funds we were using for all-day K. Siobhan Ryan wasn't present at the meeting so Dr. Gerardi told Forcier to contact her for more details. Forcier noted that she is PTO Co-Chair at Bernon Heights School and the teachers were being attacked even though they had deferred pay raises. Now she is hearing about the added certification for ESL for elementary teachers and doesn't understand how we will save that much money with this new requirement. Dr. Gerardi explained how the ESL Directors and parents felt about integration plan. He has heard from the teachers so they plan to implement the plan over time so the teachers can get the certification they need. Mrs. Nadeau told Mrs. Forcier that she needs to ask the City Council if they will fund all-day K. "It's great that they support it – but will they fund it?" she asked.

Denise Auclair, PAC Co-Chair: Stated that she's on the Uniform Committee and is concerned about the sanitizing of the shirts because of head lice and other health problems. She thanked Mr. Celio at 5th Avenue School for hosting a workshop at his school last night, saying it was a good event. Asked about the music program at the WMS for next year, adding that it hasn't worked running it before school this year. "If it's not reinstated in full next year, she suggested changing the times to after school. She spoke about all-day K and losing that program, especially with the stress on the test scores now. Auclair spoke about the Caruolo Action and having to get our programs down to the bare bones. She's concerned about what will happen if we don't win the Caruolo Action. "Will we ever get these programs back?" she asked. Dr. Gerardi said that next year, the band is being scheduled back into the 7-period schedule during the school day.

Darlene McGaw, Family Resources Community Action: Announced that the next School Success Coalition meeting is Thursday, April 29th, at 245 Main Street from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Karen Belcher, 55 Hawthorne Street, parent: She asked about kindergarten students receiving resource services and what decisions have been made for them now that kindergarten will only be half-day. Dr. Gerardi addressed this question, saying these services will be provided after their kindergarten time and will not take away from their time in kindergarten. Gerardi said that there will be one or two self-contained kindergarten classes and referred her to Carole Lerner.

Jeff Hardy, 243 Carnation Street: Asked for clarification on where the Title 1 funds will be used next year if they aren't going to be paying for the second half of all-day kindergarten. Dr. Gerardi explained that the funds will be used to address other mandates that we have to address. Hardy said he went to the City Council meeting this week and asked Mayor Fontaine about the school department not paying its health bills and problems about being able to make its payroll. Dr. Gerardi said that there is no answer yet because the audit isn't completed. "It's hard to do an audit in the middle of the fiscal year," said Gerardi. Hardy asked about talks with the unions and any concessions that they might be willing to make. Gerardi said it wasn't prudent to talk about negotiations with the unions while they are going on. Hardy asked about mandates that we must provide busing. Dr. Gerardi said there are some mandates regarding busing and he believes we can't deny busing totally.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Robert Gerardi

Lt. Col. Dan Richard gave a report on his AJROTC Unit's recent evaluation and announced that they exceeded the standards. Dr. Gerardi said he got incredible feedback from the presentation they made at the NESSC Conference they presented at last week. Dr. Gerardi congratulated George Barr, a Coleman Elementary 3rd Grader for being the recipient of the 2009 Education Bonnie Plants 3rd Grade Cabbage Program \$1,000 scholarship for growing a colossal cabbage plant. He also congratulated the Woonsocket Elementary Schools for participating in the RI Community Food Bank Breakfast Excellence Program. This program awarded schools \$1,000 if more than 50% of students participated in the School Breakfast program for a month. Kevin Coleman and Citizens Memorial were awarded checks and Bernon Heights, Governor Pothier, Harris Elementary and Fifth Avenue will be soon notified of their pending awards. Gerardi announced that Principal George Nasuti was honored and named "Athletic Director of the Year" by his peers from the RI Interscholastic League Association and listed his accomplishments in that position with various sports having winning seasons. Gerardi noted that Woonsocket Middle School was featured in the April 2010 issue of American Libraries magazine for its unique design of the Villa Nova Library Media Center and credited the architects from Ai3 for the design. He read an excerpt from the article. On behalf of Ms. MacBeth, Principal of Savoie, and the second grade teachers at Leo Savoie Elementary School, he extended their gratitude to Charles Myers, WACTC teacher, and his construction students at the Career and Technical Center for their time and efforts in supplying Savoie with mathematical geoboards. The second grade students will use these tools to aid and extend their learning of geometric shapes, area and perimeter. Gerardi congratulated Halle Rasco, a junior at the WACTC, who won the RI Blood Center T-Shirt contest. Her winning design was a splash of red on a black t-shirt with RI Blood Center logo seeping through. Halle was chosen one of three finalists in a community wide online vote. Gerardi announced that Harris Elementary School hosted Reading Week this week. Volunteers were asked to read to students every day and the turnout has been very successful.

