

Volume 1

Pages 1-18

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WAPPINGERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PUBLIC HEARING  
"CONTRACT FOR EXCELLENCE"  
~~~~~

DATE: April 21, 2008

TIME: 7:20 p.m.

LOCATION: Wappingers Junior High School
30 Major McDonald Way
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

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Lisamarie Harden-McGrath  
Shorthand Reporter  
107 Parkdale Drive,  
New Windsor, NY 12553  
(845) 565-7601

## 04/21/08 C4E PUBLIC HEARING

1 PRESENT:

2

CHRISTINE BRADY  
(Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction)

3

4

ROGER D'AQUINO  
(Vice-President, Board of Education)

5

DR. CHARLES HILL  
(Deputy Superintendent, Tech, Testing & Assessments)

6

7

JOHANNA HUDAK  
(Director, Special Education & Related Services)

8

DEBORAH KUTER  
(President, Board of Education)

9

10 MICHELE S. MOLONEY  
(School Business Manager)

11

SUSAN PENNEY  
(District Clerk)

12

13 RICHARD A. POWELL  
(Superintendent of Schools)

14

JOANNE SEREDA  
(Director, Human Resources)

15

16 G. THOMAS STELLA  
(Director, Administration Support)

17

DR. CHERYL THOMAS  
(Assistant Superintendent, Administration)

18

19

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

20

DOUGLASS BITTEKER  
JOSEPH INCORONOTO  
ANTHONY LOCICERO  
JOSEPH PORPORA  
SEBASTIAN RUTIGLIANO  
MARILYNN SHULTZ

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1 DEBORAH KUTER: I'd like to call the  
2 meeting to order. Could we all stand for the  
3 pledge, please?

4  
5 (Whereupon the Pledge of Allegiance  
6 was recited by all present.)

7  
8 DEBORAH KUTER: I'm going to turn the  
9 microphone over to the Superintendent.

10 RICHARD POWELL: Good evening,  
11 everyone. Thank you for joining us. The first  
12 part of tonight's meeting is a public hearing  
13 on the contract for excellence. Last year the  
14 district, along with -- I think -- 54 other  
15 districts in the state was put on what they  
16 call a contract for excellence, which requires  
17 you to do a variety of things. And we'll talk  
18 about that as a lead-in with Dr. Thomas. But  
19 one of the requirements of a district that is  
20 under contract is that they must conduct a  
21 public hearing. And a public hearing must  
22 have a transcript of that hearing -- which we  
23 have this evening -- and a copy of that  
24 transcript needs to be filed with the contract  
25 that goes to the state in terms of how you

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1 intend to spend monies. There's a rubric  
2 in terms of how the district gets on the  
3 contract list. Again, Dr. Thomas will talk  
4 about that. Part of it is revenue driven.  
5 Part of it is academically driven. So what  
6 we want to do this evening to start the  
7 proceedings is to have Dr. Thomas give us  
8 a brief presentation on what the contract  
9 is, how we got there, what our proposed plan  
10 is in terms of incorporating the budget. And  
11 then I'll turn the meeting back over to our  
12 President, Ms. Kuter, and she can open up the  
13 hearing for public comments. With that having  
14 been said, Dr. Thomas?

15 CHERYL THOMAS: Thank you. A contract  
16 for excellence is a fairly new initiative in  
17 New York State. Actually this is the first  
18 year of its implementation. The goal of the  
19 State Education Department was to encourage  
20 schools to improve academically. In order to  
21 be chosen for the contract for excellence, a  
22 district must have at least one school  
23 requiring academic progress and an increase in  
24 foundation aid of at least \$15 million or ten  
25 percent of the amount received in the base

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1 year, whichever is lower. The State Ed, under  
2 the contract for excellence, will mandate how  
3 the increased foundation aid may be used.  
