

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

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

on: **Thursday, April 16, 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

Open session was called to order at 5:02 p.m.

There were present at the Call to Roll: Member Alvarez, Member Biancheria, Member Binienda (virtual), Member Guardiola, Member Johnson, Member Mailman, Member Roy (virtual).

Vice Chair McCullough and Mayor Petty were absent.

A motion was made to enter into Executive Session to discuss the items below and reconvene in open session. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; Mayor Petty, yes. By a margin of 7-0, the motion passed. Executive Session began at 5:04 p.m.

Vice Chair McCullough and Mayor Petty were absent for the vote.

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.

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 April 2, 2026.

B. Call to Order: The return to open session was called to order at 5:32 p.m.

C. Pledge of Allegiance/National Anthem

D. Roll Call: There were present at the call to roll: Member Alvarez, Member Biancheria, Member Binienda (virtual), Member Guardiola, Member Johnson, Member Mailman,

Member Roy (virtual), and Mayor Petty. Mayor Petty left the meeting at 5:55 p.m. and returned at 7:18 p.m. Vice Chair McCullough arrived at 6:09 p.m.

M. Student Advisory Committee Items

E. Consent Agenda

i. Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes of the [April 2, 2026](#) School Committee Meeting.

ii. Approval of Donations

To consider approval of books donation from The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to benefit Worcester Public Schools.

To consider approval of a donation of books, provided by Kaitlyn Flanagan in partnership with Tidepool Bookstore, through the Marshall Memorial Fund at the College of the Holy Cross, for the benefit of students at Claremont Academy.

To consider approval of an in-kind donation from the Regional Environmental Council, Inc., through the "UGROW: Increasing Biodiversity at School and Community Gardens through Native Plants & Pollinators" Community Biodiversity Grant, to support the expansion of 9 existing pollinator gardens and the installation of 4 new gardens at Tatnuck Magnet School, New Citizen School, Rice Square School, Wawecus Road School, Jacob Hiatt Magnet School, Flagg Street School, Goddard School of Science and Technology, Clark Street Community School, North High School, Worcester Technical High School, Vernon Hill School, and Elm Park Community School and City View Discovery School. The project will include planting more than 40 native perennial species to increase biodiversity, support pollinator populations, improve soil health, strengthen urban ecosystem resilience, and provide hands-on environmental education and stewardship opportunities for students and community members.

iii. Notification of Personnel Records

- a. [New Hire Instructional Staff](#)
- b. [New Hire Non-Instructional Staff](#)
- c. [Resignations/Retirements](#)

iv. Initial filing of Recognition

McCullough

(April 16, 2026)

To recognize Worcester County Superintendent's Association Scholarship recipients:

Burncoat High School - Yvonne Roberts

Claremont Academy - Nikkie Perritt & Carol Somersall Feliz

Doherty Memorial - Elena Melka & Kleri Morcka

North High - Tammy Do & Milene Novoa

South High Community - Jordan Dennett & Caleb Som

University Park Campus - Rediet Abayneh
Worcester Technical - Katie Lam & Nelson Tetteh

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: On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; Mayor Petty, yes. By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed.

Vice Chair McCullough was absent for the vote.

F. Item for Reconsideration

G. Held Items

H. Recognitions

Mailman

(January 8, 2026)

Parent library volunteers across the district were recognized for their efforts.

Administration

(April 2, 2026)

Recipients and Nominees for the Worcester Regional Research Bureau's 2026 Isaiah Thomas Award were recognized for their youth engagement in the community.

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. Fred Nathan, of Worcester, spoke regarding grants and other finance items.
2. Dina Tedeschi, of Worcester, spoke regarding ros 6-8, sa 5-1, and sa 6-1.
3. Andrea Peak, of Worcester, spoke regarding ros 6-8.
4. Joanna Jawher, a WPS employee, spoke regarding ros 6-8.
5. Lila Pope, of Worcester, spoke regarding ros 6-8.
6. Jean Conway, of Holden, spoke regarding ros 6-8.
7. Jodie Chapdelaine, of Worcester, spoke regarding library volunteer recognitions.
8. Melissa Verdier, of Worcester, spoke regarding ros 6-8.
9. Jenny Pacillo, of Worcester, spoke regarding gb 6-45.

J. Public Petition

K. Report of the Superintendentros 6-8 (Administration)**Vision to Action...Culture ad Climate Update (Wellness Rooms)**

Thomas Toney, Administrative Director of Positive Youth Development, and Jeffrey Creamer, Director of Climate and Culture, explained the structure, operating procedures and supports that are provided by wellness rooms as well as data that demonstrates the effectiveness of wellness room programs.

Wellness rooms provide a dedicated, supportive, calming space to take a break, recharge, and learn healthy coping skills for students with mental health or behavioral needs to de-escalate and re-regulate so they can return to class with minimal disruption.

Wellness room data for middle and high schools was presented to the Committee along with Bryt data (intensive support program) from Burncoat High School.

Member Mailman asked if wellness rooms will be expanded to elementary schools. Superintendent Allen noted that due to lack of resources, although WPS would like to, it will not happen at this time.

