

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 and in order to ensure active, public engagement, the City of Worcester currently allows for both in-person and remote participation at all City Council and Standing Committee meetings. To partake in the meeting, you may attend the meeting in-person within the meeting location, follow the below link to join via Zoom or dial the direct line as indicated.

Education Committee Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/96739569567>

Education Committee Zoom Phone Number: (929) 205 6099

Education Committee Zoom Access Code: 967 3956 9567

Committee Members

Tracy O'Connell Novick, Chair  
Jermoh Kamara, Vice-chair  
Susan Mailman

City Council Members

Thu Nguyen, Chair  
Donna Colorio, Vice-Chair  
Kathleen Toomey

Representatives

Brian Allen  
Timothy McGourthy

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

AGENDA #1

The Joint Standing Committee on Finance and Operations and the City Council's Standing Committee on Education:

on: Monday, May 22nd, 2023  
at: 5:30 p.m.  
in: Esther Howland South Chamber, City Hall

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. GENERAL BUSINESS

c&p 2-19 - Clerk (December 12, 2012)

To consider a communication from the City Clerk regarding the City Council's Standing Committee on Education and the School Committee's Standing Committee on Finance and Operations.

To consider meeting jointly on a regular basis throughout the year concerning issues of overlapping interest: FY24 Budget

IV. ADJOURNMENT

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

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://worcesterschools.zoom.us/j/88453685011?pwd=MTFicHA0eFhIRXU4Z3BSK1FE0EFudz09>

Passcode: 223364

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

Webinar ID: 884 5368 5011

Committee Members

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

Administrative Representative

Brian Allen

OFFICE OF THE  
CLERK OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
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AGENDA #5

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

on: May 22, 2023

at: 6:30 p.m.

in: Esther Howland South Chamber, City Hall

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. GENERAL BUSINESS

c&p 3-4.1 Administration

To consider a presentation by the Goddard School Student Council on an Earth Day Water Bottle Project aimed at reducing plastic waste at the school.

gb 2-241.11 - Novick

(August 23, 2022)

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

V. ADJOURNMENT

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

J. Public Petition  
Administration  
(April 19, 2023)

ITEM: c&p 3-4.1  
MEETING: 5-22-23

ITEM:

To consider a presentation by the Goddard School Student Council on an Earth Day Water Bottle Project aimed at reducing plastic waste at the school.

PRIOR ACTION:

4-27-23 Referred to the Standing Committee on Finance & Operations

BACKUP:

Annex A (2 pages) contains a letter to the School Committee from the Goddard School Student Council

Annex B: [Link to the Student Youtube Presentation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFb8v4aIL00&authuser=0)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFb8v4aIL00&authuser=0>

RECOMMENDATION OF MAKER:

RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION:

*Helen A. Friel, Ed.D.*  
Assistant to the  
Superintendent/Clerk of the  
School Committee  
[Friel@worcesterschools.net](mailto:Friel@worcesterschools.net)

Goddard School Student Council  
Goddard School of Science and Technology  
14 Richards Street  
Worcester, MA 01603

April 12, 2023

Dear Worcester School Committee Members,

As you know, April 22 is Earth Day. In honor of Earth Day, The Goddard School Student Council has been working on a special project. We have designed and ordered reusable water bottles.

Since Covid, our school's water fountains have been shut down. The school has been giving students bottled water. We have noticed that students at Goddard School are using 80-100 cases of water bottles a week. That adds up to between 3,840-4,800 bottles thrown in the trash every week! In addition, that is between 138,242-172,800 bottles per year. That is an enormous amount of waste that harms our planet!



Goddard used 80-100 cases per week.

Not only is it a harm to our planet, it is also costly. Each case of 48 water bottles costs close to \$10.00. We estimated the cost is between 800-1000 dollars per week. The cost of that is as high as 36,000 dollars per year!

We want to help solve this problem, that is why we thought of selling reusable water bottles at school. We were able to design and buy 50 reusable water bottles with our \$100 budget. The problem is that we have no way to refill them. So we are asking for 3 refilling stations one for each floor. In fifth grade last year, we did this project. We were told that Goddard School would have water filling stations this year, but none came. We want to do something for our school before we graduate. We hope you can help us!!



The Water Bottle  
We Designed

Sincerely,

***The Goddard School Student Council***

Kaylani Colon, President

Ariel Lopez

Jaelianis Ynoa, Vice President

Johey Castano

Michelle Mendez, Treasurer

Maurice Teran-Lezcano

Andrea Rodriguez, Secretary

Yorgermi Mendez Pichardo

Ray Munoz Castro

STANDING COMMITTEE: **FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, May 22, 2023

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.