Motion to receive and place on file: E. Nadeau

2nd: A. Forcier (Unanimously Approved)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 24, 2010 OPEN/CLOSED

Motion to approve as corrected: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

Mrs. Majewski made a correction on the Open Session Minutes on Page 2, under Unfinished Business #1. In the 6th Sentence from the bottom, it should read: *Mrs. Majewski agreed with Mrs. Nadeau and asked if we can tell them we can't provide the busing for "days outside the public school calendar" because it's going to cost us more money.* Majewski made another revision Under New Business #1, Page 3, 3rd Sentence. It should read: *"Will the teachers be required to adhere to wearing uniforms?" asked Phongsavanh.*

Ms. Phongsavanh asked if New Business #1 could be taken out of order. The WSC members agreed.

NEW BUSINESS: (Taken out of order)

1. Discussion of ELO Policy – V. Phongsavanh

Dr. Gerardi explained what an extended learning opportunity (ELO) is. "It is an acknowledgement that everyone has opportunities to learn all day long and that students who have structured outside activities that align with the RIDE state standards should be allowed to apply those learning activities to their graduation requirements." School Committee Member Phongsavanh asked him to review the Manchester NH Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) policy and make a recommendation for a Woonsocket ELO policy tonight. Upon further investigation, Gerardi found that our WED Policy P3-3.6 did not accurately reflect the current Graduation and Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements that have been voted on, approved and placed in our Woonsocket High School Student Handbook in the past. He reviewed the Manchester ELO policy with Linda Filomeno and they revised it as provided in the WSC's additional agenda items package tonight. They have included the Graduation and Proficiency Based Graduation

Requirements with the Extended Learning Opportunities Policy under P3-3.6. He said that Ms. Phongsavanh would like to have the full committee consider this recommendation as a 1st passage of a revised school committee policy P3-3.6 tonight. Adam Grenman of RIASP explained how the ELO policy can benefit our students. "If a student is participating in Rivers Edge, it can be counted for credit in high school if they are learning as much there as they would be in the classroom. Woonsocket has been exploring this program since September," he said, adding that the Planning Team consisted of teachers, students, community group members, etc. The planning process is wrapping up and the review team will be looking at the application for an \$80,000 grant for next year to implement the program. Dr. Gerardi said he was in full support of ELO. Mrs. Forcier said she supported it. Adam commended Vimala on her work on this initiative. Mrs. Majewski questioned whether the credit being granted by a certified personnel member has to be a certified teacher because it may eliminate members of the community with much experience that aren't certified teachers. Dr. Gerardi explained how community members would work with certified teachers, who would ultimately determine the credit to be given. After he explained, Majewski was in support of this program. Mr. Grenman said the first year of program implementation would be funded with the \$80,000 grant and they would work on getting continued funding for it later on.

Motion to approve for 1st Passage under WSC Policy P3-3.6: A. Forcier
2nd: V. Phongsavanh/L. Majewski

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes APPROVED

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

**Personnel Appts. —Hourly, Stipend & Extracurricular Appts.--removed by L. Majewski*

**Field Trip/Conf. Requests: AFJROTC – Removed by L. Majewski.*

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments/Non-Certified Appointments – removed by L. Majewski

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

CDI Computer Dealers, Inc./Computers/Grants & Curriculum/Perkins Grant – REMOVED by Dr. G.

Dell Inc./Computer Equipment/Grants & Curriculum/Title II Grant

Pontesaia Design/Professional Development/Grants & Curriculum/Title II Grant

RINET/Internet Access/Technology/Local

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests

AFJROTC/New York, NY/WHS/ROTC Funds, Parent Support Group – removed by L. Majewski

Debate National Championship/NY, NY/WHS/Grant

Solution Tree Conference, Las Vegas, NV/Harris/Prof. Development/Title I Grant

The Leadership & Learning Center, Atlanta, GA/Prof. Development/Globe/Grant Funded

4. Home Schooling Requests

5. Disposal of Obsolete Equipment

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

1) Personnel Appointments (Hourly, Stipend & Extracurricular Positions):

Mrs. Majewski asked if the people being appointed to the \$30/hr. positions were certified teachers. Mrs. Filomeno confirmed that they are certified teachers.

