

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 5, 2026**

At: 6:00 p.m. Open Session

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

MINUTES

A. General Business Items taken in Executive Session

The Worcester School Committee is convening in executive session under Mass. G.L. c. 30A, Section 21(a)(1) (Purpose 1) to discuss an Open Meeting Law complaint filed by Robert Contois against the Worcester School Committee.

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, Units A/B.

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, Aides to the Physically Handicapped, Monitors and Drivers 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, Parent Liaisons Unit.

B. Call to Order

C. Pledge of Allegiance/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.

M. Student Advisory Committee Itemssa 6-1 (Student Advisory)

(February 5, 2026)

To review and audit [school nurse staffing levels](#).

Yvonne Roberts, of Burncoat High School, Ex-Officio of the School Committee Student Advisory Council presented the item.

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

E. Consent Agendai. Approval of MinutesApproval of Minutes of the [January 22, 2026](#) School Committee Meeting.ii. Approval of Donations

To consider approval of a donation from The Hanover Insurance Group of 200 Weekend Food Backpacks to benefit the schools in the Burncoat Quadrant with established food pantries (Elm Park, Lincoln Street, Burncoat High, Vernon Hill).

To consider approval of a donation of (3) bike racks, (18) helmets and (18) locks from Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) as part of their Safe Routes to School Bike Rack Program to benefit students at Grafton Street School.

To consider approval of a donation in the amount of \$200 from Dario Diesel to benefit the South High Diesel Technology Program.

To consider approval of a \$10,000 in-kind donation from Eaton Company through Adoptaclassroom.org to support Sullivan Middle School.

iii. Notification of Personnel Recordsa. [New Hire Non-Instructional Staff](#)b. [New Hire Instructional Staff](#)c. [Resignations/Retirements](#)iv. Initial filing of RecognitionMcCullough

(February 5, 2026)

To congratulate Doherty Senior, Caleigh Moriarty, on being named a Posse Scholar. Being named a Posse Scholar is highly significant because it recognizes a student's academic excellence, leadership potential, and commitment to community. Posse Scholars are selected through a rigorous, multi-stage process that looks beyond grades to identify students who will lead, support others, and thrive in challenging environment. Caleigh will be attending Bucknell University in the Fall.

McCullough

(February 5, 2026)

To send letters of thanks to the Worcester Technical High School and Hopedale High School basketball teams and fans for their assistance in emptying the emergency trailer and setting up cots and other provisions in the gymnasium following their basketball game, in support of the opening of the emergency shelter at Worcester Technical High School.

McCullough

(February 5, 2026)

Send letter letters of congratulations to the WPS students who received acceptances into the Massachusetts All State Music Festival. This is the highest number of acceptances for WPS.

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

Member McCullough noted that she would like to add additional Posse Scholarship awardees to her submitted recognition. **A motion was made to approve the consent agenda with Member McCullough's amendment. 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**G. Held Items****H. Recognitions**

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 6-3, gb 4-117, and gb 5-103.
2. Leah Bradley, of Worcester, spoke regarding the initial filing of recognition for Worcester Technical High School students and staff for helping with the emergency shelter.
3. Ignacio Arguello, of Worcester, spoke in favor of gb 6-11.
4. Noelia Chafoya, of Worcester, spoke on items gb 4-117 and gb 5-103.
5. Catherine Holmes, of Worcester, spoke on gb 4-117 and gb 5-103.
6. Stanley, of Worcester, spoke regarding gb 4-117 and gb 5-103.

7. Aislinn Doyle, of Worcester, spoke regarding gb 4-117 and gb 5-103.
8. Nathan Diaz, of Worcester, spoke regarding gb 6-11.
9. Hannah Rhodes, of Worcester, spoke regarding gb 6-11.
10. Keith Linhares, of Worcester, spoke regarding gb 4-117 and 5-103.
11. Natasha, of Worcester, spoke regarding gb 4-117 and gb 5-103.