Member Binienda expressed concerns about wellness rooms being "catch-alls" for all kinds of behaviors.

Member Binienda made a motion to receive data on the number of students using the wellness rooms and how many students are repeated users of the wellness rooms.

Member Johnson made a motion for a year-over-year comparison in the number of students referred to the wellness rooms to assess the effectiveness of the program. Member Johnson also requested how outside support service information/communications are given to students and families to inform them of available services.

Member Biancheria made a motion to receive the total budget for wellness room programs and a report on the collaboration of bullying mitigation and wellness rooms.

A motion was made to refer this item with the aforementioned motions to TLSS. On a roll call vote: On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, no; Member Mailman, no; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; By a margin of 6-2, the motion passed.

Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

L. Reports of the Standing Committees

N. Approval of Grants and other Finance Items

To consider approval of the [Middle School Sports Grant](#) from the Play Ball Foundation in the amount of \$50,000.

To consider approval of a prior year payment to an employee in the amount of \$6,985.72.

To consider approval of the Middle School Exploration Policy and [MyCAP Grant](#) in the amount of \$4,000.

To consider approval of [3 prior year payments](#) in the amount of \$16,097.44.

To consider approval of [Community Preservation Act funding](#) in the amount of \$382,580 for the Stronger Starts Worcester: District-wide Playground Initiative.

To consider approval of [Kendall Food Vision Prize Grant](#) in the amount of \$20,000 to support the alignment of menu items to increase local food purchasing and promotion.

A motion was made to approve the Grants and other finance items listed above. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

O. General Business

gb 5-120 (Roy)

(December 4, 2025)

Response from Administration

Request from Administration to consider reviewing and improving a long range plan for preventing dropouts in the Worcester Public Schools by forming a committee with educators, social agencies and business leaders to what has been accomplished and needs to be changed.

A motion was made to approve and file this item. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

sa 5-2 (Student Advisory)

(December 18, 2025)

Response from Administration

To propose a plan to aid unhoused students. (much like the already mentioned washing machine truck) like wellness packs that include toothbrushes, travel toothpaste, floss, etc.

A motion was made to approve this report and file this item. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

sa 6-1 (Student Advisory)
(February 5, 2026)

Response from Administration

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

A motion was made to approve this report and file this item. On a roll call vote: On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

gb 6-40 (Mailman)
(April 16, 2026)

To update the community on plans for the Transitions Program to move out of the Fanning Building for next September.

A motion was made to refer this item to Administration. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

gb 6-41 (Clerk)
(April 16, 2026)

To review the 2026-2027 WPS Student Handbook approve any necessary changes.

A motion was made to refer this item to O&G. On a roll call vote: On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

gb 6-42 (McCullough)
(April 16, 2026)

For the administration to provide an update on the supports and services currently offered in Worcester Public Schools for students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities, including any recent improvements or planned enhancements.

A motion was made to refer this item to TLSS. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes;

Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

gb 6-43 (Guardiola)

(April 16, 2026)

Request that the administration provide a detailed report on the current custodial and grounds staffing at Foley Stadium. Specifically, the report should include: The total number of custodial staff assigned to Foley Stadium; the total number of grounds crew staff assigned to the facility; a breakdown of full-time, part-time, and contracted personnel (if applicable); a clear outline of the roles and responsibilities for both custodial and grounds staff; the supervisory and reporting structure for these positions, including who is responsible for oversight and day-to-day management; and any coordination with external vendors or partners related to maintenance and upkeep.

A motion was made to refer this item to Administration. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

gb 6-44 (Administration)

(April 16, 2026)

To approve an extension of the existing McGraw Hill contract for five (5) years, at a cost of \$1.1 million for History- grades 6,7,9, Psychology, Sociology, and Legal Aspects.

A motion was made to approve this purchase and file this item. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

gb 6-45 (Guardiola)

(April 16, 2026)

To request that the Administration provide an update to the School Committee on the Worcester Public Schools Nutrition Department's efforts to partner with local farms and food aggregation organizations to increase the procurement and availability of locally sourced food for students.

A motion was made to refer this item to O&G. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; By a margin of 8-0, the motion passed. Mayor Petty was absent for the vote.

gb 6-46 (Alvarez)

(April 16, 2026)

Request data on enrollment and participation of Hispanic/Latinx students in advanced coursework and recommend actions to increase access and support as needed.

A motion was made to refer this item to Administration. On a roll call vote: Member Alvarez, yes; Member Biancheria, yes; Member Binienda (virtual), yes; Member Guardiola, yes; Member Johnson, yes; Member Mailman, yes; Vice Chair McCullough, yes; Member Roy (virtual), yes; Mayor Petty, yes. By a margin of 9-0, the motion passed.

P. Announcements

Meeting Dates:

- April 30, 2026, Standing Committee for Teaching, Learning, and Student Success, 5:00 p.m., 20 Irving Street, Room 410.
- May 4, 2026, Standing Committee for Operations and Governance, 5:00 p.m., 20 Irving Street, Room 410
- May 7, 2026, School Committee Meeting, 5:00 p.m., City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber

Q. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristi Turgeon, Clerk of the School Committee