

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2010
7:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.
Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center
400 Aylsworth Avenue
Multimedia Room 303

Delegates/Guest Introductions:

Attendees:

Cindy Stepanian (PAC Co-Chair, Globe Delegate), Denise Auclair (PAC Co-Chair, Harris Elementary Delegate), Tara Dubois (WHS Alternate Delegate), Jennie Kithes (WHS parent), Donna Houle (School Success Team Leader, RIPIN rep.), Shannon Gamache (Leo Savoie Delegate), Vimala Phongsavahn (Neighbor Works), Linda Filomeno (Dir. of Literacy & Professional Dev.), Kimberly Blais (Secretary to Dir. of Instr. & Admin.), Amy Thibeault (Bernon Heights Delegate), Mrs. Roberts (Elementary School Alt. Delegate, TIME teacher/Harris), Tony Gabrielle (WHS Parent), Sue Rochefort (WHS Delegate, PTO President), Dr. Gerardi (Superintendent), Ron Celio (5th Avenue Principal), John Ward (City Council President), Anita McGuire-Forcier (School Committee member), Chris Ferrio (State Rep.)

Announcements:

Special guest – Principal, Ron Celio of Fifth Avenue Elementary School. PAC Co-Chair welcomed Mr. Celio and explained how PAC meetings run.

For the Record:

Rob Desrosiers, Globe Park Principal, sent an e-mail he could not attend the meeting tonight. Brenda Galvin (SELAC Delegate), Richard Ferguson (WMS Admin. Delegate/VP Principal Hamlet) & Paula Dube (Leo Savoie Delegate) not in attendance tonight.

Delegate/Guest Introductions:

Cindy Stepanian: (PAC Co-Chair), new official Globe Park delegate and parent of a 3rd and 5th grader at Globe Park School. Question - Background checks – Are they done every year and what is the process for the parents?

Dr. Gerardi suggested the parent speak to the principal of the school and then to the local police station to have a BCI check. BCI need to be done on a yearly basis.

Teachers at Globe Park are requesting donations of tennis balls for their classroom chairs. Are the teachers getting their monies for their classrooms this year for supplies?

Dr. Gerardi, explained that supply expenses have been cut in half. However, most of the schools ordered supplies with the money that was available at the time. We have not started the budgeting process yet.

Bullying on the bus. We have had workshops on bullying in the classrooms and in school but what happens when they are on the bus? Maybe this could be discussed during a future workshop. Is there a procedure in place? If not could there be?

Dr. Gerardi stated there is a procedure for bus drivers regarding disciplinary issues. They are to write it up and give it to the principal. A student can be suspended from riding the bus. All of our busses have bus monitors. A parent may notify the principal and the principal will notify the bus driver and the bus monitor as to keep an eye on the situation. In addition, there are video cameras on the bus. If there is a physical assault, administration will review those tapes.

Any information you would like on upcoming events please contact Globe PTA/PTO. Upcoming events at Globe are Karaoke, Winter Dance, Bingo, Poetry Night, Cookie Walk. Next PTA meeting February 11th

Dr. Gerardi: (Superintendent of Schools), Will discuss Race to the Top later this evening.

Linda Majewski: (School Committee Delegate), School Committee Members will be discussing the budget over the next two weeks. Please try to attend those meetings or tune in. It is going to be a difficult year. Off the top, last year we were able to plug holes with some ARA Fund money, \$1.6 million. This year if we are level funded by the City or State, we are already looking at a \$1.6 million deficit. Will discuss Race to the Top under new business later this evening.

Title I allocations – Title I monies are basically allocated to schools based on the level of poverty within each district. Certain levels of staffing required based on the levels of poverty. Most of the funds over the last several years have gone to the elementary level. We felt that is the best place to allocate those services to help kids early. Unfortunately, this year, when we looked at the Title I allocations of monies for the period of October 1, 2009, which the Title I monies are projected from last year's enrollments, currently the middle school is at 75.6% which will mandate a higher level of service at the middle school. This translates to a need for \$750,000 of our Title money from elementary school to be moved to the middle school. Therefore, that is going to cause a big hole in our elementary budget. The only thing that we are offering our students right now that is not mandated by basic education program is the full day kindergarten program. We are going to do everything in our power to continue to provide full day kindergarten.

Uniform Committee will meet on January 25th at 7:00 p.m. at the Career and Tech Center in the Principal's Conference Room. Kim Blais sent out email notices for this meeting, however, we are missing some email addresses. Please pass the message along. Eleanor Nadeau will also be sitting on this committee. We will be going over projected vendors, how do we put this out to parents and taking suggestions on policy. Once we have a draft, we would like to go over the policy with the principals of the schools because they will be the people who will have to enforce whatever policy we write and the policy is only good as the enforcement.