2) Field Trip/Conference Requests: AFJROTC trip to NY

Mrs. Majewski asked Lt. Col. Richard if a cadet has ever left his room after "lights out" and not be allowed to come home on the bus with the rest of the group. He said, "No." "In case it does happen, will someone stay with the student until the parents arrive?" asked Majewski. "Yes," said Richard.

Motion to approve exempted items: M. Dubois

2nd: A. Forcier (Unanimously Approved)

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

COMMUNICATIONS: Fair Funding Report by Atty. Steve Robinson was postponed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Readiness to Learn Policy (Uniform Policy Included) 2010-2011 1st Passage: L. Majewski / E. Nadeau

Mrs. Majewski reported that the Uniform Committee met on Monday night. She reviewed the changes that were made since the 1st Passage of the Readiness to Learn Policy. She made a revision to the request for waivers section upon the advice of Atty. Ackerman to include ***“legitimate exercise of free speech as specified by law.”*** Atty. Ackerman referred to a court case of students wearing arm bands in protest of the Vietnam War. Majewski said that someone called her tonight about allowing Capri pants, but she didn't want to add it right now. "It can be addressed later on," she said. Majewski said that a rumor going around about kids who receive free lunch would receive free uniforms is false. To address concerns about shirts being sanitized after students return them, Dr. Gerardi said that there are Home Economics rooms that have washers and dryers in them for this purpose. "What about schools that don't have them?" asked Mrs. Forcier. It was also noted that maroon shirts would not look very good after being washed in hot water and bleach. Discussion took place about washing in non-chlorine bleach. ***Forcier suggested getting the parent's permission to give the student a shirt for the day or they can come pick them up.*** Mrs. Nadeau said that there is a rumor that Walmart wants to do a superstore in North Smithfield and may close the store in Woonsocket. She stressed that there will be a Walmart open locally no matter what. Mrs. Forcier asked if there will be any human rights issues being violated by limiting skirts to girls only. Atty. Ackerman advised waiting for a federal court case on that issue. Mr. Dubois noted that the revision saying "without writing" and "any logo must be school-related" is conflicting. He suggested adding: ***“Any logo and writing must be school-related.”*** Mr. Dubois thanked Mrs. Nadeau, Mrs. Majewski, and everyone who served on the Uniform Committee for their hard work and perseverance. Nadeau said she was impressed with the parents who really committed to this effort. "It took three years to get to this point," she said. Mrs. Majewski thanked the parents also and said they put in a lot of work. "They were really honest and expressed their ideas," she said, thanking the school principals, Dr. Gerardi and Mr. Garceau as well. ***Majewski said that it is implied in the policy that it will be implemented kindergarten through Grade 12.***

Revisions made tonight: *Maroon or gray shirts long or short sleeve (polo or Tee's without writing) that are properly fitted. Any logo and writing must be school related. Waivers to the dress code policy will be issued at the discretion of the Superintendent or his designee (Director of Instruction and Administration or Special Education Director) by filing a waiver request stating the specific reason for your request (i.e. religious freedom, health consideration, legitimate exercise of free speech as specified by law.*

Under possible consequences: School shirt will be provided for the day ***with the parent's permission.***

Motion to approve the revised Readiness to Learn Policy for 2nd Passage: M. Dubois

2nd: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes. APPROVED

For next steps, Majewski said they will be looking at ways of informing the parents. She reminded parents that local merchants have been informed about the uniform prototype.

NEW BUSINESS:

2. Discussion of Car Seats in School Busses – R. Gerardi, P. Fontaine

Dr. Gerardi reported that he and Mr. Fontaine have been discussing serious concerns with Durham Bus Company around the use of Car Seats in School Busses. Due to the liability issues around this concern, he brought this to the school committee's attention for discussion purposes. He noted that Mr. Fontaine has provided the school committee with considerable documentation and let him take over the presentation to provide the public with a summary of their concerns. Mr. Fontaine reported that car seats are no longer legal in school busses. He said that Bill Legare of

Valley Transportation contacted him also and reinforced what Fontaine had written in his memo to the school committee regarding this issue. Fontaine asked for information on all our kids that require car seats and give Durham Bus Company a reasonable amount of time to retrofit their buses with proper lap belts and harnesses. He recommended giving them until September. Mr. Paul Neves from Durham Bus said that they received four new buses that already have the seatbelts and harnesses. Mrs. Majewski asked who would be absorbing the additional cost of the retrofits. Neves wasn't sure at this point. He said the school department actually owns the harnesses that Durham has now that were passed on by our old vendor.

