

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

The School Committee held an in-person meeting with a virtual option*:

on: **Thursday, February 26, 2026**
At: 5:00 p.m., Executive Session; 5:30 p.m. Open Session
Esther Howland Chamber, Worcester City Hall

MINUTES

A. General Business Items taken in Executive Session

Executive Session pursuant to Mass. G.L. c. 30A, Section 21(a), Purpose 7 to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law, including the Massachusetts Public Records Law, Mass. G.L. c. 66, Section 10, and the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, Mass. G.L. c. 30A, Sections 22(f) and (g), relating to review of executive session minutes for meetings that occurred between 2023 and 2026.

To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares – Worker Compensation Settlement - Cafeteria Worker.

To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares – Worker Compensation Settlement - Teacher.

B. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m.

C. Pledge of Allegiance/National Anthem: The Burncoat Middle School Chorus performed the National Anthem.

D. Roll Call: There were present at the call to roll: Member Alvarez, Member Biancheria, Member Binienda, Member Guardiola, Member Johnson, Member Mailman, Vice Chair McCullough, Member Roy, and Mayor Petty. Mayor Petty left the meeting at 6:10 p.m. and returned at 6:59 p.m.

M. Student Advisory Committee Items

E. Consent Agenda

- i. Approval of Minutes
Approval of the Minutes of the [February 3, 2026](#) Standing Committee meeting For Teaching, Learning, and Student Success

Approval of Minutes of the [February 5, 2026](#) School Committee Meeting.

Approval of Minutes of the [February 9, 2026](#) Standing Committee meeting for Operations and Governance.

ii. Approval of Donations

To consider approval of a donation from Operation Warm of 288 new winter coats to benefit Belmont Street Community School.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$350 from T. Camarra Jr & Son Truck & Equipment to benefit the South High Diesel program.

To consider approval of a donation from the Commonwealth Shakespeare Company's School SAVOR program of 200 performance tickets for 5/26/26, along with transportation costs to be paid directly to AA Transportation by the CSC, for the benefit of North High School.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$1203 from Worcester Art Magnet parents from Krispy Kreme fundraiser to benefit Worcester Art Magnet's special chorus.

To consider approval of a donation from Amazon Sort Center in Northborough of 150 book bags for First Readers to benefit the Worcester Public School District to support literacy programs and reading promotion activities.

To consider approval of a donation from Todd & Caroline Jackson in the amount of \$50 to benefit Nelson Place School.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$1,558 from Gates Lane PTO to benefit Gates Lane School.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$500 from Special Olympics Massachusetts Inc to benefit Gates Lane Elementary School.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$68.20 from Polar beverages to benefit Gates Lane Elementary School.

To consider a donation in the amount of \$500 from Global Partners "Coffee for Educators" charitable initiative to benefit South High School.

To consider approval of a donation from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts of 14 - Bausch & Lomb KHS 400327 monocular 100x magnification, 14 - Bausch & Lomb ASZ30L3 binocular dissecting 30x magnification, 6 - Olympus CH-2 binocular 1000x magnification with oil immersion to benefit Worcester Public School's Secondary Science Program.

iii. Notification of Personnel Records

a. [New Hire Non-Instructional Staff](#)

b. [Resignations/Retirements](#)

iv. [Initial filing of Recognition](#)

[McCullough](#)

(February 26, 2026)

To recognize Andrea Cook for being named Central Mass Music Educators Association Middle School [Educator of the Year](#).

[McCullough](#)

(February 26, 2026)

To recognize the Burncoat High School Spirit Team on their National Championship win in the Spirit Program Game Day Live Division at the National School Spirit Championships in Orlando, Florida. This is the teams third time competing, and their first national championship together.

[McCullough](#)

(February 26, 2026)

To recognize the Burncoat Pep Band for coming in 3rd in the National School Band competition.

[McCullough](#)

(February 26, 2026)

To send letters of congratulations to the BMS students who participated in the CDMMEA Jr. Districts and who have been selected to participate in the festival in April.

[McCullough](#)

(February 26, 2026)

To send letters to the [winners](#) of this year's Museum of Worcester Be Our Valentine Contest Winners.

[McCullough](#)

(February 26, 2026)

To send a letter to Burncoat Boys Basketball player Jaiden Johnston for reaching the 1,000 point mark in his high school basketball career.

[McCullough](#)

(February 26, 2026)

To congratulate South High Girls Basketball Coach Diago McClain on reaching 100 career wins. Over the past five years leading the South High girls basketball team, Coach McClain has guided the program to four Inter-High Conference Championships, back-to-back State Championship appearances, and a three-peat as CMAC Conference Champions. The team has also built an extraordinary 49-0 undefeated record at home during this time.

This milestone reflects Coach McClain's exceptional leadership, dedication, and commitment to excellence both on and off the court.

McCullough

(February 26, 2026)

To congratulate the Worcester Tech/North High 4x200 Relay team for winning the MIAA Division 3 State Championship.

v. Notices of Interest to the District or to the Public

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda, yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy, yes; Mayor Petty, yes. By a margin of 9-0, the motion passed unanimously.

F. Item for Reconsideration

gb 6-11 (Mailman)

(February 5, 2026)

Reconsideration filing by Member Biancheria

To unanimously support [legislation filed by Sen Robyn Kennedy S390](#) - to create a commission to study MSBA to look at the funding process and the award process. Support for such a commission is especially important as we work on plans for a new Burncoat High School and explore the possibility of an indoor track facility.

A motion was made to consider approving reconsideration. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, no; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda, yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, no; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy, yes; Mayor Petty, yes. By a margin of 7-2, the motion passed.

A motion was made to support creating a commission to study the MSBA to look at the funding and award process. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, no; Member Binienda, no; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy, no; Mayor Petty, yes. By a margin of 6-3, the motion passed.

A motion was made to support exploring the possibility of an indoor track facility at Burncoat High School. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda, yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy, yes; Mayor Petty, yes. By a margin of 9-0, the motion passed unanimously.

G. Held Items

H. Recognitions

McCullough

(December 4, 2025)

The Burncoat Dance Team was recognized for their MSAA 2025 Fall State

Championship wins with 2nd place in Jazz and 1st place in Hip Hop.

- I. Public Comment**-Any member of the public may address the Committee regarding any item before them for two (2) minutes. Those speaking will state their name, their residence, and the item on which they wish to speak for the record. Those speaking may do so in person or via remote participation. Those wishing to address the Committee in a language other than English are asked to notify the Clerk of the Committee in advance, so the Committee may be provided with an interpreter. Members of the Committee may not respond to the comments of the public at the meeting. [Click to view Policy BEDH-Public Comment](#)

1. Dina Tedeschi, of Worcester, spoke regarding ros 6-4, c&p 5-5 and c& p 5-6, and gb 3-269.
2. Barbara Mudd, of West Boylston, spoke regarding ros 6-4.
3. Heather Stanek, of Worcester, spoke regarding ros 6-4, c&p 5-5 and c& p 5-6.

J. Public Petition

K. Report of the Superintendent

ros 6-4 (Administration)

[Vision to Action...Instructional Framework \(Culturally Responsive Pedagogy\[CRP\] Enhanced\)](#)

Director of Recruitment, Cultivation & Equity, Caleb Encarnacion-Rivera and Supervisors of Teaching and Learning, Timmery Leary and Colleen Santon presented the ROS on CRP which updated the Committee on the CRP implementation, provided an overview of the professional development (PD) and training plan, and reviewed the next steps.

CRP is an adaptive instructional approach that affirms students' identities, cultures, and lived experiences, promoting academic achievement, cultural awareness, and critical consciousness as a core instructional practice.

With CRP, there is diverse representation in classroom materials, lessons connected to students' lived experiences, multiple perspectives embedded in instruction, high expectations and support, asset-based language, flexible collaboration, and family and community connections are reflected in the learning.

