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The following item will be discussed at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues to be held virtually on Wednesday, May 26, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. in Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building:

gb #1-35 - Administration (January 25, 2021)

To consider approval of the proposed 2021-22 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Wednesday, May 26, 2021

ITEM: Administration (January 25, 2021)

To consider approval of the proposed 2021-22 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 2-4-21 - Ms. Novick made the following motion:
Request that the Student Handbook be forwarded to the Student Representatives for their review and invite them to attend the meeting of the Standing Committee when the item is discussed.
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.
- 3-22-21 - STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES
Ms. Novick made the following motion:
Request that the last sentence in the first paragraph be deleted under Rule 14 – Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Laser Pointing Devices as follows:
Rule 14. - Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Laser Pointing Devices
While on school premises or at a school sponsored event during the school day, a student shall not, without expressed permission of appropriate school personnel, use any cell phone, smart phone, tablet, camera or any other type of electronic device which may potentially be disruptive of school activities or a distraction to students. Electronic devices shall include any cell phone, smart phone, tablet or anything powered by electricity and is suitable for communicating any oral, voice, audio or text messages or postings or for recording or communicating any audio, voice, picture, image or video imagery. **Students are not permitted to have their cell phones or electronic devices while in school unless permitted by a school staff member.**
On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.
On a roll call of 3-0, pages 0 through 33 in the Student Handbook were approved as amended.
- 4-8-21 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.

BACKUP:

- Annex A (4 pages) contains a copy of the proposed changes.
Annex B (42 pages) contain a copy of the 2021-22 Student Handbook with the proposed changes.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

4-27-21 - STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES

Legal PoliciesNotice for Out-of-School Suspensions

Ms. Novick asked if it would be possible to consider a policy that would state that students who are Grade 3 and under would not be given an out of school suspension, but rather an in school suspension. She asked that the Administration recommend providing additional resources to assist in this when considering the Budget.

Superintendent Binienda stated the law is clear when it comes to principals having the authority to suspend and she does not want to take that responsibility away from them. She also stated that even with additional resources, the out of school suspension is a last resort for principals when it becomes a safety issue for the other students.

Ms. Novick stated that the Boston Public Schools policy states that K-3 students are not given out of school suspensions and requested that the Administration seek a legal opinion regarding the jurisdiction of principals.

Ms. Novick made the following motion:

Request that the Administration provide a report describing what would be needed in order to eliminate out of school suspensions for K-3 students and solicit recommendations from principals on what their school would need to make that happen.

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

Legal PoliciesSuperintendent's Appeal Hearings

Ms. Novick requested that the Clerk of the School Committee include on the next Executive Session agenda the item that pertains to this policy.

Procedures for Suspension(s) Exceeding 10 School Days

Page 53- Do **not** delete the word "agree" after the words special circumstances or parent.

Chairman Clancey requested that the word SAGE be replaced with Student Information System throughout the entire Handbook.

On a roll call of 3-0, pages 26 through 54 of the Student Handbook were approved as amended.

5-6-21 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO 2021– 2022 STUDENT HANDBOOK

PAGE	PROPOSED CHANGES
iii, iv and v	<p>COVID-19 PANDEMIC Delete entire section except for the first paragraph. (Keep) The district will follow state and federal guidelines to address COVID-19 related school issues. Due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, the guidelines may change during the school year. The district will provide timely information to parents/students/guardians about any needed changes to district programs and services through postings on the Worcester Public Schools website (worcesterschools.org), social media, and Connect-Ed messages.</p>
8-9	<p>Dress Code Policy (Changes are from Attorney Tobin) Clothing should include: Delete etc. at the end of Top and Bottom Add a coma after pants.</p> <p>Last paragraph Delete the words disciplined or after Students shall not be... Add after the end of the first sentence unless such removal is necessary because the student’s attire causes a disorder or disruption of the educational process or if the clothing violates reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness.</p> <p>Add at the end of the paragraph or if the clothing violates reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness.</p>
31 and 32	<p>Legal Policies (Changes are from Attorney Tobin) <u>Superintendent’s Appeal Hearings</u> A, C, D, E G and H, delete the words or his/her designee after the superintendent</p>
56	<p>Suggested Guidelines for Safe Backpack Use #2 add a before the words waist strap.</p>
56	<p>Access for Pregnant Students Delete the word the after the words delivery is encouraged, and</p>
57	<p>Transportation Fifth paragraph, delete Quinsigamond School, 14 Blackstone River Road (508) 799-3502 and add Clark St. Community School, 280 Clark St., (508) 799-8212,</p>
58	<p>Transportation (continued) Homeless Students Update page 38 when the handbook is completed.</p>

<p>59</p>	<p>Transportation (continued) Riding School Buses #3 add a comma at the end of each bullet and a period on the last bullet. #7 add a comma at the end of each bullet, the 7th bullet add an and at the end and add a period at the end of the 8th bullet.</p>
<p>60</p>	<p>Student Services Social Emotional Learning First Paragraph, delete Social Emotion Learning Department and replace it with Office of Social Emotional Learning (OSEL)</p>
<p>65</p>	<p>Homeschooling First paragraph, third sentence, delete the words the Child Study Department and add the words Social Emotional Learning (OSEL) Delete - between home-schooling Update page 49 when the handbook is completed.</p>
<p>66</p>	<p>Instructional Policies Elementary Schools After the second paragraph capitalize G on grade.</p>
<p>71</p>	<p>Dropout Prevention Second paragraph, add the words his/her after the words The Superintendent or</p>
<p>75</p>	<p>High School Graduation Requirements Second sentence, delete - Students in the graduating classes of 2021-23 and replace with - The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted in April 2021 to waive or modify the state competency determination (CD) requirement by allowing students in the class of 2022 to receive their CD by earning full credit in an approved course and demonstrating competency in that subject, in lieu of earning a qualifying MCAS score. Students in the graduating class of 2023 will need to satisfy...</p>
<p>76</p>	<p>High School Graduation Requirements (continued) Add the words and following years after class of 2024</p>
<p>76</p>	<p>Graduation Course Requirement Delete – Grade 9 beginning 2013-14 and replace it with Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 beginning in 2021-22 school year.</p> <p>History/Social Science delete 2 credits and replace it with 1 credit and add at the end and 1 credit chosen by the student 3 credits History/Social Science (including 1 credit World History and (DELETE 2 credits) (ADD 1 credit) U.S. History (ADD and 1 credit chosen by the student))</p> <p>Delete the following: Grades 10, 11 & 12 students enrolled prior to 2013-14 4 credits English 3 credits Mathematics 3 credits Science and Technology/Engineering 3 credits Social Studies (includes 2 credits of U.S. History) ½ credit Health 1 credit Physical Education</p>

<p>77</p>	<p>Graduation Course Requirement (continued) #3 - delete and replace with: Students in grades 7 & 8 who successfully complete high school courses in World Language will receive one high school credit per course that will be recorded on their high school transcript. Students who take Part 1 of a World Language Course in 8, will not receive credit for the course taken in middle school. It is recommended that students take two years or more of the same language at the high school level.</p>
<p>78</p>	<p>Massachusetts State College and University Minimum Required Courses for Admission After Social Sciences, delete 2 courses (including 1 course in U.S. History) and replace it with 3 courses (including 1 in U.S. History and 1 in World History)</p>
<p>79</p>	<p>Recommendations for Advanced Placement Enrollment First paragraph, delete the word parents and replace it with caregivers after guidance learning opportunity with their Second paragraph, delete the word following after the word The delete the word should and replace it with below may after the word indicators Third paragraph, delete the last sentence.</p>
<p>79</p>	<p>Advanced Placement Exams Second sentence, delete the words guidance counselors and replace them with AP Coordinators after the word School</p>
<p>80</p>	<p>College Courses for High School Students Add above the title Early College Program:</p>
<p>81</p>	<p>MA Seal of Biliteracy Fourth paragraph, add , on the Worcester Public Schools website after the word guidance office Fifth paragraph, delete the word Director and replace it with Manager after Carmen Melendez-Quintero</p>
<p>82</p>	<p>General School Issues No School/Delayed School Opening/Early Dismissal Announcements Add the following, after the words - early dismissal from school will be made: via a Connect Ed message, on the Worcester Public Schools website (worcesterschools.org) and</p>

<p>84</p>	<p>English Learner Parent Advisory Committee Add after the heading (ELPAC)</p> <p>Delete the entire section and replace it with:</p> <p>The purpose of ELPAC is to support the academic success of English learners (ELs) and former English learners (FELs) by providing a forum in which parents and guardians of current and former English learners can express their perspectives and provide input to the District.</p> <p>The duties of the council include: (1) advising the school district and school committee on matters that pertain to English learners; (ii) meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning and development of programs designed to improve educational opportunities for English learners; and (iii) participating in the review of school improvement plans.</p> <p>The WPS English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) was established in 2018-2019. The ELPAC consists of parents and guardians of current and former English learners, community members, and teachers and district staff members. Meetings are a venue for meaningful discussions about Dual Language, Transitional Bilingual Education, Sheltered English Immersion, and English as a Second Language, as well as other topics related to the education of current and former English learners. Parents and guardians of current and former English learners are encouraged to attend the ELPAC meetings that are held throughout the school year. For additional information, please email melendezquinteroc@worcesterschools.net.</p>
<p>85</p>	<p>Opportunities for Parent/Guardian Support Add the word the after Please see.</p>
<p>Inside back cover</p>	<p>ADD the new Section Massachusetts Parental Notice for One Time Consent to Allow the School District To Access MassHealth (Medicaid) Benefits after the Telephone directory and before the sign-off sheet for the Worcester Public School District Media Policy.</p>
<p>Back Cover</p>	<p>Second paragraph delete the word or and replace it with and after the words student actions both on...</p>

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The district will follow state and federal guidelines to address COVID-19 related school issues. Due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, the guidelines may change during the school year. The district will provide timely information to parents/students/guardians about any needed changes to district programs and services through postings on the Worcester Public Schools website (worcesterschools.org), social media, and Connect-Ed messages.

DELETE

~~Remote Learning Time and Use of Remote Learning Platforms~~

~~As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, during the 2021-22 school year the District may be required to provide some or all educational programming via remote learning and various remote learning platforms, e.g. Zoom, Google Classroom etc.~~

~~The Code of Conduct and District Policies, including but not limited to those that govern student discipline, bullying, harassment, and discrimination, are applicable during remote learning times and when using remote learning platforms.~~

~~Parents and students are prohibited from recording and/or disseminating remote learning lessons or instruction. Violations of the no-recording policy may result in school based discipline or referral, in appropriate cases, to law enforcement.~~

~~Safety Requirements and Educational Program Continuum~~

~~As a result of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, on June 25, 2020, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education issued "Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance" (the "Guidance"). In accordance with this guidance, the following safety requirements and educational programming models will be in place for the 2021-2022 academic school year as required by the Commonwealth. The District reserves the right to amend these requirements and the manner in which educational services are provided to its students as determined appropriate and as ordered/advised by the various agencies of the federal and state governments.~~

Safety Requirements

Masks/face coverings

- Students are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth.

