

**MINUTES**  
**WEST WARWICK SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**APRIL 7, 2015**  
**JOHN F. DEERING MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**WEBSTER KNIGHT DRIVE**  
**5:30 P.M.**

*This meeting was called to order by Stephen H. Lawton, Chairperson.*

**Members Present:**

Stephen Lawton, Chairperson  
Christopher Messier, Vice-Chairperson  
Rene Coutu, Clerk  
Patricia Keenan  
Luis Colon

**School Committee**

**Attorney Present:**

Andrew Henneous

**Administrators Present:**

Karen Tarasevich, Superintendent of Schools  
Gregory Kortick, Athletic Director  
James Monti, Director of Educational Reform,  
Compliance and Technology  
Joseph Spagna, Director of Financial Operations  
Philip Solomon, Principal, West Warwick High  
School  
Kenneth Townsend, Director of Property Services  
Paul Vigeant, Director of Special Education and Pupil/  
Personnel Services

**Recording Secretary:**

Michelle M. Colozzo

**1. Open Session**

**Open Session**

Mr. Lawton opened the meeting at 5:30 P.M.

**2. Roll Call**

**Roll Call**

The following members were present: Mr. Lawton, Mr. Coutu, Mrs. Keenan, and Mr. Colon. Mr. Messier was absent at roll call.

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### 3. Motion to go into Executive Session

**Motion to go into Executive Session according to RI General Laws 42-46-4 and 42-46-5, Subsection (a) Paragraphs 1 and 2**

#### **MOTION**

**MOTION MADE BY RENE COUTU THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION ACCORDING TO RI GENERAL LAWS 42-46-4 AND 42-46-5, SUBSECTION (a), PARAGRAPHS 1, 2, AND 3.** Motion seconded by Patricia Keenan. The following members voted in the affirmative: Luis Colon, Patricia Keenan, Rene Coutu, and Stephen Lawton. Motion passed 4 to 0.

### 4. Executive Session

#### **Executive Session**

- a) Personnel
- b) Contracts  
Council 94 Negotiations Update
- c) Discussion: Safety Plans

The School Committee met in Executive Session.

### 5. Open Session

#### **Open Session**

Mr. Lawton opened the public session at 6:35 P.M.

### 6. Roll Call

#### **Roll Call**

The following members were present:  
Mr. Lawton, Mr. Messier, Mr. Coutu, Mrs. Keenan,  
and Mr. Colon.

### 7. Reading of Mission Statement

#### **Reading of Mission Statement**

Mr. Coutu read the Mission Statement of the West Warwick Public Schools.

*The West Warwick Public Schools, in partnership with the entire community, is dedicated to providing all learners with access and opportunity to a challenging comprehensive education while developing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills in a safe, personalized learning environment.*

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### 8. Pledge of Allegiance

#### Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Keenan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 9. Motion to Close Executive Session Minutes

#### Motion to Close Executive Session Minutes

#### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY CHRISTOPHER MESSIER THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE CLOSE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES.** Motion seconded by Luis Colon. The following members voted in the affirmative: Rene Coutu, Patricia Keenan, Luis Colon, Christopher Messier, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

### 10. Student Recognition

#### Student Recognition

The School Committee recognized Sophia Rosa, 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at John F. Deering Middle School, for her achievement at the state spelling bee.

### 11. Student Representative

#### Student Representative

Rachel Lachapelle, President of the Student Council, reported on recent and upcoming activities at West Warwick High School including the following:

- March Madness Tournament and Dodgeball tournament – the junior class won the basketball tournament and the seniors won the dodgeball tournament.
- The Student Council will be holding class elections for all class officers on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 7:30 – 1:30, there will be a blood drive in the high school gym.

### 12. Audience of Citizens

#### Audience of Citizens

Jason Briggs addressed the School Committee regarding the appointment of the high school football coach. He spoke about the long history of local football coaches in West Warwick and expressed

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displeasure that this tradition was not being continued at this time.

Jaime Studd also addressed the School Committee regarding the appointment of the high school football coach. Ms. Studd expressed displeasure that the local candidate was not being appointed to the position.

### **13. Chairperson's Report**

#### **Chairperson's Report**

Mr. Lawton said 20 days ago, we lost someone very special; he was a friend of mine; he meant a lot to myself and the kids. Mr. Lawton then asked for a brief moment of silence for Jim Williamson.

### **14. Superintendent's Report**

#### **Superintendent's Report**

Mrs. Tarasevich said she just wanted to review a little bit about PARRC testing which is underway. She said people have heard a lot about school departments in the media—it is an important and big conversation statewide and nationally. PARCC has replaced NECAP. At the latest superintendents' association meeting, they talked about legislation in the works to discuss the PARCC process and whether or not to include an opt out process. The Department of Education did not give out any guidance—they left it up to the local districts.

Mr. Monti and Mr. Mealy have worked on the technical end—what was involved in the set-up for the PARRC. In terms of opt out, we only have a total of 36 parents who opted for their children not to take the test. Having that few, what that tells us is that we have done a nice job in informing people about PARRC—we have 1.65% of our population that opted out compared to other districts with 25 or 26%. Mrs. Tarasevich said it's very much an ongoing conversation that we will be hearing more about in coming years.

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### 15. Consent Agenda

#### Consent Agenda

a) Approval: Executive Session Minutes: March 10, 2015

a) Approval: Executive Session Minutes: March 10, 2015

b) Approval: Open Session Minutes: March 10, 2015

b) Approval: Open Session Minutes: March 10, 2015

c) Approval: Payment of Bills: \$917,847.47

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d) Approval: Home Instruction Plans

d) Approval: Home Instruction Plans

#### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY CHRISTOPHER MESSIER THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.** Motion seconded by Rene Coutu. The following members voted in the affirmative: Luis Colon, Patricia Keenan, Rene Coutu, Christopher Messier, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

### 16. Presentation/ Discussion: Common Core/PARCC

#### Presentation/Discussion: Common Core/PARCC

Mrs. Patricia D'Alfonso and Mr. Jim Monti gave a presentation to the School Committee on Common Core/PARCC.

Mr. Monti and Mrs. D'Alfonso included information about instructional techniques, professional development, and how children are more deeply engaged in all of the stages of learning resulting in being able to explain the strategies and concepts that lead to gaining knowledge.

### 17. Approval: Safety Plans

#### Approval: Safety Plans

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee approve the safety plans.

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**MOTION**

**MOTION MADE BY CHRISTOPHER MESSIER THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE SAFETY PLANS.** Motion seconded by Luis Colon. The following members voted in the affirmative: Patricia Keenan, Rene Coutu, Luis Colon, Christopher Messier, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

**18. Approval: Out-of-State Field Trips**

**Approval: Out-of-State Field Trips**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee approve the following out-of-state field trips:

- John F. Deering Middle School Grade 7 White Team to Mystic Aquarium, Mystic, CT, June 18, 2015
- West Warwick High School Grades 9-12 Music Students to Aladdin the Musical on Broadway, New York, NY, May 24, 2015
- Greenbush Elementary School Grade 2 Students to Capron Park/Zoo, Attleboro, MA, May 5, 2015

**MOTION**

**MOTION MADE BY LUIS COLON THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE FOLLOWING OUT-OF-STATE FIELD TRIPS:**

- **JOHN F. DEERING MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADE 7 WHITE TEAM TO MYSTIC AQUARIUM, MYSTIC, CT, JUNE 18, 2015**
- **WEST WARWICK HIGH SCHOOL GRADES 9-12 MUSIC STUDENTS TO ALADDIN THE MUSICAL ON BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NY, MAY 24, 2015**
- **GREENBUSH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GRADE 2 STUDENTS TO CAPRON PARK/ZOO, ATTLEBORO, MA, MAY 5, 2015**

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Motion seconded by Christopher Messier, for discussion

Mrs. Keenan asked what the number of chaperones is for the third field trip—what is the required number? Mrs. Tarasevich responded the ratio is usually 10 to 1 for this grade level.

The following members voted in the affirmative: Rene Coutu, Patricia Keenan, Christopher Messier, Luis Colon, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

### 19. Approval: Parental Leave

#### Approval: Parental Leave: Grade 1 Teacher – John F. Horgan Elementary School

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee approve the request for parental leave submitted by Ololade Williams, Grade 1 teacher at John F. Horgan Elementary School, April 29 through May 29, 2015.

#### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY CHRISTOPHER MESSIER THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE REQUEST FOR PARENTAL LEAVE SUBMITTED BY OLOLADE WILLIAMS, GRADE 1 TEACHER AT JOHN F. HORGAN ELEMENARY SCHOOL, APRIL 29 THROUGH MAY 29, 2015.** Motion seconded by Rene Coutu.

The following members voted in the affirmative: Patricia Keenan, Luis Colon, Rene Coutu, Christopher Messier, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

### 20. Acceptance of Resignations for Retirement Purposes

#### Acceptance of Resignations for Retirement Purposes

##### a) **Speech-Language Pathologist – Maisie E. Quinn School**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement from Linda White, Speech-Language Pathologist at Maisie E. Quinn School, effective May 8, 2015.

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### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY PATRICIA KEENAN THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF RETIREMENT FROM LINDA WHITE, SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST AT MAISIE E. QUINN SCHOOL, EFFECTIVE MAY 8, 2015.** Motion seconded by Christopher Messier. The following members voted in the affirmative: Luis Colon, Rene Coutu, Christopher Messier, Patricia Keenan, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

#### **b) Library Media Specialist – John F. Deering Middle School**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement from Jacquelyn Lamoureux, Library-Media Specialist at John F. Deering Middle School, effective at the end of the 2014-2015 school year.

### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY CHRISTOPHER MESSIER THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF RETIREMENT FROM JACQUELYN LAMOUREUX, LIBRARY-MEDIA SPECIALIST AT JOHN F. DEERING MIDDLE SCHOOL, EFFECTIVE AT THE END OF THE 2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR.** Motion seconded by Rene Coutu. The following members voted in the affirmative: Luis Colon, Patricia Keenan, Rene Coutu, Christopher Messier, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

## **21. Acceptance of Resignations**

### **Acceptance of Resignations**

#### **a) Part-Time Custodian – Maisie E. Quinn School**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee accept the resignation of Richard Lizotte, Jr., from the position of part-time custodian at Maisie E. Quinn School, effective February 27, 2015.

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**MOTION**

**MOTION MADE BY LUIS COLON THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF RICHARD LIZOTTE, JR., FROM THE POSITION OF PART-TIME CUSTODIAN AT MAISIE E. QUINN SCHOOL, EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 27, 2015.** Motion seconded by Christopher Messier. The following members voted in the affirmative: Patricia Keenan, Rene Coutu, Christopher Messier, Luis Colon, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

**b) Saturday Ramp-Up Teacher Assistant – Wakefield Hills Elementary School**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee accept the resignation from Della Lepore from the position of Saturday Ramp-Up Teacher Assistant at Wakefield Hills Elementary School, effective March 11, 2015.

**MOTION**

**MOTION MADE BY CHRISTOPHER MESSIER THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION FROM DELLA LEPORE FROM THE POSITION OF SATURDAY RAMP-UP TEACHER ASSISTANT AT WAKEFIELD HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, EFFECTIVE MARCH 11, 2015.** Motion seconded by Patricia Keenan. The following members voted in the affirmative: Rene Coutu, Luis Colon, Patricia Keenan, Christopher Messier, and Stephen Lawton.