The scope of the work was described and the Committee was shown the three domains in which CRP is embedded within WPS. CRP is being integrated into WPS with a "train the trainer" model that includes educator learning, coaching and instructional support and strong leadership. Over 200 leaders and coaches will have been trained in CRP between 2025-2027.

Next steps in CRP implementation include continued professional development, operationalized 3-5 non-negotiable CRP "look-fors," prioritize coaching styles, and use of walkthrough data to monitor implementation.

Member Biancheria asked how the roll out is being presented. Mr. Encarnacion-Rivera

noted that educators have been actively using the hands-on pedagogical support tool WPS has created. By the end of this year there will be a smaller PLC and the work WPS is doing with leaders is evolving. Member Biancheria asked how WPS makes this practice fit different grade levels and cultures of individual schools. Mr. Encarnacion-Rivera said that the beauty of this type of pedagogy is to allow leaders to recognize the uniqueness of each school. This kind of pedagogy celebrates those differences. He also noted that the professional development for this program is data driven.

Member Mailman noted that the report focuses on school-based leadership in regard to CRP, but one of the things that is not included in this report is district and Superintendent leadership and how Superintendent Allen sees this work fitting into the budget. Mr. Allen told the Committee that this practice is being implemented slowly and intentionally to go deep into the coaches academy and really get into the classroom. He mentioned the pilot work that is being done at South and Sullivan, but emphasized the implementation is being deliberate so that this work will be sustainable once it goes district wide.

Member Mailman noted significant community concern regarding the seriousness of WPS commitment to this work. Mr. Allen noted that WPS is committed to CRP.

Member Mailman asked Mr. Encarnacion-Rivera about student involvement. He noted in the pilot work student voice has been championed, with a cohort of students who work with teachers to look at CRP and members have been delighted to work with students on their perspective in their educational journey.

Member Binienda noted that CRP was in process at WPS during her tenure, 10 years ago at South High and the walk-through tool was also in place during her time. She said WPS and CRP should be focused on teaching and learning. Superintendent Allen agreed with Member Binienda that this work is part of teaching and learning.

Member Alvarez expressed her appreciation for the work of the team and their approach to CRP.

A motion was made to accept and file this report. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed unanimously.

L. Reports of the Standing Committees

Teaching Learning and Student Success February 3, 2026-

gb 3-269 (Motion from Member Johnson)

(April 28, 2025)

Response from Administration

Examples from Administration

Member Johnson made a motion to gauge how often Chromebooks are used for learning in school, versus hands-on learning.

Results: Item filed on 2-1 (Alvarez dissent) roll call vote.

The following two (2) items were considered together:

Response from Administration**c & p 5-5 (Doyle)**

(July 10, 2025)

Request that the school committee update district policy to require explicit consent from parents/guardians when a third party service wants to use personal information collected from students to train or otherwise develop artificial intelligence technologies.

c & p 5-6 (Doyle)

(July 10, 2025)

Request the school committee to update district policies to require explicit consent from parents/guardians before a third party service collects any data that could be a biometric identifier, such as audio recordings, photographs, and/or video.

Results: Items filed on 2-1 (Alvarez dissent) roll call vote.

The following two (2) items were considered together:

Proposed Course Additions**Response from Administration to gb 6-10A****gb 6-10 (Administration)**

(January 22, 2026)

To approve the proposed course additions for the 2026-2027 school year.

gb 6-10A (Motion from Member Biancheria)

(January 22, 2026)

Member Biancheria made a motion in regard to the articulation agreement we have with our students and any unions that are inphrased

Results: Courses approved with the exception of Pre AP English I and II (removed at request of Administration) and item filed on 3-0 roll call vote.

Member Johnson asked questions about c&p 5-5 and c&p 5-6. He asked if WPS is using any app or technology that retains biometrics. Drs. Kyriazis and Dr. Andrade said we do not use biometrics to authenticate identity; however, we do use apps that can record student voices. WPS will be looking into this at a higher level and look to ensure higher levels of protection around student data.

WPS has student data privacy agreements with the apps that are currently in use and outline all of the data responsibilities that they are required to follow. Dr. Andrade noted that he and Dr. Kyriazis work as a team, with the help of the Future Ready Technology Committee, to review and vet technology products and ensure there are data agreements in place, as part of the consortium, to safeguard student data.

Member Johnson asked what the plan is if WPS decides to use an opt out in the future. Dr. Kyriazis noted that biometric data will be on the Future Ready Technology Committee agenda for March 13, 2026. The Committee will be reviewing state laws and discussing the next steps.

Member Mailman made a motion to hold both c & p 5-5 and c&p 5-6 in Operations and Governance. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, no; Member Binienda, no; Member Guardiola, no; Member Johnson, no; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, no; Member Roy, no. By a margin of 2-6, the motion to hold both items failed. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

Member Johnson made a motion to receive a report on the amount of time that Chromebooks are actually being used in the elementary classrooms, by teachers or coaches who are actually using Chromebooks in the classroom by May 2026.

Member Johnson made a motion to receive a report from the Future Ready Technology Committee to update the School Committee on their progress. Member Mailman made a friendly amendment to make the report biannual.

A motion was made to approve the items as presented at the February 3, 2026 Teaching, Learning & Student Success meeting and approve the two aforementioned motions from Member Johnson. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda, yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy, yes. By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed unanimously. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

Operations and Governance February 9, 2026

qb 2-92.15 – Clancey/McCullough/Johnson/Kamara/Mailman
(March 8, 2022)

Facilities Report February 2026

Request that the Administration provide quarterly reports regarding building maintenance to include timeframes on when work will begin and be concluded.

Results: The report was approved on a 3-0 roll call vote and the item was held.

c & p 4-13 (Frederick Rushton)
(November 14, 2024)

Response from Administration

To request the School Committee work with the Superintendent in developing a plan to integrate the fastest growing sport in America, pickleball, into after school programming. Pickleball is a lifetime sport that can be played by boys and girls of all athletic abilities. Many surrounding communities already have incorporated pickleball into their school systems and our children deserve the same. As part of the plan, I would request establishing a minimum of two pickleball courts at or next to the four middle schools. Additionally, I request that the Committee and School District prepare for the eventuality that the MIAA will be establishing it as a high school sport, which is being talked about

in the next two years.

Results: This item was filed on a 3-0 roll call vote.

A motion was made to approve the items as presented at the February 8, 2026 Operations and Governance meeting. On a voice vote of 8-0 (Mayor Petty absent) the motion passed.

N. Approval of Grants and other Finance Items

To consider approval of the [Financial Education Innovation Fund Grant](#) in the amount of \$6,900.

To consider approval of the [718 Supporting Arts & Cultural Vitality Teams Grant](#) in the amount of \$10,225.

To consider approval of a prior year payment to Aramsco in the amount of \$198.32.

A motion was made to approve these grants and other finance items. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda, yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy, yes; Mayor Petty, yes. By a margin of 9-0, the motion passed unanimously.

O. General Business

gb 6-8 (Roy)

(January 22, 2026)

Response from Administration

To request a report on what firewalls and precautions are in place to prevent students from connecting to internet sites that are outside the educational uses of chromebooks/ipads.

A motion made to approve and file this item. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

gb 6-15 (McCullough)

(February 26, 2026)

To have administration review game day staffing levels and pay for game day staff.

A motion made to refer this item to administration. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

The following two items were taken together.

gb 6-16 (McCullough)

(February 26, 2026)

That the Worcester School Committee hereby recognizes and celebrates Black History Month, honoring the history, achievements, resilience, and lasting contributions of Black Americans and members of the Worcester community, and reaffirms its commitment to equity, inclusion, and culturally responsive education while continuing to foster school environments where every student feels valued, represented, and

supported.

gb 6-17 (McCullough)

(February 26, 2026)

To recognize March as Women's History Month, the Worcester School Committee honors the achievements, leadership, and lasting contributions of women throughout our nation's history and within our Worcester community. Established through school-based celebrations and later designated by Congress as a month-long observance, this recognition encourages reflection, learning, and equity in our schools.

A motion made to approve and file these items. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

gb 6-18 (McCullough)

(February 26, 2026)

To explore funding options to maintain and expand the Bryt program.

A motion made to refer this item to Finance. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

gb 6-19 (Mailman)

(February 26, 2026)

To consider amending [rule 13](#) of the School Committee rules to include "*At no time will the school committee delay the start of the public meeting beyond 15 minutes of the published start time.*"

Member Mailman spoke to the item, noting that she feels that, when Executive Session runs long it is disrespectful to the public to keep them waiting.

Member Johnson assured the public that, in his term of Vice Chair, that there was never any intention to waste the public's time and he did not view this as a significant issue. The Vice Chair has always worked with the Clerk, Superintendent, and Counsel to take the timing of Executive Session into account. He reiterated that he does not believe it is an issue.

Member Guardiola echoed Member Johnson's sentiments and noted he respects the public's desire to make public comments. He also noted that executive session items are taken seriously, while paying counsel, and putting a definitive end time on Executive Session is too restrictive.

Member Biancheria said that to insinuate that the Committee does not respect the public or their time is disrespectful and insulting. She noted that the issues that we speak about in Executive Session deserve time and consideration as well.

Member Mailman noted that she believes we should return to Executive Session after the open session.

A motion was made to file this item. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, no; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda, yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, no; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy, yes; Mayor Petty, yes. By a margin of 7-2, the motion passed.

gb 6-20 (Administration)
(February 26, 2026)

Proposed Revisions to COPPA

To update the COPPA(Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) policy and make updates to the handbook as necessary.

A motion was made to refer this item to Operations and Governance. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

gb 6-21 (Clerk)
(February 26, 2026)

Policy EFBA

Policy Updates: BHE, ECAB, EFBA, GBEDC, IKF, IKFE, JJE, KBE, KBG, KI

To request approval of updates to these MASC policies in order to update Worcester School Committee policy manual.

A motion was made to refer this item to Operations and Governance. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

gb 6-22 (McCullough)
(February 26, 2026)

To get an update on the implementation of girls flag football at WPS.

A motion was made to refer this item to TLSS. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

gb 6-23 (Mailman)
(February 26, 2026)

To get an update on the current structure at Claremont/Woodland St and any proposed changes.

A motion was made to refer this item to Administration. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

gb 6-24 (Mailman)
(February 26, 2026)

To provide report showing line item improvements for Worcester Technical High School from pre-SOA (Student Opportunity Act) til the end of SOA, showing how we ended up closing the gap between WTHS (Worcester Technical High School) and the regional technical schools.

A motion was made to refer this item to Administration. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

gb 6-25 (Johnson)

(February 26, 2026)

To provide an update on the new electric buses for the district.

Mr. Allen provided an update. We have received 20 electric busses via grant, that included money for charging stations. These busses are extremely quiet and drivers look forward to driving these new additions. The first 20 is a pilot program and WPS will see where the fleet will go from there. Use of the electric busses are slated to start during the week of March 2, 2026.

A motion was made to file this item. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

gb 6-26 (Johnson)

(February 26, 2026)

To look at changing the distance for bus transportation from 2 miles to 1.5 miles. In attempt to address traffic at pick up and drop off at schools moving forward, and with the new school district lines.

Mr. Allen noted that WPS is actively looking at reducing the walk radius for next school year but he is happy to refer this item to Operations and Governance for further discussion.

A motion was made to refer this item to Operations and Governance. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

gb 6-27 (Biancheria)

(February 26, 2026)

To request that the clerk work with the state delegation to schedule a legislative breakfast.

A motion was made to approve and file this item. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed.

P. Announcements

Meeting Dates:

-March 5, 2206, School Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m., City Hall

Q. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristi Turgeon, Clerk of the School Committee