Donna Houle: (School Success Coalition and RI Parent Information Network), passed out new Workshop Catalogs for RIPIN. Any schools can apply for a workshop if they would like to. There is no cost for Title I schools'. School Success Coalition will be meeting on Thursday, January 28th from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Family Resources. A light supper and child-care will be provided. Please let me know if you will need child-care, so we can plan accordingly.

New Woonsocket Middle Schools numbers are: WMS at Villa Nova is 235-6125 and WMS at Hamlet is 235-6110.

Shannon Gamache: (Leo Savoie Delegate), parent of a 4th grader and a 9th grader. Have Title I concerns for Savoie. If Leo Savoie has the lowest paying lunch, why won't they get Title I money, do they have a chart to decide where to put the Title I money? If PLP's need TIME teachers and they won't be there why bother to write them. Last month we had a very successful breakfast with Santa. This is mostly a fun event not so much as a fundraiser. Very well attended. Tonight is our second round of Swine Flu Shots. Next PTA Meeting will be January 27th. Also, what resources will Savoie receive?

Linda Filomeno said the Savoie has a .5 TIME teacher who will be starting during the 2nd semester, February 1st. All Savoie money went into full day kindergarten. When we redid the numbers, which we do two times a year, that is when we were able to put in a .5 TIME teacher. Which was shared with Bernon and Fifth Avenue who lost that position.

Dr. Gerardi stated that if you have any questions about TIME teachers please call or meet with Linda Filomeno.

At this time, Linda Majewski asked if they wanted to know what schools are projected to lose their Title I monies.

Dr. Gerardi advised the committee who will be receiving Title I monies per federal guidelines, which are based on free or reduced lunch. It is the federal law as well as federal money. In addition, we have been in close contact with the RIDE to make sure that these numbers are right. Title I allocations are as follows: WMS will get the majority of the money, Citizens', Pothier, Coleman, and Fifth Avenue Schools will be the next level getting a decent amount of money, Harris will be getting a very small amount of money, Globe, Bernon and Savoie will receive no Title I funds.

Denise Auclair asked Linda Filomeno if she would be the contact if there were questions/concerns about SIT committees.

Linda commented she is not currently working with SIT unless needed. Please direct questions regarding SIT to Mark Garceau, Director of Instruction and Administration.

Stephanie Roberts: (TIME Teacher/Elementary teacher delegate at Harris School), no major concerns. However, several good highlights to share. Tonight is our annual ice skating party at River Island Park. It's free. The Mayor is working very hard to keep this open, and we, the PTO, offered that any student who brought a can good which will be donated to our food pantry will receive a free hot chocolate. Harris PTO will pay for this. The refreshment stand is what pays to keep the park open.

Health Fair on February 14th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Administration and School Committee will be receiving an invitation soon. This is sponsored by the SIT sub-committee, (Health Committee), and that is similar to a vendor fair. Different health organizations will set up booths and we will also have our "Jump Rope for Heart" fundraiser at the same time.

In December we had our first parent training meeting, where parents are trained to be classroom volunteers. As part of it, we had a notary there because the fastest way to get your BCI done is to mail it in yourself. There is a 3 to 6 week waiting period to go to the police station compared to ten days. No official form, just a statement from the parent. Parents had to sign confidentiality agreements customized for Harris. Parents can not go on field trips anymore without a BCI check. Next one is February with the second parent training meeting in February.

Jennie Kithes: Parent of two High School students. No comment.

Tara Dubois: (High School Delegate), has three children in high school. No comment.

Linda Filomeno: (Director of Literacy, Professional Development and ELL for the District), No comment.

Kimberly Blais: Parent of a 3rd Grader at Globe Park School. No comment.

Ron Celio: (Fifth Avenue Principal), second H1N1 Clinic Thursday night at Coleman School. January 26th meeting at Fifth called Parents Voice from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Upcoming events are a family literacy night, a family math night, and a family night where we explain the report card and how a standard based report card works. Health Fair night, sometime in May. A lot of exciting things going on with teaching and learning. We have teachers addressing the GLEs to make sure every GLE grade level expectations are being met. We are also looking at different behavioral programs, we are looking at the PBIS Program to incorporate some of the ways it works, i.e. rewards menu for positive behavior.

Denise Auclair asks if the PBIS is at the WMS.

Dr. Gerardi stated that PBIS exists not only for the elementary level but also for the secondary levels. However it requires a lot of professional development. Savoie piloted PBIS when they had Article 31 money.