J. Public Petition

K. Report of the Superintendent

ros 6-3 (Administration)

Vision to Action...FY27 Preliminary Budget Estimates & SC Priorities

Sara Consalvo, Chief Financial and Operating Officer of WPS presented the preliminary budget estimates for fiscal year 2027 (FY27), including preliminary budget revenue estimates from the Governor's Budget, key drivers and assumptions, preliminary cost estimates, and FY27 budget planning.

Ms. Consalvo reviewed FY27 major budget themes. Enrollment in WPS is down slightly by .41% or 101 students based on our October 1, 2025 numbers. The foundation inflation rate for FY27 is 2.76%. This is the final year of the Student Opportunity Act (SOA). WPS's annual budget adjustments are based on enrollment shifts in individual schools and WPS continues strategic investments to close opportunity gaps for students with equity-based budgeting process.

Ms. Consalvo reviewed the detailed enrollment reports, noting changes in enrollment in low income students, multilingual learners, elementary, middle, and high school rates. When totaled, enrollment was down just 0.41%. Ms. Consalvo showed the enrollment trends from FY19-FY26.

The foundation budget inflation rate was reviewed. Inflation Rate: 2.76%, Employee Benefits Inflation Rate: 8.29%, Inflation provides \$19.4 million in funding for FY27. Each 1% change in the inflation rate equals an estimated \$5.0 million. A total increase of \$15.4 million is expected using the inflation rate formula.

The SOA will provide WPS with nearly \$18.5 million. This is the final year of the SOA funding phase in. The SOA provides funding for guidance and psychological services, multilingual learners, low income students, special education services and more.

When factoring in all the foundation budget factors (inflation, enrollment, SOA) the FY27 foundation budget is expected to increase by \$33.8 million. Additional factors to transition from the state foundation budget to the WPS Operating Budget require additional calculations, such as the subtraction of \$3.8 million in City of Worcester Free Cash, less charter school tuition, school choice tuition, less state special education assessment leaves a net increase of \$27.8 million or 5.3% increase over FY26.

Ms. Consalvo reviewed the key areas of impact for FY27 budget planning, including the SOA and strategic plan, student enrollment and shifts, staffing with a planned

21:1 student teacher ratio, equity-based planning, equitable resources, family and community engagement, climate and culture, and safe and modern facilities. She noted that WPS is closely monitoring federal grants, including Head Start, USDA Food Programs, and Entitlement Grants, which are not expected to change. Ms. Consalvo also presented a budget planning timeline. The FY27 budget will be submitted to the School Committee via the WPS website on May 8, 2026.

Member Mailman asked about the original SOA process and how long it took from inception to completion. Mr. Allen said that it was conceptualized in 2015, approved in 2019, and funded in 2022. Member Mailman also asked why there was a decrease in low income and multilingual learners. Ms. Consalvo and Mr. Allen informed the Committee that state benefits qualify students as low income, and multilingual learners may be reduced due to testing out of ELL status.

Member Biancheria asked if WPS is looking at layoffs in FY28 due to the loss of funds from the SOA. Mr. Allen noted that there may be reallocation needed to support student needs for next year but layoffs are not predicted at this time. Member Biancheria asked why high schools and middle school enrollment increased while elementary enrollment decreased, the opposite of the usual pattern. Mr. Allen noted that reallocation of boundaries will take place to adjust overcrowding but WPS projections are on target regarding enrollment. Mr. Allen noted WPS impacts are lower than data trending throughout the state.

A motion was made to approve and file this report. On a voice vote 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 [Support Implementing of Updated Regulations Regarding Time-Out Practices Grant](#) in the amount of \$50,000.

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

The following two items were taken together.

qb 4-117 (Mailman)

(December 5, 2024)

Response from Administration

To create a policy for "time on screen" for one to one devices in the classroom across grade levels.

qb 5-103 (Mailman)

(September 18, 2025)

Response from Administration

To provide update on the technology committee including software acquisition policy and process, structure around time on devices especially, at the elementary level, and when AI use is allowed and when it is not.

Member Mailman presented both of these items. Member Mailman noted her opposition to filing these items as they will be subjects that will need continuous discussion. She mentioned that Northampton Public Schools has an opt out for sharing information with third parties and Mr. Allen was asked if WPS will consider this. Mr. Allen said that he acknowledges and respects the concerns raised around student data privacy and that the ED Parent Technology Coalition may be a good vehicle to use for the district to use to improve parental notice, safeguards and accountability as it relates to student data privacy. WPS is working to have more transparency and communication - on student biometric data is important and WPS should consider opportunities for parents to opt out.

Member Mailman made a motion that gb 5-103 be referred to TLSS.

Member Johnson noted that he has spent a lot of time over the past month digesting the subject of AI, based on numerous calls and emails he has received. Because many of these items were intertwined, he broke the items down and communicated with Nashoba, Millbury, Wachusett, Shrewsbury, Grafton, and his constituents to get a better grasp on the information. He would like to hear from people who are in the field doing the work and get feedback from those on the ground. From his own investigation and conversations, he found that there was some variance but technology/Chromebook usage was not as frequent as he believed. He mentioned he would like to hear more from Focused Instructional Coaches and teachers, but what he has heard and seen so far is that teachers are actively teaching, doing hands-on learning and supplementing with technology.

Vice Chair McCullough reiterated Member Johnson's thoughts and concurred that, in her experience, she has witnessed a lot of hands-on learning with some supplemental technology, which was appropriate to their age level and assisting in learning.

A motion was made to approve and file gb 4-117. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made to refer gb 5-103 to TLSS. 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; Mayor Petty, no. By a margin of 2-7, the motion failed.

A motion was made to file gb 5-103. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed unanimously.

gb 6-11 (Mailman)

(February 5, 2026)

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.

Member Mailman presented this item, noting that Burncoat is the last big high school that will be built in the near future. It is her hope that the Committee can agree to explore the possibility of having a track in Worcester which would benefit the region and support finding funding sources for such a facility.

Mayor Petty noted that since the turn of the century the City has invested in every high school. He also mentioned that the MSBA has also invested heavily in the City of Worcester. He reiterated that there are no indoor facilities in central Massachusetts, noting there is one in Boston and one in Western Massachusetts and we can explore a public/private partnership.

Member Binienda discussed her experience in the building of South and Doherty High Schools. She mentioned that WPS now spends money to transport students to Northbridge. MSBA has been great to Worcester but are strict with how they use their money. She mentioned it would be great to have a field house at Burncoat but hopes our request does not change the relationship between WPS and MSBA.

Member Guardiola said he appreciates the legislation filed by Senator Kennedy. He also mentioned he supports the intent of but has concerns. WPS has been fortunate to work with MSBA and has just begun the feasibility study. He cautions that our request may weaken our negotiation position with MSBA. Despite his concerns, he supports the item but cautions the Committee to disrupt the relationship we've created with MSBA.

Member Biancheria noted she is in favor of a field house but does not believe we need to form a commission to study the MSBA or where those dollars are coming from.

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

gb 6-12 (Mailman)

(February 5, 2026)

To request an updated enrollment report, since 2023, for the Hanover Program and Goddard Scholars program, including sending schools and demographics.

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

gb 6-13 (Johnson)

(February 5, 2026)

Request administration look at adjusting the 2026-27 school year calendar to adjust the Christmas break to allow for two weeks off.

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

gb 6-14 (Administration)

(February 5, 2026)

To authorize the Administration to enter into a [five-year lease renewal with Hilltop Group Holding LLC](#) for the parking lot associated with the Durkin Administration Building.

A motion was made to approve this item. 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.

P. AnnouncementsMeeting Dates:

-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.

-February 26, 2206, School Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber.

["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. On a voice vote of 9-0, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristi Turgeon, Clerk of the School Committee