

**The following items will be discussed at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues to be held on Monday, March 16, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 410 at the Durkin Administration Building:**

gb #8-74 - Mr. O'Connell/Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria/Miss McCullough (February 14, 2018)

To formulate a policy, and appropriate protocols and guidelines, as to initiation of procedures in Juvenile Court under the "Children Requiring Assistance" statute (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Sections 21 and 39E – 39I), in light of the decision of the Supreme Judicial Court in Millis Public Schools v. M.P. et al (SJC-12384, February 6, 2018).

gb #9-99 -Mr. Comparetto/Mr. O'Connell (March 13, 2019)

Request that the Administration review the action taken by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection against White & Brite Cleaners in Worcester and take necessary precautions to ensure that the students and staff at Gates Lane School are safe from exposure to contaminants.

c&p #0-1 -Clerk (January 2, 2020)

To consider a communication from Gordon T. Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, relative to a policy regarding clear and uniform districtwide standards for suspensions.

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 #0-3 -Clerk (January 2, 2020)

To consider a communication from Gordon T. Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, relative to a policy of an adequate number of counselors and teachers.

c&p #0-4 -Clerk (January 2, 2020)

To consider a communication from Gordon T. Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, relative to a clear and uniform policy for the Worcester School District regarding emergency removals that do not have a racially adverse impact.

c&p #0-5 -Clerk (January 2, 2020)

To consider a communication from Gordon T. Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, relative to the establishment of a Residents' Advisory Commission which can formally petition the Worcester School Committee and to which the Worcester School Committee would be required to provide a response.

c&p #0-8 - Clerk (February 19, 2020)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Doherty Memorial High School's faculty and staff to donate accrued sick time to a colleague who is experiencing significant health challenges.

gb #0-28 - Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (January 8, 2020)

To create an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Worcester School Committee to consider changes to the school committee rules, meetings and agendas to make the work of the School Committee and our meetings more effective and better aligned with the focus on the strategic direction of the district. These changes should reflect best practices and address the recommendations included in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's report from 2017.

gb #0-59 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley (January 29, 2020)

To rewrite the Worcester Public Schools' Student Dress Code.

gb #0-93 - Administration (February 24, 2020)

To consider approval of the following updated MASC policies proposed to be included in the MASC Policy Manual:

BEDH	Public Comment at School Committee Meetings
IC/ICA	School Year/School Calendar
IE	Organization of Instruction
IGA	Curriculum Development
IGB	Support Services Programs
IHAM	Health Education
IHB	Special Instructional Programs and Accommodations
JC	Attendance Areas
JCA	Assignment of Students to School
JH	Student Absences and Excuses
JLCB	Immunization of Students

Committee Members  
Laura Clancey, Chair  
John F. Monfredo, Vice-Chair  
Tracy O'Connell-Novick

Administrative Representative  
Jennifer Boulais  
Helen A. Friel, Ed.D.

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

AGENDA #1

The Standing Committee on GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES will hold a meeting:

on: Monday, March 16, 2020  
at: 4:30 p.m.  
in: Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

gb #8-74 - Mr. O'Connell/Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria/Miss McCullough (February 14, 2018)

To formulate a policy, and appropriate protocols and guidelines, as to initiation of procedures in Juvenile Court under the "Children Requiring Assistance" statute (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Sections 21 and 39E – 39I), in light of the decision of the Supreme Judicial Court in Millis Public Schools v. M.P. et al (SJC-12384, February 6, 2018).

gb #9-99 - Mr. Comparetto/Mr. O'Connell (March 13, 2019)

Request that the Administration review the action taken by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection against White & Brite Cleaners in Worcester and take necessary precautions to ensure that the students and staff at Gates Lane School are safe from exposure to contaminants.

gb #9-350 - Miss McCullough/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo (October 14, 2019)

Request that the School Committee work with the Clerk of the School Committee to determine 3 or 4 dates in 2020 for policy forums/conversations that will be open to the community.

c&p #0-1 - Clerk (January 2, 2020)

To consider a communication from Gordon T. Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, relative to a policy regarding clear and uniform districtwide standards for suspensions.

