

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://worcesterschools.zoom.us/j/84707486389?pwd=a3UwMm9jbEhyWHZiNWJPM2JCaWxidz09>

Passcode: 010023

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

Webinar ID: 847 0748 6389

The following items will be discussed at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues to be held virtually on Monday, April 4, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building:

gb #2-30 - Administration - (January 19, 2022)

To consider approval of the proposed 2022-23 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

gb #2-51- Administration (February 9, 2022)

To conduct a bi-monthly meeting with the School Committee's student representatives.

To following item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues for discussion:

Request that governance include a position description for student representatives in the school committee rules.

Committee Members
Laura Clancey, Chair
Molly McCullough, Vice-Chair
Jermaine Johnson

Administrative Representative
Helen A. Friel, Ed.D.
Jennifer Boulais

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

AGENDA #4

The Standing Committee on GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES will hold a meeting:

on: Monday, April 4, 2022
at: 4:30 p.m.
virtually in: Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL
- III. GENERAL BUSINESS

ros #0-9 - Administration (September 23, 2020)

RENNIE CENTER FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH & POLICY – REPORT ON THE TECHNOLOGY SECTION FROM THE STRATEGIC PLAN

gb #0-28 - Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (January 8, 2020)

To create an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Worcester School Committee to consider changes to the school committee rules, meetings and agendas to make the work of the School Committee and our meetings more effective and better aligned with the focus on the strategic direction of the district. These changes should reflect best practices and address the recommendations included in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s report from 2017.

gb #0-109 - Mr. Monfredo (March 16, 2020)

Request that the School Committee submit to the Clerk any proposed changes to the Rules of the School Committee.

gb #0-210 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough (June 10, 2020)

To conduct an equity audit of the Worcester Public Schools' policies and student handbook.

gb #0-288.1 - Administration/Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (September 22, 2020)

Response of the Administration to the request to outline in writing under what circumstances the Department of Children and Families is called regarding a family or child, particularly with regard to student attendance.

gb #0-368 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (November 23, 2020)

To create Worcester School Committee operational norms.

ros #1-7 - Administration (April 7, 2021)

RENNIE CENTER-PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC PLAN

ros #1-10 - Administration (July 14, 2021)

To update the Superintendent's Goals and to consider changing the evaluation cycle to reflect the school year

gb #1-285 - Administration (October 14, 2021)

To formulate a policy regarding the use and replacement of Chromebooks and their accessories.

gb #1-322.1 - Administration/Ms. McCullough/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (January 12, 2022)

Response of the Administration to the request to review the policies for athletic eligibility.

c&p #2-5 - Clerk (February 3, 2022)

To consider a communication from the EAW to consider approval of a donation of sick days to an Instructional Assistant at Worcester Technical High School.

gb #2-21 - Ms. Novick/Mr. Johnson/Ms. Mailman (January 12, 2022)

To consider eliminating the test out option within the employee vaccination requirement.

gb #2-22 - Ms. Novick/Ms. Mailman (January 12, 2022)

To consider implementing a student vaccination requirement for participation in extracurricular activities.

gb #2-24 - Ms. Novick/Ms. Clancey/Ms. Mailman (January 12, 2022)

To consider what observances are recognized by the Worcester Public Schools.

gb #2-25 - Ms. Novick/Ms. Clancey/Ms. Kamara (January 12, 2022)

To make provision within all WPS secondary schools of space for prayer during the day for those whose religious observance requires it; relatedly; to add to the student handbook notification to students and families that such provision will be made as needed.

gb #2-30 - Administration - (January 19, 2022)

To consider approval of the proposed 2022-23 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

gb #2-51- Administration
(February 9, 2022)

To conduct a bi-monthly meeting with the School Committee's student representatives.

To following item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues for discussion:

Request that governance include a position description for student representatives in the school committee rules.

Motion gb #2-6 - Administration - (January 4, 2022)

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

Facilities

Create more single use bathrooms, limit the locking of bathrooms and enhance the HVAC and heating systems.

V. ADJOURNMENT

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

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, April 4, 2022

ITEM: Administration (January 21, 2022)

To consider approval of the proposed 2022-23 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

PRIOR ACTION:

2-3-22 - On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

Annex A (1 page) contains a copy of the proposed changes for the 2022-23 Student Handbook.

Annex B (37 pages) contain a copy of the first third of the 2022-23 Student Handbook with the proposed changes.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO 2022– 2023 STUDENT HANDBOOK

PAGE	PROPOSED CHANGES
Cover	Change 2021-22 to 2022-23 and throughout the book.
Inside front	Insert updated calendar for 2022-23
i	School Committee Members Update
ii	Handbook Updates (will be updated once the handbook is approved.)
iv-v	Table of Contents (will be updated once the handbook is approved.)
Page 11	Science Laboratory Safety Add a new #1 and renumber the others below. 1. Successfully complete a Lab Safety Assessment after engaging in instruction with their instructor.
Page 11	Security Measures First paragraph, first sentence delete the words adopted new Second sentence delete – (. The regulations) and combine both sentences

Worcester Public Schools

Student Handbook



2022-23 (Changed)

Please Note: The form located on the back of this Handbook must be signed and returned to your school.

www.worcesterschools.org/handbook

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOL'S CALENDAR 2022-23 (Updated)

Updated

Worcester Public Schools Calendar 2022-2023

AUGUST 2022							SEPTEMBER 2022							OCTOBER 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3							1
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
														30	31					

NOVEMBER 2022							DECEMBER 2022							JANUARY 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31				

FEBRUARY 2023							MARCH 2023							APRIL 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4							1
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
26	27	28					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
														30						

MAY 2023							JUNE 2023							JULY 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6				1	2	3							1	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
														30	31					

2022	2023
<p>August 25: Teacher/Staff Reporting</p> <p>August 26: Teacher/Staff Reporting</p> <p>August 29: First Day of School</p> <p>September 1: First Day for PreK & K</p> <p>September 5: Labor Day</p> <p>October 7: Staff Development</p> <p>October 10: Columbus Day</p> <p>November 11: Veterans' Day</p> <p>November 23 – 25: Thanksgiving</p> <p>December 23 – 30: Holiday Vacation</p>	<p>January 2: New Year's Day (Observed)</p> <p>January 16: Martin Luther King</p> <p>February 20: Presidents' Day</p> <p>February 21 – 24: Winter Vacation</p> <p>April 7: Non-School Day</p> <p>April 17: Patriots' Day</p> <p>April 18 – 21: Spring Vacation</p> <p>May 24: Last day of school for seniors</p> <p>May 29: Memorial Day</p> <p>*June 13: Last day of School</p> <p>June 19: Juneteenth Day</p>

☐ = DAYS WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION FOR STUDENTS

**Last day of school may change in response to the number of snow days used during the school year*

End of Marking Quarters:	November 4, 2022	January 20, 2023	April 6, 2023	June 13, 2023 or last day of school
--------------------------	------------------	------------------	---------------	-------------------------------------

The Worcester Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer/Educational Institution and does not discriminate regardless of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness. The Worcester Public Schools provides equal access to employment and the full range of general, occupational and vocational education programs. For more information relating to Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action contact Human Resource Manager, 20 Irving Street, Worcester, MA 01609, 508-799-3020.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Mayor Joseph M. Petty - Chair

Jermaine L. Johnson - Vice-Chair

Laura B. Clancey

Jermoh V. Kamara

Susan M. Mailman

Molly O. McCullough

Tracy A. O'Connell Novick

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

The Worcester Public Schools is pleased to present the 2022-23 Student Handbook to inform students and caregivers of the important policies and procedures that are in effect in our school system.

Thank you for reviewing this handbook with your child and for keeping it for future reference. Please note there have been revisions made to some of the policies and procedures from the previous year. We ask that you pay particular attention to those revisions.

Best wishes for a successful 2022-23 school year.

Superintendent Maureen F. Binienda

Handbook Updates **(To be updated once the handbook is completed)**

	Page
COVID-19 Pandemic	iii
Student Dress Code Policy.....	7
Code of Conduct... ..	15
(To be added - approved on 9-23-21)	
Notification of Rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)	
Notification Concerning Privacy of Student Directory Information	
Students with Disabilities and/or Suspected Disabilities Receiving Special Education Services or 504 Plan.....	47
Procedures for Suspension(s) Exceeding 10 School Days ..	47
High School Graduation Requirement.....	66
Graduation Course Requirement.....	67
Massachusetts State College and University Minimum Required Courses for Admission.....	70
Advanced Placement Exams	70
English Learner Parent Advisory Committee.....	75
Massachusetts Parental Notice for One Time Consent to Allow the School District To Access MassHealth (Medicaid) Benefits	79

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 caregivers/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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS (To be updated once the handbook is completed)

Registration 1
Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center 1
Opt-Out Policy for English Learners 2
School Immunization Requirements 3
Registration Policy 4
Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy 4
Policy for Non-resident Foreign Students holding J-1 Visas 6
School Choice 6
Student Dress Code Policy 7
Career Vocational Technical Education Programs: Shop and Uniform Policy 8
Voluntary School Uniform Policy 8
Policy Regarding Televised Broadcasts 8
Pledge of Allegiance and "Moment of Silence" Policy 8
Safety and Behavior 8
Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Policy 9
Inappropriate Network Usage 9
Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) 10
Science Laboratory Safety 11
Security Measures 11
Crisis Prevention and De-escalation 11
Security Cameras in Schools 11
Emergency Plans 12
Student Lockers 12
Access to Students During School Hours 13
Visitors in the Schools 14
Use of Motor Vehicles 14
Code of Conduct 14
School-Imposed Discipline 15
Disruptive Conduct 17
Legal Policies 22
 Due Process 22
 Nondiscrimination 30
 Sexual Harassment 31
 Anti-hazing Law 32
 Child Abuse 34
 Drug-Free School Zones 34
 Gun-Free School Zones 34
 Education of Homeless Children 34
 Policy on Caregivers Notification Relative to Sexuality Education 35
 Annual Notice to Caregivers on the Protection of Pupil Rights
 Amendment (PPRA) 36
 Selective Service 36
 Student Records 36
 Every Student Succeeds Act 41
 Bullying and Harassment 42
 Athletes and Participants in School-Related Activities 44
 Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Activities 45
 Discipline of Students under Section 504 and ADA 46
 Students with Disabilities and/or Suspected Disabilities Receiving
 Special Education Services 47
Resolving School-Related Problems 48
Health Services for Students 49
Wellness Policy 49
Overview of School Health/Nursing Services 49
School Health Advisory Council 50
Suggested Guidelines for Safe Backpack Use 50
Access for Pregnant Students 51

Transportation	51
Transportation Program	51
Busing Privileges	52
Transfer Students.....	52
Homeless Students.....	52
Two Mile Limit.....	52
School Bus Stops and Routing.....	52
Riding School Buses	53
Student Services	54
Social Emotional Learning	54
Section 504 - Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act.....	54
Special Education	56
Employment Information and Procedures	57
Home Hospital Education Services 603 (CMR 28.03(3)(c).....	57
Homeschooling	58
Instructional Policies	59
Homework Policy.....	59
Process for Assigning Textbooks.....	60
Promotion Policy	60
Academic Dishonesty	61
Attendance Policy	62
Student Absence Notification Program	63
Field Trip Policy.....	65
Honor Roll Policy	65
Standardized Testing	66
High School Graduation Requirements	66
Graduation Course Requirements	67
MCAS Appeals Process	69
Massachusetts State College and University	
Minimum Required Courses for Admission	70
Advanced Placement Policy.....	70
Class Rank Grade Point Average.....	71
Early College Program-College Courses for High School Students	71
Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy.....	72
General School Issues	72
Delayed School Opening/Early Dismissal/School Cancellation Policy	72
Policy Statement and Procedural Guidelines for Recess	73
Caregivers and Community	74
Parent Advisory Councils	74
Opportunities for Caregiver Support	75
Volunteer Staff Regulations	76
Worcester Public School District Media Policy	76
Telephone Directory	78
Massachusetts Parental Notice for One Time Consent to Allow	
 the School District To Access MassHealth (Medicaid) Benefits	79
Worcester Public School District Media Policy Sign Off.....	81
Policy Handbook Sign Off	Back Cover
Calendar.....	Inside Front Cover
School Committee Members	i
Superintendent's Message	
COVID-19 Pandemic	iii

REGISTRATION

Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center
Open All Year Monday through Friday
8:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.
768 MAIN STREET
SHATTUCK BUILDING JACOB HIATT COMPLEX
Phone: (508) 799-3299, (508) 799-3068,
(508) 799-3069, (508) 799-3194

In the event of extended school closure, online registration is available at <https://www.worcesterschools.org/enroll/>

In order to enroll a student in the Worcester Public Schools, the following documentation must be provided and verified:

Verification of:

1. Birth Certificate or Passport
2. Legal Guardianship or a responsible adult party in the household who can serve as an emergency contact.
3. Worcester residence (utility bill, lease, mortgage statement, etc.) or completed STUDENT ADDRESS VERIFICATION FORM
4. State mandated immunizations
5. Records from previous school, If available

The requirement for school immunizations and records may be temporarily waived for students who qualify as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or are in foster care.

Preschool—Grade 6

All students (preschool through grade 6) registering for, or transferring into or within the Worcester Public Schools must do so at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center.

The Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center staff will:

- Provide information to caregivers regarding the student assignment policy
- Assist caregivers in selecting an educational environment most appropriate for their child's needs
- Assist caregivers in the initial stages of registration required by schools, i.e., documentation of birth and immunization, completion of Home Language Survey Forms, Medicaid eligibility, etc.
- Answer questions regarding school policies

Grades 7 – 12

New students in grades 7-12 have the option to register at their respective high school. Potential English learners must complete registration at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center.

Students in grades 7-12 who are transferring within the Worcester Public Schools will do so at the appropriate middle or high school based on their new address.

Home Language

State and federal regulations require that all schools determine the language(s)

spoken in each student's home in order to identify their specific language needs. If a language other than English is spoken in the home, the district is required to do further assessment to determine whether the student is an English Learner and to place the student in the appropriate instructional program to support content area and language learning.

Opt-Out Policy for English Learners (ELs)

The Worcester Public Schools is committed to comply in good faith with all federal, state and local laws, rules and guidelines in the area of education for English Learners. Federal civil rights laws, namely, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), require schools to take appropriate steps to address the language barriers that prevent ELs from meaningfully participating in their education. Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71A and supporting regulations provide the state framework for the education of English learners in Massachusetts.

Caregivers of ELs may notify the district of their choice to have their child "opt-out" of English learner education programs. The decision to opt-out must be made by the caregivers (or students over 18 years of age) and must be **voluntary** and **informed**.

In opt-out cases, the district must inform the caregivers of the services the child would receive in the district's English learner education programs, as well as the type of support that would be provided to the student if the caregivers decide to "opt-out" of English learner services.

A caregiver's choice to opt-out means their child will not receive separate English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction focused on language development, but the district will provide the necessary support and actively monitor the student's progress to ensure that the student's English language and academic needs resulting from lack of English proficiency are met.

In order to comply with the laws, the following procedures shall be followed in every school building:

1. Caregivers who contact the school to request that their child opt-out of ESL services will be invited to attend a meeting at the school to include a school administrator and an ESL teacher. If the caregivers have identified in the Home Language Survey that they prefer an interpreter at meetings, the district shall provide an interpreter at the meeting.
2. No school personnel shall influence or encourage caregivers to request that their child opt-out of ESL services.
3. At the meeting, the district shall inform the caregivers of the services the child would receive in the district's English learner education programs, as well as the type of support that would be provided to the students if the caregivers decide to opt-out.
4. If the caregivers are unable or unwilling to attend a meeting in person at the school, the school can offer an alternative means of meeting by telephone or otherwise.
5. The school shall provide the caregivers with the Opt-Out Form in the caregiver's native language if the caregivers have indicated in the Home Language Survey that they seek written information in their native language.
6. The school shall retain a copy of the Opt-Out Form in the student's cumulative file.

7. If the caregivers decide to opt-out of an English learner program, the school should place the student in an English language mainstream classroom with an SEI-endorsed teacher. The school may also provide support from a reading specialist or other specialist as appropriate in order to ensure that the student has access to the curriculum and is provided the same opportunities to master the same academic standards and curriculum framework as their native English-speaking peers.
8. The student will continue to be classified as an "EL" on district reports, and will continue to be assessed annually in their language proficiency with the state-mandated English language proficiency test, ACCESS for ELs 2.0. The caregivers will be notified of their child's participation in such assessments, as well as assessment results.
9. The initial opt-out of a student remains active for one school year. According to new guidelines from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), caregivers are now required to complete a form **annually** requesting their child remain opted out of ESL services. The Annual Parent Choice Form also allows families who have previously made the decision to opt-out of ESL, an opportunity to reconsider ESL instruction for their child.

**Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements for School Year
2022-23**

	Child Care/ Pre-K	Kindergarten	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-12
Hepatitis B	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses
DTaP/DTP/ Td/Tdap	>/=4 doses DTap/DTP	5 doses DTap/ DTP	>/=4 doses DTap/DTP or >/=3 doses TD	>/=4 doses DTap/DTP or >/=3 doses TD, plus 1 dose Tdap
Polio	>/=3 doses	4 doses	>/=3 doses	>/=3 doses
Hib	1 to 4 doses	N/A	N/A	N/A
MMR	1 dose	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses
Varicela	1 dose	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses
Meningococcal	N/A	N/A	N/A	1 dose grade 7 entry, 1 dose on or after 16 years of age or grade 11 entry

Students lacking proper documentation of required immunizations shall be excluded until proof of such immunization is provided (102 CMR 7.07 and 105 CMR 220.00). If a child cannot be immunized due to medical reasons, (requires physician documentation yearly) or if a parent refuses to have a child immunized because of religious beliefs (requires a parent-signed letter yearly), the non-immunized student will be excluded from school during outbreaks of diseases for which the student is not immunized (**MGL c. 111, § 3, 6, 7, 109, 110, 112 and 105 CMR 300.00**).

- **Lead Screening documentation is required of all students prior to entering Pre-K and/or kindergarten (105 CMR 460).**
- Physical Examination documentation is required of all students entering grades K, 4, 7 and 9, and yearly for all student athletes.

An **immunization clinic** is available for students at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center (PIC). All state-required immunizations are provided by an RN at no cost. Please refer to the WPS website for hours of operation or call the Parent Information Center at 508-799-3194.

Registration Policy Elementary (K-6)

Students in the Worcester Public Schools shall attend schools based upon neighborhood district lines. They are also eligible to attend the five citywide magnet schools based on conditions of space availability and the magnet school being in compliance with the Worcester Public Schools' Deisolation Plan. The five citywide magnet schools are: (1) Chandler Magnet School, (2) City View Discovery School, (3) Jacob Hiatt Magnet School (4) Norrback Avenue School and (5) Worcester Arts Magnet School. Elementary students residing in the North quadrant are eligible to attend the North quadrant magnet school, Roosevelt School, based on space availability. Under the Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy, transfers are permitted to any school within that school's quadrant provided the transfer has a positive effect on the minority percentage of the school and space is available.

Secondary (Grades 7-12)

Depending on the school district in which the student resides, they can attend their local high school. This is based on the quadrant of residence of the student at the time of enrollment, unless special permission has been requested by the caregiver and approved by the District Administration to attend a different school. Attendance at Worcester Technical High School is based upon an application and selection process approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy

I. Conditions for Out-of-District Transfers

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools that students shall attend schools based upon neighborhood district lines. Exceptions to this policy are allowed under the "Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy" which permits transfers to other elementary, middle and high schools or to citywide magnet schools under the following conditions:

1. There must be space available in the receiving school.
2. Elementary, middle and high schools having a minority percentage greater than the citywide average on October 1 of each year will adhere to the following restrictions:
 - a. Minority students will not be allowed to transfer into a school which has a minority percentage greater than the citywide average on October 1 of each year.
 - b. Majority students will not be allowed to transfer out of a school except in the case where the sending school is in compliance and the receiving school is out of compliance as a result of having a minority percentage greater than 15 percentage points above the citywide minority percentage.

- c. All students, both minority and majority, shall be eligible to attend citywide magnet schools and secondary magnet schools. In order to exercise this eligibility, the magnet school must be in compliance.
3. Elementary, middle and high schools having a minority percentage less than the citywide average on October 1 of each year will adhere to the following restrictions:
 - a. Majority students will not be allowed to transfer into a school which has a minority percentage less than the citywide average on October 1 of each year.
 - b. Minority students will not be allowed to transfer out of a school except in the case where the sending school is in compliance and the receiving school is out of compliance as a result of having a minority percentage less than 15 percentage points below the citywide minority percentage.
 - c. All students, both minority and majority, shall be eligible to attend citywide magnet schools and secondary magnet schools. In order to exercise this eligibility, the magnet school must be in compliance.
4. Voluntary transfer requests will be considered for properly documented medical disabilities and other unique circumstances.
5. Spanish Bilingual, Structured English and Special Education Programs are offered in certain schools. Any student requiring these services will be enrolled in the school that will meet their assessed needs.
6. When a student changes residence and would enter grade 6, 8 or 12, they may finish the year in that school provided that they is a resident of Worcester and has received the out-of-district principal's permission to remain in that school.
7. Students who enroll in an out of district magnet program or the Worcester Technical High School must complete the year in the out-of-district school.

II. Procedures for Applying for a "Voluntary Transfer"

1. Applications and a policy statement are available at the Parent Information Center or the Office for Instruction and School Leadership:

Parent Information Center:	(508) 799-3194
Burncoat/South Quadrants	(508) 799-3264
Doherty/North Quadrants:	(508) 799-3221
*Technical Quadrant:	(508) 799-3499

*Applications for Worcester Technical High School may be obtained in all secondary guidance offices or at the Technical School Admissions Office.

2. The application must be filled out and returned to the appropriate office. Parent Information Center or the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.
3. A written approval or denial will be sent to the home of the caregiver and copies will be forwarded to the principals of both the sending and receiving schools.
4. A copy of the application and the approval or denial letter will be kept on file in the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.

III. Hardship Appeals Process

If the caregiver disagrees with the decision of the Office for Instruction and School Leadership, an appeal must be filed before the first day of the school year. A maximum of two weeks will be allowed to appeal the decision in writing to the Chairperson of the Hardship Appeals Board, Parent Information Center, 768 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01610.

The board will review each case referred to it and make timely decisions relative to the disposition of the appeal. A copy of the decision will be sent to the caregiver

and the Office for Instruction and School Leadership. Proceedings of the Hardship Appeals Board will be recorded and maintained by personnel in the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.

Policy for Non-resident Foreign Students holding J-1 Visas

Admission:

- By the first week in January each Worcester Public School high school principal will determine how many spaces are available (no fewer than three) in their school to accommodate the admission of non-resident foreign students whose host family resides in their district (or who otherwise obtain special permission from the Managers for Instruction and School Leadership on a space available basis) for the following school year. No high school principal will enroll more than three non-resident foreign students until this determination is made and forwarded to the Managers for Instruction and School Leadership.

Criteria for Attendance:

- Foreign exchange students must provide certified proof of prior academic performance from the high school(s) in their native country.
- Transcripts from intermediary or sponsoring agencies will not be accepted as appropriate documentation for determining past academic performance unless they bear the seal of the school and/or are presented in a sealed envelope from the school.
- Acceptance to the Worcester Public Schools will be on a one (1) year basis with the sponsoring organization or guardian required to reapply annually for continued study.
- Once admitted, the foreign student will be subject to all rules, policies, regulations and procedures as they relate to all students in the system.
- The system will provide an academic record of the foreign student's participation while a member of the system to the sponsoring organization or the caregiver, as required.
- Foreign students holding J-1 visas participating in this program are exempt from paying tuition.
- The system will award appropriate city (general) diplomas and/or school diplomas if students can demonstrate through appropriate documentation and verification that they have met the prerequisite requirements of the Worcester Public Schools.

School Choice

The Worcester Public Schools participates in the Massachusetts School Choice program. The School Choice program allows caregivers to send their children to schools in communities other than the city or town in which they reside. For the 2022-23 school year, the School Committee has approved the following:

1. Student enrollment in the Inter-District School Choice program is based on availability and limited preference will be given to young siblings, if space is available.
2. Caregiver is responsible for transportation to the district school.
3. All Pre-K to Grade 12 schools participate in the program with the following exceptions:
 - a. Chapter 74 approved programs in the comprehensive high schools
 - b. Chapter 74 approved programs in the Worcester Technical High School

- c. Alternative Pathways Programs
 - d. Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) Pathway Programs
4. Students accepted into the Inter-District School Choice program may apply for schools on the same basis as resident students, but the Intra-District Choice Plan (Voluntary Transfer) may give preference to resident students in assigning students to schools.

To obtain information regarding the Inter-District School Choice program, please contact the **Parent Information Center** at 508-799-3194 or the **Office for Instruction and School Leadership** at 508-799-3499.

STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools that the student and their caregiver 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.

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 etc.)

Bottom (pants, shorts, skirt, dress 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 disciplined or removed from class as a consequence for a violation of the Dress Code Policy unless the infraction is a direct violation of the Worcester Public Schools' Code of Conduct Policy. If it is determined to be a violation, the school principal or their designee will determine the consequence for the student.

Career Vocational Technical Education Programs: Shop and Uniform Policy

All trades require specific uniforms or clothing and adherence to workplace standards of appearance beyond the requirements for school dress. Shop instructors, with the respective trade department heads, identify the necessary dress.

