

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://worcesterschools.zoom.us/j/87903372298?pwd=SzFhcUNpNGJIRWR6MnRRM1FLdytxQT09>

Passcode: 475130

Telephone:US: +1 929 205 6099 or +1 301 715 8592

Webinar ID: 879 0337 2298

The following items will be discussed at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues to be held virtually on Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building:

c&p #0-13 - Clerk (August 18, 2020)

To consider a communication from the Racism Free Worcester Public School Group regarding nine areas of concerns.

gb #0-213 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough (June 10, 2020)

To review for possible implementation the Massachusetts Attorney General's Model Memorandum of Understanding for School Resource Officers.

gb #0-293 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (September 9, 2020)

To ensure Worcester Public Schools remote learning policies ensure all Worcester Public Schools administrators, staff, and students behave as guests in each other's homes.

gb #0-359 - Administration (November 12, 2020)

To consider approval to turn on the self-harm filter that is available with the current software that monitors those students' behaviors.

gb #1-50 - Ms. McCullough/Miss Biancheria//Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo (January 25, 2021)

Request that the Administration review camera use procedures regarding privacy, legal and family contract options.

gb #1-121 - Mayor Petty/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (April 9, 2021)

To consider a report from the Worcester Mayoral Commission on Latino Education and Advancement.

gb #1-189 - Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough/Ms. Novick (July 13, 2021)

To consider the Worcester Teacher Pipeline: Recommendations for Diversifying and Retaining Teachers of Color-A Comprehensive Proposal.

gb #1-210.4 - Administration/Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo (November 10, 2021)

Response of the Administration to the request to list all those whose contracts are with the superintendent who are currently:

1. on automatic one year renewals of their contract;
2. beyond one year renewals;
3. beyond the renewal language of their contract otherwise and
4. have no written contract at all.

Report to be current to the filing date of this item (8/16/21).

gb #1-322.1 -Administration/Ms. McCullough/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (January 12, 2022)

Response of the Administration to the request to review the policies for athletic eligibility.

c&p #2-3 - Clerk (January 26, 2022)

To consider a communication from the EAW to consider approval of a donation of sick days to an Instructional Assistant at the ACT Program from a teacher at the Alternative School.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

ITEM: Clerk (August 18, 2020)

To consider a communication from the Racism Free Worcester Public School Group regarding nine areas of concerns.

PRIOR ACTION:

8-27-20 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues

Mayor Petty stated that a number of WPS students would be allowed to speak to the petition put forward by the Racism Free Worcester Public School Group. Callers were in support of the demands put forward with Restorative Justice, Health, Consent and Ethnic Studies Curriculums and Diversity Counselors among the majority of the topics being supported by the callers.

On a roll call of 7-0, Mayor Petty sent the list of demands to the following Standing Committees:

1. Cop Free Schools to Governance and Employee Issues
2. Restorative Justice for Disciplined Students to Governance and Employee Issues
3. Inclusive Dress Policy to Governance and Employee Issues
4. Mandatory Health and Consent Classes to Teaching, Learning and Student Supports
5. Cultural Competency Training for Faculty and Staff to Teaching, Learning and Student Supports
6. Mental Health Competency Training for Faculty and Staff to Teaching, Learning and Student Supports
7. Ethnic Studies Curriculum to Teaching, Learning and Student Supports
8. Diversity Counselors to Teaching, Learning and Student Supports
9. Environmental Action and Transparency to Finance and Operations

BACKUP:

Annex A (7 pages) contains a copy of the petition.

Annex B (2 pages) contains a copy of the Administration's response to the item.

Racism Free WPS's Transforming WPS Demands

As current and former students of Worcester Public Schools (WPS), we bring forth to your immediate attention the following:

On July 18th, the Racism Free WPS page was made on Instagram, positioned as a platform where students, parents, and teachers alike could all submit anonymous testimonials of prejudice and discrimination within the Worcester Public Schools system. This page's intent was meant to validate the concerns and possible experiences of students during a time where conversations around racism in schools have sprung up nationwide, and push for policy changes that centered student needs in hopes of a better Worcester Public Schools education for all.