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

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To consider a communication from Gordon T. Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, relative to a clear and uniform policy for the Worcester School District regarding emergency removals that do not have a racially adverse impact.

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To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Doherty Memorial High School's faculty and staff to donate accrued sick time to a colleague who is experiencing significant health challenges.

gb #0-28 - Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (January 8, 2020)

To create an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Worcester School Committee to consider changes to the school committee rules, meetings and agendas to make the work of the School Committee and our meetings more effective and better aligned with the focus on the strategic direction of the district. These changes should reflect best practices and address the recommendations included in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's report from 2017.

gb #0-59 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley (January 29, 2020)

To rewrite the Worcester Public Schools' Student Dress Code.

gb #0-93 - Administration (February 24, 2020)

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IGB	Support Services Programs
IHAM	Health Education
IHB	Special Instructional Programs and Accommodations
JC	Attendance Areas
JCA	Assignment of Students to School
JH	Student Absences and Excuses
JLCB	Immunization of Students

V. ADJOURNMENT

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

ITEM: gb #8-74

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 16, 2020

ITEM: Mr. O'Connell/Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria/Miss McCullough  
(February 14, 2018)

To formulate a policy, and appropriate protocols and guidelines, as to initiation of procedures in Juvenile Court under the "Children Requiring Assistance" statute (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Sections 21 and 39E - 39I), in light of the decision of the Supreme Judicial Court in Millis Public Schools v. M.P. et al (SJC-12384, February 6, 2018).

PRIOR ACTION:

3-1-18 - Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

Annex A (2 pages) contains a copy of policy Section 504 - Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act.

## Section 504 - Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to comply with Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAA, 2008) in all aspects of its programming, including both academic and extra-curricular activities and programs.

The Rehabilitation Acts of 1973, also known as "Section 504," is a non-discrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of the Act is to prohibit discrimination by institutions that receive federal funding and to assure that qualified disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

An eligible student under Section 504 is a student who:

1. has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities
2. has a record of such an impairment
3. is regarded as having such an impairment

Major life activities include but are not limited to caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating and working.

Under the ADA Amendments Act, whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity is to be determined without reference to the ameliorative effects of mitigating measures. This means that the school cannot consider the ameliorative effect of mitigating measures — with the exception of eyeglasses and contact lenses — in determining whether someone has a qualifying disability.

### Eligibility

If you believe that your child may qualify for a 504 accommodation plan in order to access programs or activities in the Worcester Public Schools, please notify the Principal at your child's school. If you have medical or other documentation about the disabling condition it is helpful to bring this to the Principal, although a medical diagnosis is not required. The Principal or their designated 504 coordinator for the school will review the concerns and gather data from teachers, school nurses, parents or others working with your child. This information will assist the 504 committee to determine how and whether your child's impairment substantially limits a major life activity. Specialists at the school may be consulted. If an assessment by a specialist is needed you will be asked for written consent to complete these at school at no charge to you.

When relevant data and information has been collected, the 504 committee will meet with you to determine the student's eligibility under Section 504 and to develop a plan of appropriate accommodations for your child. If it is determined that your child is not eligible, you will be provided this decision in writing and receive information concerning your procedural rights.

#### Who Might be Eligible Under Section 504?

Students may be eligible for accommodations or related services for a variety of reasons. Following are examples of students who may be eligible under Section 504 depending on the degree to which the disability interferes significantly with a major life activity:

- a student who has a hearing impairment
- a student who has exercise-induced asthma
- a student diagnosed with ADD/ADHD
- a student with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis
- a student with Crohn's disease



ITEM: gb #9-99

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 16, 2020

ITEM: Mr. Comparetto/Mr. O'Connell (March 13, 2019)

Request that the Administration review the action taken by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection against White & Brite Cleaners in Worcester and take necessary precautions to ensure that the students and staff at Gates Lane School are safe from exposure to contaminants.