BACK UP:

Annex A (2 Pages) Transportation Monthly Update for May 2023

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 Drive r</b>	<b>Bus Monitor s</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	-28	2	15
Budgeted Positions	<u>118</u>	<u>112</u>	<u>112</u>
Difference between Budgeted Positions	-45	-15	-2

**Drivers in Training**

	1
Permitted Drivers	5
Trainees working on Permits	<u>1</u>
	<u>4</u>
	2
	9

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.



- 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 mid-sized 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 mid-sized 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.

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.

2-13-23

Mr. Allen presented an update. He highlighted that we hired 7 new drivers, had 8 drivers retire/resign, and for the first time in two years there are two after school buses for athletics. He mentioned that all the full sized buses are now owned and operated by WPS. Mid-sized and wheelchair vehicles are not available due to supply chain issues, but Mr. Allen is putting out a new bid for alternative layouts on 7D vehicles as those may be available sooner.

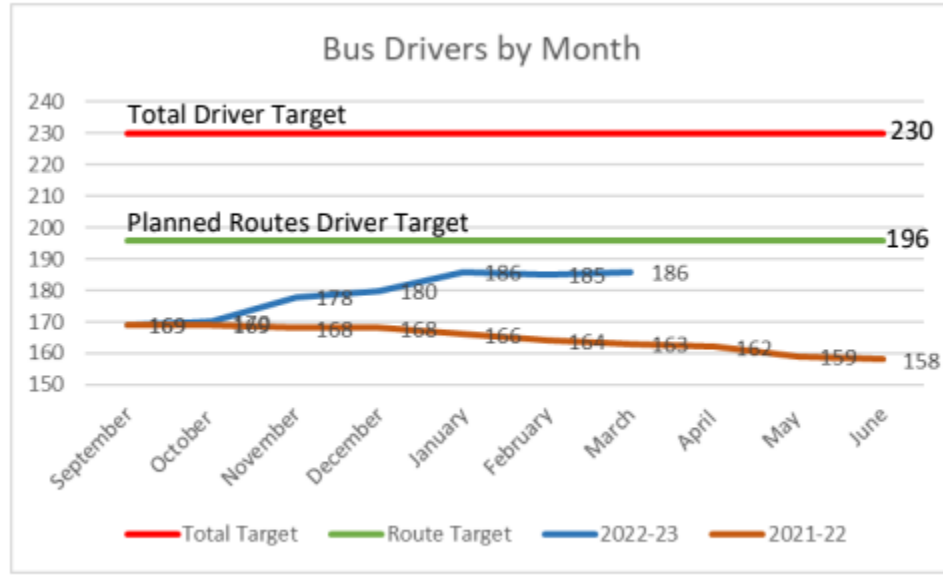
On voice vote, the motion to hold was approved.

3-20-23

Mr. Allen agreed with the public comment and stated that the Administration is trying to hire as quickly as possible. There are also 37 individuals in the process getting their CDL licenses and becoming drivers. Fuel station should be up and running by the next monthly report. RFID readers are being installed currently to ensure only the correct vehicles are fueled. The 7D vehicles are still delayed due to supply chain issues.

Member Mailman requested information on driver and monitor loss. Mr. Allen stated that the information provided shows the net change, confirming there is some attrition, and that approximately 50% of the people in the program do not complete it. Ideally, the department would have hired to plan for absences, however staffing levels have not been met. There are 19 job offers out for bus monitors.

Chair O'Connell Novick highlighted missing information on transportation increases in the budget presentation at the previous meeting and wanted to know if there was any comment on that. Mr. Allen stated that in using our transportation we are able to provide transportation without a significant increase like other districts.



On a roll call of 3-0, the motion to hold the item was approved.

4.24.23

Mr. Allen noted that the district had been running 74 routes for much of the year; the district is now running 81 routes, which is freeing up seven buses for after school athletic transportation. Transportation has 17 permitted drivers, with a number of them taking their tests soon, with 11 trainees working on their permits; the administration plans to continue to partner with MassHires, as there is always going to be turnover. Mr. Allen said double trip routes are down to 20. Mr. Allen said that the 7D vans are expected in December of this year. The gas station is now open. District transportation has conducted almost 400 field trips so far this year; the FY24 budget will include funding for any school-related trip for which district transportation has a vehicle and staff available. Mr. Hennessey added that the district does still have time restrictions, as the first responsibility of the transportation department is from home to school and school to home.

Vice Chair Kamara noted the very natural and normal process. She asked for clarification on which games are being provided transportation; Mr. Allen said that scheduling was done by athletic department. The buses on the 2:30 schedule can be seen on the district athletic schedule each week.

Member Mailman asked if administration knew how many field trips were not done; Mr. Hennessey said no, but Mr. Allen said it largely is due to the time window during which buses are available. Mr. Hennessey added that in some cases, schools have been able to adjust their time to meet the window.

Chair O'Connell Novick asked that athletics scheduling such that more buses are needed for a slot than buses are available be worked to avoid. She asked if the district contracts with outside providers are

structured such that we can end them once the 7D vans come in; Mr. Allen said that they are. She asked about updates on electric buses. Mr. Allen said that this week, the EPA announced the second round of grant applications. Mr. Allen said that the district intends to apply for up to 15 buses, which would cover the cost of the vehicle and charging stations. Mr. Allen said that it is believed that this can be done at the current facility for transportation. Chair O'Connell Novick suggested that late buses would be welcomed by secondary schools, and asked that the administration look into that idea in future planning. Mr. Allen said it would eliminate transportation being a barrier to participation for students.

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

**WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION MONTHLY UPDATE  
May 2023**

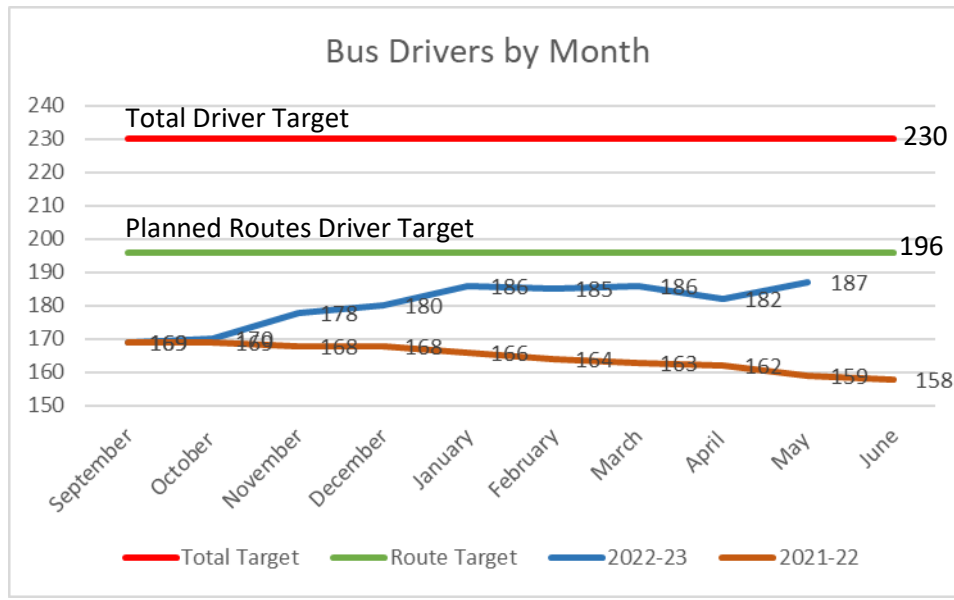
**Bus Driver Hiring and Recruitment**

As of May 11, 2023, the staffing levels are as follows:

	<b>Full Size Bus Driver</b>	<b>Mid Size Bus Driver</b>	<b>Bus Monitors</b>
Total Employees (or in Process)	<b>83</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>101</b>
Current Routes	<u>81</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>89</u>
Difference between Planned Routes	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>
Total Planned Routes	<u>101</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>95</u>
Difference between Planned Routes	-18	9	6
Budgeted Positions	<u>118</u>	<u>112</u>	<u>112</u>
Difference between Budgeted Positions	-35	-8	-11

**Drivers in Training**

Permitted Drivers	18
Trainees working on Permits	<u>4</u>
	22



### **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	100	0
Leased Buses	<u>0</u>	<u>45</u>
<b>Total Vehicles</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>98</b>

### **Next Steps & Open Items:**

- **Fueling Station:** The fueling station at Pullman Street is fully operational, and 80% of the WPS fleet is being fueled at the location. The fueling station will be available to fuel all WPS gasoline vehicles, including Facilities, Nutrition, and school vehicles.
- **7D Vans:** The District has issued a contract for the purchase of twenty-nine 7D transit-style vans, with delivery by December 31, 2023. The Administration will issue a bid for additional minivans (up to another 31) over the next several months based on vehicle availability.
- **FY24 Budget:** Adds 40 7D van drivers to begin the migration from contracted services, five fuelers to assist with second shift fueling of vehicles, and funds to support student trips and activities.