

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2015
OPEN SESSION
Woonsocket Middle School @ Hamlet
60 Florence Drive, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Meeting called to order by Acting Chairman Soren Seale at 7:00 p.m. in Open Session.

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:	George Lacouture, Chairman	Absent
	Soren Seale, Vice-Chairman (Acting Chair)	Present
	Susan Pawlina	Present
	Jose Rivera	Present
	Donald Burke	Present

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

Coleman Elementary School – Principal Angela Holt and SMILE students gave a presentation on recycling and the dangers of plastic. Students have visited local restaurants to request them to stop the use of plastic straws and to use paper straws or other alternatives.

Jeffrey Partington, WTG President – He stated RISSA has recommended shortening February vacation to that Monday and Tuesday and Dr. McGee will be proposing the same. He took the liberty of sending out a poll to the membership: of 600 respondents they received 416 responses; the poll posed 4 questions and the results are as follows: 37% to keep the traditional calendar with February vacation; 15% to eliminate February vacation but start after Labor day; 39% to eliminate February vacation but get out earlier in June; 9% for other which centered around a March spring break or other long weekends. Unless the Committee sees a compelling reason that they may not have examined, there is no reason to change the traditional vacation times. He pointed out that the basis for RISSA calling for the elimination of February vacation is driven by snow days. Unlike other districts in RI, Woonsocket does not start after Labor Day and have only 1 professional day in the contract which is the 2nd day of school; therefore, we do not have the same pressures for snow days as other districts. A source told him that 12 districts have voted on this issue and 9 of the 12 have elected to leave February vacation intact. This may have some impact on our teachers who have school aged children if the schedule were to be changed. WHS is routinely down 2 substitutes per day so every duty in every period is being pulled to cover classes; he suggested a short-term solution that a permanent substitute be considered for next school year.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: **Interim Superintendent Patrick McGee** announced Bernon Heights Elementary School has 4 finalists for the "Future Chef of America" contest sponsored by Sodexo which will be held this coming Saturday: The students are Lily Lasalle and Brianna Bressan, Grade 3; Jonah Diaktie and Serenity Bernier, Grade 4. On February 28th we held kindergarten registrations for the whole district. We registered 174 students in 3 hours which is a new record. To date, we have over 300 kindergarten students registered. Thank you to everyone who helped out with this registration event for their hard work and dedication to the Woonsocket Education Department.

Motion to receive and place on file: S. Pawlina 2nd: D. Burke (Unanimously Approved by the Committee)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- **February 25, 2015 Open/Closed Minutes** - Motion to approve: S. Pawlina 2nd: D. Burke
Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

CONSENT AGENDA: J. Wolfgang requested to remove from the Transfer list on Page 2 of the Personnel Recommendations the name of Rene Hebert since this individual has withdrawn his name for the transfer.

Motion to approve personnel recommendations as amended: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

CONSENT AGENDA: Motion to approve the consent agenda in its entirety: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina
Roll Call Vote: 4 YES APPROVED

COMMUNICATIONS: None.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion on Woonsocket Education Department's District Policies – P. McGee, S. Rapport
P. McGee and other members of the administration have met with S. Rapport and her colleague Joseph Cooper to discuss the outdated policies and policies that need to be created to insure compliance with the BEP and RIDE regulations; S. Rapport submitted an outline to the SC describing the work that will be done this year. There are three major areas of focus – (1) identify all policies that are mandated by State and Federal law; (2) cross-reference all mandated policies with the Committee's existing policies; and (3) identify and prioritize policies to be drafted and revised. They will be working with the Subcommittee of the SC to create and revise policies. They anticipate that they will be done creating and revising policies by the start of 15-16 school year.
Discussion only, not vote taken.

2. Discussion/Vote on the modification of February Winter Recess – P. McGee
Motion to approve: S. Pawlina 2nd: S. Seale
P. McGee sent the SC a memo regarding modification of the February recess as well as a list of RI school districts and what they are doing in regards to the elimination or the non-elimination of February recess; there are not a lot of RI school districts who are ; eliminating this completely; they are keeping Monday because it is a holiday and also Tuesday would be a day with no school; Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday students and staff would be returning. He based this calendar off of the RI Superintendent's Association calendar; basically we use their calendar to create our calendar each year. He would like the SC to weigh in on what is best for the district. If we did the two days for February recess we would still start school August 31st; August 27th and 28th would be the district's teacher orientation and professional development days; the last day of school would be June 9th. D. Burke asked if the 5 days we had to make up this year includes the state of emergency day. P. McGee said yes, Commissioner Gist did not allow districts not to make up that day. D. Burke said Cumberland changed the February vacation this present year so has anyone heard any reactions for this. P. McGee has not been in contact with Cumberland regarding this. He noted that some have suggested having a vacation in March instead but we have PARCC testing. S. Seale stated he is a little hesitant to vote on this; people move over the summer and military transfers also occur during the summer because of the school calendar; he would be interested in knowing what has happened in Cumberland with the scheduling especially if the rest of the state has not changed their scheduling.
Motion to table pending further information: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

