

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, January 22, 2026**

At: 5:30 p.m. Open Session

Esther Howland Chamber, Worcester City Hall or virtually with link below

MINUTES

A. General Business Items taken in Executive Session

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares – Successor Contract Negotiations (Global) – Educational Association of Worcester, Units A/B; Educational Association of Worcester, Paraeducators Unit; Educational Association of Worcester, Aides to the Physically Handicapped, Monitors and Drivers Unit; Educational Association of Worcester, Therapy Assistants Unit; Educational Association of Worcester, Parent Liaisons Unit; and Educational Association of Worcester, ESL Tutors Unit.

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares – Successor Contract Negotiations – Educational Association of Worcester, Paraeducators Unit.

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares – Successor Contract Negotiations – Educational Association of Worcester, Therapy Assistants Unit.

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares – Successor Contract Negotiations - Massachusetts Laborers' District Council for and in behalf of Worcester Public Service Employees Local Union 272 of the Laborers' International Union of North America, AFL-CIO, Unit D, Computer Technicians/IT Professionals.

B. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:49 p.m.

C. Pledge of Allegiance/National Anthem

D. Roll Call: There were present at the call to roll: Member Alvarez, Member Biancherian, Member Binienda, Member Guardiola, Member Johnson, Member Mailman, Vice Chair McCullough, Member Roy. Mayor Petty was absent at the call to

roll but arrived at 6:10 p.m.

M. Student Advisory Committee Items

E. Consent Agenda

- i. Approval of Minutes
Approval of [Minutes](#) of the January 8, 2026 School Committee Meeting
- ii. Approval of Donations
To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$350 from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc South Middlesex Alumnae Chapter to benefit the Elm Park Community School's food pantry.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$201 from WTHS Staff to benefit a WRAP Around coordinator at WTHS.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$25 from The Blackbaud Giving Fund to benefit Columbus Park School.

To consider approval of a donation of two smart TVs and stands from Clark University to benefit Claremont and Woodland Academy.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$500 from Falcone Enterprises Inc to benefit the South High Diesel program.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$100 from Bill and Heli Tomford made through Fidelity Charitable in memory of Robert S "Doc" Donahue to benefit a scholarship fund at University Park Campus School.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$20.00 from Box Tops to benefit Columbus Park School.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$300 from Darren Wuensch DBA A-Plus Educational Services to benefit Gerald Creamer Center.

To consider approval of an in-kind donation from Boys & Girls Club of Worcester.

- iii. Notification of Personnel Records
 - a. [New Hire Non-Instructional Staff](#)
 - b. [New Hire Instructional Staff](#)
 - c. [Resignations/Retirements](#)
- iv. Initial filing of Recognition (Administration)
(January 22, 2026)
To recognize the Belmont Street School staff for their coordinated response to the recent fire.

(Administration)

(January 22, 2026)

To recognize student Adryan Ferreira Pugira and bus driver Fabian Torres for their commendable response to a porch fire.

(McCullough)

(January 22, 2026)

To send letters of congratulations to the 2025 South High Girls Basketball Team and their Coaches for making it to the 2025 State Championship game. The Colonels reached back-to-back state finals in March 2024 and March 2025.

(Mayor Petty)

(January 22, 2026)

To congratulate Linda McSweeney for her recognition from Governor Healey on her years of service and dedication in the field of education.

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. By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed unanimously. Mayor Petty was absent.

F. Item for Reconsideration**G. Held Items****H. Recognitions**December 4, 2025

(Johnson)

The Worcester Cowboys 12u Football team was recognized for advancing to the National Championship in Naples, Florida.

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. Michael Ricciardi, of Worcester, spoke regarding ros 6-2.
2. Luis Suarez, of Worcester, spoke regarding ros 6-2.
3. Fred Nathan, of Worcester, spoke regarding gb 5-116.

J. Public Petition**K. Report of the Superintendent**

ros 6-2 (Administration)

Vision to Action...Facilities and School Safety Updates

To be taken collectively with:

gb 5-114 (McCullough)

(November 20, 2025)

To request that the safety department work with the schools, particularly those in high traffic areas, to review pick up and drop off policies and require right turn only into and out of school driveways during specific drop off and pick up times to improve significant congestion in those areas, with a particular focus on middle and high schools.

gb 5-116 (Alvarez)

(November 20, 2025)

Request that the Administration work with the city of Worcester's Department of Transportation and Public Works to assess traffic and pedestrian safety concerns at the crosswalk located on Belmont Street across from Stanton Street, near the basketball located in Bell Hill Park. It has been reported that drivers speed through this area despite the existing crosswalk. Further, request that the City explore safety enhancements such as flashing pedestrian lights (for non-school hours), additional signage, or the assignment of a crossing guard during school hours.

