

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

AGENDA #9

on: Thursday, March 4, 2021
at: 5:00 p.m. - Executive Session
6:00 p.m. - Regular Session
Virtually in: Room 410 at the Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

ACTION

I. CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

NATIONAL ANTHEM

II. ROLL CALL

III. APPROVAL OF RECORDS - NONE

IV. MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION - NONE

V. IMMEDIATE ACTION

gb #1-66 - Administration
(February 24, 2021)

To consider input from the School Committee's student representatives.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT - NONE

VII. COMMUNICATION AND PETITION

c&p #1-3 - Clerk
(February 22, 2021)

To consider a communication from the EAW regarding hybrid learning.

Filed

**On a roll call of
7-0, the item was
held for the
meeting on
Thursday, March
18, 2021**

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ACTIONVIII. REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE -NONEIX. PERSONNEL - NONEX. GENERAL BUSINESS

gb #0-286.6 - Administration/Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/
Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick
(February 26, 2021)

**On a roll call of 7-0,
the item was
discussed and held
(See notes)**

To provide a brief update on COVID-19 and remote learning.

gb #1-67 - Ms. McCullough/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/
Mr. Monfredo
(February 22, 2021)

**On a roll call of
7-0, the item as
amended was
referred to the
Standing Committee
on Finance and
Operations
(See notes)**

To develop a policy and procedures regarding field clearings and preparedness for the Spring sports season and for any other seasons that it may be applicable.

gb #1-68 - Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/
Mr. Monfredo
(February 24, 2021)

**On a roll call of 7-
0, the item was
discussed and
filed**

Request that the Administration review the procedures for the return of staff such as cafeteria workers and crossing guards to make certain that there is proper protection from COVID-19.

gb #1-69 - Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/
Mr. Monfredo
(February 24, 2021)

**On a roll call of 7-
0, the item was
discussed and
filed**

Request that the Administration discuss the policy and procedures of returning to full staff in school sites including how notifications are taking place.

gb #1-70 - Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo
(February 24, 2021)

**On a roll call of 7-
0, the item was
discussed and
filed**

Request that the Administration make certain that all nurse stations and COVID rooms have sufficient medical and PPE supplies prior to the opening of schools.

gb #1-71 - Administration
(February 24, 2021)

**On a roll call of 7-
0, the item was
approved**

To approve a prior fiscal year payment in the amount of \$4,010.76 made payable to Latham Centers.

GENERAL BUSINESS (continued)

gb #1-72 - Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley
Ms. McCullough
(February 26, 2021)

Request that the Administration inform parents of children who will be entering kindergarten about the importance of enrolling them in school for the 2021-22 school year.

gb #1-73 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/
Mr. Monfredo
(February 26, 2021)

Request administration plan to begin a remote academy as part of the FY22 Budget.

gb #1-74 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough
(February 26, 2021)

Request administration begin preparing models for the 2021-22 school year for a preliminary Committee discussion in April.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

gb #1-75 - Administration
(February 26, 2021)

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.

To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares – Educational Association of Worcester and Worcester School Committee, Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations, MUP-20-8221, Bargaining Regarding Reopening.

To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares – Educational Association of Worcester and Worcester School Committee, Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations, MUP-20-8368, Interactive Process and Requests for Workplace Accommodations.

(Continued on the next page.)

ACTION

On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Administration (See notes)

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Held from 5:05 p.m. to 6:28 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (continued)

ACTION

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 – Successor Contract Negotiations – Educational Association of Worcester, Units A & B (Educators/Administrators).

XII. ADJOURNMENT

7:38 p.m.

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

N O T E S

The School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools met virtually in Open Session at 5:02 p.m. in Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building on Thursday, March 4, 2021.

There were present at the Call to Order:

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

There was absent: Mayor Petty

Vice-Chairman Foley stated that the School Committee would recess into Executive Session to discuss the following items:

gb #1-75

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.

To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares – Educational Association of Worcester and Worcester School Committee, Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations, MUP-20-8221, Bargaining Regarding Reopening.

To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares – Educational Association of Worcester and Worcester School Committee, Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations, MUP-20-8368, Interactive Process and Requests for Workplace Accommodations.

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 – Successor Contract Negotiations – Educational Association of Worcester, Units A & B (Educators/ Administrators).

On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Mayor Petty), it was voted to recess to Executive Session.

Mayor Petty arrived at 5:15 p.m.

The School Committee recessed to Executive Session from 5:05 p.m. to 6:28 p.m.

The School Committee reconvened in Open Session at 6:32 p.m.

There were present at the second Call to Order:

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

GENERAL BUSINESS

gb #0-286.6

Superintendent Binienda discussed the process of handling the transition from remote learning to hybrid learning. The Group C teachers will be reporting to their respective schools on Monday, March 8th to prepare their classrooms for the return of the students on Monday, March 15th. The second group of teachers will return to their respective schools on Monday, March 22nd to prepare their classrooms for the return of the rest of the students on Monday, March 29th. She stated that, if a parent had not originally signed their child up for hybrid learning and would like that option, that the Administration will be reviewing the classroom numbers to determine by the week of April 5th if there is space available. If there is space available, the Administration will be contacting parents to let them know there is room for their child to attend.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the COVID numbers for this week were slightly different from the previous week. There were 7 staff members working in buildings, 3 staff members working remote and 14 students that had reported they contacted COVID-19.

Mr. Allen discussed the Uni vent, the portable and full mechanical ionization equipment, that is in place at school sites. All Uni vents have the ionization equipment installed in them.