**22. Consent to Superintendent's Appointments**

**Consent to Superintendent's Appointments:**

**a) Part-Time Kindergarten Teacher Assistant (PCA/Floater) – John F. Horgan Elementary School (FUNDING SOURCE: LOCAL)**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee provide advice and consent to the appointment of Barbara Rudolf to the position of Part-Time Kindergarten Teacher Assistant (PCA/Floater) at John F. Horgan Elementary School, effective March 13, 2015.

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### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY LUIS COLON THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROVIDE ADVICE AND CONSENT TO THE APPOINTMENT OF BARBARA RUDOLF TO THE POSITION OF PART-TIME KINDERGARTEN TEACHER ASSISTANT (PCA/FLOATER) AT JOHN F. HORGAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, EFFECTIVE MARCH 13, 2015.** Motion seconded by Christopher Messier, for discussion.

Mr. Vigeant provided background information regarding Barbara Rudolf's education and experience.

The following members voted in the affirmative: Rene Coutu, Patricia Keenan, Christopher Messier, Luis Colon, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

The School Committee congratulated and welcomed Barbara Rudolf.

### **b) Part-Time Bus Monitor – West Warwick Public Schools (FUNDING SOURCE: LOCAL)**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee provide advice and consent to the appointment of Samir Al-Shabazz to the position of part-time bus monitor for the West Warwick Public Schools, effective immediately.

### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY CHRISTOPHER MESSIER THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROVIDE ADVICE AND CONSENT TO THE APPOINTMENT OF SAMIR AL-SHABAZZ TO THE POSITION OF PART-TIME BUS MONITOR FOR THE WEST WARWICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.** Motion seconded by Luis Colon, for discussion.

Mr. Vigeant provided background information regarding Samir Al-Shabazz's experience.

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The following members voted in the affirmative: Patricia Lawton, Rene Coutu, Luis Colon, Christopher Messier, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

The School Committee congratulated and welcomed Samir Al-Shabazz.

### **c) Teachers – ESL Summer School Program (FUNDING SOURCE: TITLE III)**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee provide advice and consent to the appointments of Theresa Thornbury and Maria DePalma to the positions of teachers in the ESL Summer School Program.

#### **MOTION**

**MOTION MADE BY CHRISTOPHER MESSIER THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROVIDE ADVICE AND CONSENT TO THE APPOINTMENTS OF THERESA THORNBURY AND MARIA DEPALMA TO THE POSITIONS OF TEACHERS IN THE ESL SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM.** Motion seconded by Rene Coutu. The following members voted in the affirmative: Luis Colon Patricia Keenan, Rene Coutu, Christopher Messier, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

### **d) Certified Staff – Special Education Extended School Year (FUNDING SOURCE: LOCAL)**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee provide advice and consent to the appointments of Mary Ellen Vigeant and Katie Cilento to the positions of Speech Language Pathologists in the Special Education Extended School Year (ESY) Program and the appointment of Tara Rodriguez to the position of Preschool Teacher in the Special Education Extended School Year (ESY) Program.

#### **MOTION**

**MOTION MADE BY PATRICIA KEENAN THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROVIDE**

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**ADVICE AND CONSENT TO THE APPOINTMENTS OF MARY ELLEN VIGEANT AND KATIE CILENTO TO THE POSITIONS OF SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (ESY) PROGRAM AND THE APPOINTMENT OF TARA RODRIGUEZ TO THE POSITION OF PRESCHOOL TEACHER IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (ESY) PROGRAM.** Motion seconded by Christopher Messier. The following members voted in the affirmative: Rene Coutu, Luis Colon, Christopher Messier, Patricia Keenan, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

**e) Teacher Assistant – Saturday Ramp-Up Program – Wakefield Hills Elementary School (FUNDING SOURCE: TITLE 1)**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee provide advice and consent to the appointment of Crystal Romano to the position of teacher assistant in the Saturday Ramp-Up Program at Wakefield Hills Elementary School, effective March 14, 2015.

**MOTION**

**MOTION MADE BY CHRISTOPHER MESSIER THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROVIDE ADVICE AND CONSENT TO THE APPOINTMENT OF CRYSTAL ROMANO TO THE POSITION OF TEACHER ASSISTANT IN THE SATURDAY RAMP-UP PROGRAM AT WAKEFIELD HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, EFFECTIVE MARCH 14, 2015.** Motion seconded by Luis Colon. The following members voted in the affirmative: Patricia Keenan, Rene Coutu, Luis Colon, Christopher Messier, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

**f) Head Co-Ed Football Coach – West Warwick High School (FUNDING SOURCE: LOCAL)**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended after a thorough interview process and reference checking that the

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School Committee provide advice and consent to the appointment of David Caito to the position of Head Football Coach at West Warwick High School, effective immediately.

### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY LUIS COLON THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROVIDE ADVICE AND CONSENT TO THE APPOINTMENT OF DAVID CAITO TO THE POSITION OF HEAD CO-ED FOOTBALL COACH AT WEST WARWICK HIGH SCHOOL, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.** Motion seconded by Patricia Keenan, for discussion.

Mr. Vigeant provided background information on David Caito's experience.

The following members voted in the affirmative: Christopher Messier, Rene Coutu, Patricia Keenan, Luis Colon, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

The School Committee congratulated and welcomed David Caito.

### **23. Approval of Layoff of Substitute School Nurse Teacher Quinn School**

#### **Approval of Layoff of Substitute School Nurse Teacher Quinn School**

Mrs. Tarasevich recommended that the School Committee approve the layoff of Patrick Roth, Substitute School Nurse-Teacher at Quinn School based upon lack of necessary certification and the resulting program reorganization.

### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY LUIS COLON THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE LAYOFF OF PATRICK ROTH, SUBSTITUTE SCHOOL NURSE-TEACHER AT QUINN SCHOOL BASED UPON LACK OF NECESSARY CERTIFICATION AND THE RESULTING PROGRAM REORGANIZATION.** Motion seconded by Patricia Keenan. The following members voted in the affirmative: Rene Coutu,

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Christopher Messier, Patricia Keenan, Luis Colon, and Stephen Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

### 24. Audience of Citizens

#### Audience of Citizens

Amy Ortiz addressed the School Committee and expressed her concerns about the PARCC exam. Mrs. Ortiz said that the opt out procedure is not consistent within the district. She said that she had contacted both of her kids' schools and asked that they not take the PARCC exam—at one school, it was not a problem; at the other, she hit one roadblock after the other. When she was successful in opting out, that conversation would only be done on the phone—she was never able to get written confirmation or an e-mail of that. Whenever that conversation will not be put in writing, that's a red flag. Two schools within the same district are supposed to be following the same policy—where is that inconsistency coming from? Why is one school on one side, and the other school on the other side?

Mrs. Tarasevich said we don't have an opt out policy; what we do have is an assessment policy which indicates the expectation that all kids will take all assessments. This policy was approved by the School Committee and is based on the state mandate that we participate in state testing; and Title I funding is contingent on that.

Jason Briggs read a letter from Bob Wylie that had been printed in the Kent County Times on Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, regarding the appointment of the football coach.

### 25. School Committee Discussion for the Good and Welfare of the School System

#### School Committee Discussion for the Good and Welfare of the School System

None.

### 26. Adjournment

#### Adjournment

#### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY CHRISTOPHER MESSIER THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN**

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**THE MEETING.** Motion seconded by Luis Colon. The following members voted in the affirmative: Rene Coutu, Patricia Keenan, Luis Colon, Christopher Messier and Stephen H. Lawton. Motion unanimously passed.

Meeting adjourned at: 7:42 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Rene Coutu, Clerk

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Michelle M. Colozzo, Recorder