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- Masks/face coverings must be provided by the student/family; however, extra disposable face masks will be made available by the school for students who need them.
- Adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear masks/face coverings.
- Exceptions to mask/face covering requirements must be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors.
- Mask breaks will occur throughout the day in a manner that complies with health and safety standards.
- Masks/face coverings are required to be worn by everyone on the bus during school bus transportation.

Physical Distancing/Student Groupings

- The District will aim to maintain a physical distance of six feet between individuals
- When a physical distance of six feet cannot be maintained, the District will aim to maintain a minimum distance of three feet between individuals.
- Classrooms will be configured in a manner that provides for the above-referenced physical distance between individuals.
- Students will be contained in one classroom and with one group of students to the extent feasible.
- Additional safety precautions will be taken by the school nurses and/or any staff supporting students with disabilities in close proximity, when distance is not possible.

Hand Hygiene

- Students and staff are required to exercise hand hygiene (handwashing or sanitizing) upon arrival to school, before eating, before putting on and taking off masks, and before dismissal.
- When handwashing, individuals should use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel.
- If handwashing is not feasible, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol content can be used. Hand sanitizer should be applied to all surfaces of the hands and in sufficient quantity that it takes 20 seconds of rubbing hands together for the sanitizer to dry.

Educational Program Continuum

Per the Guidance, educational services will be provided in one of the three (3) below described models depending upon the needs of the student and/or health and safety requirements.

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Model 1—In-Person Learning

It is the District's goal to provide in-person learning to as many students as possible without compromising safety. In this model, all students return in-person to school settings that are appropriately modified to accommodate the health and safety requirements outlined above. Examples of modifications could include altered classroom configurations, setting up additional learning spaces, and schedule changes.

Model 2—Hybrid Learning

In the event that the District is unable to bring all students back to school under the health and safety requirements despite best efforts, or in case of COVID-19 related circumstances, a hybrid learning model will be implemented. In this model, students will alternate between in-person and remote learning. For instance, students could switch between in-person and remote learning on alternating weeks or days of the week.

Model 3—Remote Learning

In the event that individual students cannot return to in-person learning, or in the event of future classroom or school closures impacting all students, remote learning will be implemented. As stated throughout the Handbook, the Code of Conduct and District Bullying and Harassment/Discrimination policies apply to students during

remote learning times and when using remote learning platforms. Under Massachusetts State guidance, all families have the option for on-line learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Plan for Special Populations

Additional plan(s) will be developed as appropriate for the provision services and accommodations to special student populations, including students with disabilities and English learners.

For students with disabilities who receive services and/or accommodations pursuant to an IEP or Section 504 Plan, please note that in the event of a school closure or provision of a hybrid learning model as described above, these exceptional circumstances may affect how a particular service is provided and FAPE may look different than it did during in person learning. Federal disability law allows for flexibility in determining how to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities. In these instances, the District will work to provide specialized instructional opportunities and related services through remote learning or a hybrid model of remote and in person learning to the extent feasible while maintaining the safety of both students and staff and complying with applicable federal, state and local government directives.

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STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools that the student and their parent/guardian hold the primary responsibility in determining the student's personal attire, hairstyle, jewelry, and personal items. The district's interest in student dress is to ensure that it contributes to a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. The Worcester School Committee in its efforts to treat students equitably intends for the regulation of student dress to be free from bias.

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Head coverings such as scarves, durags, hair wraps, cultural and religious headwear are permissible. Hats and bandanas are not permissible unless for medical reasons.

Clothing should include:

Top (shirt, blouse, sweater, tank (**DELETE** etc.))

Bottom (pants(**ADD,**) shorts, skirt, dress (**DELETE-etc.**))

Footwear (suggested safe footwear must be worn in the school building)

Clothing should provide appropriate body coverage. Bareback, midriff and low-cut shirts are not permitted. In addition, attire that reveals undergarments, and garments that are made of see-through materials (mesh, sheer fabrics) without a blouse/shirt underneath are not allowed. Clothing must cover undergarments when sitting, standing or bending.

Safe footwear must be worn in the school building. Seasonal footwear is recommended (example: boots and closed shoes to be worn in the winter).

Student clothing and jewelry shall be free of graphics/images that are obscene, violent, vulgar, sexist, racist and/or promote the use of illegal drugs/alcohol/ tobacco and cause disorder or disrupt the educational process. Apparel that is gang, violence and/or cult related (refer to Rule 15) is not permitted.

Outerwear will not be worn in school buildings (example: jackets/parkas/windbreakers). Students may wear hooded sweatshirts or shirts but may not wear the hoods up or covering their heads or faces in the building or on school property. Earbuds or headphones may not be worn or used except when it is connected to a learning activity with permission of school personnel. Specific accommodations will be granted to students who require headphones to access their learning.

Students shall not be (~~DELETE disciplined or~~) removed from class as a consequence for a violation of the dress code policy (~~ADD unless such removal is necessary because the student's attire causes a disorder or disruption of the educational process or if the clothing violates reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness.~~) The School principal or his/her designee will determine consequences if the students attire is a direct violation of the Worcester Public Schools Code of Conduct (~~ADD or if the clothing violates reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness.~~)

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Superintendent's Appeal Hearing:

- a) A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent (~~DELETE or his/her designee~~).
- b) The student or parent/guardian shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent/guardian may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.
- c) The superintendent (~~DELETE or his/her designee~~) shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the superintendent shall grant the extension.
- d) The superintendent (~~DELETE or his/her designee~~) shall make a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian in the hearing. The superintendent (~~DELETE or his/her designee~~) shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent/guardian and superintendent to participate. The superintendent (~~DELETE or his/her designee~~) shall send written notice to the parent/guardian of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- e) The superintendent (~~DELETE or his/her designee~~) shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and, if so, what the consequence shall be. The superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request. The superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request.
- f) The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension.

g) The superintendent (**DELETE or his/her designee**) shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(3)(c)1 through 5. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision.

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h) The decision of the superintendent (**DELETE or his/her designee**) shall be the final decision of the school district, with regard to the suspension.

A parent/guardian conference (re-entry meeting) with the principal or his/her designee is strongly encouraged before students who are suspended return to school. This conference will be used to promote the engagement of the parents/ guardians in discussions of the student's misconduct and to assist the student in reengaging with the school community.

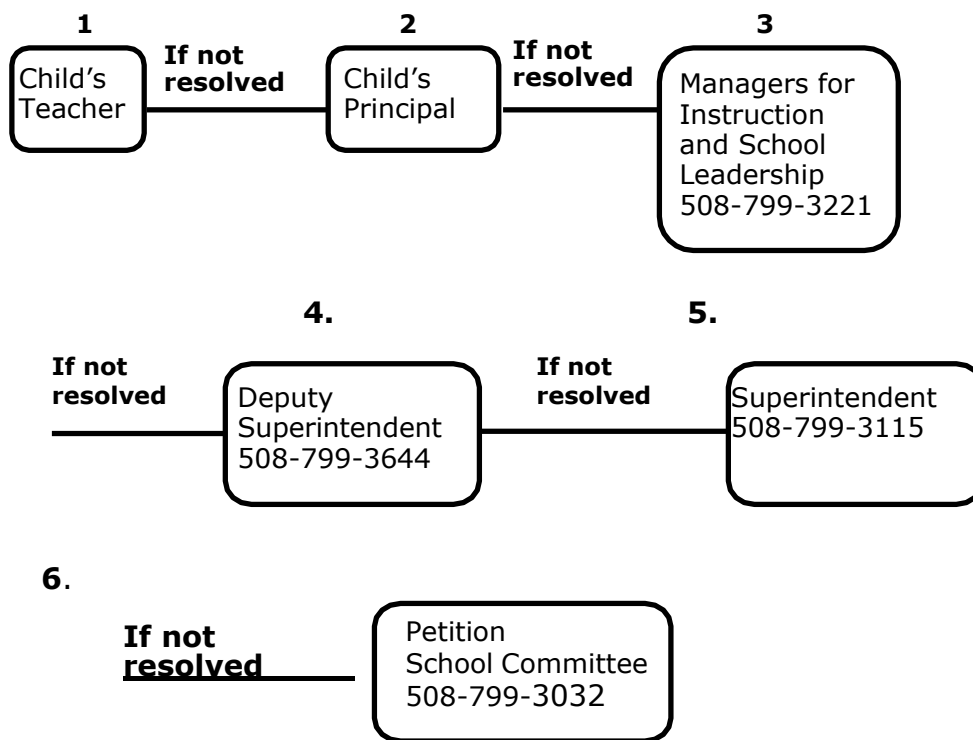
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Procedure

RESOLVING SCHOOL-RELATED PROBLEMS

In order to resolve school-related problems, parents will follow this process:

If a problem arises, contact:



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Policy Regarding the Reporting of any Potential or Actual Incidents that may Impact on the Safety of Children.

Principals have been directed to provide parents/guardians with verbal and written reports of any potential or actual incidents that may impact on the safety of students. Criteria for reporting will include the following:

1. Parents/guardians should be notified immediately by telephone of any incident which might impact safety.
2. Each verbal report will be followed up immediately by a written report which is either mailed or delivered to the parents/guardians.
3. Principals will file a dual report immediately with the appropriate Managers for Instruction and School Leadership and the School Committee.

HEALTH SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Wellness Policy

Preamble

It is the mission of the Worcester Public Schools (WPS) Wellness Policy to enable students to become independent and self-directed learners, responsible for meeting their own health and nutritional needs as developmentally appropriate. It is the goal of the Wellness Policy to promote **all students'** physical, emotional and social well-being through the coordinated efforts of all departments and services offered in the Worcester Public Schools. This model calls for a collaborative, coordinated and comprehensive approach to learning and health, and serves as the model for the WPS Wellness Policy and nursing practice.

Overview of School Health/Nursing Services Offered

A coordinated program of accessible health services will be provided to students through the leadership of the Nursing Department, in collaboration with the school Physician Consultant, various school departments, and community agencies, as applicable. The program includes communicable disease prevention and reporting, immunization compliance, health education and wellness promotion, health assessments and screenings, chronic condition (including but not limited to asthma, diabetes, life-threatening allergies, seizures, ADHD) management, counseling, community health referrals, first aid and emergency care. The school nurses collaborate and coordinate with parents and other health care providers to create an Individual Health Care Plan.

School nurses provide **mandated screenings** for students at various grade levels in accordance with MA State laws and the Division of Public Health requirements. Screenings include vision and hearing (grades K-5, 8, 10), scoliosis (grades 5-9) height, weight and BMI (grades 1, 4, 7, 10) and Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment [SBIRT] (grades 7 and 9). All students will receive a form from school for parents/guardians to choose to opt out of one or more of these preventive screenings.

All school staff throughout the district are trained by school nurses yearly on life

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threatening allergy awareness education and Epi-Pen administration and basic first-aid. There are also many school staff members who are trained by the Nursing Department in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) use. Every school and outside athletic area has at minimum one AED available and at least one person trained to use it at all times.

