

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

Administrative Representative
Yeu Kue, Ed.D.

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

AGENDA #8

The Standing Committee on GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES will hold both an in-person and virtual meeting:

on: October 3, 2023
at: 4:45 p.m.
in: Room 410, Durkin Administration Building, 20 Irving St.
Worcester

virtually: <https://worcesterschools.zoom.us/j/88949059993?pwd=YjMvWGZEdDRnTkJ3Z1VkSmFGRUVqdz09> Passcode: 116224 Telephone: US: +1 929 205 6099 or +1 301 715 8592 Webinar ID: 835 4552 2201

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. GENERAL BUSINESS ITEMS TAKEN IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

To consider or interview applicants for employment or appointment by a preliminary screening committee if the chair declares that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants - Review of Applicants - Clerk of the School Committee

IV. GENERAL BUSINESS

gb 3-185.4 O'Connell Novick
(July 12, 2023)

To consider the reorganization of the support staff assigned to the School Committee, to include establishment of a full-time Clerk of the School Committee whose sole responsibilities shall involve work directly related to the operation of the School Committee and the conduct of its business.

gb 2-119.1 O'Connell Novick
(March 31, 2022)

To consider a one-year alteration to the district policy limiting excused absences to 7 days, in light of quarantine requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

gb 2-294.1 Clancey

(November 4, 2022)

To review current policy regarding service and support animals in school and make any necessary changes.

gb 3-69.1 McCullough

(February 7, 2023)

To review and/or develop policies regarding public use of school playgrounds, adjoining playgrounds, and parks during school days/recess times.

gb 3-100.1 O'Connell Novick

(March 29, 2023)

To suspend the voluntary school uniform policy unless and until language is added providing an exit.

gb 3-164.1 O'Connell Novick

(June 7, 2023)

To revise district policy KHB regarding advertising.

ROS 3-1.4 Administration

(January 5, 2023)

FROM HERE, ANYWHERE... TOGETHER: The Path to a Refined Strategic Plan
To approve the Superintendent's Strategic Plan/Goals.

V. ADJOURNMENT

O. General Business
O'Connell Novick
(July 12, 2023)

ITEM: gb 3-185.4
S.C. MEETING: 10-3-23

ITEM:

To consider the reorganization of the support staff assigned to the School Committee, to include establishment of a full-time Clerk of the School Committee whose sole responsibilities shall involve work directly related to the operation of the School Committee and the conduct of its business.

PRIOR ACTION:

7-20-23: Member O'Connell Novick introduced her item by thanking Dr. Friel for her service as Clerk. She continued by stating that the School Committee needs someone prepared to take over as the Clerk of the School Committee as they need to have legal records of their meetings. The backup provided by Member O'Connell Novick was a draft of a job description.

Member O'Connell Novick made a motion to hold this item and to request that the Chair of the School Committee call a special meeting in early August to take this item including position description, any amendments the School Committee members bring forward, and to make sure it aligns with current human resource practices.

Mayor Petty asked the Governance Committee to begin outlining the process of recruitment and interviewing of candidates for the Clerk position. Mayor Petty outlined that the two different motions on the table were the following: (1) Member O'Connell Novick's motion to reorganize the School Committee office so the Clerk reports directly to the School Committee. (2) Mayor Petty's motion to start the process to find the next Clerk.

On a roll call of 7-0, the motions were approved collectively.

8-10-23: The School Committee made the following amendments to the job description:

- Under the Job Description: Replacing "must" with "preferred" in regards to being familiar with School operations
- Under the Reports To section: Changing the language to read: "Reports to the Vice Chair of the School Committee on behalf of the entire School Committee."
- Under the Performance Responsibilities section: Adding "Other duties", which include creating a new system of Agenda development and item storage that is more user friendly and organized.
- Adding "evenings" to the flexible working hours for clarification
- Adding a nondiscrimination policy

TITLE:

Administrative Clerk of the School Committee

JOB DESCRIPTION:

The Administrative Clerk serves as the confidential secretary to the Worcester School Committee and coordinates the day-to-day operations of the School Committee.

The ability to interact with the public, staff, and members of the School Committee in a fast-paced environment, sometimes under pressure with deadlines, while remaining flexible, proactive, resourceful, and efficient, with a high level of professionalism and confidentiality is crucial to this role.

This position requires strong oral and written communication skills with attention to detail and the ability to manage emails, create documents, transcribe minutes, type, proofread, and edit with precision including: policies, forms, procedures, federal and state reports. The candidate is preferred to have familiarity with school operations, with the open meeting law, with public records requirements, and have the initiative and ability to create an efficient organization system, and to coordinate and execute a variety of activities and/or projects. This individual must have the ability to deal with challenging situations, problem solve, prioritize tasks, create and maintain a professional work environment, and be flexible enough to deal with daily challenges of the system. In addition, they must have strong relationship-building skills, and work well with individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences and cultures.

Experience in multilingual and multicultural environments is preferred.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Experience in a position using similar skill sets as this position requires. Specific skill-based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include: operating standard office equipment including pertinent software applications, databases and the use of spreadsheets; planning and managing projects; and preparing and maintaining accurate records;

Specific knowledge-based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include: operations, modern principles and practices of office management; principles and practices of fiscal, statistical, and administrative data collection and report development; concepts of grammar and punctuation; and business telephone etiquette; and

Bilingual highly encouraged

REPORTS TO:

Vice Chair on behalf of the Worcester School Committee

PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Office Administration:

1. Records accurate and concise minutes of all open and executives sessions for all School Committee and standing committee meetings to be reviewed for approval at the next Committee meeting. Attends all Executive Sessions in person. Once minutes are approved, posts on the WPS website and distributes them, as required by Massachusetts General Law and local directive.
2. Prepares and distributes agendas and material for all School Committee and Subcommittee meetings, tracks pending items for each Committee or Subcommittee meeting in coordination with the Office of the Superintendent, and reviews with Committee convener and/or Vice-Chair. Meets with Vice-Chair and Superintendent on Thursday before bimonthly School Committee meeting to create agenda for full committee meetings from items submitted by members and by administration. Ensures electronic posting and distribution of full Committee agenda by Friday. Coordinates agenda for all subcommittee meetings with relevant chair and administrators. Works with Committee members and appropriate administrators to establish regular and special Committee and Subcommittee meeting schedules, professional development schedules, and other occurrences. Confirms that all relevant administrators and members of the public have been invited, including those with petitions before the Committee or Subcommittee. Obtains all permits or permissions for meetings, timely posts all meetings, and provides all meeting materials for attendees with as much lead time as possible.

