

Warwick Community Outreach Educational Committee
Minutes for May 5, 2016

Members Present: Sarah Callahan, Nathan Cornell (co-chair), Ed Ladouceur, June Marchant, Darlene Netcoh (clerk), Michael Pierce, Anthony Sinapi

- I. Call to Order:** Nathan Cornell officially called the meeting to order at 6:20 pm.
- II. Vote to Approve Minutes:** The committee voted to approve the minutes of April 6, 2016.
- III. Discussion: Review of Topics Discussed at Previous Meeting.** The committee reviewed the issues, particularly the elimination of Reading Recovery and the problems with special education.
- IV. Discussion: Warwick Students' Advisory Committee Report**
 - A.** Mr. Cornell reported that the first meeting of this committee was held the previous week. There were a total of five students representing Toll Gate, Warwick Vets, and Pilgrim.
 - B.** Mr. Cornell shared the following suggestions and concerns from the students at the meeting and later e-mailed the list, which is included here:
 - Teachers are concerned about their future and being laid off.
 - There are concerns that classes might be cut due to the laying off of teachers.
 - Considerable work will need to be done to Pilgrim over the summer.
 - Integration of new programs could benefit students.
 - Sports will be a lot better next year.
 - Fewer opportunities for students in sports programs.
 - Division of students in favor or against incoming students.
 - Problems with PARCC testing.
 - Hacking incident; things on PARCC are not all in curriculum.
 - PARCC is very difficult.
 - Students don't take PARCC seriously because it doesn't count.
 - Questions about Vets-Pilgrim shadowing.
 - Consolidation is going to be stressful to students due to schools being more crowded.
 - Will there be a Vets day like a freshman day?
 - Difference between shadowing and finding one's own classes; pairing students with students who are in different level classes.
- V. Discussion: Reading Recovery/Literacy**
 - A.** Karen Bachus had wanted this topic on the agenda. Michael Pierce reported that at the April 28, 2016 Warwick School Committee Special Meeting about the budget, Ms. Bachus had made a "valiant effort" to save the program. She had facts and figures, but one member of the school committee made Reading Recovery "sound like a cult." Mr. Pierce said that it was frustrating that the members of the school committee did not understand what the program meant.
 - B.** Darlene Netcoh said that the superintendent once again tried to use the Grade 2 September STAR results to prove that Reading Recovery does not work. At a previous school committee meeting the ELA director had explained that the September scores reflect summer learning loss, and one should use the December

and May scores instead. At a previous school committee meeting Bob Bushell, the retired director of elementary education, waited until “Public Comment” at the end of the meeting to explain that the district had eliminated Reading Recovery once and then brought it back because scores had dropped without it.

- C. June Marchant said that recently collected data indicated that many students had been exited by the end of the second grade. If a student still has difficulty reading after having had Reading Recovery, then he or she has other learning issues that need to be addressed.
- D. Mr. Pierce said that it does not make sense to say that we are doing terrible at reading but then cut the number of reading specialists.
- E. Ms. Netcoh brought up that the district created six new “math interventionist” positions while the administration laid off nine math teachers.
- F. Ed Ladouceur said that we are paying unemployment to nine people and hiring six more.
- G. There was a discussion about the sixty-five layoffs that are in violation of the contract, which even though is expired is still in effect until a successor agreement is reached.
- H. Ms. Netcoh said that they are adding administrators to the buildings but are eliminating teachers.
- I. Mr. Ladouceur said that he was going through the budget.
- J. The committee discussed the amount of money the district has been spending, especially the previous week at the April 28 meeting.
- K. Mr. Ladouceur discussed West Bay Community Health and questions that he has about a certain line item.
- L. Anthony Sinapi said that there is some oversight available in the city charter. The City Council can only vote “yay” or “nay” to the overall budget. He said that when the budget is presented there are line items, but the city council approves it as a whole. The charter says that there are expenditure limits. At the end of the fiscal year the surplus goes back unless expended or lawfully encumbered.
- M. There was a discussion that members of the school committee should be qualified to be on the school committee. They should know something about education. Mr. Ladouceur said that to be on the contractor’s board, one must have experience.

VI. Discussion: Special Education

- A. Mr. Cornell reported that at the City Council meeting on May 2 the council approved the resolution to investigate the special education department.
- B. Mr. Ladouceur said that he was going to meet with the superintendent tomorrow, and he has a meeting on May 17. The Mayor has become involved. Mr. Ladouceur said that on Tuesday he sent an e-mail to the City Council and the superintendent. He said that he has reached out to Dr. Thornton, who has agreed to provide an outside special investigator. Mr. Ladouceur commented that we accomplished initially what we wanted. We created public awareness, and now, hopefully, people are not afraid to speak out. He said there is huge support from the City Council. As the prime sponsor of the resolution, Mr. Ladouceur or his designee will sit in on the selection of the independent investigator. This committee will not compromise the investigation. Since the City Council meeting

Mr. Ladouceur has received even more calls and e-mails. He said that even though there is a national average of 12% IEPs in a district, and we have 17%, we can't compress just to reach 12%.

- C. Mr. Pierce said that this committee has succeed in opening communications between both sides. He said that this committee has allowed an avenue for this issue to be brought forward. The school committee members have direct contact with central administrators but not with teachers.

- D. Mr. Sinapi said that the best part will be the outreach.

VII. Discussion: Warwick School Committee's Approved Budget. This topic was covered earlier in the meeting.

VIII. Discussion: Warwick Schools/City Council Funding. The school department will present its budget on May 21.

IX. Information and Proposals from Committee Members: Mr. Cornell and Mr. Ladouceur discussed the future of this committee.

X. Public Comment: There were no members of the public present.

XI. Next Meeting: June 1, 2016

XII. Adjournment: 8:20 pm