4 Wappingers is a contract for excellence school,  
5 and we got on this list because both of our  
6 junior high schools were considered SRAP  
7 schools in 2006/2007, and we received a ten  
8 percent increase in foundation aid for  
9 2007/2008. The formula that the State Ed has  
10 given Wappingers for use of the foundation aid  
11 is this. Four percent of it we can use any way  
12 we like. Fifty percent of it must be used for  
13 new programs. At least 50 percent must be used  
14 for new programs. And up to 50 percent may be  
15 used to expand existing programs. Not only  
16 does the State Ed tell us how much we can  
17 spend -- how much we must spend -- they also  
18 tell us how to spend it. And one of their  
19 requirements is that we must target programs  
20 that will predominantly benefit students with  
21 the greatest educational needs. And what we've  
22 done is take a global view, and we are  
23 concentrating on our junior highs, yes, but  
24 expanding that on either side. So we're  
25 catching the students coming into junior high

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1 to prepare them for junior high, and we're also  
2 catching them on the way out for those that  
3 didn't do well in junior high. The allowable  
4 categories for spending under the contract for  
5 excellence include class size reduction,  
6 increased time on task, improving teacher and  
7 principal quality, restructuring the middle  
8 schools and high schools, running a full day  
9 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, creating  
10 programs for students with limited English  
11 proficiency, and experimental programs. But  
12 any experimental programs must be approved by  
13 the Commissioner of Education. New York State  
14 defines class size reduction in two ways. It  
15 can either be creating or constructing more  
16 classrooms, or assigning more than one teacher  
17 in a classroom to reduce the student to teacher  
18 ratio. We're proposing with our contract a  
19 plan for next year to reduce class size at  
20 Fishkill Elementary by adding two classrooms  
21 with the manufactured classrooms, providing a  
22 teaching assistant at Kinry Road Elementary to  
23 be shared throughout the building, and adding a  
24 math and business teacher at the high schools.  
25 For increased time on task, the State Ed

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1 defines that as lengthening the school day or  
2 the school year, dedicating instructional  
3 time -- additional instructional time --  
4 individualized tutoring or after school  
5 programs. What we're proposing with the  
6 contract for excellence is that we provide a  
7 summer school for grades 8 and 9 in the subject  
8 areas of English and social studies, provide a  
9 summer reading camp for students in grades K  
10 through 2, and implementing an academic  
11 intervention services plan at the high schools.  
12 And that includes adding a reading teacher at  
13 both high schools, one teacher at each high  
14 school. It also includes as part of our  
15 teaming, a lab period for students in English  
16 and social studies. For improving teacher and  
17 principal quality, New York State defines this  
18 as recruiting and retaining highly qualified  
19 teachers and principals, or providing mentoring  
20 programs or incentive programs, providing  
21 instructional coaches, and school leadership  
22 coaches for principals. We're proposing with  
23 our contract for excellence plan that we  
24 continue the use of our literacy coaches. For  
25 restructuring middle and high schools, New York

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1 State defines this as implementing  
2 instructional program changes or making  
3 structural changes to schools. However, those  
4 programs must include instructional program  
5 changes and challenging academic content and  
6 learning opportunities. What we are proposing  
7 for next year with the contract for excellence  
8 is to implement a teaming approach in both high  
9 schools for the ninth grade. It also includes  
10 a school-to-work program for the special  
11 education students, and additional special  
12 education services at the high schools. We're  
13 also allowed to implement a full day pre-K or  
14 kindergarten. However, that is not proposed at  
15 this time due to lack of space in Wappingers.  
16 We're also allowed to implement programs for  
17 students with limited English proficiencies.  
18 And right now our program is fairly strong, so  
19 we're not making any recommendations for  
20 changes in that program at this time. And then  
21 there's experimental programs. We can use up  
22 to 15 percent of the foundation aid to be  
23 included with the new requirement, but it must  
24 be approved by the Commissioner. And at this  
25 time we're not proposing any experimental

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1 programs. The bottom line cost for us is a  
2 little over \$2.3 million that we must spend for  
3 contract for excellence monies. And these are  
4 the programs that we are proposing and a  
5 breakdown on the costs. Questions and  
6 comments?

7 RICHARD POWELL: Cheryl, do me a favor  
8 and expand a little bit on a SRAP school. You  
9 used an acronym there. You could probably  
10 define what that is and then talk about what  
11 exactly that particular portion of the rubric  
12 was that got us on the list.

