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The following items will be discussed at a virtual meeting of the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports to be held on Tuesday, January 18 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 410 in the Durkin Administration Building:

gb #0-362.1 - Administration/Ms. McCullough/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey (November 24, 2020)

Response of the Administration to the request to provide a report on the tracking of Special Education services that are currently being provided remotely to students.

gb #1-42 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo (January 25, 2021)

Request administration propose for Committee deliberation shifts in practice, curriculum, process, and culture that have taken place during remote learning for possible retention for in-person learning.

gb #1-53 - Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough/Ms. Novick (February 12, 2021)

Request that the Administration collaborate with community agencies, retired teachers and other groups, to study the feasibility of establishing a summer learning program to assist K-8 students.

gb #1-312 - Ms. McCullough/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (November 9, 2021)

Request that the Administration explore utilizing virtual tutoring services for the students of the WPS.

gb #1-318 - Mr. Monfredo (November 7, 2021)

Request that the Administration provide an update on the teaching of cursive writing in the primary grades and whether there are plans to reinforce cursive writing in the intermediate grades.

Committee Members

Molly McCullough, Chair
Susan Mailman, Vice-Chair
Jermoh Kamara

Administrative
Representative
Susan O'Neil, Ph.D.

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

AGENDA #1

The Standing Committee on TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS will hold a meeting:

on: January 18, 2022
at: 4:30 p.m.
virtually in: Room 410, Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

qb #9-327 -Administration (October 7, 2019)

To consider answers to the fourteen Action Steps made by Mayor Petty and approved by the School Committee:

1. School Department to create clear and transparent process to provide the necessary, student-sensitive data needed to do a thorough review of the suspension rates in our Worcester Public Schools. This should include the last 7 years of data.
2. Worcester State University to re-engage with our school department regarding the 2014 report, "Suspension in Worcester: A Continuing Conversation.
3. Incorporate comprehensive training practices focused on understanding cultural differences, unconscious bias, understanding racial disparities, and trauma informed care for all staff. Included in this training is MGL c222. For all staff including School Committee.
4. Review of the state's school discipline statute, MGL c222, to ensure the city is in complete compliance with the law and make any necessary changes to our policies and procedures.
5. Continue to maintain an English Language Learner Parent Advisory Council that includes Community Based Organizations and Community Partners in compliance with law, which will work with both the Director of English Language Learners and the Chief Diversify Officer.
6. Review the practice of out of school suspension for students in K-2 grade and work with community partners and internal staff to create an in-school program to provide counselling and assessment services for these students, contingent on proper funding and in-kind services.

gb #9-327 (Continued)

7. Create an Affirmative Action Advisory Committee that would work with the Human Resource Department and the Chief Diversity Officer. Provide a semiannual report to the School Committee, with the Human Resources Department and the Chief Diversity Officer, as to progress.
8. Create a Superintendents Latino Advisory Committee
9. Quarterly/biannual reports on the progress of the Strategic Plan
10. Review and maintain the existing suspension hearing and appeal practices so that the same WPS person is not allowed to do both hearings and appeals.
11. Hiring a Chief Diversity Officer who shall report to the Superintendent and who shall work collaboratively with the Department of Human Resources of the Worcester Public Schools.
12. Review and assist a comprehensive plan with college presidents to do focused recruitment and retention plans to hire diverse teachers and support staff.
13. Provide a semi-annual report on the work of the English Language Learner Department and programs to the School Committee on compliance with best practices and Federal DOE guidelines.
14. Work with the School Committee to consider and implement recommendations of the Mayors Commission where appropriate. Work with the Commission to benchmark projects.

gb #9-349 - Miss McCullough/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo (October 14, 2019)

Request that the Administration invite educators who currently teach or train NoticeAbility Curriculum and consider implementing it for students with dyslexia.

gb #9-384 - Mr. Comparetto/Mr. Foley (November 13, 2019)

Request that the Superintendent present an annual report on the status of education for Latino students.