In December we had a raffle get together at Coleman School. Community was involved. (Kafin Oil donated oil). This was very successful. Approximately 70 parents attended, received many donations for our raffle baskets.

Amy Thibeault: Parent of a 1st Grader at Bernon. Title I money concerns. Second H1N1 clinic this Friday. Yesterday we kicked off the Valentine Day raffle. Had twenty different raffles. The main prize is \$500.00 another is \$250.00. Raffle ends February 11th.

Sue Rochefort: (WHS PTO President), PTO meeting last week. Just received transcripts for a student named Laura who was a \$500 scholarship winner from last year. We will be issuing a check to her. January 27th and 28th are exams. January 30th is make-up exams. Report cards go out February 5th. Started in the Stop and Shop A+ program. Next meeting February 3rd. Towel sales were successful. Only 70 towels left!

Vimala Phongsavahn: (School Committee member/Neighbor Works, Blackstone River Valley, represents the Fairmont and Constitutional Hill area in Woonsocket), one of the major things that we are working on is the ELO, which is Extended Learning Opportunity Grant. It is a high school credit program. High School students who attend high quality after school programs can earn high school credits. We have one student in a pilot program right now with RiverzEdge. There will be an exhibit on the student, which is a question and answer evaluation process, at RiverzEdge on February 1st at 4:30 p.m.

Census 2010. We are making a real push with the City. We are thinking of ways to make this fun so we are considering making this a competition between the different census tracks and possibly turn it into a student thing to get students involved.

February 11th, working with the WHS Guidance department and will be holding a PBGR presentation and new graduation requirements. We are trying to also make this meeting a question and answer meeting regarding the fair funding, race to the top and possible Title I money and kindergarten.

Mike Ferry, e- Learning Instructor, said that one of the new features that will be available to parents is the parent will be able to log in and look at their children's grades, seating charts, and attendance. This was also presented at the WHS PTO.

Tony Gabrielle: (VP of WHS PTO), parent of a daughter in 9th grade. Concerns are Race to the Top and the Fair Funding Formula.

Denise Auclair: (PAC Co-Chair), parent of a child at Harris, WMS, and WHS. One big concern is the allotment of the Title I monies. Especially because Harris is now getting Title I monies; while other schools like Globe are losing it. As PAC Co-Chair and as a parent, my big concern is the parent involvement of that since Title I monies played a big part of this. A lot of PTAs and PTOs are barely getting parents to attend meetings as it is and SIT meetings are not well attended. In addition, another concern is PLPs because quite a few people say that they get the PLPs and then the PLPs are not being followed through.

Concerns on the Race to the Top Grant for the Race to the Top monies; and our Teacher's Union not signing on. Understands that they don't want to be held accountable for the NECAP Test since it is her understanding it would be 51% of their evaluation. Unfortunately, even knowing the Commissioner, if RI gets the grant monies to go around the state. I think, if I was the commissioner, even though we are a nice group of people and the parents are involved, still not enough support for the grant. So here comes Woonsocket asking for money but then skips by Woonsocket and goes to the next area/district who supported the Race to the Top Grant to give the monies to. Thank God the School Committee signed on, is what I say. We might still have a chance to get some but not a lot.

OLD BUSINESS:

Elections – Bumped to the March meeting. We will send out information on what a PAC Co-Chair does and if anyone would like to nominate themselves, or ask someone to nominate them, we would appreciate that information for our next meeting in March. Linda Majewski recommends an amendment to the by-laws. Which state; a position as a Co-Chair Elect or President Elect which means that someone who is going to be voted into that position next year can have the opportunity to shadow, to figure out what you do and what the process involves.

PAC Co-Chairs – something to think about.

Parent Leadership Workshop – Requested by Fifth Avenue and Coleman schools PTO's to get parent involvement in those schools. We have asked a couple of organizations about this workshop but they did not have what we were looking for at this time. PAC has done a couple of workshops in the past, PTO/PTA fundraiser rules and regulations, as well as a DRA Workshop. But this time we would like outside support to present the workshop. PAC will help organize and be at this meeting to show support but we want an outside professional organization to give the presentation. It's a win-win for everyone.