The Nursing Administration coordinates and supports other health services available to students including oral health screenings and preventive care such as fluoride and sealant application with referral to a dentist as needed. All high schools, Burncoat, Worcester East, and Sullivan middle schools, and Elm Park Community, Goddard School of Science and Technology, and Woodland Academy elementary schools have School-Based Health Centers (SBHC) staffed with Nurse Practitioners who can provide more advanced health assessments, diagnoses, and treatment as indicated. Students can also receive physical examinations and immunizations if registered. The Edward Kennedy Health Center (EKHC) and the Family Health Center (FHC) of Worcester operate the SBHCs in the WPSs. Parents/guardians who are interested in this additional health service must register their child/children at the start of every school year, providing consent for treatment.

School Health Advisory Council

The School Committee recognizes the relationship between student wellness and student achievement. The purpose of the School Health Advisory Council is to recommend, review and help implement school district policies addressing school nutrition, nutrition education, physical activity and related issues that affect student health (105 CMR 215.000). The council is comprised of the Coordinator of Nursing and a variety of community agencies who work together to advocate, develop, implement, monitor, review and revise school health policy as needed/mandated.

See the WPS Nursing and Health website (<https://www.worcesterschools.org/about/departments-offices/nursing/>) for the complete Wellness Policy and other health-related policies and forms or call your school nurse with any questions.

Suggested Guidelines for Safe Backpack Use

Recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics for choosing the correct backpack include:

1. Do not carry weight greater than 20% of body weight
2. Select a style that has padded shoulders and (**ADD a**) waist strap
3. Use both shoulder straps
4. Tighten the straps so the pack is close to the body
5. Distribute the weight of objects evenly in the backpack
6. Utilize all compartments
7. Pack heaviest objects close to the back with the center of gravity near the pelvis

Access for Pregnant Students

Pregnant students are encouraged to continue to attend school. Every effort will be made to see that the educational program of the student is disrupted as little as possible, that return to school after delivery is encouraged, and (**DELETE the**) every reasonable opportunity to complete high school is provided.

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In accordance with Federal Law and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations and guidance, a student who is pregnant is permitted to remain in regular classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non-pregnant students throughout her pregnancy. After giving birth, a student is permitted to return to the academic program in which she was enrolled and is permitted to participate in extracurricular programs.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Program

Free transportation is granted to students in grades kindergarten through 12 who reside two (2) miles or more from the school which they are entitled to attend. **The legal obligation of the School Committee in this respect is limited to provision for transportation for elementary school children and the School Committee does have the right, if necessary, to charge for transportation or not provide transportation at the secondary level regardless of where students may live.**

All eligible K-12 students are expected to ride only the bus to which they are assigned both to and from school and be picked up and dropped off at their assigned bus stops. Students will be asked to walk to a common bus stop. In that situation, students in grades K-6 should be accompanied to the stop by a parent or guardian. The safety responsibility for escorting a child to and from the bus stop shall rest with the parents or guardians of the student involved.

Parents or guardians of students are responsible for supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day. Once the child boards the bus – and only at that time – does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to escort the child to and from the bus stop where there are no sidewalks, where sidewalks are only on one side, where the bus stop is on the opposite side of the street, or where the parent/guardian has other traffic concerns.

It is also expected that all students will be outside at the bus stop TEN minutes before the bus arrives. Bus drivers have been instructed NOT TO STOP if no child is waiting. Students should be visible and not in cars, stores, or otherwise not easily seen by the school bus driver. For safety reasons, it is most important that a parent or guardian be at the bus stop to receive the homecoming child.

Students in kindergarten who are transported will receive an identification tag at their school to ensure that they are not discharged from the school bus without a parent/guardian being present. Students not released from the school bus because no parent/guardian is present will be taken to the (~~DELETE Quinsigamond School, 14 Blackstone River Road (508) 799-3502~~) (**ADD Clark St. Community School, 280 Clark St., (508) 799-8212,**) to be picked up by a parent or guardian.

Students who are assigned a school bus pass through their secondary school are expected to carry the pass with them at all times when riding the school bus and to display it to the driver for inspection, if requested. Only students with valid passes will be permitted to ride the school bus.

Transportation eligibility is based solely on the student's home address and is

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only for the transportation between the student's home bus stop and the school he/she attends.

Additionally, transportation shall be provided at district expense for children whose Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requires such transportation.

Free transportation will be provided when the presence of long-term heavy construction projects on the prescribed routes creates a hazard. This applies only for the duration of the project.

Busing Privileges

In view of the fact that a school bus is an extension of the classroom, the Worcester Public Schools shall require each student to conduct himself/herself in a manner consistent with the Code of Conduct and Safety and Behavior Rules for Pupils Riding School Buses as stated in the student handbook. School bus drivers have the authority and the responsibility to maintain good order while operating the bus. Additionally, bus drivers are instructed to inform the building principal about any student misconduct that creates an annoyance or distraction while driving. The building principal will inform the parents/guardians of the misconduct and request their cooperation in monitoring the child's behavior. Any student who becomes a disciplinary problem on the school bus may have riding privileges suspended on a temporary or permanent basis. In such cases, the parents/guardians of the child involved become responsible for seeing that the child gets to and from school safely.

Worcester Public Schools' school buses may be equipped with cameras to create a video and audio record of each trip. This video and/or audio may be used to assist the school principal in determining what discipline, if any, is appropriate in cases of reported violations of safe riding practices. It may also be used as a tool to teach and reinforce safe riding practices for all students.

As always, safety is of primary importance. At the bus stops and on the school bus, students are expected to be well behaved and cooperative at all times.

Transfer Students

Transportation will be provided to transfer students only if their transfers have a positive effect on the state approved deisolation plan.

Homeless Students

Refer to transportation services described on (**Update when the handbook is completed page 38**) under Education of Homeless Children.

Two Mile Limit

The two-mile measurement is the shortest vehicular route between the nearest walkway or driveway to the student's residence and the nearest walkway or gateway leading to the front door of the school. Mileage will NOT be calculated to or from a daycare provider.

School Bus Stops and Routing

Students will walk to a common bus stop. Bus stops will be set up, approved, and verified by the Worcester Public Schools Transportation Department only. Students are not entitled to street-to-street or door-to-door pickup or delivery. All stops will

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be at corners, whenever possible, to make them fair and consistent for all. All requests for additions or changes of school bus stops must be made through the student's school principal or designee. Parents or guardians are responsible to ensure that their child is at the correct bus stop. Any child standing at unauthorized locations, or bus stops not assigned by the Transportation Department, will not be picked up. Do not assume bus stops are in the same location as the previous year, as they may change due to student location and population. School bus drivers are

not permitted to make changes, additions, or deletions of any bus stops. While the law requires school departments to furnish transportation to those students falling within the state's guidelines, it does not relieve the parent or guardian of the responsibility of supervision of the child until the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the day. Once a child boards the bus, only at that time does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the bus stop at the close of the school day.

Riding School Buses

The following safety and behavior rules for pupils riding school buses are published as a guideline for students entitled to transportation by the Worcester Public Schools. A breach of these rules may result in loss of busing privileges.

1. Only pupils and school personnel assigned to the bus shall be allowed to ride in a school bus unless permission is granted by the Director of Transportation.
 2. Students should be at the pick-up point at the time designated and prepared to get on the bus with the least possible delay in order to keep the bus on schedule.
 3. While at a bus pick-up point, students must:
 - Conduct themselves in an orderly manner(ADD ,)
 - Stay out of the street(ADD ,)
 - Respect nearby private property rights(ADD ,)
 - Remain at least ten (10) feet from the bus when it stops to pick up, and move toward the bus only when the door opens(ADD .)
 4. Students should ride only the bus to which they are regularly assigned.
 5. Students should take seats promptly after boarding the bus and remain in their seats while the bus is in motion.
 6. Students shall not open or close windows or emergency doors except when asked to do so by the driver or the bus monitor. Students must keep arms and heads inside the bus.
 7. While a passenger on a bus, a student must not:
 - Smoke or vape(ADD ,)
 - Throw any objects on the bus or out the windows(ADD ,)
 - Disturb the driver or other students,
 - Litter(ADD ,)
 - Make loud or unnecessary noises(ADD ,)
 - Eat food or drink(ADD ,)
 - Transport items which may endanger the health or safety of any other passengers (ADD and)
 - Damage or deface any part of the bus(ADD .)
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8. Students must remain quiet when approaching a railroad crossing.
 9. Students who exit from the bus should pass ten (10) feet in front of the bus and look in both directions before crossing.
 10. In the event of a road emergency, students are to remain on the bus unless requested to leave by the driver of the bus.
 11. After exiting the bus, students should enter the school directly for safety purposes.

12. A student who has been issued an identification card by school authorities should carry such card with him/her at all times and show it when requested.
13. Bus drivers/monitors must report violations of the above rules and regulations to the school official on Bus Conduct Forms. Riding the bus is a privilege that can be denied temporarily or permanently when the student's behavior warrants it.

STUDENT SERVICES

Social Emotional Learning

The (~~DELETE Social-Emotion Learning Department~~) [**ADD Office of Social Emotional Learning (OSEL)**] consists of School Psychologists and School Adjustment Counselors who assist students, referred as a result of academic, social or behavioral difficulties. **A referral to the Social Emotional Learning Department does not constitute a referral for a Special Education Team Evaluation.**

Social Emotional Learning Department services include:

- Collaborative consultation with teachers
- Individual and group counseling
- Individual assessments
- Collaboration with community agencies
- Referral and case management services
- Parent Consultation and Support and referral to appropriate community-based resources
- Supervision of attendance
- Mediation
- Participation in SSP and 504 committees as requested by building principal
- (~~DELETE Risk assessments~~) (**ADD Safety Assessments**)
- Crisis intervention and stabilization services
- Specialized case management, service coordination and support for students in the care of DCF and for homeless students
- Coordination, training and support of the district's (~~DELETE PBIS initiative~~) (**ADD Universal and Tiered SEL supports and interventions**)
- Delivery of school-wide social emotional learning supports

Section 504 - Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to comply with Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAA, 2008) in all aspects of its programming, including both academic and extra-curricular activities and programs.

The Rehabilitation Acts of 1973, also known as "Section 504," is a non-discrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of the Act is to prohibit discrimination by institutions that receive federal funding and to assure that qualified disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled

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students. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

An eligible student under Section 504 is a student who:

1. has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities

2. has a record of such an impairment
3. is regarded as having such an impairment

Major life activities include but are not limited to caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating and working.

Under the ADA Amendments Act, whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity is to be determined without reference to the ameliorative effects of mitigating measures. This means that the school cannot consider the ameliorative effect of mitigating measures — with the exception of eyeglasses and contact lenses — in determining whether someone has a qualifying disability.

Eligibility

If you believe that your child may qualify for a 504 accommodation plan in order to access programs or activities in the Worcester Public Schools, please notify the Principal at your child's school. If you have medical or other documentation about the disabling condition, it is helpful to bring this to the Principal, although a medical diagnosis is not required. The Principal or their designated 504 coordinator for the school will review the concerns and gather data from teachers, school nurses, parents or others working with your child. This information will assist the 504 committee to determine how and whether your child's impairment substantially limits a major life activity. Specialists at the school may be consulted. If an assessment by a specialist is needed, you will be asked for written consent to complete these at school at no charge to you. When relevant data and information has been collected, the 504 committee will meet with you to determine the student's eligibility under Section 504 and to develop a plan of appropriate accommodations for your child. If it is determined that your child is not eligible, you will be provided this decision in writing and receive information concerning your procedural rights.

Who Might be Eligible Under Section 504?

Students may be eligible for accommodations or related services for a variety of reasons. Following are examples of students who may be eligible under Section 504 depending on the degree to which the disability interferes significantly with a major life activity:

- a student who has a hearing impairment
- a student who has exercise-induced asthma
- a student diagnosed with ADD/ADHD
- a student with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis
- a student with Crohn's disease

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School Districts Must

Conduct an evaluation of any student who, because of a disability, needs or is believed to need special education or related services in order to access all learning activities in a manner comparable to that of non-disabled same age peers. The evaluation will consist of the collection and analysis of data relevant to the impact of the disability on the student's functional access to curriculum, learning, social and enrichment opportunities that comprise the educational program.

Additionally, the Worcester Public Schools must “undertake to identify and locate every qualified handicapped person between the ages of 3 and 22 residing in the district who is not receiving a public education” 34 CFR 104.32 (a). In addition, the Worcester Public Schools must take appropriate steps to notify students with disabilities and their parents or guardians about this child find duty 34 CFR 104.32 (b). Written notice of Parent Rights under Section 504 may be requested at your child’s school or accessed through the Worcester Public Schools website:

<https://worcesterschools.org/wp-content/uploads/handbook/Section%20504%20Parents%20Rights%20Notice.pdf>

The person responsible for Section 504 at your school is the principal. Please contact your child’s school or the Office of Social and Emotional Learning at 508-799- 3175 if you have any questions or concerns regarding this notice or Section 504.

Special Education

The mission of the Special Education Department is to provide support, technical assistance and service to schools, staff, students, families and community stakeholders as we work collaboratively to promote safe schools to maximize educational outcomes for students with disabilities. Through our efforts we are committed to partnering with families and schools to ensure the fidelity of specialized instruction, inclusion opportunities, professional learning and rigorous outcomes to ensure the individual growth and personal success of students.

The following key areas provides an overview of special education:

Child Find activities includes the district providing screenings and evaluations annually for students to determine eligibility for special education and/or related services. Parental consent is required for all evaluations and completed within 45 school working days after the parent provides the district with written consent.

Through the evaluations process the evaluation must assess the child in all areas related to the child’s suspected disability. The evaluation results will be used to determine the child’s eligibility for special education and/or related services or a 504 Plan.

Special education services provides specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child who has a disability. The Federal law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), in combination with the state’s special education law (MGL c.71B) protects students with disabilities who are eligible for special education and guarantees them an Individual Education Program (IEP) designed to meet their unique needs. Special education laws and regulations are meant to protect a student with disabilities to ensure that individualized education program services are designed to make effective progress. **While not every child with a disability will require special education services, every child whose disability affects their school progress is entitled to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).**

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Students are the focus of the special education process as each IEP team must discuss and create a vision for the student. A student at the age of 14 should be encouraged to be an active participant through the team process as this begins the onset of the IEP team to create a Transition Plan. The Transition Planning process should include an interest inventory, transition assessments, post-secondary goals and/or prevocational assessments for all students with a disability who are (14-22) years of age. The completion of the Transition Planning Form (TPF) allows team members to discuss what a student is interested in doing after high school and what supports they need to get there. When the student is 17 years of age, the school district must discuss with both the student and parent the change in rights of the student and the parent(s) that will occur on the student's 18th birthday. In Massachusetts, at age 18 the student reaches the age of majority and thus able to make his or her own medical and education decisions.

Another critical process for students with severe disabilities is the Chapter 688 process. This is not a continuation of special education services and is not an entitlement to services. Special education services provided while a student is in school are entitlements mandated by federal and state law. A 688 referral is to plan for needed adult services for students with severe disabilities. Filing a Chapter 688 referral is discussed by the team at least two years before the student is expected to graduate or turn 22, as part of a transition planning. This process sets in motion a two year planning process for students whose entitlements to special education services will end when they graduate from school or turn 22 years of age. This filing results in the creation of an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) that describes how the student will connect with needed supports and services beyond school. Additional information about this process can be found at the following link: www.doe.mass.edu/sped/links/transition.html . Parents can also call the Parent Training Information Center at the Federation for Children with Special Needs at 1-800-331-0688, or the Director of the Bureau of Transitional Planning with The Executive Office of Health and Human Services at 617-573-1600.

Referrals are made by contacting the principal, school personnel, or the district's Manager of Special Education when requesting an evaluation for a special education eligibility. The parent must give consent in writing before a special education evaluation can begin. The school must contact the parent within five school days of receiving the referral asking for written permission and/or consent to begin the evaluation process.

Principals at each school are responsible to ensure that individual student's education plans are implemented with fidelity as written. The person responsible for assuring that the district complies with Federal and State guidelines that governs special education regulations is the Manager of Special Education and

Intervention Services. Please contact your child's school, evaluation team chairperson or the Special Education Manager if you have any questions or concerns regarding special education and your child's educational program.

Please visit <https://worcesterschools.org/about/departments-offices/special-education-intervention-services/> for additional information.

Employment Information and Procedures

Employment Permits (14-18 years of age) are issued in the nine (9) secondary schools for students enrolled in those schools. Other students may obtain the permit or certificate at the Parent Information Center, 768 Main Street between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday throughout the year. Students who do not attend public schools must present proof of date of birth when applying for the certificate or permit.

Anyone under 18 years of age must obtain a work permit before starting a new job (M.G.L. c. 149 §86-89). Applications for work permits and complete information on legal limits of work hours and conditions of employment are available on the Massachusetts Department of Labor's Division of Occupational Safety website at: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-get-a-work-permit>

Occupation Restrictions

Minors under 14 may not work

There are a few exceptions to this such as working as news carriers, on farms, and in entertainment (with a special permit).

Home Hospital Educational Services 603 (CMR 28.03(3) (c))

State regulations provide educational services to a student who is confined to the home or hospital for medical reasons for a period of not less than fourteen school days in a school year. The intent of the regulation is to provide students receiving a publicly-funded education with the opportunity to make educational progress even when a physician determines that the student is physically unable to attend school. Home/hospital educational services are not intended to replicate the total school experience. The number of tutoring hours provided to the student will be based upon Worcester's recommendations of what is required to minimize educational loss and taking into account the medical needs of the student. The Principal and/or his or her designee determines the credits which will be awarded for work completed during tutoring.

Any student who will be confined to a hospital or a home by an attending physician for fourteen (14) school days or longer due to a medical condition is eligible for this service. Note that for chronically ill students, the fourteen days need not be concurrent, but must result from the stated diagnosis.

If a chronic or acute medical condition that is not temporary in nature appears likely to adversely impact a student's educational progress, the Principal and/or his or her designee will initiate a referral to determine eligibility for special education or 504 services.

Worcester requires students who seek home/hospital instruction to provide the Principal with a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Physician's Statement form (form 23R/3) that is completed and signed by the student's attending physician. The Principal and/or his or her designee may seek parental permission to speak with the physician in order to clarify the student's medical availability to receive educational services, to gather additional information and to develop a transition plan to return the student to a school setting. Students who do not provide a fully-completed and signed form will not be provided with tutoring.

The Home Hospital Department will review and approve request once in receipt of the state-mandated Physician's Statement form which must be completed by the attending physician and must include at a minimum the following information:

1. the date the student was admitted to a hospital or confined to home
2. the medical reason for the confinement
3. the expected duration of the confinement
4. the medical needs of the student that should be considered to assist in the planning the home or hospital educational services

The program begins as soon as the physician requests Home and Hospital Instruction on the Physician's Statement form and the district approves the services. Once the Home and Hospital Department receives the completed Physician's Statement, the parent or guardian will be contacted to coordinate the services and an instructor will be assigned to provide educational services.

Homeschooling

Parents/guardians who choose to educate their children at home, as allowed under Massachusetts law, can fulfill the requirements of the compulsory attendance statute by having their educational programs reviewed and accepted in advance by the Worcester Public Schools. Students enrolling in homeschool for initial year must attend their assigned school until approval has been received. The notifications to homeschool (elementary and secondary versions) are available upon request from the office of (**DELETE the Child Study Department**) [**ADD Social Emotional Learning (OSEL)**] at (508) 799-3175. To avoid miscommunication and to ensure compliance with the home(**DELETE -**)schooling approval law, parents are requested to give this notice in writing. **The Worcester Public Schools shall do whatever is feasible to expedite the approval process.**

Parents are expected to provide evidence of their child's homeschooling program once a year. Students completing high school through homeschooling programs are not eligible for a Worcester Public Schools' Diploma.

A student being educated through Homeschooling may have access to public school activities of an extra-curricular nature (e.g. sports, clubs) with the approval of the Superintendent or designee.

The district reserves the right to allow enrolled students to have precedence or priority over the homeschooled student with regard to placement on sports teams and activities that have limited enrollment. With approval of the Superintendent or designee, and in consultation with the principal, a homeschooled student may participate in sports teams and activities that have limited enrollment provided that he or she does not displace an enrolled student. Homeschooled students applying to participate in district-sponsored sports must follow the athletic eligibility guidelines described on (**Update when the handbook is completed** page 49.)

INSTRUCTIONAL POLICIES

Homework Policy

The School Committee recognizes that a reasonable amount of study and preparation is necessary for the scholastic growth of all students. It is also aware that the amount of preparation should increase as the child progresses through the grades. Teachers will ensure that homework supports the district's curriculum.

Meaningful homework is connected to district expectations for accelerating academic performance, college readiness and career readiness.

Parents/guardians are important partners. They can support student success when they:

- ensure that students complete homework
- check work to assure quality
- stress importance of systematic study
- supervise and assist when necessary and,
- provide a suitable place to study

Elementary Schools

The purpose of homework is to reinforce skills that are taught in the classroom. Homework assignments should be related and/or connected to the Massachusetts Frameworks.

Assignments should be an extension of the class lessons that provide students with opportunities to (1) increase or practice learning objectives, (2) engage in higher order thinking, (3) reinforce concepts and apply learning, (4) work on open ended questions and writing skills, or (5) project work.

Teachers will adhere to the following guidelines and coordinate their assignments so that students are not overloaded with homework on any particular night.

- K-grade 2 Introduction to homework. Students might be asked to finish papers that were started in school or rehearse early reading skills and math skills.
- G**rade 3 Formal homework is introduced at this level. Students are assigned between 15 and 30 minutes of homework on a daily basis.
- G**rade 4 Students are assigned between 45 and 60 minutes of homework on a daily basis.
- G**rades 5-6 Students are assigned between one and one-and one half hours of homework on a daily basis.

Secondary Schools

Homework assignments will be designed to accelerate student learning, engage students in higher order thinking and facilitate career and college readiness and should be related to the Massachusetts Frameworks in support of success on the MCAS.

Purposeful homework will vary from day to day for each student. The combined minimum daily homework for academic assignments from middle school teachers should be 120 minutes. The average minimum daily homework assignment from

the high school teachers should be 45 minutes per academic subject and up to one hour for AP classes.

Teachers are responsible for including homework in their individual lesson plans and providing students with guidelines for:

- linking assignments to learning objectives that reflect and support the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Worcester Public Schools curricula, School Improvement Plans and Worcester Public Schools benchmarks
- providing learning experiences that are both rigorous and relevant and that can be completed independently by the student
- ensuring that homework is an extension of learning that takes place in the classroom and applying the same standards of performance as applied to classroom work
- assigning homework that is explicit and of reasonable length
- ensuring that the quality of homework is more important than the quantity
- completing and evaluating assignments as part of the students' progress toward standards
- showing how homework is factored into the student grade and,
- never assigning homework as punitive work
- Ensuring all students can complete the work assigned regardless of home or family access to technology or the media

Principals are responsible for encouraging school communities to embrace homework as a true extension of student learning and to evaluate the utilization of homework as part of student achievement in the learning process.

With the support and encouragement of teachers, principals, parents/guardians, students will be responsible for completing their homework assignments with care and constancy.

Process for Assigning Textbooks

Students and parents/guardians are responsible for books and all other equipment issued to a student of the Worcester Public Schools. All books and equipment shall be returned by the student and in the condition in which they were issued. Reasonable wear on books and materials is anticipated due to students use.

Worcester Public Schools reserves the right to collect payment for lost or damaged textbooks and other equipment from the students and/or their parents/guardians.

Promotion Policy General

The principal, after considering recommendations from members of the Student Support Process (SSP), may determine that a child, who is trying but lacks the maturity or has failed to grasp the basic skills, and can gain academically from an additional year at his or her present grade designation, may be retained for one year. Before retaining a student, all elementary principals will meet with the SSP members to consider and discuss the nineteen (19) items of the Light's Retention Scale (without any numerical rating scores and conference with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).

The principal is the final authority in promotion at the building level and for good cause may override the passing of promotional subject requirements. In all such cases, the principal must file a statement with his/her supervisor stating the reasons for such promotions and the steps that will be taken to provide the necessary remediation at the next level.

**Elementary (K- 6)
Promotional Subjects**

Grade 1	Grades 2-6
English Language Arts: (Reading, Language and Writing)	English Language Arts: (Reading, Language and Writing)
	Mathematics

Students must pass English Language Arts (Reading, Language and Writing) at the first-grade level. Students must pass English Language Arts and Mathematics from the second-grade level through the sixth-grade level.

Students in grades 2-6 must pass English Language Arts and Mathematics each year.

Grades 7-8

Middle school students must complete core academic subjects and enrichment courses that are unique to each school. All middle school students participate in physical education as required by state law (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 3).

Core Academic Courses (full year)

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology/Engineering
- History and Social Sciences

Pathway/Enrichment Courses may include:

- Academic Literacy, Word Study or Intervention Reading Courses
- Academic Numeracy - supplemental math course
- AVID
- Art
- Music
- Computer Literacy Health/Physical Education Family/Consumer Science
- Other: Dance, Theatre, etc.

For promotion, students must pass English Language Arts and Mathematics, two (2) additional core academic subjects and two (2) enrichment courses each year. Students cannot fail ELA and Mathematics in grades 7 and 8 and pass to grade 9.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating, plagiarism and forgery are considered to be academic dishonesty. For any work containing any information improperly submitted as one's own, or completed by means of academic dishonesty or deception, including information

obtained from the Internet and not properly cited, students will receive appropriate consequences which may include suspension and require that the student redo the assignment for credit. Violation of this policy may result in discipline ranging from a student receiving a failing grade for the assignment to suspension from school.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Overview:

In accordance to the Massachusetts General Laws, the Worcester Public Schools recognizes and enforces that every child, between the ages of six and sixteen, must attend school. School personnel and parents/guardians must work together to ensure that all students, Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12, attend school every day, and on time, during the 180-day pupil calendar.

School attendance is a priority for the Worcester Public Schools. Students' academic, social and emotional growth and development depend upon students' daily attendance, classroom participation and exposure to high quality teaching and learning. The daily interactions among teachers and students are irreplaceable components of the learning experience. In addition, daily attendance and punctuality habits acquired during schooling are essential skills in the adulthood life, and it begins as early as the pre-school years. Students who are chronically absent from school impact their own learning and the school community as a whole. Schools can take the following steps to address absenteeism:

School Attendance

Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. A school district may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen half-day sessions in any period of six months. In addition to this law, Worcester has an attendance policy and should make sure that parents/guardians are familiar with it.

CRA—Child Requiring Assistance: M.G.L. Chapter 119 Section 39e

A school can file a CRA application with the Worcester Juvenile Court if the student is a Habitual School Truant or a Habitual School Offender. The following rules must apply:

- I. Habitual School Truant: Student between the ages of 6 and 18 who, without excuse, willfully fails to attend school for more than 8 days in a quarter.
 - a. School must document whether or not the child's family have participated in a truancy prevention program.
 - b. CRA will be dismissed when the child turns 16.
 - c. If the failure to attend school is due to a physical or mental disability rather than a willful failure to attend school, the school should not file a CRA. If the failure to attend is due to a physical or mental disability, the school should convene the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for 504 Team to discuss supports and services necessary to facilitate school attendance.

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- II. Habitual School Offender: Students between the ages of 6 and 18 who repeatedly fails to obey school rules

- a. School must document specific steps taken to improve the child's conduct.
- b. CRA will be dismissed when the child turns 16.
- c. If the failure to obey school rules is due to a physical or mental disability rather than willful disobedience, the school should not file a CRA. In such cases, the school should convene the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 Team to discuss supports and services necessary to facilitate good behavior and consider a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) as appropriate. If the student is subject to school discipline, the school should conduct a manifestation of the student's disability as appropriate.

Failure to Send M.G.L. Chapter 76 Section 2

Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. It is a crime for a responsible parent or guardian not to cause such a child to attend school. If a child fails to attend school for seven day sessions or fourteen half-day sessions within any six month period, the supervisor of attendance may file a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent/guardian.

M.G.L. Chapter 119 Section 51A

A 51A is a report of suspected child abuse or neglect that is filed with the Department of Children and Families. Under Chapter 119, section 51A of Massachusetts General Laws, a report can be filed on behalf of a child under the age of sixteen for educational neglect if a child is not attending school on a regular basis.

Excused Absences

The following is a list of absences which will not count toward retention or loss of credit:

1. **Religious holy days**: The student's religion must require that the student does not attend school on the specific holy day or that school attendance would interfere with required religious observances. The parent/guardian must notify the school in writing within two (2) school days before or after the absence.
2. **Death in the immediate family**: Up to five (5) consecutive days for bereavement due to the death of a member of the student's immediate family: mother, father, sister, and brother. One (1) day to attend the funeral of grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces or nephews. The parent/ guardian must notify the school in writing within five (5) school days after the absence(s) occurred.
3. **Court appearance**: The student must have been subpoenaed to appear in a court of law. The student must be a witness, plaintiff, or defendant in a court proceeding. Within five (5) school days before or after the required court appearance, the parent/guardian must notify the school in writing and provide documentation from the court.

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4. **Hospitalization**: The parent/guardian must submit to the school release papers from the hospital documenting the student's hospitalization.

5. **Illness:** The parent/guardian must submit to the school medical documentation of the illness that requires the student's exclusion from school. The principal has the right to require and seek additional medical opinions and diagnosis regarding a student's absence(s) due to illness.

Students who will be out of school for more than fourteen consecutive days because of illness or hospitalization may receive home or hospital instruction. For more information refer to Home and Hospital Instruction on page 64.

Family vacations taken during school time are absences. Families should plan their vacations during the regularly scheduled vacations. Non-emergency appointments should be scheduled after school hours.

Student Absence Notification Program

The District will notify a student's parent/guardian daily of a student's absence based on morning attendance via a ConnectEd automated phone call.

Beginning with 5 absences, parents/guardians will receive an attendance letter via U.S. Mail with each absence. Each Principal, by whatever title he/she may be known, or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

Dropout Prevention

No student who has not graduated from high school shall be considered permanently removed from school unless the Principal has sent notice to a student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has been absent from school for ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absence. The notice shall be sent within five days of the tenth consecutive day of absence and shall offer at least 2 dates and times within the next ten (10) days for an exit interview with the Superintendent or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be in both English and the primary language of the home, if applicable. The notice shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview and shall indicate that the parties shall reach an agreement on the date/time of the interview within the ten (10) day timeframe. The timeframe may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian but no extension shall exceed 14 days.

The Superintendent or (**ADD his/her**) designee may proceed with any interview without a parent/guardian present.

Tardiness and Dismissal

A student who is not in his/her assigned seat at the start of homeroom or class is tardy.

If a student starts school after half of the academic day has passed, then that

student will be marked absent from school for that day. The student may not participate in any school activity (e.g., sports, dances, prom) during the rest of that day.

If a student leaves school before half of the academic day has passed, then that student will be marked absent from school for that day. The student may not participate in any school activity (e.g., sports, dances, prom) during the rest of that day.

Each principal will meet with the parent/guardian and school's faculty to develop and institute an intervention plan for students who reach 10 tardies and/or dismissals.

Faculty Responsibility

Faculty members will record all absences, tardiness, and dismissals of students from their assigned classes. As students may miss some classes more frequently than others, each faculty member will be responsible for notifying the administration on occasions when notification must be sent to a parent or guardian.

Attendance Notification to Students and their Parents/Guardians

Parents and guardians are notified by phone on a daily basis if their child is absent. After five unexcused absences, the principal (or his/her designee) will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing and, when appropriate, request a meeting to discuss the student's attendance. Parents will continue to receive written notification of their child's attendance at every 5th absence from school.

Parents and guardians will also receive attendance information through:

1. Interim and attendance progress reports (at five weeks into each marking period)
2. Report cards (every ten weeks). The secondary report cards show students' absences from each class and students' total absences from school

Retention and/or Loss of Credit

Fourteen absences or more per school year may result in retention and/or loss of credit.

Absences accumulated due to out-of-school suspensions do not count towards a loss of academic credit. Students who are absent because of out-of-school suspensions must make up missed assignments, including homework and test(s). The principal can determine that other extenuating circumstances justify absences which do not merit a loss of academic credit.

Truancy

When a student accumulates excessive unexcused absences, the principal (or his/her designee) may seek assistance from the Juvenile Court and/or the Department of Children and Families to resolve attendance matters.

High School Attendance and Academic Credit Policy

1. Attendance is required to earn credit

A student who has enrolled in a class is expected to be present each

time the course is in session. For the 2021-22 school year, high school students will not receive credit when they exceed the following number of absences:

- a. Fourteen (14) unexcused class absences per one-credit course
- b. Seven (7) unexcused class absences for courses less than one credit

2. Administrative Procedure for Loss of Credit

- a. In any case where a student fails to receive credit for any course, the final course grade will still be recorded on that student's permanent record card.
- b. In the case where no credit is received for a course required for graduation (e.g., American History) and in which a passing grade has been received, it is required that the course be repeated.
- c. A minimum of twenty-four (24) credits is required to graduate.

3. Attendance Buyback Program

During the 2021-22 school year, eligible high school students will be able to voluntarily participate in an Attendance Buyback Program. Through this program, students can make up the credit(s) which they lost due to excessive absences. To be eligible for the Attendance Buy-back Program, students must have passed a course and must have between 15 and 22 absences. Eligible students who complete additional hours of instruction beyond the school day or on Saturday mornings can then receive full credit for the course. Students will not be able to change their passing grade for their course. Eligible students who are interested in this program, should contact their high school guidance counselor for additional information.

4. Appeal Procedure

- a. The following areas may be considered in the appeal process:
 - Documented illness
 - Mandated school-sponsored activities School-sponsored field trips
 - Alternative Education Programs
 - Home tutoring assigned by the school
- b. Appeals for waiver of the policy will be heard by the Principal or his/her designee.
- c. The parent/guardian may appeal an adverse decision by the Principal or his/her designee to the Managers for Instruction and School Leadership
- d. The parent/guardian may appeal an adverse decision by the Managers for Instruction and School Leadership to the Superintendent
- e. The parent/guardian may appeal an adverse decision by the Superintendent of Schools to the School Committee. Appeals to the School Committee must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent, who will place the parent's or guardian's appeal on the

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School Committee agenda for the next regular meeting. The parent or guardian is to be notified of the date, time and place of the School Committee meeting.

Note: Confirmed class cuts and confirmed truancy cannot be appealed.

FIELD TRIP POLICY*

The Worcester Public Schools has adopted a Field Trip Policy that is in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 346 of the Acts of 2002, An Act Relative to Safety of School Sponsored Travel. The policy establishes procedures for school sponsored student travel that is planned between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m., overnight or foreign trips, and over water or air travel.

A copy of the policy is available through the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.

Cancellation Policy: The Superintendent reserves the right to cancel an approved field trip until the time of departure. In the event of a cancellation, the school system is not responsible for any expenses incurred.

***The Worcester Public Schools does not condone or take responsibility for privately funded trips without authorization of the school principal.**

HONOR ROLL POLICY

High School

Honor roll status in the Worcester Public Schools is determined by the individual student's average in all major subject areas. A major subject is defined as a course that yields a minimum of 1.00 unit of credit.

Eligibility

First Honors is defined as those students who receive grades of 90 or above in all major subjects.

Second Honors is defined as those students who receive grades of 80 or above in all major subjects.

Note: There is no weighting relative to courses of study.

Middle School

Honor roll status in the Worcester Public Schools is determined by the individual student's average in all major subject areas and enrichments. A major subject is defined as a full year course or the equivalent thereof.

Eligibility

First Honors is defined as those students who receive grades of 90 or above in all major subjects and A's in conduct and effort in all subjects including enrichments.

Second Honors is defined as those students who receive grades of 80 or above in all major subjects and A's and B's in conduct and effort in all subjects including enrichments.

Note: There is no weighting relative to courses of study.

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STANDARDIZED TESTING

Throughout their education, students will take selected standardized tests. A standardized test is one that is administered under uniform and controlled conditions. This ensures that any difference in scores (pre and post-results, between students, etc.) reflect differences in knowledge and skills, rather than differences in unrelated factors such as test conditions. These tests are one of many ways educators assess

what students know and can do. This can include paper-based or computer-based testing, oral and written tasks, classroom observations and portfolios of student work. These measures are used to monitor progress, refine instructional practices and improve our capacity to ensure that all students reach and exceed grade level expectations and graduate from the Worcester Public Schools career and/or college ready. Students whose parents opt them out of state or district standardized assessments will not be academically penalized or face disciplinary action except as prohibited by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or by the United States.

For Information on Testing

For questions or concerns related to testing procedures and security or for information on your child's performance or participation in testing, please contact your child's principal or teacher. For general questions about assessment or for questions or concerns related to testing procedures and security or for information on your child's performance or participation in testing in the Worcester Public Schools, please contact the Office of School and Student Performance (508) 799-3592. You may also visit the Worcester Public Schools website for information on testing. Information from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education concerning state assessments can also be found online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/TestingMatters.html> or by contacting the State Office of Student Assessment at (781) 338-3625.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Because of the transition to the next generation Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests in spring of 2019, requirements for the classes of 2021-2023 reflect an interim passing standard for ELA and Mathematics defining a level of achievement on the new tests that is similar to the standard on the legacy tests. (~~DELETE Students in the graduating classes of 2021-23~~) (**ADD** The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted in April 2021 to waive or modify the state competency determination (CD) requirement by allowing students in the class of 2022 to receive their CD by earning full credit in an approved course and demonstrating competency in that subject, in lieu of earning a qualifying MCAS score. Students in the graduating class of 2023) will need to satisfy one of the following two conditions in both English Language Arts and Mathematics to earn a competency determination.

- Meet or exceed the scaled score threshold of 472 on the English Language Arts grade 10 MCAS test and 486 on the Mathematics grade 10 MCAS test
- Earn a scaled score between 455 and 471 on the English Language Arts grade 10 MCAS test or earn a score between 469 and 485 on the Mathematics grade 10 MCAS test and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP)

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Scaled score requirements for the class of 2024 (**ADD and following years**) are yet to be determined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

More information can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>.

In order to graduate, all students must:

- Meet one of the above criteria for competency determination through a high enough scaled score on the English Language Arts and Mathematics sections of the Grade 10 MCAS and completion of an Education Proficiency Plan (as necessary), in accordance with the guidelines set forth by DESE.
- Receive a passing score of 220 on a science section of the MCAS in one of the following: Biology, Chemistry, Engineering/Technology or Physics.
- Earn twenty-four (24) credits.
- Worcester Technical High School students must also complete the minimum required credits and required graduation subjects established for them by the School Committee.

To receive a diploma with a specific high school name, a student must meet the Worcester Public Schools graduation requirements which must include a minimum of 10 credits earned from the particular high school. If a student has earned less than 10 credits but meets the Worcester Public Schools graduation requirements, the student will be eligible to receive a generic Worcester Public Schools Diploma.

Graduation Course Requirements

~~(DELETE Grade 9 beginning 2013-14)~~

(ADD Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 beginning in 2021-22 school year)

4 credits English

4 credits Mathematics (Effective with the graduating class of 2019, three of the four courses must include Algebra I and II, Geometry or Trigonometry)

3 credits Science and Technology/Engineering

3 credits History/Social Science (including 1 credit World History and **~~(DELETE 2-credits)~~** **(ADD 1 credit)** U.S. History **(ADD and 1 credit chosen by the student)**)

2 credits Foreign Language (of the same language)

1 credit Arts

5 credits additional core courses

Additionally, students must complete a physical education course each year

~~(DELETE Grades 10, 11 & 12 students enrolled prior to 2013-14)~~

4 credits English

3 credits Mathematics

3 credits Science and Technology/Engineering

3 credits Social Studies (includes 2 credits of U.S. History)

½ credit Health

1 credit Physical Education

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1. Beginning with students who entered the 9th grade in September 2013, the High School Graduation Requirements were replaced by the Mass Core requirements.

2. Students who successfully complete Algebra in grade 8 have the option of receiving one (1) high school credit that will be recorded on their high school transcript. (Massachusetts college admissions accept Grade 8 College Preparatory Courses, provided that the student successfully completes the next level course with a grade of "C" or better). Students electing to take Algebra I in high school will not receive credit for Algebra taken in grade 8. Students who have earned a credit for 8th grade Algebra must complete 4 credits of Mathematics during their high school years.

~~3. **(DELETE)** Students who successfully complete the second course of a Foreign Language in grade 8 have the option of receiving one (1) high school credit that will be recorded on their high school transcript. (Massachusetts College admissions accept Grade 8 College Preparatory courses, provided that the student successfully completes the next level course with a grade of "C" or better). Students electing to take the first course of a Foreign Language in high school will not receive credit for the course taken in grade 8.~~

(Replace with) Students in grades 7 & 8 who successfully complete high school courses in World Language will receive one high school credit per course that will be recorded on their high school transcript. Students who take Part 1 of a World Language Course in 8, will not receive credit for the course taken in middle school. It is recommended that students take two years or more of the same language at the high school level.

4. The intent of awarding credits for College Preparatory courses taken in grade 8 is so that students can have additional learning opportunities while in high school. These additional opportunities include but are not limited to Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, online, service learning and work-based learning courses. All students must complete 24 credits of coursework while in high school in addition to fulfilling the other graduation requirements as per the policy handbook.
5. Exception Allowances
 - a. English Language Learners (ELL) identified through the Massachusetts' state standardized test (ACCESS) as English Proficiency Level (EPL) 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 may substitute two college preparatory elective courses for the two required foreign language courses. Students who reach EPL level 6 while in grades 9 or 10 are required to take the two foreign language courses to meet graduation requirements.
 - b. Students with disabilities whose psycho-educational evaluation provides a specific diagnosis of a learning disability that precludes the student's successful completion of a foreign language course may substitute two college preparatory elective courses for the two re- quired foreign language courses.
 - c. Students enrolled in Career/Vocational Technical Programs may substitute foreign language courses for an additional academic elective course plus one of the following options:

- i. complete at least one full year of study of foreign language or
- ii. complete a fourth year of study of science and technology/engineering or
- iii. complete one full year of study for computer science

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MCAS Appeals Process

The Worcester Public Schools carries out the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's appeal processes for regular and special education high school students who have not passed MCAS. The MCAS Performance Appeals process was established in 2002 to provide eligible high school students who have been unable to pass the required MCAS tests an additional opportunity to demonstrate through their course work that they meet or exceed the state's Competency Determination (CD) standard in order to earn a high school diploma. There are specific eligibility requirements relative to student achievement in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science and Technology/Engineering, attendance and participation in tutorial and remediation efforts. Further information on these processes is available through your child's school or the Office of School and Student Performance (508-799-3060). Information from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education concerning MCAS appeals can also be found online at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals/>

Massachusetts State College and University Minimum Required Courses for Admission

English	4 courses
Mathematics	4 courses (Algebra I & II and Geometry or Trigonometry, or comparable coursework) including mathematics during the final year of high school
Sciences	3 courses (from Natural Science and/or Physical Science and/or Technology/ Engineering), including 3 courses with laboratory work
Social Sciences	[DELETE 2 courses (including 1 course in U.S. History) [ADD 3 courses (including 1 in U.S. History and 1 in World History)]]
Foreign Languages	2 courses (in a single language) <i>Note: American Sign Language (ASL) is a foreign language.</i>
Electives	2 courses (from the above subjects or from the Arts & Humanities or Computer Sciences)

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Advanced Placement Policy

Advanced Placement courses provide students with unique learning experiences that help ensure college success. Students engage in intense discussions, solve problems collaboratively, and learn to write clearly and persuasively, while developing time management skills, discipline and study habits. Students who achieve a score of 3, 4 or 5 on the Advanced Placement Exam may earn college credit from **many** four-year colleges in the US. Worcester Public Schools offers over 20 Advanced Placement Courses in on-site, community-based or virtual learning settings.

Recommendations for Advanced Placement Enrollment

Students who are interested in enrolling in Advanced Placement Courses should discuss readiness for this challenging learning opportunity with their (**DELETE parents**) (**ADD caregivers**), teachers, and guidance counselors.

The (**DELETE following**) indicators (**DELETE should**) (**ADD below may**) be considered together when assessing a student's readiness. One indicator is not more valuable than another in determining readiness.

- AP Potential using PSAT results
- Motivation and interest
- Course expectations and course work
- Prior grades in the same-discipline courses
- The number of same-discipline courses taken

Teachers may assign work to students during the summer to help prepare them for the course. (**DELETE Summer course work supports students' preparation, but it is not required as a component of the student's grade; teachers may waive this requirement for individual students when necessary.**)

Advanced Placement Exams

Students are responsible for costs for Advanced Placement Exams. The cost for one Advanced Placement Exam is \$90.00. Scholarships and reduced fees are available for eligible students. School (**DELETE guidance counselors**) (**ADD AP Coordinators**) can provide additional information.

Class Rank Grade Point Average

Class rank is computed at the end of the 6th semester, using major subjects only. Class rank will be recomputed at the end of the second marking period senior year for determining the valedictorian and for processing of college applications. The student grades are weighted as follows:

Average	A.P.	Honors	College
100-99	5.3	4.8	4.3
98-97	5.2	4.7	4.2
96	5.1	4.6	4.1
95-94	5.0	4.5	4.0
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93	4.9	4.4	3.9
92	4.8	4.3	3.8

91	4.7	4.2	3.7
90	4.6	4.1	3.6
89	4.4	3.9	3.4
88	4.3	3.8	3.3
87	4.2	3.7	3.2
86	4.1	3.6	3.1
85	4.0	3.5	3.0
84	3.9	3.4	2.9
83	3.8	3.3	2.8
82	3.7	3.2	2.7
81	3.6	3.1	2.6
80	3.4	2.9	2.4
79	3.3	2.8	2.3
78	3.2	2.7	2.2
77	3.1	2.6	2.1
76	3.0	2.5	2.0
75	2.9	2.4	1.9
74	2.8	2.3	1.8
73	2.7	2.2	1.7
72	2.6	2.1	1.6
71	2.4	1.9	1.4
70	2.3	1.8	1.3
69	2.2	1.7	1.2
68	2.1	1.6	1.1
67	1.9	1.4	0.9
66	1.8	1.3	0.8
65	1.7	1.2	0.7
64-0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Marking System

A=100-90 B=89-80 C=79-70 D=69-65 F=64-0

(ADD Early College Program:)

College Courses for High School Students

High school students in the Worcester Public Schools who wish to pursue advanced or specialized courses beyond those offered in their high schools may take courses at these area colleges:

Anna Maria College	College of the Holy Cross
Assumption College	Quinsigamond Community College
Becker College	Worcester Polytechnic Institute*
Clark University	Worcester State University

*Worcester Polytechnic Institute offers courses at reduced tuition to high school students.

With a Guidance Counselor's recommendation and approval by the college/university, students may take one college course per semester as agreed upon by the Worcester Public Schools and the individual college/university. Students receive dual enrollment credit for courses taken at area colleges. For GPA computation, Worcester Public Schools students will receive the same weight as an A.P. course for each completed college course.

MA Seal of Biliteracy

The Worcester Public Schools will offer the MA Seal of Biliteracy to graduating seniors on their diplomas and transcripts. The MA Seal of Biliteracy recognizes graduates who speak, listen, read and write proficiently in English and a second or even third language.

By offering the MA Seal of Biliteracy to its students the Worcester Public Schools recognizes, honors and encourages the bilingual students and diverse communities in Worcester and encourages all students to pursue proficiency in more than one language. Bilingualism is a critical 21st century skill that recipients of the MA Seal of Biliteracy can highlight in both college and job applications.

In order to earn the MA Seal of Biliteracy, students must meet all their graduation requirements, demonstrate proficiency in English through the ELA MCAS or ACCESS, and show proficiency in a target language by earning 4 or 5 in an AP Language Exam or other state-approved language test provided by the district.

Students interested in participating in the MA Seal of Biliteracy program must complete an application available in the guidance office (**ADD , on the Worcester Public Schools website**) or scan the QR Code included here by the Fall of their Senior year.

Questions about the MA Seal of Biliteracy program can be directed to Michelle Huaman, World Languages Liaison (huamanm@worcesterschools.net) or Carmen Melendez-Quintero, (**DELETE Director**) (**ADD Manager**) of English Learner Programs (Melendezquinteroc@worcesterschools.net)



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GENERAL SCHOOL ISSUES

Delayed School Opening/Early Dismissal/School Cancellation Policy

The School Administration will exercise one of the following options when weather conditions dictate a change in the normal opening of the school day:

1. Cancellation of school
2. Delay of one hour in the opening of school
3. Delay of two hours in the opening of school

If a delay is in effect, a.m. preschool will be cancelled; p.m. preschool will be held.

Delayed AM School Opening

If there is a one-hour delay in the opening of school, all procedures now in place will be delayed by one hour. A two-hour delay requires that all procedures in place be delayed by two hours. These procedures include:

1. reporting time of pupils
2. pick up time of all bus routes (i.e.: If a bus normally picks up a child at 7:15 a.m. in a one-hour delay it would be 8:15 a.m. If a bus normally picks up a child at 7:15 a.m., in a two-hour delay it would be 9:15 a.m.)

Early Dismissal

***Please note:** When schools are dismissed early, all after-school programs including daycare are canceled. Early dismissal time is two hours earlier than each school's regular dismissal time.

No School/Delayed School Opening/Early Dismissal Announcements

Announcements of no school, a delay in the opening of school, or early dismissal from school will be made (**ADD via a Connect Ed message, on the Worcester Public Schools website (worcesterschools.org) and**) on the following radio and television stations:

WTAG 580 AM	WORC 1310 AM	WBZ 1030 AM
WXLO 104.5 FM	WSRS 96.1 FM	WCUW 93.1 FM*
WHDH-TV Channel 7	WCVB-TV Channel 5	WBZ-TV Channel 4
WFXT-TV Channel 25		

*This announcement is broadcast in Spanish between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. on WCUW FM 93.1.

Radio stations have requested that students and parents/guardians refrain from calling to make inquiries as to the status of school. In addition, information about no school, a delay in the opening of school and early dismissal from school will be posted on the WPS Website and social media, and an automated phone message will be sent to parents/guardians.

Policy Statement and Procedural Guidelines for Recess

Quality education requires a healthy learning environment that provides students (K-6) with minimally a total of 30 minutes of recess over the course of the day.

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The 30 minutes can be divided into shorter breaks and shall include a break at lunch. Recess is designed for the purpose of engaging students in developmentally appropriate activity which promotes learning, social development, and physical health. Structured/unstructured recess shall rarely be taken away from students as a form of punishment/consequences. Neither shall severe exercise be used as a form of punishment/consequences for students. This time shall not be a substitute for physical education.

The School Principal is responsible for communicating, applying, maintaining, and evaluating the Recess Policy. The School Principal shall review the Recess Policy with the members of the School Site Council annually and submit results of that review to the Deputy Superintendent in May of each year.

Procedural Guidelines

Recess shall occur outside, weather permitting, **or unless circumstances dictate otherwise for a limited period.** Students shall be supervised by adult, staff members, parents, or school learning community volunteers. The school principal shall insure that adults receive appropriate training to support students and intended outcomes. The school principal shall insure that students are provided with developmentally appropriate equipment. Public spaces in proximity to the school, such as parks and public playgrounds may be appropriate substitutions for play space at the school.

The School Committee shall equitably support budgetary requirements needed for recess equipment for all elementary schools. This allocation will be in addition to the per pupil allocation provided to each school. Each school principal shall have autonomy to expend allocations to support the needs of students for recess.

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

Parent Advisory Councils

School Councils

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, Section 59C, requires the establishment of school councils in all schools, comprised of parents/guardians of students attending the school who shall be selected by the parents/guardians of students attending the school, teachers, students and community representatives and co-chaired by school principals. The council should be broadly representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the school building and community. The council will meet with the principal and assist in identifying the educational needs of students, reviewing the annual school budget and in formulating a school improvement plan. For additional information please contact your child's school principal.

Special Education Parent Advisory Council

The parent advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to: advising the school committee in matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities, meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs.

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The SEPAC provides ongoing professional development and networking to families of students with disabilities and the opportunity to discuss common areas of interest and specific needs regarding the education and well-being of students with disabilities. Parent/guardians meet four times during the school year to engage in various activities or selected topics of interest. These meetings provide opportunities for parents to share and collaborate as they deepen their understanding of the procedural regulations that govern special education, as well as various resources available for students with disabilities and their families. For additional information, please email sealek@worcesterschools.net

English Learner Parent Advisory Committee [ADD (ELPAC)]

~~(DELETE The duties of the council shall include but not be limited to (1) advising the school district, school committee and board of trustees on matters that pertain to English learners; (ii) meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning and development of programs designed to improve educational opportunities for English learners; and (iii) participating in the review of school improvement plans.~~

~~The English Learner Parent Advisory Committee (EL-PAC) was established in 2018-2019. It's goal is to enable parents of English learners (ELs) to participate in their children's education and success in school by creating and strengthening effective communication and home school partnerships. The EL-PAC consists of parents, community members, teachers and district staff members. Meetings are a venue for meaningful discussions about Dual Language, Transitional Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language, as well as for asking questions about topics related to education, schools, and the district. Parents of English learners are encouraged to attend the numerous meetings that are held throughout the school year. For additional information, please email melendezquinteroc@worcesterschools.net)~~

(ADD The purpose of ELPAC is to support the academic success of English learners (ELs) and former English learners (FELs) by providing a forum in which parents and guardians of current and former English learners can express their perspectives and provide input to the District.

The duties of the council include: (1) advising the school district and school committee on matters that pertain to English learners; (ii) meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning and development of programs designed to improve educational opportunities for English learners; and (iii) participating in the review of school improvement plans.

The WPS English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) was established in 2018-2019. The ELPAC consists of parents and guardians of current and former English learners, community members, and teachers and district staff members. Meetings are a venue for meaningful discussions about Dual Language, Transitional Bilingual Education, Sheltered English Immersion, and English as a Second Language, as well as other topics related to the education of current and former English learners. Parents and guardians of current and former English learners are encouraged to attend the ELPAC meetings that are held throughout the school year. For additional information, please email melendezquinteroc@worcesterschools.net.)

Citywide Parent Planning Advisory Council (CPPAC)

Each school is represented by two (2) parent members selected by their parent group and principals. Meetings are held every other month. The objectives of the CPPAC are:

1. To involve parents/guardians in addressing relevant issues in the Worcester Public Schools including integration and changing (increasing/ decreasing) enrollment.
2. To provide an open forum for discussion between parents/guardians and administrators regarding school issues and voted policies.
3. To give its members the responsibility of keeping their respective schools informed.

For additional information email contactcppac@gmail.com

Parent and Family Engagement

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to promote parent and family engagement in accord with Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.

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The WPS conducts outreach to parents and family members; implements programs, activities and procedures to involve parents and family members in the Title I programs, and plans and implements such programs, activities and procedures with meaningful consultation with parents and family members. The Office of English Learners and the WPS works with schools, parents and community partners in a variety of ways to facilitate verbal and written communication in a language that family members can understand.

Opportunities for Parent/Guardian Support

Please see (**ADD the**) district website or contact your school for information on community resources available to parents.

Volunteer Staff Regulations

Application Process

All school volunteers must fill out a volunteer application which can be obtained at the school or on the WPS website. This applies to any individual who volunteers in school property or for school activities, including field trips. All volunteers must go through a screening process prior to beginning service. This includes the CORI process.

Screening Process

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has mandated that all school volunteers must complete the CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) screening process. This process must be completed before the volunteer begins in any school or program. As the CORI check can take several weeks, all volunteers are encouraged to complete the CORI form as soon as possible. Please be aware that CORI checks expire every three years and need to be resubmitted to the Human Resource Office.

Volunteer Organizations

There have been a number of initiatives in the community to strengthen school volunteer programs. Some of these include:

- State Employees Voluntary Leave Services Program
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P.)
- Transitional Assistance Program (Welfare Office)

These types of initiatives are very specific about requirements for participation.

Parent Volunteers who bring Children

Some parent/guardian volunteers have come to school to perform a volunteer assignment and have brought young children with them. Each principal is responsible for developing a building policy in conjunction with his/her School Council regarding this issue.

If your building does allow younger children to accompany parent/guardian volunteers, these parents/guardians must perform tasks that are safe and harmless to young children.

These volunteers must not operate machinery such as:

- paper cutters
- copying machines

ALL volunteers must sign in at the office. Parent/guardian volunteers must sign in both themselves and any child that accompanies them.

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Worcester Public School District Media Policy

Purpose: During the school year, your child may have opportunities to have their work or activities publicized. Examples include, but not limited to: student work published on the district website and social media channels; feature stories about student performances or school-wide events in newspapers or on television (the district's Charter Channel 191 WEA-TV or local/national coverage); and photographs and videos of students "in action" on the website and social media channels, and in local and regional newspapers. Students first names and last initials (example: Paul F.) are used to identify pictures of three or fewer students and student work on the district website and social media channels. When reporters visit the district, they often speak with students and use their full names in covering the story.

General Media Coverage: Throughout the year there may be in-school programs, events or meetings (such as a school-wide assembly or PTA event) that are open to the public and where large group photographs or videotapes will be taken by parents, the media, or school district staff. In these cases, students would not be identified by name. Your consent to these types of group photographs or videotapes is assumed. If you do not want your child photographed or video-taped at these public events, please speak with the principal or event coordinator to insure that your child is excluded from the coverage.

Procedure: Any parent who does not want their student's name, photograph, or work published on the district's website and social media channels, or included in newspaper or television coverage must complete and return the form on the inside back cover of this handbook to the homeroom teacher.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

HIGH SCHOOLS

Burncoat High	(508) 799-3300
Claremont Academy	(508) 799-3077
Doherty Memorial	(508) 799-3270
North High	(508) 799-3370
South High Community	(508) 799-3325
The Gerald Creamer Center	(508) 799-3476
Worcester Technical High School	(508) 799-1940
Alternative St. Casimir	(508) 799-3245
University Park Campus	(508) 799-3591

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Burncoat	(508) 799-3390
Claremont Academy	(508) 799-3077
Forest Grove	(508) 799-3420
Sullivan Middle	(508) 799-3350
Worcester East Middle	(508) 799-3430

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Belmont	(508) 799-3588	May	(508) 799-3520
Burncoat	(508) 799-3537	McGrath	(508) 799-3584
Canterbury	(508) 799-3484	Midland	(508) 799-3548
Chandler Elementary	(508) 799-3572	Nelson Place	(508) 799-3506
Chandler Magnet	(508) 799-3452	Norrback	(508) 799-3500
City View	(508) 799-3670	Quinsigamond	(508) 799-3502
Clark	(508) 799-3545	Rice Square	(508) 799-3556
Columbus Park	(508) 799-3490	Roosevelt	(508) 799-3482
Elm Park	(508) 799-3568	Tatnuck	(508) 799-3554
Flagg	(508) 799-3522	Thorndyke	(508) 799-3550
Gates Lane	(508) 799-3488	Union Hill	(508) 799-3600
Goddard School of Science and Technology	(508) 799-3594	Vernon Hill	(508) 799-3630
Grafton	(508) 799-3478	Wawecus	(508) 799-3527
Heard	(508) 799-3525	West Tatnuck	(508) 799-3596
Hiatt	(508) 799-3601	Woodland Academy	(508) 799-3557
Lake View	(508) 799-3536	Worcester Arts Magnet	(508) 799-3575
Lincoln	(508) 799-3504	Academic Center for Transition	(508) 538-9106

Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center (508) 799-3299, (508) 799-3068,
..... (508) 799-3069, (508) 799-3194
Dr. James A. Caradonio New Citizen Center (508) 799-3494

MANAGERS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Elementary (508) 799-3221
Secondary (508) 799-3499

Add the following new section.

**Massachusetts Parental Notice for One Time Consent to Allow the School District
To Access MassHealth (Medicaid) Benefits**

**WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL SERVICES**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL-BASED
MEDICAID PROGRAM**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As of July 1, 2019 school districts may bill Mass Health for health care services that students receive at school. Included services are vision, hearing, dental, postural, growth and SBIRT screenings, behavioral and mental health counseling, speech and direct nursing care of students with complex medical needs. This billing in no way affects your child's Mass Health coverage outside of school or any homecare services your child receives.

The School-Based Medicaid Program offers schools an opportunity to receive federal money to offset the costs for providing the above Medicaid-covered services in the school setting. The reimbursement is to the City of Worcester and therefore will benefit both the City and school finances.

Please take a moment, complete the form below and return it to your child's school nurse. Should you have questions, require additional information or translation of the parent consent form please don't hesitate to contact me.

Dr. Debra McGovern, DNP, BCPNP
Director of School Nursing

School District Name and Code: **Worcester Public Schools 0348**

School/District Contact: **Dr. Debra McGovern – 508-799-8554**
Director of School Nursing

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your permission (also known as consent) to share information about your child with MassHealth. Local communities in Massachusetts have been approved to receive partial reimbursement from MassHealth for the costs of certain health-related services provided by the district to your child (or children). In order for your community to get back some of the money spent on services, the school district needs to share with MassHealth the following types of information about your child: name; date of birth; gender; type of services provided, when, and by whom; and MassHealth ID.

With your permission, the school district will be able to seek partial reimbursement for services provided by MassHealth, including, among others, a hearing test or eye exam; a school physical; occupational or speech or physical therapy; some school nurse visits; and counseling services with the school social worker or psychologist. Each year, the district will provide you with notification regarding your permission; you do not need to sign a form every year.

The school district cannot share with MassHealth information about your child without your permission. As you consider giving permission, please be advised of the following:

1. The school district cannot require you to sign up for MassHealth in order for your child to receive the health-related and/or special education services to which your child is entitled.
2. The school district cannot require you to pay anything towards the cost of your child's health-related and/or special education services. This means that the school district cannot require you to pay a co-pay or deductible so that it can charge MassHealth for services provided. The school district can agree to pay the co-pay or deductible if any such cost is expected.

3. If you give the school district permission to share information with and request reimbursement from MassHealth:
 - a. This will not affect your child's available lifetime coverage or other MassHealth benefit; nor will it in any way limit your own family's use of MassHealth benefits outside of school.
 - b. Your permission will not affect your child's special education services or IEP rights in any way, if your child is eligible to receive them.
 - c. Your permission will not lead to any changes in your child's MassHealth rights; and
 - d. Your permission will not lead to any risk of losing eligibility for other Medicaid or MassHealth funded programs.

4. If you give permission, you have the right to change your mind and withdraw your permission at any time.

5. If you withdraw your permission or refuse to allow the school district to share your child's records and information with MassHealth for the purpose of seeking reimbursement for the cost of services, the school district will continue to be responsible for providing your child with the services, at no cost to you.

I have read the notice and understand it. Any questions I had were answered. I give permission to the school district to share with MassHealth records and information concerning my child(ren) and their health-related services, as necessary. I understand that this will help our community seek partial reimbursement of MassHealth covered services.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Child's Name:	Date of Birth:	SASID # (for district to add):
Child's Name:	Date of Birth:	SASID # (for district to add):
Child's Name:	Date of Birth:	SASID # (for district to add):

Worcester Public School District Media Policy

Purpose: During the school year, your child may have opportunities to have their work or activities publicized. Examples include, but not limited to: student work published on the district website and social media channels; feature stories about student performances or school-wide events in newspapers or on television (the district's Charter Channel 191 WEA-TV or local/national coverage); and photographs and videos of students "in action" on the website and social media channels, and in local and regional newspapers. Students first names and last initials (example: Paul F.) are used to identify pictures of three or fewer students and student work on the district website and social media channels. When reporters visit the district, they often speak with students and use their full names in covering the story.

General Media Coverage: Throughout the year there may be in-school programs, events or meetings (such as a school-wide assembly or PTA event) that are open to the public and where large group photographs or videotapes will be taken by parents, the media, or school district staff. In these cases, students would not be identified by name. Your consent to these types of group photographs or videotapes is assumed. If you do not want your child photographed or videotaped at these public events, please speak with the principal or event coordinator to insure that your child is excluded from the coverage.

Opt Out Provisions for WPS District Media Policy

Please check only those items that you do not grant permission to.

Publication of Student Work on the Internet

- I/We **do not grant** permission for this student's work to be published on the School District Website(s).

Publication of Student First Name, Last Initial and/or Photograph on the Internet

- I/We **do not grant** permission for photographs that include this student to be published on the School District Website(s), using the student's first name and last initial to identify him/her.

Interviews and Photographs with Newspapers, Radio, and Television Reporters

- I/We **do not grant** permission for this student to be photographed or interviewed by reporters who are covering events in the School District.

***If a box is unchecked and the parent/guardian signs the student handbook, your consent is granted for the full school year. This decision can be changed at any time by contacting your child's school in writing.**

(Inside back cover)

To All Parents and Guardians:

The Worcester Public Schools and the School Committee consider the violation of the Weapons Policy found in this booklet to be a serious matter. Please review the Worcester Public Schools Media Policy **on the opposite side of this page**. Please spend some time discussing these policies, as well as other policies located within this booklet with your child(ren). Your signature below confirms that you have reviewed it.

The policies in this handbook pertain to student actions both on (**DELETE** or) (**ADD and**) off school grounds during school and school-related situations (including transportation to and from school). In addition to the academic year, the policies set forth in the handbook apply to all after-school and summer programs including, but not limited to, Work for Worcester's Youth.

The School Committee requires that all parents/guardians of students in the Worcester Public Schools sign the statement below acknowledging receipt of this handbook and return it to their child's school.

As a parent/guardian of a student within the Worcester Public Schools, I acknowledge receipt of the 2021-22 Policies Handbook for the Worcester Public Schools. The Worcester Public Schools does participate in out-of-district School Choice, but students residing outside of the City can attend the Worcester Public Schools only if they are accepted for enrollment under this program. Unless accepted under this program, I pledge residency in the City of Worcester.

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(Student's Name)

(School)

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(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(Date)

Worcester Public Schools' students enrolled in secondary schools are also required to sign below, acknowledging receipt of this handbook and knowledge of the policies contained within this handbook.

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(Student Signature)

(Date)

(Back cover)