gb #9-386 - Mr. Comparetto/Mr. Foley (November 13, 2019)

Request that the Administration provide an update on current restorative justice practices.

gb #9-388 - Mr. Comparetto (November 13, 2019)

Request an "equity audit" of the Worcester Public Schools in accordance to best practices.

c&p #0-2 -Clerk (January 2, 2020)

To consider a communication from Gordon T. Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, relative to a uniform districtwide policy on age appropriate touching.

c&p #0-13 -Clerk (August 19, 2020)

To consider a communication from the Racism Free Worcester Public School Group regarding nine areas of concerns.

gb #0-101 - Mr. Monfredo (March 5, 2020)

Request that the Administration work with the City Administration to see if there is a building available for the expansion of a full-day pre-school program.

gb #0-125.1 - Administration/Mr. Foley (April 8, 2020)

Response of the Administration to the request to present comprehensive data showing the test scores for all student subgroups since these initiatives started. This data should show changes over the years, with a particular emphasis upon the WPS student subgroups targeted through SOA funding (Hispanic students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities).

gb #0-313 - Ms. McCullough/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (September 23, 2020)

To consider the items filed by the City Council and request WPS consider Councilor Sean Rose's order to offer civil service exam study groups and to research a mechanism for students to acquire school credit for participation in these cohorts.

gb #0-362.1 - Administration/Ms. McCullough/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey (November 24, 2020)

Response of the Administration to the request to provide a report on the tracking of Special Education services that are currently being provided remotely to students.

gb #1-42 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo (January 25, 2021)

Request administration propose for Committee deliberation shifts in practice, curriculum, process, and culture that have taken place during remote learning for possible retention for in-person learning.

gb #1-53 - Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough/Ms. Novick (February 12, 2021)

Request that the Administration collaborate with community agencies, retired teachers and other groups, to study the feasibility of establishing a summer learning program to assist K-8 students.

gb #1-104 -Ms. McCullough/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (March 25, 2021)

To explore the feasibility of including recess for students in grades seven and eight.

gb #1-312 - Ms. McCullough/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (November 9, 2021)

Request that the Administration explore utilizing virtual tutoring services for the students of the WPS.

gb #1-318 - Mr. Monfredo (November 7, 2021)

Request that the Administration provide an update on the teaching of cursive writing in the primary grades and whether there are plans to reinforce cursive writing in the intermediate grades.

gb #1-323 - Ms. McCullough/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (November 19, 2021)

Request that the Administration provide an update on the use of Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Program in light of recent data.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

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

STANDING COMMITTEE: **TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, January 18, 2022

ITEM: Administration/Ms. McCullough/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey
(November 24, 2020)

Response of the Administration to the request to provide a report on the tracking of Special Education services that are currently being provided remotely to students.

PRIOR ACTION

11-19-20 - (Considered with gb #0-363.)

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

12-3-20 - (Considered with gb #0-363.1)

On a roll call of 7-0, the items were referred to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.

BACKUP:

Annex A (1 page) contains a copy of the Administration's response to the item.

Home Hospital students who are receiving educational services remotely:

- Total number of Home Hospital students who are receiving remote learning: 12 students
- Contractual Tutorial Services through Learnwell provides in-person hospitalized tutorial services through medical documentation requests only.
- District does have an option in the contract to provide remote services upon approval and based on the medical needs of students.
- Services include all content subject courses as well as IEP services based on the individual needs of students with disabilities.

Proportionate Share Funds allow the district to provide services to Non-Public and Homeschooled SWD:

- Total number of Non-Public students: 43 IEPs, 28 Service Plans
- Total number of Homeschooled students: 28 IEPs, 11 Service Plans
- Total number of students receiving remote learning: 40 students
- Breakdown of total number of students by Elementary/Middle/High School
 - Elementary: Non-public (10) and Home (7)
 - Middle: Non-public (12) and Home (1)
 - High School: Non-public (6) and Home (4)
- Total number of students based on type of Services ie., (LD, ELA, MATH, SLP) etc.
 - ELA/ROG/ Academic Support: 21
 - MATH: 1
 - MATH and ELA: 11

SLP: 18

Tracking Process:

Throughout remote learning, students with disabilities are monitored by their service provider to ensure IEP goals and objectives are being met. Additionally, progress monitoring quarterly reports are completed along with ongoing check-in meetings with parents/guardians are held to ensure student engagement and to answer any questions or concerns regarding their child performance.

Home and Hospital staff maintain a log of student performance and work completion. The completion of student work is returned to the student's assigned school which will review and provide grades based on work completion and student's performance.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, January 18, 2022

ITEM: Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo
(January 25, 2021)

Request administration propose for Committee deliberation shifts in practice, curriculum, process, and culture that have taken place during remote learning for possible retention for in-person learning.

PRIOR ACTION:

2-4-21 - On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.

BACKUP:

Annex A (2 pages) contains a copy of the Administration response to the item.

There have been many shifts, changes, and a myriad of learning opportunities and growth that were realized during remote learning in the 20-21 school year for both students and staff. In fact, it has been suggested that while this was less than ideal there was a silver lining, every student was provided a device (eliminated the digital divide), all teachers/staff were provided MacBooks and were fully trained and immersed in best practices, tools, and platforms during virtual learning. Ultimately, there was an explosion of innovation that occurred, and classroom instruction, ways students collaborate and learn has been changed forever. We believe in one year we moved faster and more efficiently toward technology-enhanced and advanced learning than ever before and we will never look back. Our shifts in thinking have been many but some highlighted by schools and staff include the following:

Culture - WPS adopted a culture of innovation through a “forced innovation” process that was robust, intentional, and led to a dramatic increase in technology skills across all staff and students. Teachers, staff, and principals shared that there were many lessons learned and will continue to use tech-enhanced practices during in-person learning. Some ways technology continue to support student learning are:

- Increased confidence and self-efficacy in technology abilities and skills of administrators, teachers and students
- Mindset shift around the importance of technology in education and the need for continuous learning
- Understanding of the benefits technology can provide to increase family/student communication (ie. Remind, Google Voice, texting, virtual parent/teacher meetings, etc...)
- The use of SEL digital check-ins (surveys) to identify student needs
- Embracing techquity, need for students to maintain ubiquitous access
- Increase in cross-school collaboration with synchronous platforms
- Increase in teacher collaboration and culture of co-learning

Curriculum & Assessment- Educators were trained to leverage multiple new platforms and tools to deliver curriculum (standards-aligned lessons, assessments, and other academic content) in a never before attempted manner.

- Multiple curriculum apps and platforms were purchased that teachers have continued to use that have enhanced and complemented the core curriculum and assessments.
- Digital curriculum and assessments provide students with multiple means of engagement, representation, action, and expression.
- District curated digital lessons, resources, and materials to complement curriculum for each grade level
- Digital content provides accessibility features
- Digital apps also provide usage data and progress measurement

Pedagogy & Instruction - Educators became designers and innovators. There was scarce research around teaching during a pandemic, therefore educators were developing and prototyping instructional practices, iterating with their students, and sharing with each other. Practices emerged that were then shared across classrooms, schools, and throughout the district. Emerging practices that have sustained into in-person instruction are:

- Use of learning management systems to provide a structure and system for communication of teacher to student, student to student, and student to content
- Use of screencasting to explain or reinforce content and curriculum that allow students to watch and rewatch
- Gamification and engagement practices
- Digital Notebooks
- Digital Assessments
- Students as creators
- Blended learning practices such as station rotations, playlists/choice boards...

STANDING COMMITTEE: **TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, January 18, 2022

ITEM: Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough/Ms. Novick
(February 12, 2021)

Request that the Administration collaborate with community agencies, retired teachers and other groups, to study the feasibility of establishing a summer learning program to assist K-8 students.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 2-25-21 - Mr. Monfredo requested that the Administration consider formulation of a committee by early April.
On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.
- 3-30-21 - **STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**
Dr. O'Neil stated that new grant opportunities were announced by the State this week and plans for the 2022 summer programs have begun.
Mr. Monfredo made the following motion:
Request that the Administration provide an update in May regarding summer program possibilities and pandemic planning.
On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.
- 4-8-21 - **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING** – The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.

BACKUP:

Summer learning for 2022 is in development. We plan to change our format and shift from our traditional summer school to more engaging camp experiences for students. Ideas we are considering and pursuing include drama camp, sports camp, art camp, poetry and writing, cheerleading, math camp, computers and coding, mindfulness, STEM camp, etc. We will be working with a variety of stakeholders to plan, develop and implement our summer learning offerings, including programs for students with disabilities and multilingual learners. In addition, we plan to continue offering opportunities for high school students to recover credits needed for graduation.

We are looking to collaborate with educators, artists, specific community groups, and potentially high school students to work within our summer programming. We are considering possibly readjusting the summer school schedule into one or two-week sessions which will allow for more student/family choice in activities and opportunities to participate in many. Additionally, we are considering providing academic enrichment through a variety of methods including virtual tutoring and specialized accelerated programs, such as tutoring hubs that provide specialized in-person instruction.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, January 18, 2022

ITEM: Ms. McCullough (November 9, 2021)

Request that the Administration explore utilizing virtual tutoring services for the students of the WPS.

PRIOR ACTION:

11-18-21 - Ms. McCullough requested that the Administration provide a report at a meeting of the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.

It was moved and voice voted to refer the item to the Standing Committee of Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.

BACKUP:

Elementary

We are presently working with two virtual tutoring programs, IGNITE, and Catapult Learning

Quinsigamond Elementary School is working with Ignite Tutoring. Students receive one-to-one tutoring in literacy with a focus on foundation reading skills. This program is being funded by the One8 Foundation.

City View, Norrback, and Flagg Street will begin working with Catapult Learning Tutoring in February. This program runs in 12-week blocks, students attend three sessions a week for forty minutes. Students in grades k-3 will be tutored virtually during after-school program hours and/or evenings at home. There are four students to one tutor in each program. This program is funded through DESE with GEER funds.

Secondary

Virtual tutoring for secondary students is still under discussion. We are exploring platforms that are in use in other Massachusetts urban districts locally and nationally.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, January 18, 2022

ITEM: Mr. Monfredo (November 7, 2021)

Request that the Administration provide an update on the teaching of cursive writing in the primary grades and whether there are plans to reinforce cursive writing in the intermediate grades.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 12-2-21 - Mr. Monfredo made the following motion:
Request that the Administration provide a report on how cursive writing is being taught in the intermediate grades.
Ms. McCullough requested that the motion be amended by referring the item to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.
On a roll call of 7-0, the item as amended was referred to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.

BACKUP:

The MA ELA Framework standard in grades 3-6 states the following: L.2a. Write legibly and fluently by hand, using either printing or cursive handwriting. In October 2019, the District recommended teaching cursive writing in grade 3 as embedded in the current core literacy program lessons in phonics and writing. In August 2019, the recommendation of the District, based on data and multiple initiatives in literacy instruction was:

1. Continue to follow the state standards with regard to cursive writing and keyboarding.
2. Continue to expand the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD), writing in response to reading, to improve students' reading comprehension skills. (Noted grades 3 through 6 were beginning year 2 of the initiative and grade 7 through 10 year 1 at the time.)
3. Review the teaching of cursive writing, keyboarding and related research in the early literacy committee work over the next two years to identify the best course of study and mastery for students in the domain of written communication and the related rationale. Historically, instruction in cursive writing would begin mid-year in grade 2.

The current core curriculum includes explicit instruction in cursive writing in grades 3 and 4 as well as teacher and student resources for continued review and support of cursive letter formations in grades 5 and 6. The March 2020 closing of schools, the remote learning in school year 2020-2021, and the ongoing pandemic challenges impacted the continuity of the teaching of cursive writing in grade 3 through the core instructional lessons.