3. Discussion/Vote on the Woonsocket Education Department's 2015-16 District Calendar – **1st Passage** – P. McGee
Motion to approve: S. Pawlina 2nd: J. Rivera
P. McGee proposed two district calendars; one calendar has the proposed elimination of February vacation and the other calendar includes the traditional February vacation. J. Rivera said he does not have a problem with approving the calendar with the traditional February vacation and if we chose to eliminate the February then we can modify the calendar during 2nd passage. S. Seale stated they will vote on the calendar that includes the February vacation for 1st passage. D. Burke said the WTG sent out a poll; can the parents weigh in on this. P. McGee said WED can get a survey out to parents and report back to the SC with the results.
Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

4. Update on Class Size Overages – B. Peryea
B. Peryea stated the overages sheet included pay periods 4 and 5 which represent the February time frame. He pointed out that pay period 4 includes pay period 3 because there were a lot of overages that were not turned in for that time frame. In pay period 5 we did have \$4,000 paid in overages; however he pointed out that this number is on the low side because it was over February vacation. On the first page, Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP) on line three and eight have been eliminated going into pay period 5 so the overages should go down. Going into pay period 6, he estimates less than \$10,000 in overages in total. If we look at what we were paying in overages back in October and November last year, we were around \$15,000 a pay period; we are looking at an overall 33% reduction in overages since we started tracking this and a lot can be contributed to the SLP fixes they have put in.
Update only, no vote taken.

CONFERENCES/DISCUSSIONS

– **Truancy Court – P. McGee, R. Picard, A. Barnes**
P. McGee introduced Andy Barnes and Roger Picard who are the district's attendance officers. He noted that there have been conversations between the attendance officers, administration, and S. Rapport to bring truancy back to Woonsocket; his personal feeling is that when WED did have truancy court it was effective. We have many plans for the district as we move forward and feel that a truancy court in place would take part in this process. A. Barnes and R. Picard gave a presentation on the history of attendance for the district. Truancy Court was available to the district for 10 years; however, in April 2010 the WED was part of class action lawsuit filed by the ACLU; a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between WED and ACLU that addressed how we handle attendance concerns from that point forward. WED had conversations to bring back truancy court because it was effective and working for many of our students and parents. The SC received graphs in their packets specifying the attendance rates at the elementary and secondary level; in addition they received a graph specifying truancy court for 10 years and then the lack there of; as you can see we are starting to move up with attendance but it is a slow process. R. Picard handed to SC the agreement between WED and ACLU regarding attendance and

Designee Michael Marcello; Stephanie Roberts, Harris Teacher; Carnell Henderson, WHS/WACTC Principal; Wesley Cruz, CCF Family Engagement Coord.; Peter Vosdagalis, local business owner of Olly's Pizza; Dan Lanigan, Savoie Parent of 3; Nicholas McDowell, Local 1137 President; Robin Crane, WTG; Lynn Kapiskis, SELAC; Cindy Stephanian, PAC Co-Chair; and Kalasia Richer, WHS Building Bridges Student. The final interview committee: Honorable Mayor Lisa Baldelli-Hunt; Linda Filomeno, Director of Grants; Carole Lerner, Director of SpEd; Brad Peryea, Director of Admin/Finance; James Wolfgang, Director of Human Resources; Peter Fontaine, Director of Facilities/Security; Jose Rivera; SC Secretary; Susan Pawlina, SC Member; Angie Holt, Coleman Principal; and Alan Graham, Chief Technology Officer. He asked J. Wolfgang to develop the postings so the SC can approve and post.

Motion to adjourn at 8:06 p.m.: S. Pawlina 2nd: J. Rivera (Unanimously Approved by the Committee)

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Blais
WSC Recording Secretary