Miss Biancheria asked if the teachers are instructed to keep their doors open if there is a portable ventilation equipment in the hallway just outside of the classroom.

Mr. Allen stated that the teachers are instructed to keep their doors open because the portable units that are in the hallways have the ionization equipment and are also filtering the air.

Miss Biancheria asked how often the MERV13 filters are to be replaced.

Mr. Allen stated that the replacement cycle is not determined yet but it was recommended to change them quarterly. He also stated that most classrooms should have portable units installed in them. The blue ionization equipment will not be visible because they are installed in the mechanical ventilation system in the ceilings.

Miss Biancheria made the following motion:

Request that the Administration provide a list of the locations of the three different types of ventilation systems that are in the schools.

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

Mr. Allen stated that the reason the Administration picked Forest Grove Middle School for the tour was because it has all three ventilation systems in place.

Miss Biancheria asked if the Administration is taking any extra precautions for individuals entering the schools and what is the protocol for keeping the doors locked in case of an emergency.

Mr. Pezzella stated that the Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate (ALICE) program is still being used and some adjustments will be made regarding COVID-19. He also stated that all the personal protective equipment is being stored in a warehouse that was donated by the real estate company that runs Allegro. All schools have a medical waiting room for students or staff members to go to if they feel ill and a nurse or a certified nurse's assistant will be there to assist and assess individual cases.

Ms. Novick stated that she was interested in seeing more schools other than Forest Grove Middle School. She would like to see how the cafeterias are going to work and what the classrooms will look like. She asked if there was any information that the Administration could provide regarding the Health Centers and COVID-19 testing.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the Administration met with the individuals from the Family Health Center regarding COVID-19 and testing students for the virus. She stated that if a student has symptoms of the virus, the parent will be notified and will be given the option to get an appointment for the test at the Health Center. If the student does get tested and it comes back negative, a second one will be done to make certain it was correct. If a school has a health-based site, the student or staff member will be provided a COVID-19 test by the nurse, if he/she is willing to administer it.

Ms. Novick asked what the policy and/or protocol is regarding an employee not wearing their mask correctly.

Mr. Pezzella stated that if staff members or parents have questions or concerns regarding the COVID-19 protocol, they can either talk with the principal or assistant principal. If they don't feel comfortable talking with either one of them, they can email their question or concern to covid19@worceserschools.net.

Superintendent Binienda stated the new guidance has come out regarding singing and dancing classes and she will obtain the information from Mrs. Leach in regards to the protocol.

Mr. Pezzella stated that Mrs. Leach is working with the music teacher to provide a safe environment for the students. Every time a student uses an instrument, the music teacher will clean the instrument down with a clean wipe that kills the virus.

gb #1-67

Ms. McCullough made the following amendment to her item:

To **develop procedures** regarding field clearings and preparedness for the Spring sports season and for any other seasons that it may be applicable

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

Ms. McCullough made the following motion:

Request that the item be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations.

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

Mayor Petty requested that the Administration provide an updated report on sports at the next School Committee meeting.

Superintendent Binienda stated that Miss Biancheria had already requested an update on sports which will be responded to at the School Committee Meeting on Thursday, March 18, 2021.

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

gb #1-68

Mr. Pezzella stated that the "Employee Back-to-School Guidance" PowerPoints were emailed to every employee in the Worcester Public Schools.

gb #1-69

Superintendent Binienda stated that the Administration provided the EAW a list of employees who were to return to work. The EAW, the Principals and the Department Heads notified everyone of the date that they are to return to their respective school buildings. A letter went out to the crossing guards and cafeteria workers to let them know the date that they are to return to work. She also stated that the secretaries belong to two separate unions and just like the teachers, if the principal needs them in the building, they were called back in. All educational secretaries will be reporting to their respective schools on March 22, 2021.

gb #1-70

Mr. Pezzella stated that all the nurse stations have been provided with PPEs and other equipment it needs.

gb #1-72

Mr. Monfredo made the following motion:

Request that the Administration provide an update in July and August regarding the recruitment efforts.

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

Dr. O’Neil stated that the kindergarten registration announcement, in all the major languages, is scheduled:

- to go out on the first and third Monday of each month through August
- to be posted on social media and
- to be sent out via ConnectEd messages from the Parent Information Center.

The Administration, with the help of Laurie Kuczka, Carmen Melendez and Maura Mahoney, will reach out to the community and early childhood agencies regarding the pre-school and kindergarten registration. There will also be a virtual Open House on the first Wednesday in July for parents who are registering their child(ren).

Ms. Novick stated that parents are getting inundated with ConnectEd messages and requested that the Administration try to limit them.

gb #1-73

Superintendent Binienda stated that the discussion regarding a remote academy is at the beginning stages and that there are five urban districts that have expressed interest in it. If Worcester is accepted, 35 additional teachers may be needed to run the academy which would cost approximately 7 million dollars.

Miss Biancheria asked if there will be a cost analysis done.

Superintendent Binienda stated that there will be a cost analysis done after the model is chosen and the application is approved.

On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Administration.

gb #1-74

Ms. Novick requested that the Administration begin discussing this item in April 2021.

Superintendent Binienda stated that at the Urban Superintendent meeting, the Commissioner was asked about the guidance for next year so districts can start planning. The Commissioner stated that it should be coming out within the next few weeks.

O T H E R

Pursuant to action taken in Executive Session, it was moved to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement, dated February 22, 2021 between the School Committee, EAW, Aides to the Physically Handicapped and the Monitor and Drivers Unit, effective until such time as the district returns students to its in-person hybrid learning.

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