Sara Consalvo, Director of Finance and Operations, Mr. Richard Ikonen, Director of Facilities, and Dr. Matthew Morse, Director of School Safety presented the report. The report reviewed a summary of district spaces, the current state of planning and prioritization, and an update on strategic plan aims, Ms. Consalvo noted the average age of the buildings are 77 years old, with 4.6 million square feet and 1,700 classrooms.

Dr. Morse reviewed the recent school safety improvements including phase I and II locks which has been completed, phase III and IV locks and intercoms, staff training and crisis response, and safety operations are ongoing.

Dr. Morse noted recent safety improvements that include trained district administrators, principals, assistant principals and deans on the Standard Response Protocol and Standard Reunification Model. WPS Participated in tabletop exercise conducted by the Worcester Police Department to incorporate elements of our Standard Response Protocol language. WPS also participated in a simulated crisis exercise conducted by the Worcester Police Department with our Transportation Drivers and Monitors. District Crisis Response Handbook Update for school personnel is easily accessible. A School-based emergency notification system is being piloted. School-based radio connection will provide active and passive communication directly to emergency response dispatchers.

Dr. Morse also reviewed pedestrian safety, continual improvement working with schools to review pick up and drop off policies in high traffic areas to improve

congestion. WPS is also working with the City's Department of Traffic & Mobility to purchase and install solar powered rectangular rapid flashing beacons and pedestrian crossing improvements for five high priority locations. Belmont Street School has been identified as a priority.

Mr. Ikonen reviewed the facilities master plan which was developed jointly as a Comprehensive Master Plan with the City of Worcester's Department of Public Facilities. After evaluating bidders, the firm that was contracted to develop a master plan is Habib and Associates. He reviewed the five-year capital plan as well as annual plans, such as non-MSBA (Massachusetts School Business Association) projects, bathroom renovations, flooring updates, masonry repairs, and ADA improvements, among others.

Mr. Ikonen also touched on MSBA Accelerated Repair Programs that have improved WPS buildings. Including 23 window projects, 10 boiler projects, and seven roof projects. Belmont Street School roof replacement and Rice Square School window, roof, and door replacements were highlighted. He also noted that WPS is working with the MSBA to replace Burncoat Middle and High Schools.

Ms. Consalvo noted that WPS is expanding future-ready opportunities for students through alignment and partnership with community-based learning resources and spaces such as the YMCA and the Guild of St. Agnes. She reviewed the next steps in the plan with the Committee.

Member Biancheria asked budgetary questions regarding upgrades. Mr. Allen, Superintendent of Schools, mentioned that the WPS team has created a workable system for upgrades.

Member Guardioli lauded the leadership team for their commitment to safety with a 1000% increase investment in school safety. He asked for a brief update on the emergency notification system that is being piloted. Dr. Morse noted that the system is comprehensive and will send notification to all district devices, phones, and more. He said that the demonstration he attended showed a very comprehensive system.

Member Guardioli asked about pedestrian safety, especially in the area of Belmont Street School. He asked if WPS has had conversations with WPD about increased traffic patrols and ticketing. Dr. Morse said he is in constant communication with WPD traffic division and the City Traffic and Mobility department and the collaboration between the three is ongoing.

Member Johnson asked how the new parking area at Roosevelt School is going. Mr. Allen stated that the upgrades did separate the bus line but what WPS still needs to address is the queueing of cars before dismissal. Mr. Allen spoke with City Manager Batista to collaborate on ways to address this. Dr. Morse said that Safe Routes to School is working with Roosevelt School to improve the dismissal process as safety is paramount.

Member Johnson asked how the City's trial parking ban ordinance will affect the

dismissal process. Mr. Allen said that the no parking signs should not be in front of the school, only after the school property, and should still allow for a bit of room to allow for dismissal and WPS will be figuring a way to queue cars for dismissal. When asked how many crossing guards were stationed at Belmont Street School, by Member Johnson, Dr. Morse said four.

Member Roy asked about the Sullivan Middle School roof repairs/exterior repairs. Mr. Allen said that since the five year plan was released, it was learned that the Sullivan roof repairs were needed. He said that the team is looking into several options for repair or replacement of the roof. Member Roy also submitted letters to the WPS team on behalf of students, regarding bathroom issues for consideration.

Member Mailman asked about the prioritization of buildings. Mr. Allen said that the master plan that is in process right now, will be the blueprint for facilities at WPS going forward and WPS and the City of Worcester will be joint capital planning.

Member Mailman made a motion to create a campaign to increase bus usage by current students.

Member Binienda asked about facilities updates on Worcester Alternative School, to which Superintendent Allen said that WPS is actively looking for a new facility as the lease will terminate at the end of the school year. Member Binienda also asked about upgrading cameras in existing buildings. Mr. Allen let the Committee know that camera replacements are part of the five-year capital plan.

Mayor Petty noted that drop off and pick up are problems at every school and to put improvement entirely on WPD is unfair. The new traffic regulations on Grafton Street is a trial and the City will collect data and reevaluate. He noted that parents and citizens will be educated on the new regulations and he hopes it will make students safer. He applauded the WPS partnership with the City on the master plan and the investment in our schools, totalling \$1.3 billion overall.

Member Alvarez asked about what WPS is currently doing to address the safety of the exterior of buildings, in regards to unauthorized trespassing and trash. Dr. Morse noted that WPS building custodians work to keep properties clean and safe and if illegal items are found, WPS works with the Worcester Quality of Life team to help WPS to address the issue.

A motion was made to approve and file this report, gb 5-114, and gb 5-116 with Member Mailman's motion. 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.

L. Reports of the Standing Committees

N. Approval of Grants and other Finance Items

To consider approval of the [FC199 Interpreter in Education Training](#) grant from DESE in the amount of \$34,995.

To consider approval of the [Unum Equitable Pathways Grant](#) in the amount of \$10,000.

To consider approval of a prior year payment to United Sales USA Corp. in the amount of \$826.04.

A motion was made to approve 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 5-115 (McCullough)

(November 20, 2025)

Response from Administration

To request the district explore the possibility of a centrally located family resource center that provides centralized services for food and clothing needs as well as the possibility of including washers/dryers for family use and one of the school based health centers.

Member Binienda requested more centers and services available to families and to keep the current services that are currently available. Mr. Allen assured the committee that current services will remain.

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

gb 6-6 (McCullough)

(January 22, 2026)

To explore the cost and feasibility of resurfacing the tennis courts at Burncoat High School.

A motion was made to refer this item to Operations and Governance. With no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

gb 6-7 (Alvarez)

(January 22, 2026)

To request administration to provide a report on which Worcester Public Schools received in-school fire safety visits from the Worcester Fire Department during the last 5 academic school years and any planned visits during this current year, including the grade levels, the frequency and format of the visits, and the criteria or process used to determine which schools receive visits. The report should also include any plans to expand or standardize access to ensure all students have equitable

exposure to fire safety education.

Member Alvarez asked that additional information on staff emergency training be added to the forthcoming report.

A motion was made to refer this item to the Administration. With no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

gb 6-8 (Roy)

(January 22, 2026)

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 was made to refer this item to the Administration. With no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

gb 6-9 (Biancheria)

(January 22, 2026)

To request a report on the cost and feasibility of field upgrades at North High School.

A motion was made to refer this item to Operations and Governance. With no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

gb 6-10 (Administration)

(January 22, 2026)

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

Proposed Course Additions

Member Binienda spoke out about some concerns she has about 2 specific Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Emily Lehman, Director of College and Career Readiness spoke to these concerns.

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

A motion was made to refer this item and Member Biancheria's motion to TLSS. With no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

P. Announcements

Meeting Dates:

-January 29, 2026, Standing Committee for Teaching, Learning and Student Success, 5:00 p.m., 20 Irving Street, Room 410.

-February 5, 2026, 5:00 p.m., Esther Howland Chamber, Worcester City Hall, 455 Main Street.

-February 9, 2026, Standing Committee for Operations and Governance, 5:00 p.m., 20 Irving Street, Room 410.

-February 25, 2026, Standing Committee for Finance, 5:30 p.m., 20 Irving Street,

Room 410.

"[Be Our Valentine](#)" - Worcester Historical Museum's annual Valentine Contest for students in grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 to "take their place in history." The contest is open to students in those grades in local public and private schools, or who are the children of Worcester Historical Museum members, or those who hold an active Worcester Public Library Card.

Q. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. With no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Kristi Turgeon, Clerk of the School Committee