Shop instructors, with the respective department heads, have a responsibility to provide a safe shop environment for all students. The Administration enforces these requirements.

Voluntary School Uniform Policy

1. Voluntary uniform policies must comply with existing School Committee policies on student attire.
2. Prior to seeking School Committee approval, a majority of the school council members and the school principal must approve the school's voluntary uniform policy. The principal will forward the request to the Clerk of the School Committee who places it on the agenda for School Committee approval which then allows the school to implement the policy.
3. There will be no disciplinary action if a student does not adhere to the voluntary uniform policy.

POLICY REGARDING TELEVISED BROADCASTS

Many times, the Worcester Public Schools extracurricular activities and programs are broadcast on Charter Channel 191 WEA-TV and participants may be shown in these broadcasts. Re-broadcasts of all programs may be made throughout the school year at unannounced times.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools that the Pledge of Allegiance be recited and a moment of silence be observed at all levels on a daily basis.

SAFETY AND BEHAVIOR

INTERNET SAFETY AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Purpose

The Worcester Public Schools recognize the value of computer and other electronic resources to improve student learning and enhance the administration and operation of its schools. The Worcester Public Schools encourages the responsible use of computers; computer networks, including the internet; and other electronic resources in support of the mission and goals of our district.

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to transmit inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)]. The Worcester Public School system certifies that its schools have adopted and are enforcing Internet safety policies as part of Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) as amended in the Broadband Data Improvement Act [Pub. L. No. 110.385] to include educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response. The district has adopted curriculum to remain in compliance with the most recent FCC Report and order FCC 11-125.

Terms of Agreement

In order to use networked and Internet resources, all students and parents/guardians must sign and return the signature page as contained on the back cover of the Student Handbook, and those under age 18 must obtain parental permission.

Internet Safety

The Worcester Public Schools is in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). The Worcester Public Schools will comply with any additional state and federal regulations that pertain to technology use within the district and through use of the Worcester Public Schools District network infrastructure and servers that is forthcoming from the local, state, and federal regulatory agencies.

A third party filtering system is in place that prevents accessing web pages that are 1) obscene, 2) pornographic, or 3) deemed harmful to minors. The district will monitor the online activities of users. The staff and students are advised never to access, keep or send anything that they would not want made public. While some pages are blocked by human intervention, other sites are blocked based on an algorithm that attempts to discern inappropriate sites. Best efforts are made to make the filtering as accurate as possible given the vast number of websites on the Internet. Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Inappropriate Network Usage

Staff and students should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. The Internet is to be used for constructive educational purposes only. Drives and files may be reviewed by network administrators occasionally to maintain system integrity.

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Worcester Public Schools online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: a) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities; and b) unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

Unacceptable Uses

The activities listed below are not permitted. The list of activities described below is not meant to be comprehensive. The Worcester Public Schools reserves the right to make judgments both as to what constitutes inappropriate behavior and the consequences that apply.

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Giving personal information, such as full name, phone number, address or identifiable photo without permission from teacher and parent or guardian
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others (cyber-bullying)
- Damaging or modifying computers, computer systems or network resources, whether physically or through use of software means such as deletion, formatting, viruses, hacking, phishing or cracking

- Attempting to bypass web content filters through proxy sites or other means
- Violating copyright laws
- Using others' passwords
- Trespassing in others' folders, work, or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Installing any software, shareware or freeware without Principal approval and installation by on-site contact person
- Employing the network for commercial purposes, financial gain or fraud The network, wired and wireless, is for educational uses only. Any non WPS device on the Worcester Public Schools network shall be used for educational purposes only. Non educational use is prohibited.

Penalties

Violation of any terms set forth in this policy may result in the loss of Worcester Public Schools computer network privileges, disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action.

Electronic Messaging Guidelines

The Worcester Public Schools contracts with a vendor to provide emergency and informational calls, texts and emails. The Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 "TCPA" (and subsequent amendments) was created to prevent consumers from receiving "robo" marketing calls from telemarketers. By signing the student handbook, you are providing prior express consent for the school district to contact you and your family via phone, email or text message for emergency and informational purposes. If you would like to opt-out of receiving informational messages, you can do so at www.worcesterschools.org/tcpa. Emergency messages will continue to be sent to the contact numbers provided, as authorized under TCPA.

Note: Worcester Public Schools' teaching staff is not contractually obligated to check email or other electronic messaging systems. Please contact your child's teacher personally to confirm whether they utilize these systems. When using email, please follow these important guidelines: Email is not confidential. Teachers will not respond via email to discuss contentious, emotional, or highly confidential issues. These issues are to be handled by phone or personal contact. Emails should be used for general information that is non-vital. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child is not to go home on the bus. A teacher may not read the message in time. A phone call should be made to make sure your message is clearly received.

Adoption

The School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools adopted this Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Policy at a public meeting following normal public notice on May 21, 2009. This amended policy was adopted by the School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools on June 5, 2014.

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

The Worcester Public Schools utilizes a number of computer software applications and web-based services to supplement educational services provided by school-based staff. While these tools are reviewed to ensure that they provide students with effective tools for learning, the applications and services are not operated by the district but by third parties. In order for students to use these programs and services, certain personal identifying information – typically the student's name and e-mail address – may be provided to the website/application operator. The Worcester Public Schools enters into a data sharing agreement

with third parties to ensure student data is handled in a manner not in violation of federal requirements.

Under the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), the websites/application operators must provide parent/guardian notification and obtain consent before collecting personal information from children under the age of 13. The law permits school districts to consent to the collection of personal information on behalf of its students thus eliminating the need for individual parent/guardian to consent directly to individual website/application providers.

A list of the sites used in our classrooms with links to privacy policies, terms of service and our data share agreements can be found on our Student Data Privacy Consortium website:

https://sdpc.a4l.org/district_search.php?state=MA&districtID=786

If a parent/guardian wishes for their child to be removed from specific third party services, an opt-out form can be obtained at the above district website. Completed forms should be returned to the school principal.

Science Laboratory Safety

Science is taught using an inquiry based approach in the Worcester Public Schools. This can be done safely only with the cooperation of students to the teacher's directions and procedures. It is the responsibility of students to conduct them- selves in an appropriate manner in the lab setting. Students are expected to:

ADD #1 and renumber

1. Successfully complete a Lab Safety Assessment after engaging in instruction with their instructor.
2. Sign a safety contract which emphasizes their responsibilities in the science lab;
3. Have parents/guardians co-sign the contract to alert them to these responsibilities;
4. Be aware of measures to be taken should an accident occur;
5. Know classroom evacuation procedures in case of an emergency;
6. Use protective equipment (gloves, aprons, goggles, etc.) provided as instructed; and
7. Refrain from eating and drinking in the laboratory.

SECURITY MEASURES

Crisis Prevention and De-escalation (Physical Restraint)

The Board of Education ~~DELETED~~ adopted new regulations on the use of physical restraint in public education programs ~~DELETED - The regulations~~ (603 CMR 46.00) are meant to promote safety for all students. Physical restraint shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be used only when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances. Mechanical restraints, medication restraints and seclusion are prohibited in all public education programs.

The amended regulations may be found at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html?section=all>

Security Cameras in Schools

The School Committee works to maintain a safe and secure environment for its students, staff, visitors, and facilities. Security means more than having locks and making certain that doors are locked at the proper times. Security also means minimizing fire hazards, reducing the possibility of faulty equipment, keeping

records and valuables in a safe place, protection against vandalism and burglary, the prosecution of vandals, and developing crisis plans.

School facilities and their contents, constitute one of the greatest investments of the community. The School Committee believes it to be in the best interest of students and taxpayers for the district to exert every reasonable means to protect the investment adequately.

In pursuit of this objective, the School Committee authorizes the use of security cameras in school district buildings and on its property to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all students, staff and visitors, to deter theft, vandalism and other negative behavior, to safeguard district buildings, grounds and equipment, and to monitor unauthorized individuals in or on school property. Security cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent of Schools in consultation with school officials as well as local law enforcement and emergency response agencies. They may be used in any area, inside or outside of school buildings where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy.

The district shall notify students and staff through student and employee handbooks and appropriate signage that security cameras have been installed and may be used at any time. Students or staff identified on security cameras in violation of School Committee policies will be subject to disciplinary action.

The Superintendent shall ensure that proper procedures are in place and are followed regarding use, viewing, disclosure, retention, disposal and security of video recordings or photographs from security cameras in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. A video recording used for security purposes in school district buildings and/or on school property shall be the sole property of the school district. All video recordings will be stored in their original format and secured to avoid tampering and to ensure confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Access to video recordings from security cameras shall be limited to school administrators (Superintendent/designee, School Principal/designee). Law enforcement and emergency response officials shall be granted access to video recordings or the security system after giving prior notice to the Superintendent/designee.

The Superintendent may, from time to time, issue further guidance that is consistent with current laws and this policy.

Emergency Plans

Advance planning for emergencies and disasters is essential to provide for the safety of students and staff; it also strengthens the morale of all concerned to know that plans exist and that students/staff have been trained in carrying out the plans.

The Superintendent shall review annually the safety plan with local police and fire officials. Building principals will meet all requirements for conducting fire drills and emergency response drills to give students practice in moving with orderly dispatch to designated areas under emergency conditions, and the staff practice in carrying out their assigned responsibilities for building evacuation.

Student Lockers

All lockers available to students are the property of the Worcester Public Schools. Use of lockers by students is regulated by the school administration and all lockers are subject to inspection by the school administration when deemed appropriate.

Any student assigned a locker must use a school issued lock. The administration will remove all non-school issued locks. If a locker is not used/assigned, the administration will secure it with a lock.

Students must store all book bags, gym bags, and outerwear (coats and jackets) in their lockers during the school day.

For security reasons, students will not be permitted to wear outerwear (coats and jackets) during the school day. Students will be permitted to carry backpacks made of a mesh or transparent material at the secondary level.

Any weapon, drugs or other prohibited items or substances found in a locker in violation of school policy may be considered to be the property of the student assigned to the locker for purposes of disciplinary action under this code.

Access to Students During School Hours

The Legal Office of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has supported the present policy of the Worcester Public Schools regarding permitting persons to meet with students during school hours without the caregivers permission. The following persons may be granted access to students during school hours:

1. The custodial caregiver (the caregiver with physical custody more than 50% of the time) or guardian or personnel or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the child in place of or in conjunction with the caregiver. According to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, §34H, the noncustodial caregiver must submit a written request to the school principal for such access. For further information, contact your child's principal.
2. A student, age 14, or upon entering grade 9, may consent to meet with an individual.
3. Certain individuals, including school personnel, police, and employees of certain state agencies may be granted access to students in the performance of their official duties. This information can be viewed at

<https://worcesterschools.org/wp-content/uploads/handbook/Access%20to%20Students%20During%20School%20Hours.pdf>

If any court ordered restrictions exist regarding access to your child, it is imperative that you provide the WPS a copy of the order so that we can comply with the order of the court.

Dismissal of Students

1. Students may only be dismissed to persons specified by the caregivers in writing. Principals may remind families to update student emergency contact information to include a robust network of persons who may be called in case of an emergency.
2. Caregivers may be provided with a Caregiver Affidavit to designate someone to make educational and/or medical decisions for a child if the child is temporarily living with someone who is not the caregiver.

Handling of Students Whose Caregivers Have Been Detained or Taken Into Custody

If a school receives notification that the caregiver of a student has been detained or taken into custody by immigration law enforcement officials or agents, the school will take the following steps:

1. Contact the person(s) listed on the student's emergency card to inform the person(s) of the situation and ask if they can retrieve the student;
2. Make arrangements for school counselors to be available to support the student;
3. Contact DCF if there is no responsible adult authorized by the caregivers to receive the student;
4. Consult with the district's homeless liaison if the student becomes homeless as a result of their caregiver's detention.

Visitors in the Schools

All Worcester Public Schools are posted with signs requiring that all visitors must report to the Office of the Principal. This ensures that the school administration knows who is visiting in the building, the reason for the visit, and if the timing of the visit is appropriate.

The following sign-in procedures will be adhered to upon entering a school building:

- Enter through the front door (some schools have Intercom Systems that will allow you to enter after ringing a bell and identifying yourself)
- Go immediately to the front office
- Please sign in at the register
- Affix a Visitor's Tag on a visible area of your attire
- Wait for further instructions from the school clerk or administrator on how to proceed to the respective visiting area or classroom

Any other entry into a school building by visitors will be considered trespassing. Intruders into the building are immediately asked to leave, and if they refuse to do so, local law enforcement officials are contacted for assistance. Trespassing laws will be enforced in accordance with this policy.

Use of Motor Vehicles

Students are extended the privilege of bringing automobiles to school as long as they respect the safety of others and obey these basic rules:

1. Automobiles must be parked in the assigned student parking areas.
2. Students who leave the campus in motor vehicles during the school hours without following established dismissal procedures will be suspended.
3. Idling of a motor vehicle engine in excess of 5 minutes is prohibited on school property. Violators will be fined.
4. Students must drive slowly and carefully on or near school grounds, always remembering that pedestrians have the right of way.
5. Cars may not be visited during the school day except with principal's approval
6. Parking privileges will be revoked or suspended for the following reasons:
 - a. Speed in excess of 15 m.p.h.
 - b. Any act endangering life or property while on school grounds.
 - c. Parking in areas other than student parking areas.
7. Parking privileges will not be available without an appropriate school registration and parking permit

CODE OF CONDUCT

Philosophy

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to ensure fair and effective disciplinary practices. Every student has a right to an education in a safe, secure and supportive environment, and every teacher has a right to expect respectful, prepared students in their classroom.

A key aspect of a student's education is the acquisition of social and behavioral skills, since effective learning can only occur when students obey basic rules of conduct. This means that:

1. Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that is in the best interest of the school and its students.
2. Caregivers have a responsibility to develop positive attitudes toward study and behavior.
3. Teachers have a responsibility to continue behavior development through teaching and discipline in the classroom.
4. The Administration and the School Committee have a responsibility to support and maintain the enforcement of discipline within the school buildings through policies and practices that are designed to use discretion and to re-engage the student in the learning process.

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws, requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation team to have special needs and whose program is described in an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Such provisions will also be made, when appropriate, for students with a disability who are receiving accommodations or related services under a 504 plan.

The Code of Conduct is based on a system of progressive discipline with a goal of limiting the use of long-term suspension as a consequence for student misconduct until other consequences have been considered, as appropriate. The administrator will exercise discretion in determining disciplinary consequences.

The administrator may utilize their discretion to significantly increase penalties in the cases of second and third offenses or for other factors. In determining the severity of the penalty or suspension, the appropriate administrator may consider all relevant facts, including but not limited to: 1) previous disciplinary record, 2) severity of disruption to the educational process, 3) degree of danger to self and/or others, 4) the degree to which the student is willing to change their inappropriate behavior and 5) whether alternative consequences are appropriate to reengage the student in learning.

School-Imposed Discipline

Expulsion means the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under MGL c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ for: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a principal or their designee determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in MGL c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ .

In-school suspension means removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. In-school suspension for ten (10) days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, shall not be considered a short-term suspension under these regulations. If a student is placed in in-school

suspension for more than ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, such suspension shall be deemed a long-term suspension for due process, appeal, and reporting purposes under 603 CMR 53.00.

Short-term suspension means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Long-term suspension means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense set forth in subsections (a) or (b) of MGL c. 71, §37 H, or in section 37H ½ of MGL c. 71, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension under section MGL c. 71 §37H ¾ shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

Other Discipline: Demerits or detentions may be imposed for infractions of these rules at the school level. Alternative consequences may be used, as appropriate, and include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Participation in clubs and activities at Worcester Public Schools and attending school-sponsored, school-related events is a privilege afforded to students who remain in good standing. To participate in school activities, events and clubs, students are expected to maintain good attendance and demonstrate good behavior and citizenship during school and at school-sponsored events. Eligibility for participation in activities, events, clubs, awards, scholarships and honorary positions at Worcester Public Schools is limited to students who are currently enrolled in and attending Worcester Public Schools in good standing. Students not meeting these expectations may be excluded at the discretion of the principal or their designee. If a student is suspended from an extracurricular activity, at the determination of the principal, the student may be excluded from that specific type of event involving the student's school of enrollment for the remainder of the school year. A student's removal from extracurricular activities and attendance at school sponsored events is not subject to the procedural requirements of MGL c. 71 §37H ¾ (Principal's Hearing). The removal is not a suspension for the purpose of counting the school days that a student is suspended. Caregivers will be notified when a student is removed or excluded from extracurricular activities.

School discipline shall not include the right to inflict corporal punishment. However, reasonable force may be used as necessary to protect other students or other persons from assault or the imminent threat of bodily injury.

School Officials may legally search a student and confiscate property provided:

1. there are reasonable grounds to suspect a search will turn up evidence tending to show that the student has violated or is violating the law or the school's rules; and

2. the search as conducted is reasonably related in scope to the circumstances that justified the search in the first place.