What began as a page intending to illuminate possible instances of racism within the WPS system grew to encompass all forms of discrimination including sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and ableism. Hundreds of anonymous submissions flooded in over the next two weeks, illustrating pervasive problems of racial harassment, sexual assault committed towards students from peers and teachers, environmental hazards within the very school buildings students occupy, and more. Two thousand people now follow the account.

Yet, despite this outpour of public outrage, there has been no statement made by Worcester Public Schools or any attempt to reach out to the organizers behind Racism Free WPS. As such, we cannot stay silent. As students of Worcester Public Schools, we have each seen the ways in which inequality can rear its head in our educational experiences — whether as students of color, LGBTQ+ students, disabled students, immigrant students, low-income students, etc. As early as kindergarten, students have been subjected to unfair and unethical treatment from their peers, teachers, and administrators with little justice provided by Worcester Public Schools. Worcester Public Schools needs change, and it needs it immediately, especially during a time where a global pandemic and racial injustice further exacerbates the existing inequalities between students.

We, as Racism Free WPS, present the following demands for immediate attention and action from Worcester Public Schools' school committee and administration in goal setting for the next academic year, as just basic acknowledgement of these issues does not suffice.

1. COP-FREE SCHOOLS
2. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FOR DISCIPLINED STUDENTS
3. INCLUSIVE DRESS POLICY
4. MANDATORY HEALTH AND CONSENT CLASSES
5. CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING FOR FACULTY/STAFF
6. MENTAL HEALTH COMPETENCY TRAINING FOR FACULTY/STAFF
7. ETHNIC STUDIES CURRICULUM
8. DIVERSITY COUNSELORS
9. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION AND TRANSPARENCY

1. COP FREE SCHOOLS

We demand for all Worcester Public Schools to be police-free and for the City of Worcester to reallocate the projected **\$861,309** from the 2020-2021 fiscal year budget originally meant for funding school resource officers towards supporting the programming listed in Demands 2-8. A report by the Justice Policy Institute found that schools with SROs have five times as many arrests more than schools without them “for disorderly conduct.” The Worcester Public Schools Strategic Plan for 2018-2023 states: "Experts increasingly highlight the disproportionate application of disciplinary measures to students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds...the application of discipline in the African-American, Latino, and Special Education populations deserves special consideration." In line with the Strategic Plan, we demand for the removal of school resource officers from school campuses in order to immediately reduce the disproportionate application of discipline towards Black, Brown, and other marginalized youth.

We draw inspiration from Oakland Unified School District which has recently passed the [motion](#) to eliminate its schools’ police department and reallocate funding towards “student support positions such as school-based social workers, psychologists, restorative justice practitioners, or other mental or behavioral health professionals, as the budget supports, to meet the needs of students.”

Having police in our school is rather a recent phenomenon, developed in the 1990s during the Clinton Administration. The origins of SROs began with a program in Flint, Michigan to strengthen the ties between kids and police and escalated due to major school shooting incidents (like Columbine in 1999) and a heavily racialized concept of “juvenile superpredators” assigned to students of color. As school shootings continue to happen, there’s very little evidence that SROs actually make school safer. In a 2018 Washington Post [analysis](#), of nearly

200 gun violence on campus, SROs have only successfully intervened twice. Therefore, we demand for WPS to get rid of SROs and reallocate those funds elsewhere.

2. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES FOR DISCIPLINED STUDENTS

We demand that any student that is suspended for more than 10 consecutive dates receive educational services and continue to make academic progress, as continued educational services are legally required. We also demand that WPS follow the precedent set by Oakland Unified School District in using Restorative Justice when it comes to student misbehavior, a guided [process](#) which furthers the student's behavioral growth through Community Building, Restorative Processes, and Supported Re-Entry. These restorative practices would be employed by adjustment counselors (now additionally funded by the reallocated funding from the school department) and school administrators. Once established, restorative justice processes should replace current punitive punishments, such as in and out of school suspensions, which only serve to disrupt the education of students.

This demand follows the concerning disproportionate suspension data released by WPS. Statistics show in WPS that even though students of color make up 70% of the population they make up 80% of the students disciplined for non-violent behavior. While 3.1% of white youth have faced suspensions for non-violent, non-criminal and non-drug related behavior, this number skyrockets to a 11.4% suspension rate for Native American youth, 6.7% for Latinx youth, 6.6% for Multi-race Non Latinx youth, and 4.8% for Black youth. Furthermore, the suspension rate is 10.4% for students with disabilities and 6.1% for students who are economically disadvantaged.

3. INCLUSIVE DRESS POLICY

We demand that all Worcester Public Schools revise the existing dress code and model after the Seattle Public Schools [Inclusive Dress Policy](#), which solely requires students wear a top, bottom, and footwear, so long as clothing does not exhibit “private parts, presents a health or safety hazard, and/or would contribute to a hostile or intimidating school environment.” This dress code allows students to dress in a way that promotes a sense of individuality without over-policing, without removing students from classes and interfering with education time, and without body shaming.

Banning clothing that exposes body parts such as the midriff, cleavage, and lower back sexualizes student's bodies by creating a stigma around these body parts. No

student shall be labeled as a ‘distraction’, because no school environment should include a fear of body shaming. The dress code will not discriminate against racial/ethnic groups, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, or body size/type. Any and all head coverings and hairstyles pertaining to one’s identities, will not be in violation of dress code. Head coverings and specific hairstyles are a part of different group cultures, therefore banning these attire increases marginalization of groups. Excessive disciplinary actions against students violating dress code will be limited as it is harmful to the student’s record, disrupts learning, and wastes school resources.

4. MANDATORY HEALTH AND CONSENT CLASSES

We require the implementation of **mandatory** health and consent classes for every student enrolled in Worcester Public Schools. This mandatory education must begin in elementary school and continue through high school, as children of all ages need to be exposed to effective education around these topics. The health and consent education provided to students must be free of all forms of oppression, including but not limited to: racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia.

- a. We demand that the consent education **must** be taught using the [affirmative consent model](#). We also call for the end of abstinence only sex education in Worcester Public Schools, as this has been proven time and again to be detrimental. Students who are not properly educated on STI and pregnancy prevention are at a higher risk of contracting an STI or becoming pregnant. We also demand that adequate education be provided around contraception methods and options including birth control and condoms, and emergency contraception such as Plan B and abortion.
- b. We demand the school committee to reconsider its stance on the implementation of the Making Proud Choices model of sex education. The way the discussion was handled around this in 2019 was incredibly dismissive of the program's proven merits and was struck from consideration before it even reached a public committee discussion due to former and current committee members’ morals and invoked religiosity as a main stopping point — as this is a public school district religion should not be a factor in these decisions. We demand that this program, Making Proud Choices, is publicly discussed at a committee meeting, based only on its educational and health benefits for the students of the Worcester Public Schools.
- c. We demand that all secondary schools provide condoms for free to ensure safe sex for their students. Teen birth rates in Worcester are higher than

the state average, and as a county, cases of sexually transmitted diseases are rising as well. Among these cases, teenage pregnancy has shown to have a higher rate within minorities than white students. Since this may be because of wealth disparity, we demand that condoms be provided in the nurse's office.

5. CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING FOR FACULTY/STAFF

We demand that Worcester Public Schools mandate cultural competency training for all faculty and staff as biases permeate every level of the school system, and that this training be overseen and subject to input and shaping from current WPS students. This is evident in the disproportionate discipline rates for students of color within the Worcester Public Schools system and the myriad of unethical instances documented through the Racism Free WPS page. Competency training must be administered in a way that would educate faculty and staff on the issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, classism and ableism.

We draw from the work of Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) in providing competency training and [mandating](#) that educators all be trained in cultural competency, and also draw from the [National Education Association's Diversity Toolkit](#) as a primer for the issues faced by marginalized students. Racism Free WPS would be more than willing to provide input on the implementation of a cultural competency training.

6. MENTAL HEALTH COMPETENCY TRAINING FOR FACULTY/STAFF

We demand for the competent mental health response training of WPS faculty and staff in order to ensure that students receive the help they deserve when they need help. Statistics show that 1 in 6 children in the United States suffer from a mental health disorder, with suicide being the 2nd leading cause of death in young people ages 15 to 24. The number of suicides in children ages 10-24 has increased by 56% in recent years. Another alarming fact is that 72% of children will witness a traumatic event before the age of 18. We demand that all educators be proficient at recognizing signs of psychological and emotional dysregulation for the age groups in which they teach. In addition, we demand there be an adequate number of dedicated, trained counselors in each school in the district. This will ensure that all students are able to receive help and guidance. The American School Counseling Association has recommended there be one counselor per 250 students. We demand that all Worcester Public Schools follow this recommendation, in order to ensure the mental well-being of WPS's staff as well.

We draw from the work of Mental Health Colorado’s School Mental Health [toolkit](#), and emphasize the importance of educators also having a trauma-informed understanding of mental health, given that students may be dealing with trauma from abusive households, violence in their neighborhoods, migrant trauma, and more — particularly as a majority of WPS’s students are of color and low-income.

7. ETHNIC STUDIES CURRICULUM

We demand for a mandatory Ethnic Studies (ES) curriculum to be adopted district-wide along with the teacher preparation and training necessary to allow Worcester Public Schools students to have an education that is culturally sustaining and liberating. Ethnic Studies is a discipline that teaches the histories and cultures of marginalized racial communities and the concepts of race and ethnicity. In order to adopt ES, WPS needs to expand funding to recruit, train its current educators, and support educators of color (from the community) whose teaching philosophies align with the values of Ethnic Studies. Finally, communities and students should have the power to lead the efforts to adopt ES into the WPS district.

Established in 1969, Ethnic Studies originated from student and community demand, stemming from Black Student Union, Third World Liberation Front and the communities at San Francisco State University, and was created in response to a lack of ethnic history in the dominant canon. Today, it has evolved into a globally recognized field that places marginalized voices at the center to interrogate “power and how it articulates around the axes of race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and nation.” (Okiihiro, 2010) Ethnic Studies is not just a celebration of cultural diversity or multiculturalism; it further exists to analyze how our communities are impacted by systems of oppression and power. At its core, Ethnic Studies, recognizes that institutionalized racism exists in the ways we learn and use knowledge. Rather than conforming to the oversights and inaccuracies in Euro-American curricula, Ethnic Studies places marginalized voices at the center of its goal and interrogates power, race/racism and its intersections.

8. DIVERSITY COUNSELORS

We demand that Worcester Public Schools set into motion a long-term plan to hire permanent diversity counselor positions for each high school tasked with responding specifically to the needs that arise psychologically, physically, and emotionally for youth

of color and other marginalized youth. Such a position is crucial for the well-being of marginalized youth.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION AND TRANSPARENCY

We demand that Worcester Public Schools employ more clear and transparent plan of action in response to the elevated levels of lead and/or copper in the drinking water and the existence of PCBs and Asbestos-containing materials at every Worcester Public School afflicted, informing parents, teachers, and students through communication sent home at every step of the way.

While we recognize the WPS's current and long-term actions in order to minimize environmental hazard and risk, explicit transparency on what is being done through communications sent home to students and parents is crucial in order for families to be aware of what hazards may still remain.

1. COP-FREE SCHOOLS

The city removed School Resource Officers (SROs) as of January 1, 2022. The SROs were funded through the city.

2. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FOR DISCIPLINED STUDENTS

The district adopted Collaborative Problem Solving (See: <https://thinkkids.org/>) as a proactive, foundational step to improve discipline. The basis of this evidence based program is “kids with challenging behavior don’t lack the *will* to behave well. They lack the *skills* to behave well.” Currently four schools are involved in implementing this strategy and receive biweekly coaching from Think: Kids. Recruitment for the next group of secondary schools will occur the first week in March. Elementary schools are waiting to hear the outcome of a grant application by Think: Kids.

Restorative justice practices are being used in several sites as reported in the recent Teaching and Learning subcommittee, this approach, PBIS and similar programs are then layered onto the Collaborative Problem Solving foundation for a comprehensive approach to supporting students social-emotional development across the grades.

3. INCLUSIVE DRESS POLICY

The WPS dress code was updated in the SY 21-22 Student Policy Handbook. The Seattle Public Schools Policy was cited in the process.

4. MANDATORY HEALTH AND CONSENT CLASSES

The sexual health curriculum was implemented in SY 21-22. (See: <https://worcesterschools.org/sexual-health-education-curriculum-information-sessions/>)

5. CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING FOR FACULTY/STAFF

The Superintendent’s Formative Evaluation, July 2022, extensively documents the type and number of trainings in SY 20-21. Continuing and related trainings/professional development continue in SY 21-22 including staff participation in the city’s series “Worcester Resiliency & Racial Equity Community Practice Network-Foundational Course”. Extended topics that are brought back to the building level include: Dr. Irvin Scott supporting principals inclusion of race and equity awareness in staff meetings through “Leading for Access and Equity through Data”; the support of UMass Medical for professional development on trauma/mental health (Dr. Heather Forkey) and anti-bias (Maryann Jernigan) trainings; the expansion of Collaborative Problem Solving; the continuation of the Networks with culturally responsive practices/pedagogy; and the Barr Grade 9 Success initiative and launching of the WPS Portrait of a Graduate with input from students, caregivers and community stakeholders. Principals had a training on misgendering February 15th that they will bring to staff.

6. MENTAL HEALTH COMPETENCY TRAINING FOR FACULTY/STAFF

Dr. Heather Forkey, University of Massachusetts Pediatrician and Chief of the Child Protection Division, has been working to train the district staff for more than three years on mental health response training. The professional development model has been a live presentation/training to principals, a live presentation/training to school psychologists and school adjustment counselors, and a follow up presentation of the recorded presentation/training to staff through the monthly meeting with facilitation and discussion by the building administration and staff from the Office of Social and Emotional Learning.

In preparation for the return to in person learning, staff had asynchronous training from Jessica Minihan (<https://jessicaminahan.com/>) and Stuart Ablon (<https://www.stuartablon.com/what-we-do>) on how to meet the needs of students as they return.

The sexual health curriculum was implemented in SY 21-22. (See: <https://worcesterschools.org/sexual-health-education-curriculum-information-sessions/>)

7. ETHNIC STUDIES CURRICULUM

Worcester Public Schools Inclusive Courses- 2021- 2022

The district continues to work with secondary schools to develop electives. Currently offered are Contemporary World Religions and African American Studies.

8. DIVERSITY COUNSELORS

The Office of Social and Emotional Learning, with the support of the School Committee, has consistently increased the number of counselors over the past few years with a focus on hiring qualified staff from diverse backgrounds, racially, ethnically and linguistically. The current job market shortage of clinicians is challenging for both public and private providers.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION AND TRANSPARENCY

WPS facilities continues to communicate with the staff, unions and public to address environmental concerns. Information relative to environmental activities are posted on the district website, please see link below. <https://worcesterschools.org/about/departments-offices/facilities-management/environmental-management/>

Annual reports are available on file at the building and district level. Testing/assessment is ongoing.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

ITEM: Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough (June 10, 2020)

To review for possible implementation the Massachusetts Attorney General's Model Memorandum of Understanding for School Resource Officers.

PRIOR ACTION:

6-18-20 - Ms. Novick stated that Attorney General Healy worked with the State, Chiefs of Police and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents and created a model Memorandum of Agreement between school districts and municipal police departments. Ms. McCullough would like to review the current Memoranda of Agreement between the WPS and Student Resource Officers. Mayor Petty suggested that the School Committee review both Memoranda of Agreements for comparative purposes. On a roll call of 7-0 the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

Subsequent to this item, School Resource Officers were removed from schools. Therefore, the Administration recommends that the item be filed.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

ITEM: Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (September 9, 2020)

To ensure Worcester Public Schools remote learning policies ensure all Worcester Public Schools administrators, staff, and students behave as guests in each other's homes.

PRIOR ACTION:

9-17-20 - On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues to take up with the pandemic policies.

BACKUP:

The norms staff set for remote learning were intended to support this recommendation. Administrators responded and communicated with families, students and staff as needed regarding behavioral expectations and sustaining a welcoming environment. . Remote learning is no longer an option. Therefore, the Administration recommends that the item be filed.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

ITEM: Administration (November 12, 2020)

To consider approval to turn on the self-harm filter that is available with the current software that monitors those students' behaviors.

PRIOR ACTION

11-19-20 - Mr. Walton spoke about Lightspeed, a system that monitors when a student searches for information that may suggest an intent to self-harm. He stated that the program is currently being used at four schools.

Mayor Petty made the following motion:

Request that the pilot be turned off and the item be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues in order to invite school psychologists, administrators, parents and students to be part of a panel for discussion on the subject.

On a roll call of 7-0, the motion was approved.

On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

Backup:

Remote learning is no longer allowed. Therefore, the Administration recommends that the item be filed.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 1-19-21 - STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES
Anthony Bruno and Mark Russo, representing Lightspeed Systems, presented an overview of the safety check software feature which identifies potentially dangerous internet searching behavior by students. This software is Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) compliant and is activated when a student logs into their WPS account.
- Ms. Novick pointed out that the case law on this has not been sorted out, particularly when it comes to Fourth Amendment rights of students. She asked at what point does the district have the right to search a WPS owned device or the student's own device? She stated that if the committee is to go forward with this, there will need to be a clear policy created. She suggested that if resources are going to be devoted to this, she would like to see the money go to hiring more school psychologists and adjustment counselors.
- Superintendent Binienda stated that School Adjustment Counselors and nurses have been reaching out to students and that hotlines are available for students who are in crisis.

(Continued on Page 2)

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 1-19-21 - Chairman Clancey made the following motion:
Request that the item be referred to the City Solicitor for a legal opinion regarding the safety alert software to include the potential liability issues.
On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.
- 1-21-21 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

ITEM: Ms. McCullough/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo
(January 25, 2021)

Request that the Administration review camera use procedures regarding privacy, legal and family contract options.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 2-25-21 - On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.
- 3-22-21 - STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES
Attorney Tobin stated in her backup that the district does not require that cameras be turned on due to privacy issues. However, she stated that the Administration would like all students to turn their cameras on for attendance purposes.
Mrs. Clancey made the following motion:
Request that the Administration encourage students to have their cameras on during class and draft a Camera Policy for students to have their cameras on during attendance.
On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved
HOLD
- 4-8-21 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.

BACKUP:

Camera use procedures were reviewed with the district’s civil rights attorney during remote learning on January 19, 2021. At that time, some school districts asked students to be “on camera” for attendance purposes and then off if needed. The discussion about not requiring students to be on camera was one of equity, as some students may be in homeless shelters or environments that are not “camera ready.” The attorney was not aware of any legal requirement that would prohibit a rule requiring cameras to be on but noted there are definitely some equity concerns. There was a related concern reported in the media of student’s well-being in another district and the need to visually check in during remote learning. The Administration recommends that the item be filed.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

ITEM: Mayor Petty (April 9, 2021)

To consider a report from the Worcester Mayoral Commission on Latino Education and Advancement.

PRIOR ACTION:

4-15-21 - Mayor Petty stated that in May 2018, he asked Dr. Pedraja and Ms. Marion to gather and analyze data from the Worcester Public Schools and other sources, to listen to the community and engage with other Worcester leaders and stakeholders in a productive citywide dialogue. Those findings and recommendations were provided by Dr. Luis Pedraja, President of Quinsigamond Community College and Mary Jo Marion, Assistant Vice-President of Urban Studies and Latino Education at Worcester State University in the presentation. Dr. Pedraja stated that over the course of the commission from Mayor Petty, there have been eleven meetings and four at-large community sessions. The data analyzed revealed that 43.1% of Worcester Public Schools' students are Latinx and that there are significant barriers and equity issues. He provided recommendations for improvement which included rebuilding trust, transparency, equity, accountability and quality of life. Ms. Marion stated that the Latinx community does not feel represented and would like to be seen and heard more. She recommended that there be no suspensions for students in grades K-3. Dr. Pedraja stated that the report also recommended an equity audit of the WPS and would require that all WPS employees attend implicit bias training sessions. He also offered suggestions for curriculum changes and culturally responsive outreach. In conclusion, Dr. Pedraja and Ms. Marion recommended that the Strategic Plan include an Equity Advisory Committee and that the WPS should implement a Comprehensive Sex Education curriculum. Mr. Foley stated that he was happy to see the collaboration with community groups and families. He asked for the commission's help in providing outreach to Latinx families regarding enrollment in pre-k and Head Start

(Continued on Page 2)

BACKUP:

The document has been reviewed and has been responded to within the Fourteen Points responses, most recently on February 8, 2022 in the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting. See gb #9-327 to consider answers to the fourteen Action Steps made by Mayor Petty and approved by the School Committee. The Administration recommends that the item be filed.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

4-15-21 - Mr. Monfredo suggested that the commission also seek assistance from parents to enroll their child(ren) in summer school programs and also would like to see Latinx college students be recruited for mentoring.

Ms. Novick asked that the Mayor forward this report to the City Council.

Jasmine Owusu, School Committee Student Representative, stated that she appreciated the report and felt that the information reflected what she and other students of color have experienced.

On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues and a copy of the report be sent to the City Manager and City Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

ITEM: Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough/Ms. Novick
(July 13, 2021)

To consider the Worcester Teacher Pipeline: Recommendations for Diversifying and Retaining Teachers of Color-A Comprehensive Proposal.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 7-22-21 - Mayor Petty made the following motion:
Request that the Administration provide a report regarding:
- the hiring of a diversified workforce
 - the next steps for achieving the hiring goals
 - the issues encountered in achieving the hiring goals
 - the retention of newly hired personnel
- On a voice vote, the motion was approved.
Mr. Monfredo made the following motion:
Request that the Administration provide a report in July 2022 on what the system has accomplished with the Future Teachers Club and provide any recommendations it has to expand it.
On a voice vote, the motion was approved.
Mr. Monfredo suggested that the Administration talk one-on-one with parents and students regarding the benefits of becoming a teacher in the Worcester Public Schools.
It was moved and voice voted to refer the item to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

Annex A (1 page) contains a copy of the Administration's response to the item.

The teacher and administrative pipeline continues for Instructional Assistants to earn a teacher license and teachers to earn an administrative license. The most recent teacher Diversity Grant went before the School Committee for approval Thursday, February 3, 2022. Additionally, Human Resources and district administrators are working on developing a District Recruitment and Diversity Plan holding their initial meeting February 2, 2022. WPS has been part of the DESE Teacher Diversification Professional Learning Community since last school year. Meetings are attended by WPS principals, Special Education Assistant Directors and Multilingual Programs Assistant Directors. The WPS Chief Diversity Officer is facilitating the district's enrollment in the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education (MPDE) This organization assists districts in the recruitment practices as well as provides Multicultural Staffing Initiatives for Public Schools.

In progress:

- Interviewing and hiring a Recruitment and Cultivation Director to assist in the process of expanding the Office of Diversity.
- Collaborating with Office of Digital and Informational Technology to publish a google site that is currently in process
https://sites.google.com/d/1elgeBGxqt_hRrJqMHbK9w3iTYXkbR86-/p/1cHclb9wWFWLVaWlqzOKOXwoti8eV-tza/edit
- Partnering with Tom DelPrete, Clark University, to plan an Interview Fair that Principals Plant (Claremont Academy) and Padilla (Woodland Academy) have provided space for.
- Working with Worcester State University to plan another interview fair for WSU students.
- Collaborating with the Latino Educational Institute (LEI) to plan promotional information for a potential video for recruitment purposes.
- Participation in job fairs, two to date this year, both have been specifically intended for the recruitment of teachers, professionals of color.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

ITEM: Administration/Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo
(November 10, 2021)

Response of the Administration to the request to list all those whose contracts are with the superintendent who are currently:

1. on automatic one year renewals of their contract;
2. beyond one year renewals;
3. beyond the renewal language of their contract otherwise and
4. have no written contract at all.

Report to be current to the filing date of this item (8/16/21).

PRIOR ACTION:

8-26-21 - It was moved and voice voted to refer the item to the Administration for a report at the September 2, 2021 meeting.

9-23-21 - Ms. Novick asked if all central administrators and principal contracts have been signed. **(Continued on page 2.)**

BACKUP:

The information was previously sent from Human Resources to the School Committee. Therefore, the Administration recommends that the item be filed.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 9-23-21 - Ms. Boulais stated that payroll is currently working on calculating salaries for some principals who have not signed their contracts.
(continued) Ms. Novick made the following motions:
Request that the Administration provide an update on the number of outstanding contracts.
Request that the Administration provide the actual number of outstanding Administrative contracts.
On a voice vote, the motions were approved.
On a voice vote the item was referred back to the Administration for updates at the meeting of October 7, 2021.
- 10-7-21 - Ms. Novick stated that there are still some outstanding issues.
Ms. Boulais stated that the COLA adjustments are processed and that the Human Resource Department should be able to have a list of the specific salaries for each employee by the second payroll paycheck.
Mr. Foley made the following motion:
Request that the Clerk of the School Committee interact with Ms. Novick and the Administration to identify the exact information that is being requested and provide the report at the October 21, 2021 School Committee Meeting.
On a voice vote, the motion was approved.
- 10-21-21 - On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Miss Biancheria), the item was held.
- 11-18-21 - Ms. Novick stated that she was concerned that some administrators do not have a contract and said she was told that it was common practice. She mentioned that this could potentially opening the district up to discriminatory challenges, given that there are people of similar levels and responsibilities that do have contracts.
Ms. Novick made the following motions:
Request that Attorney Sweeney provide a legal opinion regarding contract parity for those who have one and those who don't.
Request that Attorney Sweeney provide a legal opinion regarding best practices and limitations for contract renewals and extensions in time of a transition to new leadership.
On a roll call of 6-1 (nay Miss Biancheria), the motions were approved.
Mayor Petty stated that the contract situation has been going on long before the current Administration was in place and suggested that the item be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations.
Mayor Petty made the following motion:
Request that all contracts going forward that need to be signed be brought to the School Committee for to its review and/or approval until the next Superintendent is hired.
On a roll call of 6-1 (nay Miss Biancheria), the motion was approved.
Mayor Petty made the following motion:
Request that the item be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.
On a roll call of 7-0, the motion was approved.
Superintendent Binienda stated she would provide an update on additional contracts that have been recently signed.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

ITEM: Ms. McCullough/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (November 19, 2021)

Response of the Administration to the request to review the policies for athletic eligibility.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 12-2-21 - Ms. McCullough asked if the Spring sport eligibility policy could be reviewed.
On a voice vote, the item was referred to the Administration.
- 1-20-22- On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

In the attachments for the January 20, 2022 meeting, are the Worcester Public Schools Athletic Requirements/Attendance policy. Marco Rodriguez, Mary Meade-Montaque, and Dolores Gribouski wrote this in 2014-2015. The School Committee approved the new policy as well. Superintendent Binienda and Athletic Director David Shea discussed the policy and do not feel there should be a change in the middle of the year. The administration recommends and will request that the Quadrant Office and Athletic Department collaborate to get feedback from the principals and athletic liaisons at each of the schools about these policies and identify any recommendations for changes.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

ITEM: Clerk (January 16, 2022)

To consider a communication from the EAW to consider approval of a donation of sick days to an Instructional Assistant at the ACT Program from a teacher at the Alternative School

PRIOR ACTION:

2-3-22 - Roger Nugent, EAW President, requested that a teacher from the Alternative School be authorized to donate 20 sick days to an Instructional Assistant at the ACT Program. Mr. Nugent indicated that he would provide the information regarding the sick days to Jennifer Boulais.
Mayor Petty requested that the sick days be provided until a vote is taken at the Standing Committee followed by an official vote of the School Committee.
On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

Since the item was approved at the School Committee meeting on February 3, 2022, the Administration recommends that the item be filed.



January 21, 2022

Mayor Joseph Petty
c/o Dr. Helen Friel Clerk of School Committee
20 Irving Street
Worcester, MA 01609

VIA Email Scan

Dear Dr. Friel,

I would like to speak at the next School Committee meeting on February 3rd.
I will be speaking about donating sick days for a teacher at Alternative School to an IA
at the ACT program.

Please let us know when we will be presenting.

Sincerely,

Roger Nugent

Roger Nugent
EAW President