

Winchester Public Schools
Winchester, MA 01890
October 28, 2003

Roll Call

Notice having been given in accordance with the requirements of law, a meeting of the School Committee was held at 7:37 p.m. on Tuesday, October 28, 2003 in the Lynch Elementary School Library. Present were Ms. Swiger, Mr. Haley, Ms. Bodie, Mr. Febowitz, Dr. Kounaves, Director of Finance Mr. Rippin, Dr. Kerble and Superintendent Marini.

Public Comment

None

Student Representative

Meg MacCaughey joined the committee and reported that the Spanish Exchange students completed their stay at Winchester High School and that the German Exchange students will be leaving on Thursday. The sophomore semiformal dance held recently was a huge success. In connection with an exchange program with Allston and Brighton public schools, juniors participated in a pumpkin-painting program. Twenty senior students received the highest PSAT scores and three students received recognition from the National Merit Foundation. Peer leaders from the high school in conjunction with the Recreation Department organized the Halloween window painting held in Winchester's downtown area. The A Cappella Fest will be held Saturday, November 1st, at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall. The field hockey team will be competing in the tournament, which will be held on October 29th in Ambury. The boys' and girls' soccer teams will be participating in tournaments as well. The cheerleaders are currently participating in a competition in Reading.

Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip

Principal Vandy French, Assistant Principal Mati Ligon, Ed McGrath, Jim Maconochie, and Jack Squeglia, McCall teachers, joined the committee to present proposed trips for seventh and eighth grade students.

Mr. French outlined the proposed Washington, D.C. trip scheduled to take place from March 8-March 12, 2004 for eighth grade students. World Strides Travel Agency of Charlottesville, Virginia has been secured and the cost of the trip will be \$619, which includes a \$39 non-refundable application fee. Partial scholarships and full scholarships will be available through contact with Principal French. Students will be chaperoned by McCall staff on a 12:1 basis.

Mr. McGrath presented information regarding the proposed seventh grade New York trip. The cost of the trip will be \$412, which covers transportation, accommodations, all-evening security, a certified course leader, admissions, educational activities, all meals, social events, and personal accident insurance. Full and partial scholarships will be available through contact with Principal Vandy French. The trip will take place in early April if approved by the school committee.

Ms. Ligon presented the proposal for the McCall Middle School Students' New York City Weekend Project to be held on December 6-7. Nine to ten McCall students and four adults will travel via rental passenger van. The focus of the trip deviates considerably from the focus of the traditional seventh grade McCall spring field trip to New York City. The itinerary will have a cultural, social, educational and recreational value. There will also be short-stops in ethnic neighborhoods of Harlem, El Barrio, Staten Island, Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, Queens, Chinatown, and the Lower East Side.

On a motion by Ms. Bodie, seconded by Mr. Febowitz, the committee unanimously

VOTED to approve the out of state trips as proposed.

Ms. Bodie thanked the facilitators for their work and involvement in these programs that will benefit the students.

A hotline 800 number will be available for parents and the Superintendent, which will provide an update of the activities being held during the trip. The staff will be equipped with cell phones for communication purposes as well.

For safety reasons if global circumstances change prior to the trip the protocol for the superintendent to cancel the trip will remain in effect.

Nursing Report

Joan Wallwork, McCall Middle School nurse, and Robert Belmont, Pupil Services Administrator, along with all school nurses, joined the committee. Ms. Wallwork introduced the nurses and identified the schools in which they work. Ms. Wallwork stated that over 26,800 students were seen in the health offices system-wide for illness, injury, or counseling. Ms. Wallwork stated that the nurses perform a needs assessment in order to create a long-range Professional Development Plan to strengthen and broaden nursing skills and knowledge to better serve the students of the Winchester Public Schools.

A discussion around alcohol use prompted the need for continuing health education after grade 9. Dr. Kerble stated that the No Child Left Behind grant provides a 40-page manual on strategies and ideas, which the staff is working to help implement.

Ambrose School Council Report

Principal Lisa McManus, along with Annemarie Ring, an Ambrose teacher, presented an overview of the Ambrose School Council Year-End Report for 2002-2003. The Goals and Objectives included reviewing rules and regulations pertaining to school councils, using data for setting goals for the year and evaluating progress, initiating a teacher survey in the spring of 2002, TAGLIT, MCAS, and student/parent handbooks. From the goals and objectives it was determined the need to establish a three-year technology plan, prepare for swing space, parking lot safety issues, connect school improvement goals with the Strategic Plan, and finalize a student/parent handbook for distribution in September of 2003.

In the area of parent involvement in the student/parent handbook, Mr. Haley suggested posting school committee meeting and encouraging parents to become more involved in the committee work.