13 CHERYL THOMAS: If you don't mind, if  
14 I can defer that to Charlie?

15 RICHARD POWELL: That's fine, just  
16 so that there's some kind of explanation since  
17 we're taking a transcription here and we could  
18 include that in there. While Charlie is coming  
19 up front, I wanted to make mention of the fact  
20 that the \$2 million plus that Dr. Thomas  
21 mentioned on the expenditure side represents  
22 1.35 percent of our budget increase. And as  
23 Cheryl -- Dr. Thomas -- had mentioned, we have  
24 no choice. If you were to back out the 1.35  
25 percent for the programs that we have to fund

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1 from the 5.98 percent increase that the  
2 Superintendent's recommended budget is at,  
3 you would see that our budget to budget  
4 increase would be about 4.6, which would be  
5 one of the lowest increases in years. But  
6 unfortunately -- or fortunately, depending on  
7 how you want to look at it -- we're required  
8 to spend that kind of money. I will also make  
9 a comment that we were up in Albany a couple of  
10 weeks ago -- Dr. Thomas and Ms. Brady and  
11 myself -- at a conference on C4E, and we had  
12 the opportunity to meet with Dr. Deborah  
13 Cunningham, who is intimately involved in C4E  
14 districts. And we had the opportunity to  
15 present our proposed C4E plan to Dr. Cunningham  
16 just to make sure that we're on the right  
17 track. And Dr. Cunningham said that it was a  
18 very nice presentation, it was a good job, and  
19 she thought it fully met the requirements of a  
20 contract for excellence in terms of how we got  
21 there to begin with. So we've done some  
22 homework. We've done some research. And it's  
23 important to understand that the 1.35 percent  
24 if we didn't have to spend it, we could use  
25 that \$2 million to reduce the tax levy; okay?

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1 But we have no choice in this matter because of  
2 the additional aid that was given to us. In  
3 fact, Michele, I think I remember the  
4 foundation aid was right at ten percent; is  
5 that correct?

6 MICHELE MOLONEY: The number just  
7 changed to 11.23.

8 RICHARD POWELL: It's 11.23. So that  
9 will go towards the greatest academic need, but  
10 suffice it to say that the money we could have  
11 used to reduce the tax levy, we must use for  
12 programming. Again, it's 1.35 percent of the  
13 budget, which represents the C4E. Charlie, I  
14 want you to make mention -- if you will -- of  
15 how we got there academically.

16 CHARLES HILL: Okay. Just by way of  
17 a preface, I'll tell you that the actual  
18 nomenclature is a little more complicated in  
19 its language than I'm going to use right now.  
20 I'll give you the very brief version. A school  
21 requiring academic progress is first of all a  
22 non-title one school that has not made adequate  
23 yearly progress in either the elementary/middle  
24 or the secondary ELA, math or whatever happens  
25 to be the third subject area for that science

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1 at the elementary/middle and graduation from  
2 the high schools. So in the case of our two  
3 junior high schools, they did not make adequate  
4 yearly progress in ELA for two consecutive  
5 years for those grades which are tested at the  
6 middle level, in other words seventh and  
7 eighth. They didn't make adequate yearly  
8 progress as a school because one of their  
9 sub-groups of 30 or more students did not make  
10 adequately yearly progress. Now, you can make  
11 adequate yearly progress by doing two things.  
12 First of all, you need at least a 95 percent  
13 participation rate of all of the eligible  
14 students at the appropriate grade levels. And  
15 secondly, by meeting or exceeding a certain  
16 benchmark percentage of students scoring at  
17 levels 3 and 4. In the case of both of the  
18 schools, that sub-group made the attendance  
19 mark, but did not achieve the required  
20 percentage of students scoring at levels  
21 3 and 4. The sub-group population for those  
22 students are classified as special education.

23 RICHARD POWELL: Thank you.

24 DEBORAH KUTER: Mr. Incoronoto?

25 JOSEPH INCORONOTO: I seem to have two

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1 sets of numbers here for the C4E costs. We're  
2 told it's \$2.2 million, but I'm looking at my  
3 charts here, and it says \$1.647 million, so can  
4 someone clarify the variance?

5 CHERYL THOMAS: I would be happy to  
6 address that, and maybe Michele can help out,  
7 too. The discrepancy comes because you're  
8 looking at the budget numbers for staffing.  
9 Those budget numbers are for replacement staff.  
10 We will not use brand new teachers for the  
11 contract for excellence programs. We will use  
12 experienced teachers for that. And those are  
13 the numbers that we can account for in our C4E.

14 JOSEPH INCORONOTO: So what's the true  
15 number; \$1.647 million or \$2.2 million?

16 CHERYL THOMAS: The --

17 JOSEPH INCORONOTO: What's the true  
18 number?

19 CHERYL THOMAS: The number for the  
20 contract for excellence comes to about \$2.3  
21 million.

22 JOSEPH INCORONOTO: Okay. It's \$2.3  
23 million. So then this chart is wrong.