Vimala made some suggestions on who might want to put this on. Vimala will contact the PAC and talk more about this workshop with Coleman and Fifth.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Compact School Policy:(which was sent to PAC delegates via e-mail before meeting)

Linda Filomeno explains the difference between the Compact Policy and the Parent Involvement Policy per PAC request. The *Parent Involvement Policy* is Woonsocket's pledge to parents as to what they believe their role is going to be in the schools. It is also the parent's of Woonsocket's parents' pledge to the School Department of what they understand their role as parents to be. Therefore, the Parent Involvement Policy defines the interactions between the parents and schools. The *Compact Policy* is actually your pledge based on the Parent Involvement Policy. Under the Compact, you (teachers, parents, and students) are pledging or promising to do specific things that embody the Parent Involvement Policy (enable parents).

The following changes were made to the Compact Policy (see italic sections).

Under Teacher, Section "I Promise to" the following revisions were made:

Help each child grow to his or her fullest potential *by setting goals and developing and implementing individualized plans*. Denise made motion to accept revisions; Shannon seconded.

Provide meaningful and appropriate homework activities and *explaining corrections as needed*.

Provide extra assistance to student or parents when needed *by offering workshops or activities that promote learning*.

Provide meetings with parents as requested. (new bullet)

Communicate with parents/guardians *by e-mail, newsletters, notebooks, and regular reports*.

Support PTO/PTA meetings. (new bullet)

Encourage students to resolve conflicts in a positive way *and inform parents of incident*.

b) Under Student, Section "I Need" the following revisions were made:

Teachers and school staff who care about me *and offer encouragement*.

c) Under “Parent” the following revision were made:

Add the word Guardian. Title should read PARENT/*GUARDIAN*.

d) Under Parent/Guardian, Section “I Promise to” the following revisions were made:

Provide nutritious food and a consistent bedtime *so* my child is ready to learn.

Attend open houses *and* parent conferences.

Support PTO/PTA meetings. (new bullet)

View the SIT (School Improvement Team) plan by interacting and engaging with the school improvement practices via SIT, PTO/PTA meetings, Parent Café, and other school initiatives.

The committee will approve these changes tonight with the understanding that the PAC will make these changes and send it out one more time to the committee. If we do not hear back by Monday, we assume that this policy for the handbook has been approved and in turn, we will email the policy to Mark Garceau, Dr. Gerardi, Linda Filomeno, and Siobhan Ryan for review with the Principals at the their next Administrative Council Meeting.

Linda Majewski made the request that we add a little blurb defining the difference between the Compact Policy and the Parent Involvement Policy. Linda Filomeno offered to do this part.

Denise Auclair made motion to approve these amendments as PAC Delegates; Cindy Stepanian seconded the motion.

Parent Involvement Policy:

No changes were made to the policy. Denise made motion to approve the Parent Involvement Policy with no changes. Stephanie Roberts seconded the motion.

Internet Safety & Sexting Workshop – Woonsocket Prevention Coalition & PAC

Mr. Victor Ramos of the Woonsocket Prevention Coalition would like to do a workshop with PAC on this topic. We are hoping this workshop will be held at the high school during school hours for students and another workshop for parents at the high school after school hours. Mr. Ramos has asked the PAC to try to help in getting more parents to attend. Any ideas please let us know.

Fair Funding Formula Presentation - Council President, John Ward, Chris Fierro and Anita Mcguire Forcier

Discussion on where the Fair Funding Formula stands at the State House. Unfortunately, it has turned political since re-allotting monies in these economic times does not sit well with the districts that would lose some. There are a few Fair Funding Formula's out there and only one would benefit most and that would be RIDE's formula since the money would go to the districts that would have the most need. At this point it would seem that parents and a grass root push would be the only way to get a Fair Funding Formula.

Chris Fierro – Would like to help parents and community members feel comfortable in talking to the legislatures by offering a training workshop. It would consist of role-playing and different ways to present your opinion/concerns. Would this be of interest? A phone tree would be helpful to go to state house at a moment's notice. Dates for bill are in the middle of April. Even just three parents from Woonsocket would make a big difference.

Cindy Stepanian – we already went to the State House and watched our Mayor get chewed out. It would be scary for parents. We need everyone to attend mayor, school committee, teachers, and parents. Need to show everyone is aware and supports this.

Dr. Gerardi – We have the lawsuit with the help of Mr. Robinson. A lot of pieces to get this to go through.

Shannon Gamache - would like to make calls to get parents involved. Use PTO/PTA lists.

After discussion, it was decided this would be a great opportunity for parents and community members. Mrs. Roberts would check with the Harris School principal to have the event there. PAC will send out more information as it gets closer.

“Race to the Top Grant” – Superintendent Dr. Robert Gerardi, postponed. **Unfortunately, due to time constraints this will be revisited at the next PAC meeting on March 22, 2010.**

Motion to adjourn made by Cindy Stepanian, Seconded motion Denise Auclair,
Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly Blais