PRIOR ACTION:

3-21-19 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

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

## Summary of Testing Results at Gates Labe School

### Ground Water

None of the ground water tests conducted near school property showed any traces of volatile organic compounds

### Interior Surface Slabs

All four interior sub-soil gas screening tests conducted at the school were below residential sub-slab soil gas screening values

### Exterior Surface Slab:

Only one of four exterior sub-soil gas screening tests had a result above the residential sub-slab soil gas screening values.

### Indoor Air Quality:

All air sample collections were below the Massachusetts Residential Indoor Air Threshold Values and Massachusetts Commercial/Industrial Indoor Air Threshold Values.

It was determined by DEP the stack on the dry cleaner building adjacent to the school is not used to vent dry cleaning machines and dry cleaning equipment is only used for a couple hours per week on Monday mornings.

No further actions are needed at the school in accordance with guidance from the Department of Environmental Protection and Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Indoor Air Quality Program.

ITEM: c&p #0-1

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 16, 2020

ITEM: Clerk (January 2, 2020)

To consider a communication from Gordon T. Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, relative to a policy regarding clear and uniform districtwide standards for suspensions.

PRIOR ACTION: Considered with c&p 0-2, 0-3, 0-4 and 0-5

1-16-20 - Gordon Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, Gwen Davis, member of the Progressive Labor Party and Ruth Rodriguez spoke to the Communications and Petitions filed by Mr. Davis regarding suspensions and the perceived adverse impact on the black and Latino community. Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP: The Worcester NAACP petitions the Worcester School Committee for a policy of citywide uniform standards for suspensions. This includes no suspension for grades K through 3 and not more than 1 day suspension for non-drug and non-violent suspensions.

ITEM: c&p #0-2

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 16, 2020

ITEM: 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.

PRIOR ACTION: Considered with c&p 0-1, 0-3, 0-4 and 0-5

1-16-20 - Gordon Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, Gwen Davis, member of the Progressive Labor Party and Ruth Rodriguez spoke to the Communications and Petitions filed by Mr. Davis regarding suspensions and the perceived adverse impact on the black and Latino community. Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP: The Worcester NAACP petitions the Worcester School Committee to establish a policy of a clearly defined and age appropriate districtwide standard for inappropriate touching.

ITEM: c&p #0-3

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 16, 2020

ITEM: Clerk (January 2, 2020)

To consider a communication from Gordon T. Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, relative to a policy of an adequate number of counselors and teachers.

PRIOR ACTION: Considered with c&p 0-1, 0-2, 0-4 and 0-5

1-16-20 - Gordon Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, Gwen Davis, member of the Progressive Labor Party and Ruth Rodriguez spoke to the Communications and Petitions filed by Mr. Davis regarding suspensions and the perceived adverse impact on the black and Latino community. Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP: The Worcester NAACP petitions the Worcester School Committee to establish a policy of maintaining an adequate number of counselors and teachers especially for the support of children who have experienced trauma. The adequacy shall be determined by objective standards and results.

ITEM: c&p #0-4

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 16, 2020

ITEM: Clerk (January 2, 2020)

To consider a communication from Gordon T. Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, relative to a clear and uniform policy for the Worcester School District regarding emergency removals that do not have a racially adverse impact.

PRIOR ACTION: Considered with c&p 0-1, 0-2, 0-3 and 0-5

1-16-20 - Gordon Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, Gwen Davis, member of the Progressive Labor Party and Ruth Rodriguez spoke to the Communications and Petitions filed by Mr. Davis regarding suspensions and the perceived adverse impact on the black and Latino community. Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP: The Worcester NAACP petitions the Worcester School Committee to establish a policy of emergency removals that do not have a racially adverse disparate impact.

ITEM: c&p #0-5

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 16, 2020

ITEM: Clerk (January 2, 2020)

To consider a communication from Gordon T. Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, relative to the establishment of a Residents' Advisory Commission which can formally petition the Worcester School Committee and to which the Worcester School Committee would be required to provide a response.