24 CHERYL THOMAS: No, it's not wrong.  
25 That's the budget.

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1 JOSEPH INCORONOTO: Well, honestly, I  
2 can't wrap my mind around this.

3 CHERYL THOMAS: We do --

4 JOSEPH INCORONOTO: We're talking  
5 budget numbers; okay? We are talking budget  
6 numbers. Is it \$2.3 million in the budget or  
7 \$1.6 million in the budget? That's what I need  
8 to know.

9 MICHELE MOLONEY: What's in the budget  
10 for new staff is the \$1.6 million. When  
11 someone asks, "Who's going to be working for  
12 the contract for excellence and what is it  
13 costing you?" it's \$2.3 million. But that's  
14 existing staff. So the increase budget to  
15 budget -- if that's your question, Joe -- is  
16 the \$1.6.

17 JOSEPH INCORONOTO: Okay. That's a  
18 true number? That's what you expect to replace  
19 teachers that are outgoing with -- that's money  
20 accounted for in the budget. You expect to  
21 spend \$1.6 million?

22 MICHELE MOLONEY: Yes, that's the  
23 increase through the contract for excellence.

24 JOSEPH INCORONOTO: So then when you  
25 say 1.35 percent -- that's a six

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1 percent increase that's due to C4E -- that's  
2 really overstating it. It's more like maybe  
3 one percent or less. I haven't done the  
4 arithmetic. So you've got to compare \$2.3  
5 million versus now the true reduced number of  
6 \$1.6 million. So there's quite a difference in  
7 that regarding its impact on the budget.

8 Again, you can't ascribe 1.35 percent to the  
9 budget any longer where that number loses like  
10 almost a million dollars.

11 MICHELE MOLONEY: The 1.35 is based on  
12 the \$1.6 million.

13 JOSEPH INCORONOTO: No. Well,  
14 that's -- okay. That's correct that -- okay.  
15 The 1.35 is based on the \$1.6 million. Okay.  
16 That works for me. Thank you.

17 DEBORAH KUTER: Are there any other  
18 questions? Joe?

19 JOSEPH INCORONOTO: Yes. This year  
20 we're getting some state aid, I think in the  
21 amount of \$4.3 million. It was over a nine  
22 percent increase. I have it in the  
23 Poughkeepsie Journal. We got this year overall  
24 projected school aid of \$51.12 million as  
25 opposed to the last year or current year of

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1 \$46.79 million. So that's a nine and  
2 one-quarter percent increase amounting to \$4.33  
3 million. So some of that obviously will go  
4 towards offsetting the contract for excellence,  
5 which I believe needs something like 20 full  
6 time equivalents between teaching assistants  
7 and new teachers and monitors all for these  
8 additional provisions under the contract for  
9 excellence. Now, what happens next year when  
10 we don't get the nine and one-quarter percent  
11 from the state? Who's going to fund all of  
12 these programs that have been triggered by the  
13 C4E this year?

14 DEBORAH KUTER: That's a good  
15 question.

16 RICHARD POWELL: We should have  
17 brought you to Albany with us. We asked that  
18 exact same question, and all we got in essence  
19 was, "Hummina, hummina, hummina."

20 JOSEPH INCORONOTO: But that makes the  
21 case even further. We're tightening our belt  
22 when it comes to passing this budget. We can't  
23 just say, "Well, it's six percent and that's  
24 okay. That's the best we can do." Families  
25 are not getting a six percent increase in their

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1 family incomes. I can tell you that. So we've  
2 got to do some paring and some shaving and some  
3 boring into some of these numbers. I don't  
4 think we can stay with another \$10 million  
5 increase in the budget. Thank you.

6 DEBORAH KUTER: Does anyone else have  
7 any questions?

8 RICHARD POWELL: Thank you, Michele  
9 and Charlie and Cheryl.

10 DEBORAH KUTER: Thank you. I would  
11 like to open the public hearing on the  
12 2008/2009 contract for excellence. Would the  
13 public please feel free to express your  
14 concerns at the mic? Please state your name  
15 for the record. Seeing no one come to the mic,  
16 I will close the public hearing. Thank you.

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18 (Whereupon the PROCEEDINGS concluded  
19 at 7:45 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Lisamarie Harden-McGrath, Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public, do hereby certify that I recorded stenographically the proceedings herein at the time and place noted in the heading hereof, and that the foregoing transcript is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, skill and ability.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 2nd day of May, 2008.

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LISAMARIE HARDEN-McGRATH  
Shorthand Reporter