

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Special Meeting #253, Saturday, January 17, 2004
8:00 a.m.

Hagglund Room, Campus Center
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Committee Members Present:

Duncan Leith, Chairman	Alice Livdahl
Natalie Mello, Vice-Chairman	Julie Scott (left 9:45AM)
Donald Benson	René Rodriguez
Elizabeth Brennan	John Rokicki
Clifford Connell	Michael Sherman
Patricia Gates (left 10:00 AM)	Margaret Watson
Mark James	Patricia Young

Committee Members Absent:

Charles Capparelli	Norman Plourde
David Dickman	Tammy Tod
John Nunnari	

Administration Present:

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Paul K. Soojian, Director of Operations
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative Services

Others present, who desired to be recorded as present (see attached Attendance Sheet – attachment 1):

Allen Berg, Holden Finance Committee
Richard Fenton, Chair, Paxton Finance Committee

I. Call to Order

Chairman Duncan Leith called the meeting to order at 8:16 AM and distributed the Revised Agenda (attachment 2).

II. Discussion of Budget Standards

Chairman Leith distributed copies of the Wachusett Regional School Committee Goals and DP4120 **Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Standards for Budget Development** (attachments 3 and 4). Chair Leith divided the members into work groups to rank the standards, as listed in the draft policy (attachment 5). The groups were to rank the standards based on a rating scale of +5/0/-5, whereby +5 is the most important, 0 lies in the middle and -5 is least important.

There was consensus that:

The recommended Appropriation Budget shall meet all requirements of Federal and State laws and regulations. The recommendation shall ensure that sufficient funds are proposed so that regular education student resources meet or exceed Department of Education State Foundation levels and that sufficient funds are planned to meet the requirements of Individual Education Plans, transportation consistent with School Committee policy and approved debt payments.

The groups reported the following priorities:

Standard	Descriptors	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Total
1	High Quality Curriculum	1	2			3
2	Challenge and Motivate		1	2		3
3	Optional Programs	4		4		8
4	High Standards Assessment		5		1	6
5	Conducive Environment	3		3		6
6	Distribution of Resources		3		3	6
7	Active Learning			1	2	3
8	Professional Development	5			4	9
9	Technology	2	4			6
10	Beyond Academics		6	6		12
11	Alternative Education			5	5	10
12	Diversity	6			6	12
		Leith Connell James	Mello Brennan Rodriguez	Scott Gates Rokicki Watson	Sherman Livdahl Young Benson	

Discussion of the ranking followed with a greater emphasis on Standard 4, due to the variance within the rank. There was consensus that the Standard 4 should be considered within the top third of all the standards. There was consensus that the priorities of the standards should be within the following three groups:

Highest Priority should be given to:

- Ensure the continued development, implementation, and maintenance of a high quality curriculum that is consistent throughout the District and exceeds the requirements of the State Frameworks;
- Provide challenging educational programs that interest and motivate students to individual achievement;
- Provide instruction and assessments that promote active student learning;
and
- Maintain high standards based on academic benchmarks that are measured by national standardized testing, state assessments including Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Standards and classroom assessment.

The second level of priority were agreed to be:

- Provide support as needed to ensure that all students can participate and succeed in an environment most conducive to learning;
- Utilize the most efficient distribution of resources;
- Promote stimulating optional programs and activities that will promote maximum individual achievement; and
- Promote and support the widespread use of technology in the classroom to ensure that all students possess the skills to compete in a technological society.

The third priority level would be:

- Provide a program of professional development in order to ensure that all staff members possess the skills necessary to engage students in learning;
- Encourage and support the efforts of students to reach beyond the traditional academic program into areas of interest;
- Provide options for learning through alternative educational opportunities;
and
- Provide support programs that support an appreciation for diversity.

III. Presentation of Foundation Costs/Special Education Costs – Member Clifford Connell

Member Clifford Connell shared with the Committee a PowerPoint presentation on the *WRSD Budget Comparisons* (attachment 6).

The Superintendent distributed copies of information from the Massachusetts Department of Education, *School Finance: Circuit Breaker* (attachment 7). The Superintendent also distributed copies of teacher salary information regarding regular education and special education (attachment 8).

IV. Ad-Hoc Subcommittee on Community Outreach – Member Michael Sherman

Member Michael Sherman presented *Topics for Public Information* as a PowerPoint presentation (attachment 9). The presentation focused on the issues, events and budget process that the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee would like to follow.

A. Establishment of Calendar for Information Meetings Prior to Town Meetings

The establishment of a calendar will be completed by the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee.

B. Establishment of Calendar for Open Meetings in Member Towns with Designated School Committee Members

The establishment of a calendar will be completed by the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee.

C. Schedule of Topics for Press Release

The schedule will be determined by the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee. Possible topics will include:

1. WRHS Construction Project and related topics
2. NEASC Report Release
3. Class Size Policy
4. Dramatic increase in SAT Math Results
5. Successmaker home component pilot program
6. Accelerated Math pilot program at Thomas Prince
7. Review of WRHS graduation Requirements

Member John Rokicki suggested clarity of roles for the various topics mentioned and who should be dealing with which issues.

Member Alice Livdahl suggested that the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee on Community Outreach put together an information sheet for School Council liaisons so that the information flow to the member communities is equitable across the board.

V. Determination of Information Needs for Survey

Member Michael Sherman distributed *Public Information Topics List Worksheet* and asked that members fill out and return to him by the next meeting of the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee on Community Outreach, Wednesday, January 21, 2004 (attachment 10).

Chairman Duncan Leith distributed an email correspondence from Member David Dickman (attachment 11).

THE COMMITTEE AGREED BY CONSENSUS THAT THE CHAIRS OF THE MEMBER TOWN SELECTBOARDS AND FINANCE/ADVISORY COMMITTEES WILL BE INVITED TO THE MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEBRUARY 4, 2004.

VI. Adjournment

Motion: To Adjourn

(J. Rokicki)
(R. Rodriguez)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
Donald Benson
Elizabeth Brennan
Clifford Connell
Mark James
Alice Livdahl
Natalie Mello
René Rodriguez
John Rokicki
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson
Patricia Young

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 12:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools