

Committee Members

Tracy Novick, Chair  
Jermoh Kamara, Vice-Chair  
Susan Mailman

Administrative  
Representatives  
Brian Allen

OFFICE OF THE  
CLERK OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
20 IRVING STREET  
WORCESTER, MA 01609

AGENDA #11

The Standing Committee on FINANCE AND OPERATIONS will hold a virtual and/or in-person meeting:

on: Thursday, December 8, 2022  
at: 5:45 p.m.  
in: Room 410, Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. GENERAL BUSINESS

gb 2-23 - Ms. Novick/Ms. Clancey/Mr. Johnson/Ms. Kamara/Ms. Mailman  
(January 12, 2022)

To consider a pilot of provision of menstrual supplies at all secondary schools.

c&p 2-13 - Clerk (September 27, 2022)

To consider a petition from two students at Forest Grove Middle School regarding plastic waste products.

gb 2-241 - Novick (August 23, 2022)

To consider monthly updates on the implementation of district-operated transportation during the 2022-23 school year.

gb 2-249 - Novick (September 7, 2022)

To collaborate with state and national school organizations to advocate for a change in federal Department of Transportation policies barring Commercial Driver License testing in any language other than English.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Helen A. Friel, Ed.D.  
Clerk of the School Committee

ITEM: gb 2-23

STANDING COMMITTEE: **FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, December 8, 2022

ITEM: Ms. Novick/Ms. Clancey/Mr. Johnson/Ms. Kamara/Ms. Mailman  
(January 12, 2022)

To consider a pilot of provision of menstrual supplies at all secondary schools.

PRIOR ACTION:

BACKUP:

Administration will be prepared to discuss.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, December 8, 2022

ITEM: Clerk (September 27, 2022)

To consider a petition from two students at Forest Grove Middle School regarding plastic waste products.

PRIOR ACTION:

BACKUP: Annex A (3 pages) contains the response to the item.

Forest Grove received 4,284 bottles of water as required to meet the USDA water availability mandate at the cost of \$22,253.40 during the last school year. System-wide, Worcester Public Schools spent \$724,387.26 on water for all school meal locations. As drinking fountains, water coolers, and bottle filler fixtures are brought back online and/or installed, water bottle usage and consequent expenditure on water is anticipated to decrease by approximately \$175,000 for FY23.

The Worcester Public Schools Trash Removal/Recycle contract with A.J. Letourneau, Inc. requires a Single Stream Recycling Program for all school locations per the attached procedures where recyclables are identified. Additionally, recyclables must be clean and free of contaminants such as food, oil, wax, and grease residue. Water bottles free of contaminants are suited for collection/recycling, while soiled cutlery and paper plates/boats are not considered recyclable, regardless of material.

## ACCEPTED RECYCLABLES

- \* Paper- White & Colored;  
Newspaper, Magazines, Soft  
Covered Books, Paper bags
- \* Plastic - Numbers 1-7
- \* Glass Bottles- All Colors
- \* Cardboard- Paperboard &  
Corrugated
- \* Aluminum & Steel Cans
- \* Materials **MUST** be loose

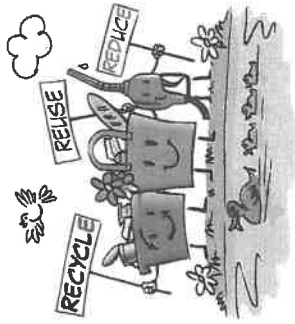
**DEP Waste Ban Items:**  
Items should not be put in either  
container & require special  
handling

- \* White Goods
- \* Bulky Wastes
- \* Liquids- Oils, Grease, Paint
- \* Batteries, Light Bulbs, Mercury
- \* Yard Waste
- \* Construction & Demo Materials
- \* Electronics & Cathode Ray  
Tubes

Visit [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) for more details on  
the waste ban list.

## A.J. Letourneau, Inc

Worcester Public Schools  
Single Stream Recycling Program



[WWW.AJLETOUR.COM](http://WWW.AJLETOUR.COM)  
508-791-4239

## Non-Recyclable Materials

- \* Plastic Bags
- \* Unmarked Plastics
- \* Window Glass
- \* Drinking Glasses
- \* Light Bulbs
- \* Dishes, Pyrex, Ceramics
- \* Foam Packaging, Styrofoam
- \* Aerosol Cans
- \* Food Waste
- \* Printer Cartridges
- \* Electronics
- \* Bulky Wastes
- \* Liquids
- \* Hazardous Materials
- \* Tires
- \* Material in trash bags



## Supplies:

### Classroom & Office Containers



Each school has received a pre-determined amount of recycling bins for each classroom or office. If you choose to place a liner the recycling bins the liner must remain in the bin or be disposed of with the trash. If the recyclables are left in the liners the recycling facility will consider it "Trash" and the **WHOLE LOAD** will be rejected, defeating the efforts of every building picked up that day.

## Signage:



Age appropriate posters have been provided for each school. Please post in high traffic areas.

## Tilt Carts



Tilt carts have been provided to assist you in moving LOOSE recyclables. Each school or building received one cart, that has a 1,000 lbs capacity, for that direct purpose.

Thank you all for your cooperation. It is our goal for this program to benefit all involved.

Remember to lock your dumpster to preserve your efforts.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, December 8, 2022

ITEM:

To consider monthly updates on the implementation of district-operated transportation during the 2022-23 school year.

PRIOR ACTION:

9-1-22 - On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations.

9-8-22 - **STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**  
Mr. Allen presented the September Student Transportation update which included:

- 74 Full-Size Bus Drivers (full size): 17 WPS buses
- 95 Mid-Size Bus Drivers and 12 new buses
- 109 Bus Monitors 42 leased
- 35 Drivers in Training

Additionally, 32 new buses were awaiting registration and inspections. The number of drivers currently in training are projected to bring the Transportation Department to full budgeted strength. He stated that the district began this school year using the new Versatrans My Stop app and that a few technical issues occurred in particular, double trips do not show on the app, and some adjustments were made.

If there are any questions regarding accessing the app, caregivers can call the Transportation Department at (508) 799-3241.

Mr. Allen also stated that any School Committee policy change including changing start times or changing walk zones for the 2023-24 school year impacting the number of buses needed would have to be voted on as soon as possible in order to place orders for additional buses for next year.

There are 13 buses coming off of lease at the end of this school year, and Mr. Allen provided information of various alternative fuels for those buses that have been explored by the administration; a decision on that would also be needed as soon as possible. Administration recommends that the district plan to use propane for this set of buses, and pilot an electric bus.

The district plans on implementing a transportation registration portal for secondary students to pre-register in order to allow for better load management and planning for 2023-24.

He thanked the whole transportation team including drivers and liaisons for their work during the first two weeks of the school year.

**(continued on Page 2)**

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-8-22 - Member Mailman asked if there was any data available from other districts that currently use electric buses. Mr. Allen stated that he and Mr. Hennessey have been attending transportation conferences pertaining to the use of alternative fuel, but due to the fact that electric buses are three times the cost of a regular school bus, and that there are concerns about such buses' with the cold climate, with hills, as well as with the infrastructure needed for their support, the district would prefer to use propane as the alternative fuel choice at this time, piloting an electric bus.

Mr. Hennessey provided the following advantages of using propane in the buses rather than gasoline:

- price per gallon is significantly less
- maintenance is significantly lower
- no engine warmup needed for heating
- less oil changes needed
- no hazardous waste

Chair Novick asked if there are plans to provide My Stop access for private and parochial school families and Mr. Freeman stated that it is possible, but will take further data sharing.

Member Mailman asked for more information on the out-of-school providers and Mr. Allen stated that the Administration met with them again in August and provided the current practice which is if a bus is heading in a certain direction and if there is capacity to take on the students. The process has not changed, but it's the number of buses heading in that direction that has changed. Once there are more buses and drivers, there will be greater flexibility. Mr. Hennessey stated that the district started with the same locations that it ended with last year. Mr. Freeman stated that there were other providers such as Ride Rite that were providing transportation but they are also experiencing capacity issues.

Chair Novick stated that the Student Handbook clearly states that the transportation provided is from a student's home to school and school back home. She questioned if the Committee should consider clarifying the language. She also asked if a parent inquired about out of school transportation, they should call the Transportation Department for information. Mr. Allen suggested they could call the provider.

On a roll call of 3-0, gb 9-355, gb 1-101, gb 2-44, gb2-109 and gb 2-205 were filed and gb 2-241 will be the current transportation item and will be held for the next meeting.

9-15 22 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.



**PRIOR ACTION** (continued)

10-12-22 - Mr. Allen presented the monthly transportation update with the staffing plans for the next school year as of October 5, 2022.

	<b>Full Size Bus Driver</b>	<b>Mid Size Bus Driver</b>	<b>Bus Monitors</b>
Total Employees (or in Process)	<b>73</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>110</b>
Current Routes	<u>74</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>89</u>
Difference between Planned Routes	<b>-1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>21</b>
Total Planned Routes	<u>101</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>95</u>
Difference between Planned Routes	<b>-28</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>
Budgeted Positions	<u>118</u>	<u>112</u>	<u>112</u>
Difference between Budgeted Positions	<b>-45</b>	<b>-15</b>	<b>-2</b>

**Drivers in Training**

Permitted Drivers	15
Trainees working on Permits	<u>14</u>
	29

In addition, there are 40 additional people in the evening training program.

**School Bus Vehicle Procurement**

<b>Current Vehicle Fleet</b>	<b>Full- Size Bus</b>	<b>Mid Size Bus</b>
WPS Buses	16	63
New Buses	48	0
Leased Buses	<u>49</u>	<u>44</u>
<b>Total Vehicles as of 8/31/22</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>107</b>

Mr. Allen provided an update on electric school buses and stated that there have been a number of meetings over the last month. He was under the assumption that the district was not eligible for some of the federal EPA funding under the infrastructure for some vehicles. He believes that even though the district does not have diesel engines that some of the older combustion gas engines may qualify to be exchanged for electric school buses. If that is the case, it is the district's intention that the next round of funding window will open this month and it will work on an application up to 15 electric school buses to add to the fleet. **(Continued on Page 4)**

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 10-12-22 - The School Committee last week authorized the district to lease 13 buses for next year, but it is thinking about buying out those leases and keeping them and pursue the electric bus option instead. He will be providing an update at the next meeting on the status of the application. He stated that the WPS is a high priority district for funding consideration but there's a lot to consider including a new infrastructure that would need to be installed.
- Member Kamara asked for an update on athletic transportation and Mr. Allen stated that in the past, the WEDF provided funds for field trips using AA Transportation and this year, with the district owning its own buses, there has been a \$40,000 savings.
- Mr. Freeman stated that there has been some compatibility issues with the MyStop app due to drivers using tablets and incurring a break in the GPS connection. IT technicians are working on trying to fix the problem.
- On a roll call of 3-0 the item was held.
- 10-20-22 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.
- 11-17-22 - **gb 2-241 - Novick (August 23, 2022)**

Mr. Allen provided an update on the implementation of the district operated transportation. There has been an increase of 5 full-sized bus drivers, 3 midsized bus drivers, with more in the pipeline. With regard to vehicles, Mr. Allen stated that the transition of bringing in the new buses, getting them registered and inspected, and sending the leased buses back is ongoing; the district is up 22 buses from last month. The hope is to have all 100 new full-sized buses on property next month. There is no change in midsized buses. The landlord has received all necessary permits for construction of the fueling station on Pullman Street; the plan is for that to be operational next year.

In response to a question from Vice Chair Kamara, Mr. Allen stated that for the fall season, bus transportation was being provided to athletics only after 4 pm. Winter season is generally night events; it is expected that for the spring season, the increase in drivers and vehicles will allow for athletic transportation at the end of the school day.

In response to a question from Member Mailman, Mr. Allen stated that administration shares some of the concerns shared during public comment, and that there is ongoing work with schools regarding student behaviors on school buses. He further stated that questions regarding response times can be addressed during the upcoming joint labor-management meeting.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

Mr Allen stated that at this time, the administration has decided not to pursue the lease of propane vehicles due to the length of time it is taking for vehicles to arrive. The intent is to purchase the 13 buses coming off of lease; the district also will pursue the upcoming federal grant for 15 electric buses.

Mr. Allen stated that there will be an update on phasing in the new drivers at the December meeting; there is a planned schedule being constructed. Mr. Allen stated that the administration may be asking the School Committee to add training staff further to address the ability to move trainees through the pipeline.

On a roll call of 3-0, the item was held.

BACKUP: Annex A (2 pages) contains the response to the item.

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION MONTHLY UPDATE  
December 2022

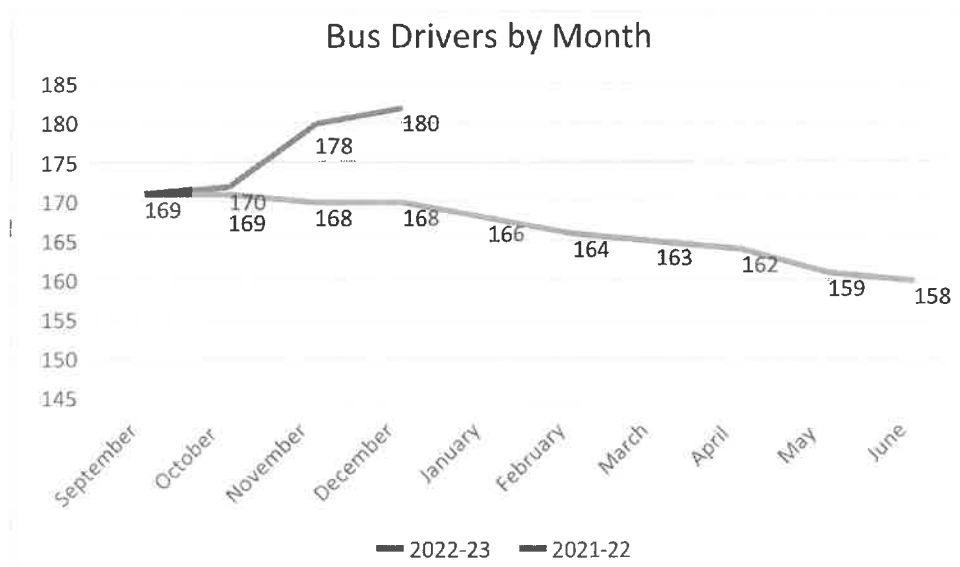
**Bus Driver Hiring and Recruitment**

As of November 29, 2022, the staffing plans for the next school year:

	<b>Full Size Bus Driver</b>	<b>Mid Size Bus Driver</b>	<b>Bus Monitors</b>
Total Employees (or in Process)	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>109</b>
Current Routes	<u>74</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>89</u>
Difference between Planned Routes	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>
Total Planned Routes	<u>101</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>95</u>
Difference between Planned Routes	-21	5	14
Budgeted Positions	<u>118</u>	<u>112</u>	<u>112</u>
Difference between Budgeted Positions	-38	-12	-3

**Drivers in Training**

Permitted Drivers	20
Trainees working on Permits	<u>85</u>
	10
	5



## School Bus Vehicle Procurement

<b>Current Vehicle Fleet</b>	<b>Full-Size Bus</b>	<b>Mid Size Bus</b>
WPS Buses	16	53
New Buses	72	0
Leased Buses	45	44
<b>Total Vehicles as of 11/28/22</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>97</b>

### Next Steps & Open Items:

- **7D Vans:** The ESSER-approved budget includes purchasing 40 vans for out-of-district student transportation. Due to supply chain issues and the availability of these vehicles (minivans and transit-style vans), the Administration delayed implementing this service until the 2023-24 school year. A bid to purchase these vans will occur shortly for the delivery of vehicles by the next school year (or sooner).

In preparation for this new level of student transportation service, the Administration intends to front-load and build capacity by adding a 7D Operations Supervisor position to assist with driver recruitment, hiring, and training. In addition, the district will need two additional part-time dispatch liaisons (that can provide immediate assistance to customer service and driver support).

- **Additional Safety/Trainer Liaison:** to assist with the number of individuals that have applied and are working on a permit license, an additional safety trainer liaison is recommended to help get more candidates through the training pipeline. One additional trainer will provide 40+ hours of additional capacity per week in training.
- **Additional Transportation Liaison:** Based on the volume of phone calls and driver dispatch calls, one additional transportation liaison for customer service will greatly assist with calls from parents and schools and support in the area of bus driver dispatch.

These positions are entirely funded through reallocated transportation savings (within Accounts 540-91117 Transportation Salaries and 540-92000 Transportation) and will not impact any other accounts within the FY23 or FY24 General Fund Budgets.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, December 8, 2022

ITEM: Novick (September 7, 2022)

To collaborate with state and national school organizations to advocate for a change in federal Department of Transportation policies barring Commercial Driver License testing in any language other than English.

PRIOR ACTION:

9-15-22 - On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations.

BACKUP: Annex A (2 pages) contains the response to the item.

The federal requirement regarding language stems from Federal Regulation Title 49 391.11, which requires that drivers of commercial motor vehicles:

(b) (2) Can read and speak the English language sufficiently to converse with the general public, to understand highway traffic signs and signals in the English language, to respond to official inquiries, and to make entries on reports and records;

The requirement is not specific to school bus drivers—it is not part of either the P (Passenger) or S (Student) endorsement within federal regulations, both of which are separately required for school bus drivers (49 CFR 383.123)--but required for all those who wish to have a commercial drivers license.

There is no federal or state requirement that drivers of all vehicles speak English fluently. In fact, many states allow driver's tests to be taken in languages other than English, both for private and for commercial purposes.

The federal regulation itself makes an exception (49 CFR 391.68) for a “private motor carrier of passengers (nonbusiness).” Under federal regulation, it is neither driving the vehicle nor transporting passengers that requires fluency in English.

The Secretary of Transportation may, under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, grant waivers if they find “the waiver is in the public interest, and that it is likely to achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level of safety that would be obtained in the absence of the waiver.”

It was under this authority that U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg in January waived the “under the hood” engine section of the school bus driver road test (not adopted by Massachusetts), a waiver which expired in March. In making the waiver, the Secretary noted it was designed to enable additional drivers to qualify to drive, while FMCSA Deputy Administrator Meera Joshi said it did so without compromising safety standards.

In 1997, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, under Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater of the Clinton administration put forward a proposed rule change, noting:

It has been brought to the attention of the Department of Transportation that the wording of this requirement might occasion a conflict with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in the administration of federally funded programs based on race and national origin.

“[I]n the interest of safety and civil rights,” the comment period was being opened Within that federal notice, the FMCSA commented as follows:

The FHWA recognizes that section 391.11 was originally intended to be enforced through the motor carrier employer, i.e., **it was the employer’s responsibility to evaluate the driver’s proficiency with the English language in the context of his or her duties and responsibilities.** The ICC further recognized that the provisions as to

qualifications of drivers embodied requirements which were “manifestly desirable”—but that final responsibility must rest with the motor carrier to “ \* \* \* satisfy himself that his drivers meet these requirements.” (1 M.C.C. 1, at 6, December 23, 1936) When promulgated, **the rule was not intended to be enforced at roadside. The employer was presumed to know what communication skills may be necessary for the type of cargo handled, the route to be taken, and the contact with the public that may be necessary. The FHWA never made speaking English a specific pre-requisite for the CDL, and, in fact, proposed and later authorized administration of the CDL test in foreign languages.** States, however, do administer some form of test to all license applicants, which is intended to demonstrate their ability to read or recognize warning signs (emphasis added throughout)

Again, that the history of the regulation noted by the Department of Transportation itself in proposing the section be reviewed in 1997. The proposal was withdrawn in 2003 after a change in the presidential administration.

Should the Committee wish to pursue advocacy for a federal waiver of the language requirement, therefore, there is precedent for the waiver, for the lack of association with traffic safety, and for questioning the equal treatment of all under Title IV of this rule. Federal regulation regarding this issue falls under the Department of Transportation. The Committee might consider outreach to the federal delegation in collaboration with others.