3. Maintains all archival Committee meetings and materials as required by state law. Responds to requests for meeting information. Maintains copies of all documents executed by the School Committee. In coordination with the relevant staff, manages the School Committee's website in order to ensure the public and members gain timely access to required documents and information.
4. Provides updated policies to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees after approval by School Committee.
5. Drafts all correspondences, memorandum, annual reports, recognitions, nominations, announcements in a timely manner as per Committee vote.
6. Responds to parent and/or community concerns when the matter falls within the purview of the School Committee, or refers them to appropriate school department personnel for resolution. Tracks all parent and/or community inquiries by topic and provides updates to the School Committee.
7. Collects data and prepares reports of various subjects to inform district decisions at directive of full Committee.
8. Provides relevant data to support annual budget preparation, as requested by the Budget Office.
9. Collaborates with other Administrative Assistants (Superintendent's Office, Human Resources, Teaching and Learning, and Budget Office) to provide support to the School Committee whenever needed.
10. Organizes and facilitates special events such as School Committee hosted Massachusetts Association of School Committees Division meetings, recognition events, etc.
11. Works effectively in informal and formal teams with diverse constituencies.
12. Update IT systems for agenda development and item organization.
13. Other duties as assigned

Professional Development:

1. Encouraged to attend annual conference of the Massachusetts Council of School Committee Administrative Personnel (COSCAP) at School Committee cost.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT:

Twelve-month work year

Flexibility with work hours, including evenings, and work schedule may be needed per the School Committee Calendar.

EVALUATION:

Performance shall be evaluated annually on or before July 1st. The School Committee Vice-Chair will complete the evaluation with input from the School Committee. The annual evaluation will be reviewed and voted in open session by the full School Committee by the second regular meeting in September of each year.

Equal Opportunity Employer

The Worcester Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer/Educational Institution and does not discriminate regardless of race, color, ancestry, sex, gender, age, religion, national origin, gender identity or expression, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy or a related condition, veteran status 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 the Human Resource Manager, 20 Irving Street, Worcester, MA 01609, 508-799-3020.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: October 3, 2023

ITEM: Novick (March 31, 2022)

To consider a one-year alteration to the district policy limiting excused absences to 7 days, in light of quarantine requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PRIOR ACTION:

4-7-22 - Member O'Connell Novick stated that students are only allowed seven excused absences and is concerned for the students who have had COVID multiple times. She would like the policy discussed in Standing Committee. Superintendent Binienda stated that she and many principals do not follow that policy due to the pandemic. There is a special code C that is put into the computer to mark a student as absence for COVID reasons.

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

8-30-22 - STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES
Ms. Mahoney stated that an absence is an excused one if a student tests positive or has been in close contact with someone who has COVID. Chair Clancey stated that, in the Student Handbook, under the Attendance Policy, it states that:

- under School Attendance - a school district may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen half-day sessions in any period of six months.
- under Illness - that the caregiver must submit to the school medical documentation of the illness that requires the student's exclusion from school

She would like the Administration to consider amending the current policy due to the fact that some parents are not able to get their child/ren to the doctors to get a note for school. Ms. Mahoney stated that the Administration has had conversations with the attorneys regarding revamping the Attendance Policy. Dr. Monárrez recommended that the item be held in order for the Administration to seek a legal opinion regarding the Attendance Policy. Chair Clancey made the following motion:

Request that the item be held.

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

9-15-22 SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.

3-28-23 Chair Clancey made a motion to take the following two items collectively:

gb 2-119 - Novick (March 31, 2022)

To consider a one-year alteration to the district policy limiting excused absences to 7 days, in light of quarantine requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

gb 2-176 - Clancey (May 25, 2022)

Request that the Admin review and update the Attendance Policy, if necessary.

On a roll call, 0-3, the items were held.

BACKUP:

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: October 3, 2023

ITEM: gb 2-294 Clancey

(November 4, 2022)

To review current policy regarding service and support animals in school and make any necessary changes.

PRIOR ACTION:

11-10-22 On a voice vote, the motion to refer to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues was approved.

3-28-23 gb 2-294 - Clancey (November 4, 2022)
To review current policy regarding service and support animals in school and make any necessary changes. Chair Clancey stated there will be a motion to hold this items to further review changes to the policy and will be sending recommendations for Administration to review.

Member McCullough requested the policy language be specific regarding emotional support and service animals, and that the policy note emotional support animals are specifically building based. Chair Clancey made a motion to hold the item for further review. On a roll call, 0-3, the item was held.

BACKUP:

Annex A (4 pages) contains the Service Animal Policy Guidance.

Annex B (4 pages) contains the WPS Emotional Support Dog Policy.

Annex C (1 page) contains a response from Administration.

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOL'S POLICY ON SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS

Overview

The purpose of this statement is to explain Worcester Public Schools' ("the District") policy regarding the permitted use of service animals within the District. The District does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of service animals. The District will comply with Massachusetts and federal laws concerning the rights of persons who use service animals and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation in a manner consistent with the law.

Definition of a Service Animal

Massachusetts law limits the definition of service animal to a dog that accompanies an individual with a sensory and or physical disability. The ADA defines service animals as ~~"any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability."~~ **"dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA."** ~~Examples of performative tasks include but are not limited to assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing nonviolent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.~~

~~Service animals are not pets, nor are they emotional support animals. An emotional support animal is a dog whose sole function is to provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not qualify as service animals.~~

The District's Responsibility

The District shall not assume or take custody of, or responsibility for, the care of feeding of any service animal. The owner or person having custody and control of the animal shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the service animal.

Safety

A service animal must have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of

work or tasks, in which case ~~the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control.~~ **the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.**

If, in the opinion of the building Principal or their designee, any service animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the service animal may be excluded from the school or program. ~~The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the service animal from the District premises immediately. Any animal not covered under the ADA service animal definition can be asked to leave District premises.~~

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the person having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by the Principal (or designee) and an alternative plan will be developed with appropriate District staff. Such plan could include the reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different classroom.

No service animal will be permitted on school premises without proof of current rabies vaccination ~~and without prior discussion with the Director of Special Services.~~

The Superintendent of Schools or their designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of a service animal in District facilities and on school transportation.

Reference: ADA Regulations, 28 CFR Part 35 (as amended, 2010); Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); The Rehabilitation Act of 1973; M.G.L. c. 272, § 98A

Protocol for Service Animal Policy

1. All requests for ~~an individual~~ **a student** with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal must be addressed in writing to the Office of Special Education and Intervention Services at 20 Irving Street, Worcester, MA 01609, and must contain required documentation of animal vaccinations. This written request must be delivered to the Director of the Special Education at least 10 business days prior to bringing the service animal to school or a school function. A challenge to the determination regarding the qualification of the dog may be appealed to the Director of Special Education.

2. **All requests for an employee with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal must be addressed in writing to the Office of Human Resources at 20 Irving Street, Worcester, MA 01609, and must contain required documentation of animal vaccinations. This written request must be delivered to the Director of Human Resources at least 10 business days prior to bringing the service animal to school or a school function. A challenge to the determination regarding the qualification of the dog may be appealed to the Chief People Officer.**

3. Removal of a Service Animal: A school administrator may ask an individual with a disability or their parents to remove a service animal from a school building, a classroom, school property or from a school function if any one of the following circumstances occurs:
 - the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it;
 - the animal is not housebroken;
 - ~~the animal's behavior or presence poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;~~
 - ~~the animal's presence would "fundamentally alter" the nature of the service, program, or activity or is disruptive. Examples may include, but are not limited to, research labs, areas requiring protective clothing, and food preparation areas;~~ **and**
 - animals not covered under the ADA service animal definition can be asked to leave a District facility or program. Questions related to the use of service animals on school property should be directed to the Director of Special Education **for students and the Director of Human Resources for employees.**

4. The District shall not ask about the nature or extent of a student's **or employee's** disability, but to determine whether an animal qualifies as a service animal, the District may inquire if the animal is required because of a disability and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform. The District shall not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal.

5. If the student **or employee** arrives at school with a service animal and previous approval has not been obtained, **1) the employee will be asked to leave the premises until it can be determined that the presence of the dog in school is in compliance with the law and policy; and 2) the student's** parents/guardians will be immediately notified and

requested to come to the school to retrieve the service animal until it can be determined that the presence of the dog in school is in compliance with the law and policy. The service animal will remain with the child until the parent/guardian removes the service animal from school property. The service animal will not be separated from the child.

6. Owners of a service animal must provide annual proof that the animal has been immunized against diseases common to dogs, including the following vaccinations: DHLPPC (Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus, and Coronavirus), Bordetella, and Rabies.
7. All service animals must be spayed or neutered; treated for, and kept free of, fleas and ticks; and be kept clean and groomed to avoid shedding and dander.
8. Owners of a service animal are liable for any harm or injury caused by the animal to other students, staff, visitors, and/or property.
9. The animal must be “required” for the individual with a disability.
10. The animal must be “individually trained” to do work or a task for the individual with a disability.
11. In the event access is granted, the school should consider and establish the following:
 - a rest place for the dog (such as a crate in a quiet place);
 - rest times for the dog (gym, lunch, and recess are especially difficult school periods for a service dog to successfully endure);
 - emergency evacuation plan;
 - fire drill plan/participation; and
 - an alternate accommodation/plan in the event the dog is not able to accompany the disabled child to school due to illness, injury, or death.
12. Any questions about the Worcester Public School’s policy or procedures with regard to service animals should be directed to the Director of Special Education.

Worcester Public Schools Emotional Support Dog Policy

Emotional Support Dogs, which can be called social-emotional assistance dogs, or comfort dogs, and therapy dogs, are not service animals as defined by Massachusetts law or Title II or Title III of the American Disabilities Act. This policy addresses these non-service dogs who provide companionship, comfort and affection and sometimes help with depression, anxiety, and certain phobias, but do not have special training to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities. This policy also addresses therapy dogs who provide people with therapeutic contact to improve their physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive functioning.

An Emotional Support Dog may only be brought into a Worcester Public School or any of its affiliated programs or facilities at the sole discretion of the Superintendent or their designee. Other emotional support animals are not permitted in the Worcester Public Schools. All requests shall be submitted to the Superintendent in writing. The Superintendent or their designee reserve the right to request documentation supporting all requests. Such documentation may include documentation from a physician, psychiatrist, social worker or other mental health professional describing the need for an Emotional Support dog and documentation from a veterinarian that the Emotional Service dog is in good health and up-to-date on all vaccinations as required by local ordinances and regulations.

If a request for Emotional Support Dog is granted by the Superintendent or their designee, the owner of the Emotional Support Dog is responsible for ensuring that the Emotional Support Dog does not unduly interfere with school activities and is solely responsible for any damage to persons or school property caused by the Emotional Support Dog.

Protocol for Emotional Support Dog Policy

1. All requests to bring an Emotional Support Dog onto the Worcester Public Schools property or to activities or events must be in writing and approval must be received **prior** to the dog attending school activities or events or being present on school property. An Emotional Support Dog may only be brought into a Worcester Public School or any of its affiliated programs or facilities at the **sole discretion** of the Superintendent or his or her designee. The Superintendent or his or her designee may withdraw approval for the Emotional Support Dog **at any time** at his or her **sole discretion**.
2. The request shall be submitted for approval each school year and/or whenever the handler wishes to use a different Emotional Support Dog.
3. The requestor must provide the following documentation prior to receiving approval:
 - i. For individuals (as opposed to groups or organizations) requesting to bring an Emotional Support Dog onto the Worcester Public Schools property or to activities or events, such individuals must submit current documentation (not more than one (1) year old) on letterhead from a licensed mental health professional stating: (1) the person has a mental health-related disability listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV); (2) having the dog accompany the person is necessary to the person's mental health or treatment; (3) the individual providing the assessment of the person is a licensed mental health professional and the person is under his or her professional care; and (4) the date and type of the mental health professional's license and the state or other jurisdiction in which it was issued.
 - ii. Evidence from a veterinarian of the dog being up-to-date with required vaccinations, including rabies and receipt of a clean bill of health.
 - iii. Appropriate licensure from a local dog licensing authority.
 - iv. Affirmation that the dog has regular flea prevention treatment and will be well-groomed while on school property or at school activities/events.
 - v. Evidence that the owner has liability insurance which would cover any damages or injuries caused by the dog's presence at school, school activities/events.
 - vi. Statement that the owner is responsible for any damages caused by their dog.
 - vii. Evidence that any Emotional Support dog servicing as a therapy dog has received a therapy dog certification from a national therapy dog organization (e.g. the American Kennel Club, Intermountain Therapy Dog, Pet Partners, Bright and Beautiful, or such other therapy dog registering organization as determined appropriate by the Superintendent or his or her designee) if the dog will serve as a therapy dog in school. Exceptions may be made for therapy dogs undergoing training by the Worcester Police Department to serve as a therapy dog for the benefit of the schools.
4. The Emotional Support Dog must be obedient, calm as well as affectionate and friendly to strangers.

5. The Emotional Support Dog will not be permitted in unauthorized areas within and outside of the school building.
6. When using an Emotional Support Dog in a school setting, the dog must always be under the control of the handler with either a harness or a leash no longer than four (4) feet, unless holding such a leash would interfere with the therapy dog's safe, effective performance of its work or tasks. The handler shall maintain control of the therapy dog at all times and shall not tether the therapy dog to any individual or object. The school is not responsible for providing the handler or for handling the dog.
7. The handler and Emotional Support Dog will wear appropriate identification identifying them as a registered handler and therapy dog.
8. The owner of the Emotional Support Dogs is responsible for any damages caused by the dog.
9. The handler of an Emotional Support Dog is responsible for the supervision and care of the dog while on school property or school activities or events including feeding, exercising, and cleaning up after the dog.
10. The handler shall remove the Emotional Support Dog to a separate area as designated by the school administrator in such instances where any student or school employee who suffers dog allergies or aversions is present in an office, hallway, or classroom.
11. For groups or organizations (as opposed to individuals) bringing an Emotional Support Dog onto the Worcester Public Schools property or to activities or events, the following requirements apply:
 - i. Volunteer handlers shall sign themselves and their therapy dog in upon arrival at any school and shall sign both out on departure from the building. Handlers who are school district staff or a Worcester School Resource Officer shall sign their therapy dog in upon arrival and sign him/her out on their departure.
 - ii. The handler shall not charge a fee for the work they perform with the therapy dog, shall not borrow money or personal items, or receive any personal gratuity, gift, or tip, such as money or jewelry from students in the district.
 - iii. The handler shall confirm whether or not there will be any other therapy dog(s) on site prior to scheduling any visit with a therapy dog and shall take steps with appropriate staff to ensure that the dogs do not engage inappropriately while on school property. When multiple therapy dogs are engaged in a planned activity on school district property, the handlers shall ensure that the dogs have an opportunity to greet each other prior to entering the school building. Once inside the building, the handlers shall ensure that the dogs are each on a four (4)-foot leash, given work space at least eight (8) feet from each other, and are given no opportunity for contact or socialization with each other while working.

12. The ADA permits a student with a disability who uses a service animal to bring the animal to school and the district's Service Animal Policy applies to service animals.



WORCESTER

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Academic Supports
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Chief Academic Support Officer

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Dr. John E. Durkin
Administration Building
20 Irving Street
Worcester, MA 01609-2493

Date: September 28, 2023

Item: gb 2-294.1: To consider revisions to WPS Policy on Service Animals in Schools

Attachments: WPS Policy on Service Animals in Schools

Recommendation:

The Administration would like the opportunity to discuss the attached proposed changes to the WPS Policy on Service Animals in Schools with the Teaching and Learning team and Cabinet members, and therefore, request time to present the changes to the rest of the Administration. We will return to the Governance Standing Committee to present the proposed final recommendations to the WPS Policy on Service Animals in Schools.



O. General Business
McCullough
(February 7, 2022)

ITEM: gb 3-69.1
S.C. MEETING: 10-3-23

ITEM:

To review and/or develop policies regarding public use of school playgrounds, adjoining playgrounds, and parks during school days/recess times.

PRIOR ACTION:

2-16-23 gb 3-69 McCullough (February 7, 2023)

To review and/or develop policies regarding public use of school playgrounds, adjoining playgrounds, and parks during school days/recess times.

Member McCullough motioned to refer to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

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

BACKUP:

RECOMMENDATION OF MAKER:

Refer to Governance and Employee Issues.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION:

Refer to Governance and Employee Issues.

O. General Business
O'Connell Novick
(March 29, 2023)

ITEM: gb 3-100.1
S.C. MEETING: 10-3-23

ITEM:

To consider suspending the voluntary school uniform policy until language is added providing an exit.

PRIOR ACTION:

BACKUP:

Annex A (1 page) contains the response from the Administration.

RECOMMENDATION OF MAKER:

RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION:

Refer to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.



Administrator: Dr. Marie Morse
Department: Office of the Assistant Superintendent
Date: August 29, 2023
Item Number: Gb-3-100
Item: To suspend the Voluntary School Uniform Policy unless and until language is added to provide an exit.
Recommendation: Approve and file

The current Voluntary School Uniform Policy is provided below. The district recommends adding the following language below as a process for exiting the uniform policy if the school community and principal choose to.

Voluntary School Uniform Policy

The School Committee approved the following Voluntary Uniform Policy:

1. Voluntary Uniform Policies must comply with existing School Committee policies in student attire.
2. Prior to seeking School Committee approval, a majority vote of the school council members and the school principal must approve the school's voluntary uniform policy. The principal forwards 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.

The district proposes adding the following language to the policy:

4. If a school no longer wishes to implement a voluntary school uniform policy the following steps must be taken:
 - a) A majority vote must be taken by the school council to rescind/end the voluntary uniform policy in their school with principal approval.
 - b) The principal forwards this request to the Clerk of the School Committee, who will place it on the agenda for the School Committee's approval in order to rescind this policy in the school.

O. General Business
O'Connell Novick
(June 6, 2023)

ITEM: gb 3-164.1
S.C. MEETING: 10-3-23

ITEM:

To revise district policy KHB regarding advertising.

PRIOR ACTION:

BACKUP:

Annex A (2 pages) contains the revised policy.

RECOMMENDATION OF MAKER:

Refer to Governance & Employee Issues

RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION:

Refer to Governance & Employee Issues

File: KHB - ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee may grant permission for advertising of commercial products or services in school buildings or on school property under guidelines or regulations it may approve. Otherwise, no advertising of commercial products or services will be permitted in school buildings or on school property. Publications of the school system will not contain any advertising. However, this will not prevent advertising in student publications that are published by student organizations, subject to administration controls, or the use of commercially-sponsored, free teaching aids if the content is approved by the administration.

The Worcester School Committee desires to promote positive relationships between schools and the community in order to enhance community support and involvement in the districts' schools. Prior to the execution of advertisement agreements, the Superintendent or designee shall review and approve all advertising for **any Worcester Public Schools' property, including** the electronic sign or other areas at Commerce Bank Field at Foley Stadium in accordance with School Committee policy.

The Superintendent or designee may selectively approve or disapprove of any advertising based on the criteria below, but may not disapprove advertising material in an arbitrary or capricious manner or in a way that discriminates against a particular viewpoint on a subject that would otherwise be allowed. The advertisement on the electronic sign or other areas within the Commerce Bank Field at Foley Stadium does not imply district endorsement of any identified product or services.

~~The Superintendent or designee shall not approve a~~Advertising ~~at Commerce Bank Field at Foley Stadium shall not be approved~~ that:

1. Are obscene (as defined by prevailing community standards throughout the district), libelous or slanderous.
2. Incite students to commit unlawful acts, violate school rules, disrupt the orderly operation of schools, or any act prohibited by the student Policy Handbook.
3. Promote any particular political or religious interest.
4. Promote, favor or oppose the candidacy or candidate for election, party or ballot measure.
5. Promote the use or sale of materials or services that are illegal, or inconsistent with school objectives, including but not limited to advertisements for tobacco, intoxicants, and movies or products unsuitable for children.
6. Promote products that are contrary to the district's wellness practices for staff and students.
7. Solicit funds or services for an organization, with the exception of solicitations authorized by School Committee policy.
8. Would override the school district or school district's identity.

The Superintendent or designee also may consider the educational value of the advertisement, the age or maturity of students in the intended audience, and whether the advertisements support the basic educational mission of the district, directly benefit the students or are of intrinsic value to the students or their parents/guardians. All advertisements must comply with all local ordinances.

Solicitation of sales or use of the name of the school system to promote any product will not be permitted by the Committee.

SOURCE: Worcester School Committee gb #0-181 (2000)

CROSS REF.: JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations

KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools

K. Report of the Superintendent
Administration
(January 5, 2022)

ITEM: ros 3-1.4
S.C. MEETING: 10-3-23

ITEM:

To approve the Superintendent's Strategic Plan/Goals.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 1-5-23** On a refer the item to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.
- 1-31-23** Discussed the Superintendent's plan and goals, goals were approved.
- 2-28-23** Mr. Allen outlined the key groups/stakeholders, set the goal of having a timeline and plan in place by the end of the school year, and introduced the Hanover Research team that will help facilitate the Strategic Plan. The Hanover Research team provided an introduction to themselves, their research abilities, and their methodological approach.
- Chair Clancey motioned to send this portion of the report to the full committee and to hold the item for additional information.
- 4-13-23** The previous portion of the report as a part of the Minutes of the Standing Committee on Governance were reconsidered by Member O'Connell Novick with questions regarding the Strategic Plan Process. Dr. Monárrez provided additional information about the flow of information and approval process. Member O'Connell Novick motioned to amend the minutes to include the additional information and it was approved by voice vote.

BACKUP:

Annex A (19 pages) contains the Strategic Planning Process.
Annex B (6 pages) contains the Strategic Plan Update.

RECOMMENDATION OF MAKER:

To approve.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION:

To approve.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Worcester Public Schools



Worcester Public Schools (Worcester) is currently in the initial stages of the strategic planning process and is committed to providing a comprehensive framework to evaluate its performance and improve student outcomes across all student groups. To support this effort, Worcester has partnered with Hanover Research (Hanover) to develop a series of collaborative projects to engage the Worcester community in the strategic planning process. The following timeline details the upcoming work the district is doing to prepare and hone the new strategic plan with support and input from the community.

STRATEGIC PLANNING DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY SPRING 2023

Worcester and Hanover will gather leadership perceptions to identify key successes and challenges around district priorities and what the district's focus areas should be over the short term and long term.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER



What are stakeholders' top priorities for and perceived success and challenges in Worcester?

KEY STAKEHOLDERS



BOARD MEMBERS



ADMINISTRATORS

INFOGRAPHIC



Communicating Initial Survey Results

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMUNITY SURVEY SPRING 2023

Worcester and Hanover will gather perceptions to identify key successes and challenges around district priorities and what the district's focus areas should be over the short term and long term.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER



What are key successes and challenges around district priorities?

KEY STAKEHOLDERS



STAFF

STUDENTS



FAMILIES



COMMUNITY

WORKSHOP #1



Mission, Vision, Values

STRATEGIC PLANNING BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS SUMMER 2023

Hanover will identify peer and exemplar districts and review their publicly available information on academic outcomes and performance metrics to provide Worcester with points of comparison.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER



How does Worcester's performance on outcome measures compare to peer and exemplar districts?

KEY STAKEHOLDERS



PEER DISTRICTS

CAPSTONE



Overview of Findings Across the First Three Studies

COMMUNITY FACILITATION GROUPS FALL 2023

Worcester and Hanover will gather qualitative stakeholder perceptions to identify key successes and challenges around district priorities and areas of focus for Worcester over the short term and long term.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER



What should be Worcester's focus over the short (1 year) and long (3-5 years) term?

KEY STAKEHOLDERS



FAMILIES



STAFF

WORKSHOP #2



Goal Setting Using Data



STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKBOOK FALL 2023

Hanover will develop tools for Worcester's district leadership as they determine action steps for the Strategic Planning Process and identify how to use the information gathered so far.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER



What are next steps for Worcester regarding Strategic Planning?

DATA SOURCES



BOARD MEMBERS



ADMINISTRATORS

PULSE SURVEY



Gathering Feedback on Strategic Priorities

STRATEGIC PLAN TEMPLATE & BOARD PRESENTATION FALL 2023

Hanover will synthesize findings across all strategic planning studies to develop a thorough Board Presentation and an initial draft of the district's strategic plan.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER



What has Worcester learned through this Strategic Planning work?

DATA SOURCES



KEY FINDINGS FROM PREVIOUS STUDIES

WORKSHOP #3



Outlining Actions and Monitoring Progress

CLIMATE & CULTURE SURVEY WINTER 2023-2024

Worcester and Hanover will gather stakeholder perceptions of the district's current climate and culture, districtwide and within schools, specifically related to Academics, Social, School/Building, and Inclusiveness.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER



What are stakeholders' perceptions of the district's climate?

DATA SOURCES



STAFF



FAMILIES



STUDENTS

INFOGRAPHIC



Communicating Survey Results

STAFF ANALYSIS DATA DASHBOARD WINTER-SPRING 2024

Worcester and Hanover will gather district data and analyze any trends in the recruitment and retention of high-quality and diverse staff. Worcester can use findings to support staff and increase retention.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER



What are the trends around staff recruitment and retention in the district?

DATA SOURCES



STAFF DATA



DISTRICT DATA

INFOGRAPHIC



Communicating Dashboard Results

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Worcester Public Schools



On September 7th, 2023, Hanover Research (Hanover) conducted a Strategic Planning Process Workshop with WPS Strategic Planning Task Force Members. In the workshop, Hanover and Task Force Members created working groups, set norms, and examined the current state of the district priorities and strategic plan. The next workshop will cover the next step in the strategic planning process - creating aims. The following infographic provides a high-level summary of the takeaways and work that was done in the workshop.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Some of the **roles and responsibilities** of task force members include:

- Being a voice of community
- Aligning resources
- Keeping **every** child and stakeholder at center
- Supporting in strategic plan implementation
- Accountability
- Collecting primary data

During the workshop, task force members reflected on the strategic planning process and the previous strategic direction and identified **strengths** and **areas of growth**. In the table below, you will find some of the items identified by the members.

Strengths	Areas of Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually appealing • Attempts to be inclusive • Data included • Diverse input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need precise language • Onboarding new individuals • Practical and accessible • Engage teachers and parents

In the workshop, task force members were separated into **six working groups** to answer questions about a specific priority. The questions and a summary of their answers are in the table below:

WPS Priority	What do we know ?	What do we need to know?	What are our opportunities?
Modernized & Safe Facilities	State of each building in district	Enrollment and demographic trends	Fair Share Amendment
Climate and Culture	Expectations or community standards	Definition of culture vs. climate	Engaging school-based culture and climate teams
Communication & Ongoing Engagement	Communication needs to be streamlined	Preferred method of communication	Use of Hub, Parent Square and other platforms
Wellness & Mental Health	Barriers to access	How do we get students to therapeutic services?	Therapeutic opportunities
Equitable Resources & Educational Programs	Current context on educational programming	How can we gain understanding of engagement in schools?	Learn through school visits
Acquire & Retain Talent	Workforce shortage at all levels is real	What is retention rate compared to like districts?	Need to help paras pass MTEL

Next Steps:

September 26th: Workshop on Creating Aims Based on the Priorities

Annex A

PRIORITY: COMMUNICATION & ON-GOING ENGAGEMENT

What Do We Need to Know?

- A significant percentage of our population does not have access to internet
- We do not know preferred communication methods
- What gaps are created when we are not reaching people?

Opportunities

- Communication: Hub, Parent Square, New Website, Announcement request form and template, Point person for external organizations

Team: Kathy Chen, Kellie Shea, Paul Matthews, Noreen Johnson – Smith, Dan O’Brian, Kimberlee Henry, Ivonne Pérez

PRIORITY: WELLNESS & MENTAL HEALTH

What Do We Need to Know?

- Availability and access
- How do we create environment?
- How do we get them to therapeutic services?
- How do we include parents and youth to take lead in service plan?

Opportunities

- Therapeutic opportunities
- Enrichment opportunities
- Near, Peer Mentor
- Arizona self-sufficiency matrix
- Group work student teams to help normalize

Team: Liz Hamilton, Kate Ota, Annie Arzadoza, Ellen Kelley, Anastasia Garcia, Joseph Corazzini

PRIORITY: MODERNIZED & SAFE FACILITIES (1/2)

What Do We Need to Know?

- Quantitative comparison to other districts
- Enrollment: demographic trends
- Climate predictions for region
- SBA support
- Design trends

PRIORITY: MODERNIZED & SAFE FACILITIES (2/2)

Opportunities

- Build Back Better (inflation reduction act)
- Fair Share Amendment
- Legislative interest
- Grassroots: other advocacy

Team: Vivian Abreu-Hernández, Brian Allen, Will Foley, Jen Carey

PRIORITY: ACQUIRE AND RETAIN TALENT

Team: Eric M., Mary Jo M., Chantel B., James O., Yeu Rue



PRIORITY: EQUITABLE RESOURCES & EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Need

Current context on:

- Schools; buildings
- Educational programming
- Where we have equitable programs/resource allocation?

Other Questions

- How can we gain an understanding parent/family engagement in schools?

Opportunities

- Leveraging community partnerships
- Leverage neighborhood spaces
- Learn through school visits

Team: Kim Davenport, Rev Talley, Marie Morse, Tuyet Tran, John Yormie, Kimberley Salmon

PRIORITY: CULTURE AND CLIMATE (1/2)

What Do We Need to Know?

- What is the current state?
- Definition of culture vs. climate
- Measurement
 - Statistics, outcomes, surveys, narratives, focus groups, interviews

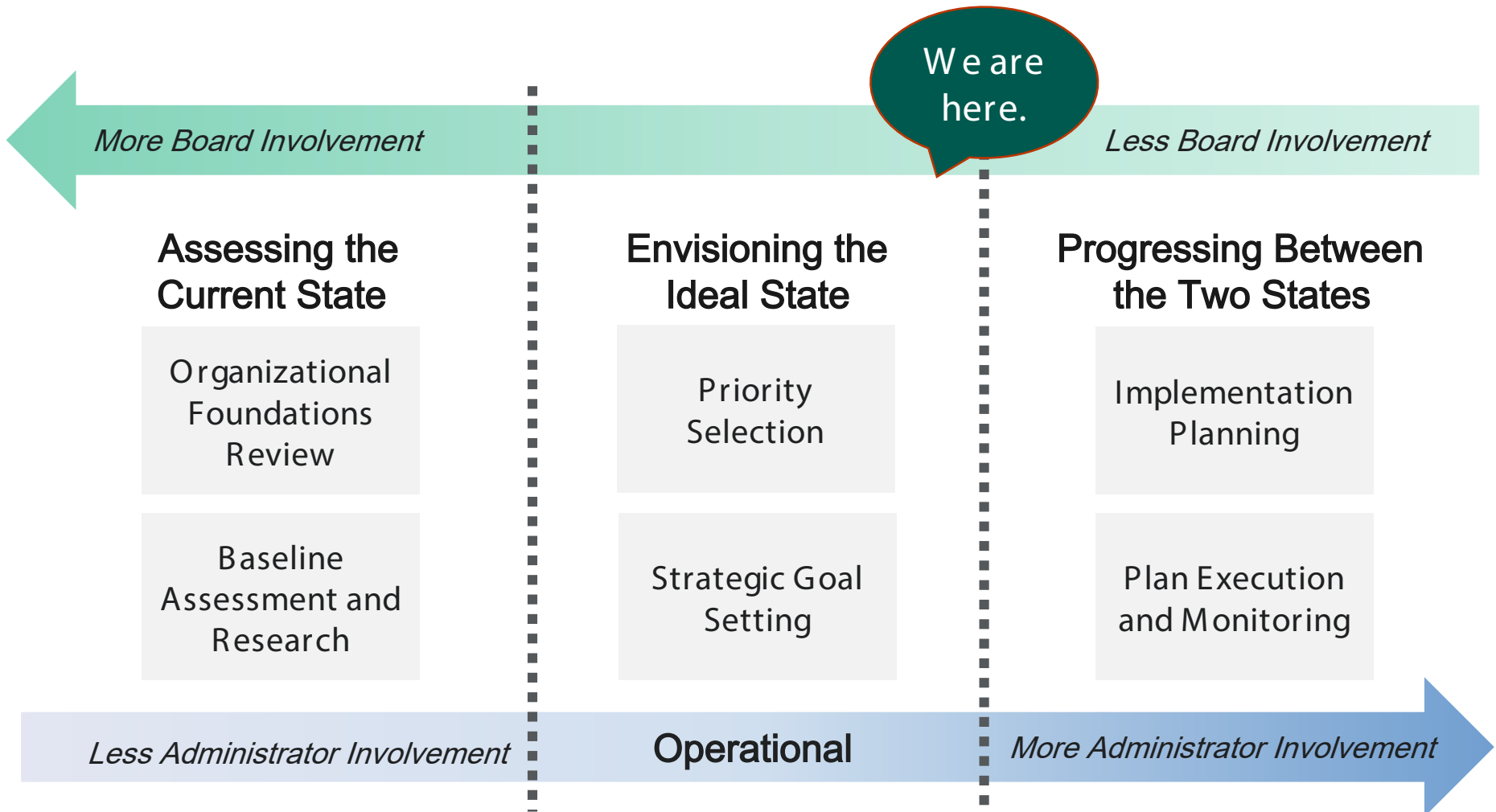
Opportunities

- Hanover Research resources
- Identifying promising practices and building upon them
- Building on higher education and other partnerships
- Engaging school-based culture and climate teams

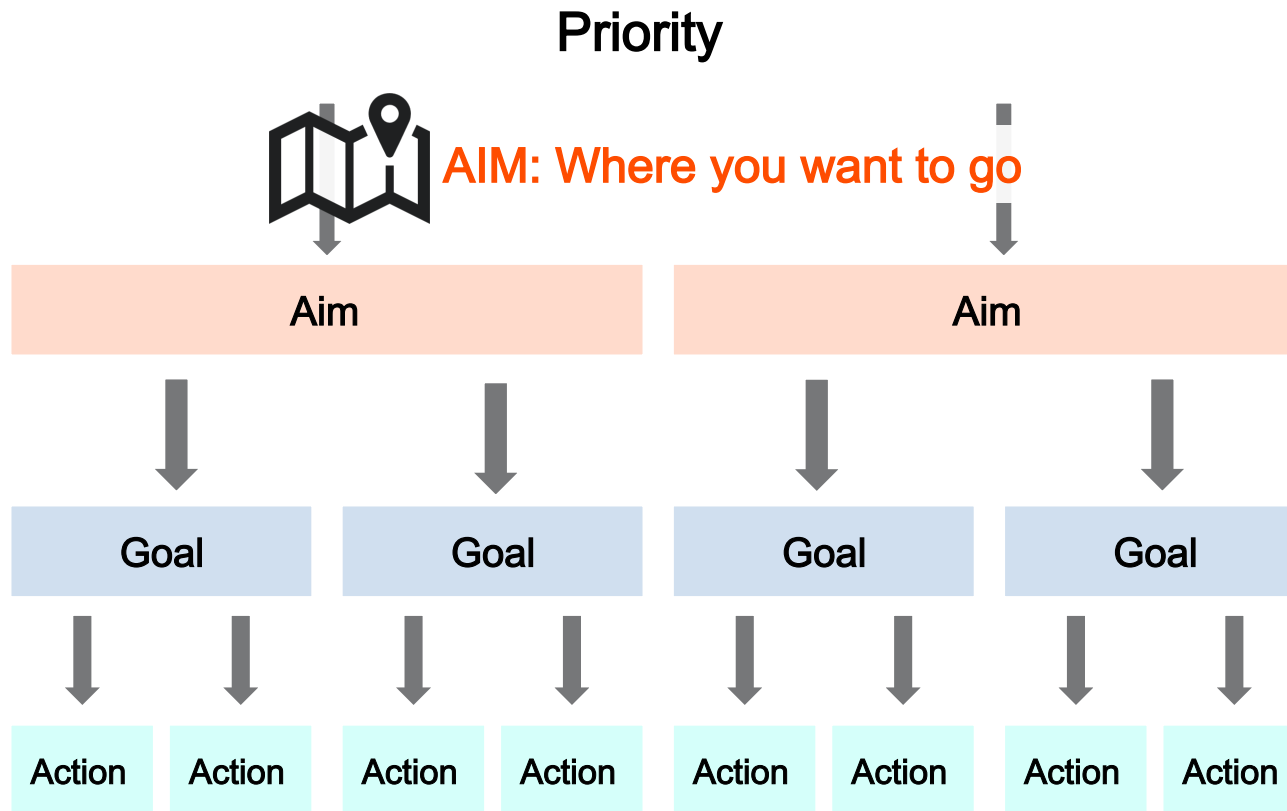
PRIORITY: CULTURE AND CLIMATE (2/2)

Team: Jeanine West, Sue Hunt, Lucas D., Tim S., Kareem T.

UNDERSTANDING STAGES IN THE PROCESS



CONTEXTUALIZING AIMS



DEFINING THE PRIORITY

- Priorities (often framed as Problem Statements) help establish a coherent way to define a challenge to inform root cause analyses, goal setting, identifying measures, and action planning.

- **Who** is affected?
- **What** is the current state, desired state, unmet need?
- **When** is the issue occurring?
- **Where** is the problem occurring?
- **Why** is this an important issue?

Priority
**Equitable Student
Discipline
Outcomes**

- **Who**? Students of Color
- **What**? Are suspended at higher rates than white peers.
- **When**? Historically (2018-2023)
- **Where**? All secondary schools.
- **Why**? Which is at odds with our mission and vision for equity.

AIMS DEFINED

Aims are the **directional changes or forms of improvement** related to specific priorities that a district seeks to achieve via targeted action planning and implementation.

DIFFERENTIATING PRIORITIES AND AIMS

- Priorities are the **areas of policy or practice** that a given school wishes to focus on for change.
- Aims are the **directional changes or forms of improvement** related to specific priorities that a school seeks to achieve through targeted action planning and implementation.

Priority: Staff Diversity

Aim

Aim

Aim

Aim

Aim: Increasing the number of diverse new hires

EXAMPLES OF AIMS FOR A SPECIFIC PRIORITY

Priority: High -Quality Teaching and Learning

Aim

Aim: Enhance teaching and learning by effectively blending technology in the classroom.

Aim: Improve student performance in Math and English/Language Arts, with a focus on decreasing existing gaps.

Aim: Increase resources for safe, nurturing, and engaging learning environments for all students.

NEXT STEPS

Stay informed

Talk to your
colleagues and get
feedback

Keep an eye out for an
invitation to
contribute to review
our vision and mission

Reach out with any
questions

The following represents a DRAFT development of priorities, priority statements, aims, and goals. This is based on the work by 24 community representatives at the September 7 and 26, 2023 sessions, along with 42 district staff on September 27, 2023. These priority statements, aims, and goals are a snapshot of the work to date to solicit initial feedback from the School Committee.

Throughout October, the Administration and Steering Committee will further refine these priority statements, aims, and goals and develop action steps and key performance indicators for measurement.



PRIORITY: Equitable Resources & Educational Programs

Priority Statement: Our commitment to equity drives us to develop a systemic approach and deliver high-quality instruction that equips all students with essential skills, opening doors to expanded opportunities for engagement and learning from Pre-K to Grade 12.

Starting at the Pre-K level, we must create personalized pathways and plans to empower every student to make authentic educational and extracurricular choices aligned with their strengths and interests.

Aim 1: Cultivate Consistent, High-Quality Instruction for Lifelong Preparedness (PreK-12)

- Enhance PreK readiness programs to ensure student preparedness.
- Implement evidence-based instructional practices with a focus on the science of reading instruction.
- Strengthen system-wide instruction by unifying it under the WPS instructional framework and a shared vision of learners.
- Establish a rigorous, aligned PreK to 12 curriculum.
- Enhance support for students in need, particularly those in the ML (Multilingual) learner programs.
- Improve student data systems and screening processes.

Goal 1: Leaders and Teachers are confident in their understanding and ability to put the instructional framework into practice.

Goal 2: Classroom practice visibly shows elements of the district instructional framework - Questions to consider: What is the least amount of elements that should be seen to qualify as meeting the goal? Is there/are there elements that should be observed consistently across all subjects/grades and parts of a lesson?

Goal 3: Students will meet grade-level expectations in reading and math.

Aim 2: Forge Pathways for College, Career, and Readiness (CCR) for All (PreK-12)
Develop a comprehensive Voluntary Learning (VoL) descriptor.

Goal 1: Promote innovative teaching practices and pathways Pre-K-12+.

Goal 2: Create, implement, and provide access to college-level courses and CCR exposure from PK-12.

Aim 3: Create Future-Ready Learning Environments and Equitable Opportunities

By embracing these aims, we strive to collaboratively prepare every student for their journey ahead, cultivating lifelong learners who possess the skills, strengths, and interests to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

Goal 1: Establish and implement equitable structures and practices to eliminate barriers hindering student success.

Goal 2: Design and execute a vertically aligned learning journey with authentic performance assessments supporting a future-ready learning experience that provides equitable access and participation for all students.



PRIORITY: Acquire & Retain Talent

Priority Statement: WPS is committed to valuing, appreciating, and compensating our staff in order to meet our mission and vision to create and ensure a culture of value, opportunities for growth, and inclusiveness for all.

Aim 1: Increase staff to represent our students (mirrors and windows)

Goal 1: Increase staff to represent our students - Close the gap by 10%

Aim 2: Increase retention of staff

Goal 2: Increase retention of staff – From 80% to 85% retention

Aim 3: Increase opportunities to develop and grow our own

Goal 3: Increase opportunities to develop and grow our own



PRIORITY: Climate & Culture

Priority Statement: Worcester Public Schools is committed to providing and sustaining a climate and culture in which all members of our school communities grow and thrive (students, faculty, staff and families), in environments where they feel valued, safe, and they belong.

Aim 1: Increase all school community members' feeling valued safe, and sense of belonging across all schools and grade levels.

Goals

Goal 1: Increase percentage of students self-reporting a positive sense of belonging. (on annual C&C Survey)

Goal 2: Increase percentage of self-reported positive perceptions of school safety (annual on C&C Survey)

Goal 3: Increase student attendance rates; decrease chronic absenteeism rates -- disaggregated

Goal 4: Decrease number of incidents of violence, controlled substance use/possession, and weapons on campus

Goal 5: Decrease incidents of bullying (in-person and online)

Aim 2: Enhance the use of culturally responsive pedagogy to connect learning to students' backgrounds, experiences and interests.

Goals

Goal 1: Increase percentage of students self-reporting that they see their backgrounds and cultures represented in their learning and school community (annual C&C survey)

Goal 2: Reduce the percentage gap of students' and teachers' perceptions of cultural awareness so they are more aligned with one another (annual C&C survey)

Goal 3: Reduce access and performance gaps in academic outcome indicators across student groups... (e.g., grades, AP participation, MCAS)

Aim 3: Expand use of restorative practices to create a more equitable environment for all students.

Goals

Goal 1: Increase percentage of students self-reporting a positive sense of belonging

Goal 2: Increase percentage of self-reported positive perceptions of school safety

Goal 3: Reduce number of out-of-school suspensions

Goal 4: Reduce number of out-of-classroom referrals

Goal 5: Reduce disproportionate rates of out-of-school student suspension and out-of-classroom student referrals (for student groups whose rates are higher than average)



PRIORITY: Health & Wellness

Priority Statement: WPS commits to prioritizing equitable initiatives and improvements that focus on the health and wellness of staff, students, and caregivers within our educational community,

- **Prevention:** Create a supportive and healthy environment that increases satisfaction and productivity, resulting in employee well-being on behalf of student success.
- **Access and Equity:** Expand authentic partnerships with caregivers and community partners in which collaborative initiatives ensure scholars' academic success and social-emotional and physical well-being.
- **Prevention:** Adjust systems and practices to develop a comprehensive wellness model to include evidence-based practices in service of the diverse needs of WPS scholars. PBIS, RJ, Bullying prevention, etc.
- **Access and Equity:** Designate spaces that promote health and wellness through community partnerships, including revitalizing community schools.

Aim 1: Increase access to staff, student, and caregiver access in wellness opportunities by decreasing systematic and institutional barriers.

Goal 1: Create a supportive and healthy environment that increases satisfaction and productivity, resulting in employee well-being and student success.

Goal 2: Increase inclusive partnerships with caregivers and community partners in which authentic engagement ensures scholars' social-emotional, and physical well-being.

Aim 2: Increase preventative wellness strategies to meet the diverse needs of the community

Goal 1: Develop an evidence-based comprehensive wellness model to meet the diverse needs of the community.

Goal 2: Designate spaces that promote health and wellness through community partnerships including the revitalization of community schools.



PRIORITY: Modernized & Safe Facilities

Priority Statement: Recognizing the impact the physical condition of a school building has on student and staff performance and health, we are committed to ensuring that each of our school facilities has the infrastructure to support equitable access to a 21st-century teaching and learning environment.

Aim 1: Advocate for increased funding for building safety and maintenance through local, state, and federal sources.

Goal 1: Increase spending on operations and maintenance to the foundation budget level as supported by state and local funding.

Goal 2: Explore mechanisms through state, municipal, and federal authorities for increased funding for repair and renovation projects.

Aim 2: Identify and prioritize building renovation and replacement projects aimed at supporting future-ready opportunities for students.

Goal 1: Update the district facilities master plan.

Goal 2: Develop a framework of a common vision of what future-ready schools look like.

Goal 3 : Develop a 5-year capital plan using cost analysis of current building operations to prioritize projects.

Aim 3: Increase timeliness of response to urgent building repair and maintenance.

Goal 1: Initiate an action plan for all urgent building repair and maintenance requests within 72 hours.

Goal 2: Implement and train key stakeholders in the full use of a new maintenance work order management system.

Goal 3: Implement and track the completion of prioritized recommendations from the Guidepost school safety audit.

Aim 4: Expand future-ready opportunities for students through alignment and partnership³ with community-based learning resources and spaces.

Goal 1: Develop a community-wide inventory of higher education, industry, and cultural partners and the associated spaces within their organizations for potential learning spaces.

Goal 2: Use the community-wide inventory to develop potential partnerships with WPS programs and schools.



PRIORITY: Family and Community Engagement

Priority Statement: The Worcester Public Schools is committed to authentic engagement between families, schools, and the community through effective, consistent, inclusive two-way communication and collaborative strategies that create supportive environments.

Aim 1: Enhance the effectiveness of inclusive two-way communication between schools and families of all languages and abilities.

Goal: Empower Caregivers to be collaborators, decision-makers, and equal partners in their scholar's education.

Aim 2: Develop the capacity of schools to build and share engagement strategies that are integrated, inclusive, and sustainable for all school communities.

Goal: Create welcoming environments that are inclusive to all families. This includes the physical environment, the interactions with staff, and a student or caregiver's sense of belonging and ownership in their school.

Aim 3: Equip teachers/staff, parents/caregivers, and community partners with tools to build and strengthen trusting relationships with one another through open conversations, involvement in school initiatives, and increased student motivation.

Goal: Strengthen WPS partnerships with families and community organizations to meet students' unique needs and aspirations and improve academic outcomes.