Ms. Bodie suggested including the history around the naming of the Ambrose School in the handbook.

Vinson-Owen School Council Report

Principal Guido Sabelli joined the committee and presented an overview of the Vinson-Owen School Council Report for 2002-2003. The council focused on three major areas. The first was Professional Development, the second was community service, and the third was a school theme for the year.

Dr. Sabelli briefly reviewed the professional development teachers engaged in during the 2002-2003 school year including Differentiated Instruction.

Dr. Sabelli highlighted the many school-wide community service projects that students and staff were involved in. On September 22, 2003, Vinson-Owen was honored as a Patron Donor of the Woburn Council of Social Concern, the second highest level of donor participation.

The theme for the current school year is Respect. Starting in the classroom and moving out to larger communities, as do the community projects, these are two goals for the year. Goal one is for students to understand in words and actions what the word respect means. Goal two is for the students to understand and be able to explain why respect is an important component of a healthy community.

The council also discussed the current fiscal climate as it relates to the timeline for rebuilding the Vinson-Owen School. Since a new building does not appear to be on the immediate horizon, the council will look at maintenance and repair needs at the school and use the Tools for Schools Program to assess and rectify any problems with air quality within the building.

In conclusion Dr. Sabelli thanked the members of the council for their efforts this year and stated he looks forward to their continued support in the coming school year.

Recess

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Marini congratulated Christina Grasi, a high school senior, for winning the essay contest from the Italian American Council. Ms. Grasi will receive a scholarship.

On November 15th, the second Community Conversation will take place in an effort to continue the work on the Strategic Plan.

Dr. Marini stated that the lights on Ciarcia Field were shining into the oncoming traffic on Skillings Road. The coach will work with the safety officer to redirect the lights to ensure a safe flow of traffic.

Members of the French Jumalage arrived on Friday and toured the high school, middle and Lincoln schools experiencing the American educational system.

On Thursday, October 30th at 6:30 p.m. there will be a public meeting to discuss the lights on Manchester Field. The last home game will be played in the evening on Friday, November 8th. Informational flyers were distributed to the abutters of Manchester Field and the meeting will give abutters an opportunity to communicate their concerns.

Dr. Marini thanked the WFEE for the support in funding a .5 Grant Writer position that was accepted by Irene Ladd. It is hopeful that this position will translate into resources for the system.

The WFEE is funding a presentation from Bill Collins, a U.S. Poet Laureate 2002. Mr. Collins will be performing at the McCall Middle School at 7:30 p.m. on October 29th.

Curriculum Review

Dr. Kerble presented an overview of the K-12 Math program review. The project objectives included conducting a comprehensive review of the content and delivery of the K-12 Math curriculum, developing and implementing recommendations for improvement to curriculum content and delivery, and creating a model for comprehensively reviewing all curriculum areas. Dr. Kerble reviewed the timetable for the review with a December 2004 final recommendation date.

Sanborn House

The purpose of this agenda item was to review the motion to release the Sanborn House property. Ms. Swiger stated that a public hearing on the motion presented by Mr. Haley was held and several suggestions from the Board of Selectmen were discussed.

On a motion by Mr. Feblowitz, seconded by Ms. Bodie, the committee unanimously

VOTED to approve the warrant article as edited by Mr. Haley.

Acceptance of Gift

Several gifts were donated to the school department that included: A \$10,867 donation from the John & Mary Murpy Education Foundation, a \$5,148 donation from the McCall Middle School Parents Association and a white board from an anonymous donor valued at \$150.

On a motion by Mr. Haley, seconded by Ms. Bodie, the committee unanimously

VOTED to accept with gratitude the generous donations.

Budget Update

Sam Rippin, Director of Finance, reviewed the Budget Timeline for the FY05 budget. Mr. Rippin provided the school committee with suggestions for developing the FY05 budget. Ms. Swiger would like to put forward a budget with maintenance of effort and the restoration of materials and supplies. A maintenance of effort budget includes maintaining class size, as the high school has not had increased staffing with the increase in enrollment.

Mr. Rippin also reviewed the projections of the FY2004 operating expenses for the school department based on September actuals. The projection shows a \$34,210 deficit that is made up primarily from lack of expected reimbursement from the Department of Education from its newly instituted circuit breaker program. Dr. Marini has suggested a budget freeze.

School Committee Reports

Mr. Edward O'Connell has invited the school committee to participate in the Veteran's Day parade, which will take place on November 11th at 9:45 a.m. at Laraway Road.

Roll Call

Ms. Swiger stated the need for an executive session for the purpose of litigation.

Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 11:07 p.m.

V. James Marini
Secretary