3. Discussion of Central Registration – R. Gerardi

At last month's school committee meeting, Gerardi discussed the concerns that were presented to him that we may have students from out of district attending our schools under their parent's false pretenses as residents of Woonsocket. He believes that a central registration process would help to reduce this problem. Many districts have moved from a building level registration process to a central office registration for the many benefits it has to offer. Gerardi noted that if we had a central registration located on the ground floor at McFee, it would allow the families who are registering to access our special education and ESL departments immediately if needed. Also, a central registration process would reduce the over registration of students in individual buildings which could save on overage costs. If Dr. Gerardi's recommendation to implement a central registration at McFee is approved, we would need to man it with one secretary and a full-time residency officer or two part-time residency officers to make evening home visits to verify residency. Gerardi feels that we can reorganize the current secretarial staff to man the central registration, but would have to hire the residency officer or officers to do the home visits. He likes the idea of two part-time residency officers because in many other districts, they have been able to recruit retired police officers for these positions. Having served on the police force, they are comfortable with the home visits. Also, due to pension rules, they can only work 90 days full time or 135 days part time. An additional benefit to the district would be that they usually do not require the benefits that a full time employee would. Gerardi asked for approval tonight to staff and plan for a central office registration next year. Mrs. Majewski was concerned about this being conducted at McFee because it's not handicapped accessible. Dr. Gerardi explained that the ground floor is accessible through a ramp on the left-side front of the building. Majewski also cited that lack of parking in front of the building. Gerardi pointed out that there's additional parking in a lot on the corner and suggested putting a sign up that indicates that. "There needs to be parking near the ramp for handicapped people. That's my only issue with having the central registration at McFee," said Majewski. Mr. Dubois suggested that the full-time employees that are working at McFee park in the parking lot and it would free up the space in front for visitors. Mrs. Majewski agreed with the suggestion. Dr. Gerardi thinks that can be arranged. Mrs. Nadeau asked how the salary would be determined. Dr. Gerardi said he has investigated what is done in other districts and estimates it would cost \$25,000 per each .5 officer. "How do we plan on getting people to register? Some years, people don't show up until the first day at the school?" asked Majewski. Dr. Gerardi said that the principals can direct them to the main office to register. Mrs. Forcier doesn't support it because of the \$25,000 cost for a part-time job. "If we get more money in the future, I would support it," said Forcier. Dr. Gerardi noted that if they catch just one high-needs student attending illegally, it will pay for the salaries. "What if they don't? It's very hard to prove," said Forcier. Dr. Gerardi is going from his experience in other districts. Right now, Forcier was still not comfortable approving it. Ms. Phongsavanh asked what the estimated number of students this year who are registered illegally was. Dr. Gerardi didn't have a number. He has just gotten some reports of out-of-state plates dropping kids off on a regular basis. "We are also known for our high-quality special needs services," said Gerardi. Mr. Dubois knows there is a lot of abuse out there. "Someone using special services could be costing us \$40,000 a year," he said.

Motion to approve: M. Dubois Roll Call Vote: 4 yes – 1 no (AF)	2nd: L. Majewski APPROVED
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4. Discussion of Integrated ESL Model – R. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi reported that the Administration has been working to address gaps in student achievement. As a result of their work, they have determined that an integrated ESL Model of instruction will be beneficial to students. Linda Filomeno has been working with the Parents of ESL Organized PESLO and they have provided a letter of support for an integrated model for the school committee. While they would like to implement this across the district at all grade levels in the next school year 2010-2011, after consultation with the Woonsocket Teachers' Guild, they realized that it would be very difficult to achieve with the current staff available. Therefore, Gerardi recommended that we still move away from the current split-grade, self-contained delivery at the elementary level in the 2010-2011 school year and implement a fully integrated ESL model at the four schools that are currently serving our ELL's. The administration will notify the WTG and its members that in the following school year 2011-2012, we will be displacing at least one tradition teaching position at every grade level K-5 with ESL endorsed positions. On the secondary level, the WMS will need a 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Team consisting of 1 Math, 1 Science, and 1 Social Studies teacher all endorsed in content area ESL. At the High School level, we will need 2 Math Teachers to cover the LEP Algebra, LEP Geometry,

LEP Algebra II, LEP integrated Algebra and Geometry, and LEP Advanced Math. In Science, we will need 1 LEP Biology, 1 LEP Chemistry, 1 LEP Physics. In Social Studies, we will need 2 Social Studies teachers for LEP World History, LEP US History I, and LEP US History II. The administration will be working with Rhode Island College to see if they can provide on-site satellite classes required for ESL endorsement classes as a support to the WTG, because, ultimately, this is a certification requirement that teachers will be responsible for.

Mrs. Nadeau said that at the high school level, she hears that there are many students that are dropped into the system that haven't had the benefit of our ESL program in the lower levels. Mrs. Filomeno said that these students get more intensive ESL services to help them catch up. Mrs. Nadeau had a problem with the burden being shifted to the local district. "It's all our responsibility when it shouldn't be. How do we work in partnership with community groups to address this issue?" she asked. Dr. Gerardi said he doesn't think there's an easy answer to that question, but we have an obligation under NCLB to educate every child. "Federal law requires us to provide a free, public education to children whether they are citizens or not, speak English or not," said Filomeno. Mrs. Nadeau believes it needs to be a cooperative effort between the parents, community groups, and us. Mrs. Majewski asked Mrs. Filomeno to explain what ESL, LEP, ELL, etc. mean. Filomeno explained that LEP means Limited English Proficient; ELL means English Language Learners, EL means English Learners, and ESL means English as a Second Language.

CONFERENCES: None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Gerardi

Gerardi reported that it seems that a shadow has been cast on the financial situation in the WED. He is a little disheartened that allegations are being made in the press without substantiated facts. Gerardi noted that the WED is working closely with the auditors and eager to get the results.

Motion to receive and place on file: L. Majewski

2nd: V. Phongsavanh (Unan. Approved)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

A Forcier: Congratulated Mr. Nasuti on his award. In regards to the Caruolo Action, she repeated what Mrs. Majewski said about us not being allowed to go into a deficit. "The last Caruolo Action saved us \$3 million. If we lose the Caruolo Action, we would have to make up what we owed from the previous year and pay the deficit we have now. Then we would have to scale back even more." She spoke about all-day K and how we are not required to have it. "If the City Council votes to fund us for all-day K, I would be thrilled to bring it back. I don't see the City having any more money to give us with the supplemental budget and cuts to schools and Cities that the legislature wants to make. I don't see the Fair Funding Formula passing because they would need \$9 million more to add to the schools. I don't see it happening next year. I heard they want to do a flat percentage cut to all the communities." Dr. Gerardi said he hasn't had a chance to talk to Senator Picard about it yet. "They should take the money from the districts that are overfunded and leave us alone!" said Forcier.

E. Nadeau: Said she was not amused by some problems that we are facing that were alluded to politely by Dr. Gerardi. "If they are not resolved quickly and honestly stayed tuned, because I'll make sure to tell you about it. I've just about had it with certain people in the administration and the games that are being played, because those games take away from your children. Let's hope that people step up to the plate and do the right thing."

V. Phongsavanh: She attended the RI Kids Count breakfast and received the RI Kids Count Book. She noted some of Woonsocket's statistics: 62% graduation rate; 35% of seniors are taking SATs; 2nd in the state for teenage pregnancies; only 12% of 11th Graders are proficient in English and reading. "We have a lot to work on."

M. Dubois: He praised the General Assembly for recommending the cuts they did last night and he hopes it doesn't get approved. He doesn't know what it's going to take for our government leaders to take education seriously. When he voted not to eliminate full-day kindergarten, he felt that the financial impact the elimination would have on our district later on will be much greater than what it costs for all-day K now. "We are spending \$600,000 at another elementary school to raise text scores." Yesterday he went to Pothier School and read to a 2nd Grade class and told them to listen to the radio tonight, not knowing this meeting would last until 10 p.m.

L. Majewski: Asked if contact has been made with the private schools about the bussing for outside the school calendar for our district. Dr. Gerardi has not yet contacted them because he has been busy with the audit and apologized for that. She congratulated Mr. Lebrun, Assistant Girls' Basketball Coach, on their division title win. She thanked Lt. Col. Richard on their unit evaluation. Said she is glad that the ESL will be a phase-in program instead of

doing it all next year. Majewski apologized for not being able to attend the reading days she was invited to. She had family issues to take care of and said she would be able to do it in May or June at the schools that invited her.

Motion to adjourn at 10:15 p.m.: L. Majewski

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary