

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

AGENDA #28

The School Committee will virtually hold a special meeting:

on: Thursday, August 13, 2020
at: 5:30 p.m. – Regular Session
Executive Session
in: Room 410, Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

ACTION

- I. CALL TO ORDER – REGULAR MEETING
INVOCATION
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/NATIONAL ANTHEM

5:35 p.m.

- II. ROLL CALL

Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Ms. McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick and Mayor Petty

- III. APPROVAL OF RECORDS - NONE
IV. MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION - NONE
V. IMMEDIATE ACTION - NONE
VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT - NONE
VIII. REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES - NONE
VII. COMMUNICATION AND PETITION - NONE
IX. PERSONNEL - NONE

- X. GENERAL BUSINESS

gb #0-246 - Administration
(July 28, 2020)

(See notes)

To consider approval of the 2020-21 Educational Plan for the Worcester Public Schools.

- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

gb #0-247 - Administration
(August 7, 2020)

**Held from 7:23
p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares – Coronavirus/COVID-19 Related Issues – Educational Association of Worcester, Units A & B (Educators/Administrators); Aides to the Physically Handicapped, Monitors and Drivers; Instructional Assistants; Parent Liaisons; Tutors; and Therapy Assistants.

- XII. ADJOURNMENT

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

N O T E S

The School Committee convened in Open Session at 5:35 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

There were present at the Call to Order:

Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Ms. McCullough, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick and Mayor Petty

GENERAL BUSINESS

gb #0-246

Mayor Petty discussed the first phase of the reopening of schools by stating that:

- Remote learning will take place for the first marking quarter.
- Teachers will be allowed to teach from home or in their classroom.
- Ventilation systems will be upgraded in all school buildings in the Fall and the Administration will start transitioning Group C students back into schools for in-person learning.
- Matrix will be put in place to monitor the education of all students.

Mr. Allen stated that prioritizing HVAC upgrades is part of the school reopening plan. The three criteria are increasing outside air, improving ventilation and using supplemental filtration, where possible. The district, along with the City, intends to use the Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization system in all schools and that work will be done between now and the end of December. The cost for the HVAC upgrades is approximately a 15-million-dollar investment as a result of the purchase of the Ionization equipment. The Administrators are seeking Federal stimulus monies and are working with the City to find funding to cover the costs to ensure that these upgrades are done.

Superintendent Binienda stated that students will start school on September 15th with a hundred percent remote learning which will run through the first quarter. The Administration will then assess the work that has been done with the ventilation systems, the progress of the students, and then will provide an update to the parents regarding the plans for the second quarter.

The Superintendent stated that the Chromebooks that were ordered are delayed until mid-October. However, the IT department did a survey of equipment and indicated that every student will be able to get a Chromebook.

A Caregivers Academy will be launched to help families support their child/ren's education. The content will be translated into multiple languages and there will also be a parent's helpline during the day.

Mayor Petty asked the Superintendent to provide a quick overview of the dissemination of the breakfast and lunches to families.

NOTES (continued)

GENERAL BUSINESS (continued)

The Superintendent stated that prepackaged breakfasts and lunches will be available for students. If there is a family in need of food that tested positive for COVID 19, there will be home deliveries in partnership with the YMCA on Main Street.

Mrs. Clancey suggested that teachers and/or parents record lessons for the students so the parents can help their child/ren.

Ms. Novick stated that the past seven weeks were very productive and the Administration has worked with the Committee. However, the Federal Government has not provided the adequate support that the school districts need. At the State level, the level of support has been anything but helpful but the local Government has been very supportive. She requested that the Mayor forward a letter to the State officials indicating the ways in which they let the district down.

Superintendent Binienda indicated that a contact and resource list is being developed to respond to questions from parents.

Mayor Petty requested that the following testing sites be placed on the Worcester Public School's website and Facebook page:

- Woodland Academy
- Goddard School of Science and Technology
- Elm Park Community School
- UMass Medical Hospital

Mayor Petty asked for a roll calls on the following motions of Ms. Novick:

Request that the Superintendent make the following changes to the backup before forwarding it to the state:

- add the following language from page 32 to the cover letter:
Worcester Public Schools will focus on fostering community and relationships throughout the day with three overarching principles: 1. parity and interdependence of physical and emotional safety; 2. equity and racial justice; and 3. collective care.
- delete the word "November" from page 3 and throughout the document.
- add to page five the various health matrices from the City that were used to monitor the increase in the virus.
- delete the last line on page 52 that reads "families can request an alternative packet."

Request that the Administration address the issues of absenteeism when the power goes out.

NOTES (continued)

GENERAL BUSINESS (continued)

Request that the Superintendent ask Dr. Hirsh to develop a Matrix Plan regarding the safe reopening of schools.

On a roll call of 7-0, the motions were approved to be forwarded to the Superintendent.

Ms. Novick made the following motion:

Request that the State make available ongoing, easily accessible free testing with a quick turnaround across the state before bring students back into session.

On a roll call of 6-1 (nay Miss Biancheria) the motion was approved.

Mayor Petty opened the meeting by allowing attendees to ask questions:

Questions

1. Will the bus drivers be transporting the students from Diocese and the Collaborative schools?
2. How will the Chromebooks and Internet connectivity be distributed to every student and what will be the cost?
3. Can the hybrid model be changed to allow students to attend more than one day a week?
4. Are teachers required to report to their schools for the first 12 days?
5. How is the system planning to mandate masks and what kind of discipline will be metered if they do not wear one?
6. What will the system do if there is a confirmed COVID 19 case in the school?
7. How will art supplies be distributed to students during the pandemic?
8. How will the Administration determine which HVAC system will be repaired first?
9. How does the proposed plan address the needs of foster children and does the district collaborate with DCF?
10. If a student doesn't have a Chromebook before school starts, will the system implement a no harm grading policy for first term?
11. Are there plans for more forums to take place to inform all families of updates regarding in-person learning?
12. Will the support staff, the office staff, the nurses and guidance counselors be able to work from home?
13. How will kindergarten students be tested?
14. How will parents of Autistic child/ren be notified as to whether or not they will be in Group C?
15. How will the remote learning take place for students with speech based learning disability by using of the Wilson Program?
16. What are the plans for the Instructional Assistants?
17. How will the Administration handle parents and community members that don't believe that the virus is real and refuse to wear masks?
18. Will the teachers be the same for remote learning and the hybrid learning?

NOTES (continued)

GENERAL BUSINESS (continued)

It was moved to approve the 2020-21 Educational Plan for the Worcester Public Schools.

On a roll call of 7-0, the 2020-21 Educational Plan for the Worcester Public Schools was approved.

It was moved to suspend the Rules of the School Committee to reconsider the approval of the 2020-21 Educational Plan for the Worcester Public Schools

On a roll call of 7-0, the motion to suspend the Rules of the School Committee was approved.

It was moved to reconsider the vote to approve the 2020-21 Educational Plan for the Worcester Public Schools.

On a roll call of 0-7, the motion to reconsider was defeated.

Mayor Petty made the following motion:

Request that the report of the 2020-21 Educational Plan be forwarded to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations and the City Council's Standing Committee on Education for a joint meeting.

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

It was moved to recess to Executive Session at 7:21 p.m. to discuss the following item:

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares – Coronavirus/COVID-19 Related Issues – Educational Association of Worcester, Units A & B (Educators/Administrators); Aides to the Physically Handicapped, Monitors and Drivers; Instructional Assistants; Parent Liaisons; Tutors; and Therapy Assistants.

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

The Mayor stated that they would not be coming back into Open Session.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.