Disruptive Conduct

Violation of any of the following rules is grounds for discipline as defined above and pertains to actions both on or off school grounds during school or school-related situations.

Rule 1. – Damage or Destruction of School Property

A student shall not steal or cause damage to school property, nor make such attempts. The Administration reserves the right to file criminal complaints against, and seek restitution from, any student who violates this rule.

Rule 2. – Damage or Destruction of Private Property, Cheating, Forgery, Plagiarism

A student shall not steal or cause damage to private property nor make such attempts during school situations on or off school grounds or at any school-related situations including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. A student shall not cheat, forge or plagiarize any work submitted for academic credit or documentation.

Rule 3. – Physical Assault on a School Employee

A student shall not use or attempt to use physical force against a school employee or cause or attempt to cause physical injury to a school employee on or off the school grounds or during school situations or school-related situations including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Any student who assaults any school employee or any student who assaults a principal, teacher, instructional assistant, or other educational staff on school premises or at school sponsored or school related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion or a long-term suspension from the school by the school principal.

Rule 4. – Physical Assault on a Student or Other Person not Employed by the School

A student shall not use or attempt to use physical force against a student or other person or cause or attempt physical injury to another student or any other person on or off school grounds at any school-related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation.

Rule 5. – Verbal Assault on a School Employee

A student shall not assault verbally any school employee on or off school grounds at any school related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Verbal assault means obscenity, bullying or abusive language. Abusive language shall include but not be limited to derogatory statements concerning race, sexual orientation, color, gender, age, religion, gender identity, national origin or disability.

Rule 5A. – Threatening a School Employee

A student shall not threaten any teacher, administrator, or other school employee or volunteer with physical harm so as to place such person in reasonable apprehension that force will be used to inflict such physical harm.

Rule 6. – Verbal Assault on, or Threat to, a Student or Non-employee of School

A student shall not assault verbally any person on or off school grounds at any school-related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Verbal assault means obscenity, bullying or abusive language. Abusive language shall include but not be limited to derogatory statements concerning race, sexual orientation, color, gender, age, religion, gender identity, national origin or disability.

Rule 6A. - Written Assault or Threat on a Student or Non-employee of School

A student shall not threaten, intimidate or bully in writing, any person on or off school grounds at any school-related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Written threats mean any messages including e-mail, text messaging or any other cyber-related forms of communication; e.g. chat rooms.

Rule 7. - Policy on Possession or Use of Weapons

If any device which may be considered a weapon under this policy is distributed by a teacher, for use in the classroom, then no student receiving such a device shall be charged with an offense under Rule 7 provided the device remains in the classroom and provided the device is only used for the classroom purpose.

A student shall not possess, use, or attempt to use, any weapon on school premises or at a school related situation, including but not limited to travel to and from the situation.

In order to protect the students of the Worcester Public Schools, any student who is found on school premises or at school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including but not limited to, a gun or a knife may be subject to expulsion or a long-term suspension from the school by the principal regardless of the size of the knife.

For purposes of this policy, a dangerous “weapon” includes but is not limited to a gun (including a B.B., pellet or other replica device), knife, sling shot, blowgun, blackjack, metallic knuckles including a ring intended to be worn on more than one finger (“fused rings”) or knuckles or any substance which could be put to the same use with the same or similar effect as metallic knuckles, nunchaku, zoobow, also known as klackers or kung fu sticks, or any similar weapon consisting of two sticks of wood, plastic or metal connected at one end by a length of rope, chain, wire or leather, a shuriken or any similar pointed star-like object intended to injure a person when thrown, or any armband, made with leather which has metallic spikes, points or studs or any similar material weighted with metal or other substance and worn on the hand, or a manrikigusari or similar length of chain having weighted ends. Any other device or object used or attempted to be used to inflict bodily harm on a person may be considered a weapon.

This policy will be implemented according to the due process provisions of the WPS Discipline Code applicable to Regular and Special Education students.

Rule 8. - Policy on Possession or Use of Drugs or Alcohol

- a. Any student who distributes or possesses, with intent to distribute, any controlled substance as defined in MGL c. 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, or heroin, on school premises or at a school sponsored activity, may be expelled or have a short-term or long-term suspension imposed from the Worcester Public Schools by the school principal. This applies to drug paraphernalia such as scales, grinders, pipes, electronic smoking devices and any and all instruments used for drug products.
- b. Any student who uses or possesses any controlled substance as defined in

MGL c. 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine or heroin, or is under the influence of such a substance on school premises or at a school sponsored activity may be subject to expulsion or a short-term or long-term suspension from school by the school principal.

- c. Possession or use of alcohol on the premises of the Worcester Public Schools is forbidden. Any student who uses or possesses alcohol on school premises, or at a school sponsored activity, or is under the influence of alcohol on school premises, or a school sponsored situation, may be subject to a short-term or a long-term suspension imposed from the Worcester Public Schools.
- d. This policy will be implemented subject to the due process provision of the Worcester Public Schools Discipline Code applicable to Regular and Special Education students. Any student charged with a violation of Rule 8 shall have the due process rights outlined in Due Process, Section III.
- e. Possession or use of drugs or controlled substances which are medically prescribed is not a violation of this policy. However, all prescribed medications will be administered to students by authorized school personnel and will be kept in a secure location.

Rule 9. - Excessive Tardiness

A student shall not be tardy from school or class without legitimate cause.

Rule 10. – Repeated School Violations

A student shall not repeatedly fail to comply with directions and reasonable requests of any authorized school personnel during any period of time they are under school supervision.

Rule 11. - Hazing

A student shall not organize or participate in hazing. A student with knowledge of any hazing activity must report the incident to the school administrator.

Rule 12. - Sounding False Alarms

A student shall not, without reasonable cause, by outcry, bells, or otherwise cause a false alarm of fire (such action shall be reported under MGL c. 269, §13). No student shall set a fire in a school building or at a school-sponsored site or situation.

Rule 13. - Smoking and Tobacco Products

Smoking, possession, use, or distribution of tobacco or tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices within school buildings, school facilities, school grounds, on school buses or at a school sponsored activity by any person are prohibited. Any student who violates this rule may be suspended.

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 should also be aware that recording an individual without their consent could result in criminal charges under MGL CH. 272.

Use of such devices in violation of this rule may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, out-of-school suspension time. The School Administration reserves the right to confiscate cellular phones or other electronic devices when a student is believed to be violating this rule.

A student shall not use or possess a laser pointing device of any type on school premises or at a school sponsored event, unless such device is distributed by a teacher or its use is authorized by a teacher in connection with school work. Use of a laser pointing device against the face, eyes, or head of another individual may be considered a weapon for disciplinary purposes including, but not limited to, the possibility of long-term suspension.

Enforcement and Penalties:

This cell phone policy may be enforced by the principal, any teacher (including substitutes) or by any other school official or employee designated by the principal.

Enforcement personnel shall have the right to confiscate any cell phone or electronic device possessed or used in violation of the Code of Conduct.

Penalties for students found in violation of the policy will be as follows:

1. First offense: Student's cell phone/electronic device will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day.
2. Second and subsequent offenses: Student's cell phone/electronic device will be confiscated and returned only to the student's caregivers. Any such caregiver may, within five days of any such confiscation, request a hearing to determine the validity of the violation of the Code of Conduct and resulting confiscation of the cell phone/electronic device. In such event the principal shall designate a hearing officer who shall: 1) give the student and/or their caregivers an opportunity to present their case; 2) hear or review the incident report from the enforcing person and any other person with relevant information; and 3) provide a recommendation to the principal as to whether there is a reasonable basis to conclude that the cell phone policy of the Code of Conduct was violated by the student. Regardless of any request for a hearing, any confiscated cell phone/electronic device shall be returned to the caregiver at the first opportunity and shall not be dependent on the scheduling or outcome of any hearing.
3. Students committing repeated violations of this policy may be subject to additional disciplinary action, consistent with the Worcester Public Schools Code of Conduct up to and including suspension from school.

Rule 15. - Policy on Gangs and Obscene Clothing

1. No student on school property or at any school sponsored function shall wear any article of clothing (including hats, bandanas, scarves and sweat-bands), jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol or sign which has wording, or designs that are reasonably deemed by the school administration to be obscene, lewd or vulgar and which causes disorder or disruption to the school environment.
2. No student on school property or at any school sponsored function shall wear any article of clothing (including hats), jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol or sign, which displays, evidences or advertises alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, illegal drugs, or other controlled substances illegal under Massachusetts law.

3. No student on school property or at any school sponsored function shall wear any article of clothing (including hats), jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol or sign which the school administration reasonably deems to be evidence of membership or affiliation in any gang. As defined in this policy a "gang" is any group of two or more persons affiliated together, either formally or informally, whose purposes include the commission of illegal acts or who in concert commit illegal acts.

Rule 16. - Students Charged with or Convicted of a Felony

In accordance with MGL c. 71 §37 H ½ principals have the authority to suspend students charged with a felony and expel or impose a long-term suspension for students convicted or adjudicated of committing a felony if the principal has determined that the student's continued presence would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Any student charged with a violation of Rules 3, 7, 8 and 18 shall have the due process rights outlined in Due Process, Section III.

Rule 17. - Disruption of School

1. In addition to complying with Rules 1 through 15 stated above, a student shall not use violence, force, threat, fear, passive resistance or any other conduct in order to cause the disruption or obstruction of any lawful mission, process, or function in school.
2. Students are not permitted in any area of the school building/grounds without supervision by a staff person of the WPS before, during and after normal school hours. Students are not permitted access to the school building/ grounds until 30 minutes before the official start of the school day or when personnel of the Worcester Public Schools are available for supervision.

Rule 18. - Bomb Threats

No student shall communicate or cause to be communicated any information in any form whatsoever that a bomb or any type of explosive device is located in or on any building or property under the control of the Worcester Public Schools or is at any school sponsored situation, including but not limited to transportation provided by the Worcester Public Schools, either directly or by contracted services.

Rule 19. - Fighting

A student shall not engage in physical altercation with another student on or off school grounds at any school-related activity or event including, but not limited to, travel to and from the activity or event.

Rule 20. - Inciting a Disturbance

A student shall not incite a disturbance on or off school grounds at any school related activity or event. A student shall not organize, encourage, or participate in a disturbance or disruption of school. It can apply to one who urges or instigates others to disturb the school setting or related activity.

Rule 21. - Leaving School without Permission

A student shall not leave the school grounds or school-related activity without permission from the school administration.

Rule 22. - Lab and Shop Safety

A student shall comply with all standards of safety in a lab or shop setting.

Students are expected to behave appropriately in these settings without causing any unsafe situation that may cause harm to self or others.

Rule 23. - Bullying and Harassment

A student shall not engage in conduct that constitutes bullying or harassment in school, at school events or activities, or outside of school if the conduct creates a hostile or disruptive environment at school.

LEGAL POLICIES

Due Process

The Code of Conduct of the Worcester Public Schools is administered within the framework of the United States Constitution and federal and state laws and regulations with regard to due process for students. The Code of Conduct is intended to be administered for disciplinary infractions that occur on school grounds or at school-sponsored events (on and off school grounds) OR for disciplinary infractions that occur off school grounds but substantially disrupt the educational environment or create a hostile environment at school. The Code of Conduct applies during remote learning opportunities and events.

The Worcester Public Schools adheres to the Student Discipline Laws and Regulations as set forth in MGL c. 71 §§37H, 37 H^{1/2} and 37 H^{3/4} and 603 CMR 53.00 et seq.

Section I

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES:

A student may be removed from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for up to ten (10) consecutive school days or up to ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Students who are placed in in-school suspension shall have the opportunity to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the in-school suspension.

A student who is unable to adhere consistently to acceptable classroom standards in a particular class may be removed from the class permanently and assigned to a different class at the discretion of the principal and/or their designee.

Notice of In-School Suspension:

The principal or their designee shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student with an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal or their designee determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal or their designee shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten (10) days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal or their designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the caregiver orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension.

On the day of the suspension, the principal or their designee shall send written notice (by hand-delivery, first class mail or email) to the student and caregiver including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the caregiver to a meeting if the meeting has not already occurred. The notice shall be in English and the primary language of the home if another language is identified in the home language survey, or by other means, as appropriate.

Caregiver Meeting:

The principal or their designee shall also invite the caregiver to a meeting (in person or by telephone) to discuss the student’s academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal or their designee is unable to reach the caregiver after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the caregiver of the in-school suspension.

No Right to Appeal:

The decision of the principal or their designee is the final decision for in-school suspensions not exceeding ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year.

Section II

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES FOR OFFENSES UNDER MGL c. 71 §37H ^¾:

Due Process Procedures for Out-of-School Suspensions:

There are two types of out-of-school suspensions, short-term suspensions and long-term suspensions. The principal or their designee shall determine the extent of the rights to be afforded the student at a disciplinary hearing based on the anticipated consequences for the disciplinary offense. If the consequence may be long-term suspension from school, the principal or their designee shall afford the student additional rights as described below, in addition to those rights afforded to students who may face a short-term suspension from school. All students facing out-of-school suspension shall have the right to oral and written notice, as described below.

Notice for any Out-of-School Suspension:

Prior to suspending a student, the principal or their designee will provide the student and the caregiver oral and written notice of the possible suspension, an opportunity for the student to have a hearing and the opportunity for the caregivers to participate in the hearing. The notice will be in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English as identified in the home language survey, or by other means of communication where appropriate. The notice for every potential out-of-school suspension will set forth in plain language:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student’s suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal or their designee concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student’s explanation of the alleged incident, and for the caregiver to attend the hearing; the date, time, and location of the hearing; and the right of the student and the student’s caregiver to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

If the student is placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal, the student shall be provided notice of the rights described above, and also the following rights:

1. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
2. The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/caregiver's expense;
3. The right to produce witnesses on their behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so;
4. The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
5. The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal and to receive a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or caregiver upon request. If the student or caregiver requests an audio recording, the principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and the caregiver upon request;
6. The right to appeal the principal's decision to the Superintendent or their designee.

The principal or their designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the caregiver orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. Prior to conducting a hearing without the caregiver present, the principal or their designee will document reasonable efforts to include the caregiver. The principal or their designee is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal or their designee has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the caregiver in the manner specified by the caregiver for emergency notification.

Written notice to the caregiver may be made by hand delivery, first-class mail or email to an address provided by the caregiver for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and caregiver.

Emergency Removal of Student:

Under certain emergency circumstances, it may not be practical for the principal or their designee to provide prior oral and written notice before removing a student from school. The principal or their designee may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's or their designee's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The principal or their designee will immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall:

- a) Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's caregiver of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, the potential consequences, including potential length of suspension, the opportunity for a hearing including the date/time/location of the hearing, the right to interpreter services, and other rights permitted for students who may be placed on short or long-term suspension as set forth in 603 CMR 53.08;
- b) Provide written notice to the student and caregiver, including the information described in 603 CMR 53.06(2);

- c) Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the principal or their designee that complies with 603 CMR 53.08(2) or 53.08(3), as applicable, and the caregiver an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and the caregiver.
- d) Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(2)(c) and 53.08(2)(d) or 603 CMR 53.08(3)(c) and 53.08(3)(d), as applicable.

A principal will not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION PROCEDURES UNDER MGL c. 71 §37H ^{3/4}:

A short-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. Any student facing a potential short-term suspension is entitled to a hearing with the principal or their designee with the following process:

Principal Hearing - Short-term Suspension:

- a) The purpose of the hearing with the principal or their designee is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, the consequences for the infraction. At a minimum, the principal or their designee shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts that the principal or their designee should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as alternatives to suspension. The principal or their designee shall provide the caregiver, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- b) Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal or their designee shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.
- c) The principal or their designee shall notify the student and caregiver of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in 603 CMR 53.13(1). The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.
- d) If the student is in a preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

No Right to Appeal:

The decision of the principal or their designee is the final decision for short-term out-of-school suspensions not exceeding ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year.

LONG-TERM SUSPENSION PROCEDURES UNDER MGL c. 71 §37H ¾:

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense set forth in MGL c. 71, §37 H, or in MGL c. 71 §37H ½, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed. Any student facing a potential long-term suspension is entitled to a hearing with the principal or their designee with the following process:

Principal Hearing - Long-term Suspension:

- a) The purpose of the hearing with the principal or their designee is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, the consequences for the infraction. At a minimum, the principal or their designee shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal or their designee should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as alternatives to suspension. The principal or their designee shall provide the caregiver, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- b) In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following additional rights:
 - 1. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
 - 2. The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student choice, at the student's/caregiver's expense;
 - 3. The right to produce witnesses on their behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so;
 - 4. The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
 - 5. The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal or their designee, and to receive a copy of the audio record upon request. If the student or caregiver requests an audio record, the principal or their designee shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and caregiver upon request.

- c) The principal or their designee shall provide the caregiver, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- d) Based on the evidence, the principal or their designee shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The principal or their designee shall send the written determination to the student and caregiver by hand-delivery, first-class mail or email to an address provided by the caregiver for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal or their designee and the caregiver. If the principal or their designee decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:
 - 1. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
 - 2. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal or their designee;
 - 3. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
 - 4. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive educational services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school;
 - 5. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's or their designee's decision to the superintendent or designee, but only if the principal or their designee has imposed a long-term suspension. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English as determined by the home language survey, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:
 - a. The process for appealing the decision, including that the student or caregiver must file a written 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 caregiver may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.
 - b. If the student is in a preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal or their designee shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the suspension takes effect.

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.

- b) The student or caregiver 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 caregiver 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 their discretion, for good cause.
- c) The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or caregiver requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the superintendent shall grant the extension.
- d) The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the caregiver in the hearing. The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if they have made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the caregiver and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the caregiver of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- e) The superintendent 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 caregiver 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 caregiver 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 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.
- h) The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, with regard to the suspension.

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

Section III
LONG-TERM SUSPENSION/EXPULSION FOR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER MGL c. 71 §37H:

The long-term suspension or expulsion of a student from school will be in accordance with MGL c. 71 §37H. The grounds for long-term suspension or expulsion include but are not limited to the following:

- a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun, a knife, or their facsimile, or anything used in the commission of assault and battery; or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter 94 C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin,

may be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion from the school by the principal or their designee.

- b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide, or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion from the school or school district by the principal or their designee.
- c) Due process for a student who is subject to an expulsion or a long-term suspension as a result of possessing drugs/weapons or assaulting school staff includes:
 1. A student shall receive written notice before the expulsion or a long-term suspension takes place and written notice of the right to appeal.
 2. The student shall be given an opportunity for a hearing and the opportunity to present witnesses and evidence. The student may have an attorney at their own expense.
 3. Following the hearing, the principal or their designee may, in their discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel the student.
 4. The student may appeal the expulsion (suspension of more than 90 days) to the superintendent provided the appeal is requested in writing, within ten (10) calendar days following the long-term suspension or expulsion.
 5. At the appeal hearing, the student may be represented by an attorney and may present oral and written testimony.
 6. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of MGL c. 71 §37H.
 7. The superintendent's decision is final.
 8. Any student who is suspended or expelled for more than ten (10) consecutive days shall have the opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH FELONY COMPLAINT OR CONVICTION UNDER MGL c. 71 §37H ½:

In accordance with MGL c. 71 §37 H ½, principals have the authority to suspend students charged with a felony and expel or issue a long-term suspension to students convicted or adjudicated of committing a felony if the principal has determined that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Due process for a student who is subject to suspension as a result of a felony charge includes:

- a) The student shall receive written notice before the suspension takes effect and written notice of the right to appeal.
- b) The student shall be given an opportunity to respond to the charges before the suspension takes effect.
- c) The student may appeal the suspension to the superintendent, provided the appeal is requested in writing within five (5) calendar days following the suspension.
- d) The superintendent must hold the appeal hearing within three (3) calendar days of the request.
- e) At the appeal hearing the student may be represented by an attorney. The student has the right to present oral or written testimony on their behalf.
- f) The superintendent must render a decision within five (5) calendar days.

- g) The superintendent's decision is final.
- h) Any student who is suspended or expelled pursuant to this section shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of their removal.
- i) Any student who is suspended or expelled for more than ten (10) consecutive days shall have the opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

Due process for a student who is subject to an expulsion or a long-term suspension as a result of a felony conviction includes:

- a) A student shall receive written notice before the expulsion or a long-term suspension takes place and written notice of the right to appeal.
- b) The student shall be given an opportunity to respond to the charges.
- c) The student may appeal the expulsion or long-term suspension to the superintendent provided the appeal is requested in writing, within five (5) calendar days following the expulsion.
- d) The superintendent must hold the appeal hearing within three (3) calendar days of the request.
- e) At the appeal hearing the student may be represented by an attorney and may present oral and written testimony.
- f) The superintendent must render a decision within five (5) calendar days.
- g) The superintendent's decision is final.
- h) Any student who is suspended or expelled for more than ten (10) consecutive days shall have the opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

Section IV

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS UNDER MGL c. 71 §§37H, 37H¹/₂ AND 37H³/₄:

Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of their removal from the class- room or school.

The principal or their designee shall inform the student and caregiver of this opportunity in writing when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, April 4, 2022

ITEM:

To conduct a bi-monthly meeting with the School Committee's student representatives.

To following item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues for discussion:

Request that governance include a position description for student representatives in the school committee rules.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 2-17-22 - Shelley Duodu spoke to the first item stating that many students have voiced their concerns regarding diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and would like the Administration to take on those initiatives. Juliana Manxhari spoke to the second item stating that it is essential for have a student representative from the Worcester Alternative School. Stacia Zoghbi spoke to the third item stating that the description for student representatives be included so that the next group of representatives will have a clear understanding of their role. School Committee Member Novick requested that the language in the position description be forwarded to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues in order to determine its place in the School Committee Rules. She also requested that the final sentence, under Basic Description, read as follows:
"They are subject to the same privileges as other School Committee members and are to be held subject to the same rules except with the ability to vote, and unless permitted to do so by the School Committee to attend Executive Session."
Stacia Zoghbi spoke to the last item stating that students are the ones who are impacted by the budget decisions. She proposed the following budget priorities:
- Mental health support including more school psychologists, safe spaces and training for staff and students
 - Expansion of Career Technical Education and
 - Availability of transportation for students within a two-mile radius of the school
- (continued on Page 2)**

BACKUP:

Annex A (2 pages) contains a copy of the position description for student representatives.

PRIOR ACTION:

2-17-22 -Shelley Dudou added that diversity training be a priority during Budget.

Adalise Rivera Lugo stated that she would like to see students informed of the available mental health resources.

School Committee Member Clancey requested that student representatives be elected by vote of the school population for the Gerald Creamer Center and the Challenge and Reach Academy.

School Committee Member Novick suggested that the student representatives hold their own budget hearing prior to the School Committee's one.

On a roll call of 7-0, the Student Advisory Committee Agenda was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

Basic Description:

The Student Advisory Committee, composed of eight Student Representatives to the Worcester School Committee, shall include students enrolled in a public or alternative school within the Worcester Public School district, elected by the students of each high school. The Student Advisory Committee shall, in accordance with Chapter 71 Section 38M of Massachusetts General Law, elect from their number a chair-person who shall serve a term of one year as an ex-officio member of the School Committee. They are subject to the same privileges as other School Committee members and are to be held subject to the same rules except with the ability to vote, and unless permitted to do so by the School Committee to attend Executive Session.

Purpose:

To provide for a meaningful link and to promote a mutual sense of respect and understanding between the student body and the School Committee.

To represent before the School Committee, the attitudes, interests and concerns, both positive and negative, of the student body.

To advise the School Committee and add insight to their deliberations.

To carry to the School Committee and to support proposals and items of concern to the student body, and to initiate, on behalf of the student body and in conjunction with the student government, projects and proposals for presentation to the School Committee.

To inform the student body of the functions and workings of the School Committee.

To represent to the School Committee a cross-section of the entire student body.

Regular Responsibilities:

- Be accessible to, and representative of, the entire student body.
- Gather collective sentiment that is representative of the entire student body and present those views to the full Committee.
- Share information among the Committee, staff, and students.
- Contribute to Committee deliberations.
- Communicate with staff and students about student concerns and help develop solutions.
- Collaborate with other student representatives and members of the School Committee.

Ex-Officio Member Responsibilities:

- Attend every Regular Session meeting during their term
- Prepare and present a "Student Report" at every Regular Session that includes, but is not limited to: student events, concerns, recommendations, projects, etc
- Attend Standing Committee and Special/Ad-Hoc Committee meetings to share sentiment of the student body
- Contribute to Committee deliberations where appropriate

Student Advisory Committee Representative Responsibilities:

- Attend Regular Sessions during their term when scheduled, if possible
- Help prepare and present a "Student Report" at every Regular Session that includes, but is not limited to: student events, concerns, recommendations, projects, etc.
- Encouraged to attend Standing Committee and Special/Ad-Hoc Committee meetings to share sentiment of their respective student body

Composition:

The Student Advisory Committee shall be composed of one student representative from each of the following schools:

- Burncoat High School
- Claremont Academy
- Doherty Memorial High School
- Gerald Creamer Center
- North High School
- South High Community School
- University Park Campus School
- Worcester Alternative School
- Worcester Technical High School
- The Challenge and Reach Academy

References:

Chapter 71 Section 38M MGL

<https://malegislature.gov/laws/generallaws/parti/titlexii/chapter71/section38m>