PRIOR ACTION: Considered with c&p 0-1, 0-2, 0-3 and 0-4

1-16-20 - Gordon Davis, Chair of the Education Committee, Worcester Branch NAACP, Gwen Davis, member of the Progressive Labor Party and Ruth Rodriguez spoke to the Communications and Petitions filed by Mr. Davis regarding suspensions and the perceived adverse impact on the black and Latino community. Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP: The Worcester NAACP and others petition the Worcester School Committee to establish a Residents Advisory Commission which would be authorized to petition the Worcester School Committee and the Worcester School Committee would be required to respond.

ITEM: c&p #0-8

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 16, 2020

ITEM: Clerk (February 19, 2020)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Doherty Memorial High School's faculty and staff to donate accrued sick time to a colleague who is experiencing significant health challenges.

PRIOR ACTION:

2-27-20 - Phillip Spellane spoke on behalf of the staff and faculty of Doherty Memorial High School who would like to be allowed to offer their accrued sick time to a fellow employee who is dealing with health issues.

It was moved and voice voted to refer the item to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues and provide the Action Sheet from that meeting at the March 26, 2020 School Committee meeting.

BACKUP: Annex A ( 1 page) contains a copy of the original petition.



To allow members of Nahrby HS  
faculty and staff to donate  
assigned sick time to a colleague  
who needs help in experiencing  
significant health challenges

Roger Nguyen  
2-21-2020

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 16, 2020

ITEM: Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/  
Mr. Monfredo (January 8, 2020)

To create an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Worcester School Committee to consider changes to the school committee rules, meetings and agendas to make the work of the School Committee and our meetings more effective and better aligned with the focus on the strategic direction of the district. These changes should reflect best practices and address the recommendations included in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's report from 2017.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 1-16-20 - Mayor Petty requested that the item be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues in order to have a transparent meeting where Mrs. Clancey can bring in experts from other cities and towns.  
Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues as amended.

BACKUP:

ITEM: gb #0-59

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 16, 2020

ITEM: Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley (January 29, 2020)

To rewrite the Worcester Public Schools' Student Dress Code.

PRIOR ACTION:

2-6-20 - Referred to the Student Advisory Council and to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP: Annex A (2 pages) contains a copy of the current Student Dress Code Policy from the 2019-20 Worcester Public Schools' Student Handbook and ~~the approved amendments from the July 1, 2019 meeting.~~

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY**

Students' clothing shall not disrupt or distract from the school's educational process. While in school, students will wear clothing that meets the following standards:

- No hats, bandanas, scarves or headwear that cover full head unless for religious or medical reasons
- No bare backs/low cut shirts (must be able to tuck in shirt)
- No bare feet, or unsafe footwear
- No clothing that uses see-through material or displays words (in whatever language) / graphics that are obscene or vulgar, violent, sexist, racist and/or promote the use of illegal drugs/alcohol/tobacco.
- No gang-, violence- or cult-related apparel (refer to Rule 15, policy on gang and obscene clothing)
- No droopy pants or clothing that reveals undergarments; the length of shorts and skirts must measure to at least mid-thigh length
- No outerwear to be worn in school buildings. Example: jackets/parkas/windbreakers
- Students may wear hooded sweatshirts or shirts but may not wear the hoods up or covering their heads or faces in the building or on school property
- No ear buds or headphones may be worn or used except with permission of school personnel

The school principal, having discretion to render judgments regarding what is and what is not appropriate, may, if necessary, waive these policy restrictions in religious and/or medical situations. The principal will determine what consequences should follow when a student does not comply with this policy.

ITEM: gb #0-93

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 16, 2020

ITEM: Administration (February 26, 2020)

To consider approval of the following updated MASC policies proposed to be included in the MASC Policy Manual:

BEDH Public Comment at School Committee Meetings  
IC/ICA School Year/School Calendar  
IE Organization of Instruction  
IGA Curriculum Development  
IGB Support Services Programs  
IHAM Health Education  
IHB Special Instructional Programs and Accommodations  
JC Attendance Areas  
JCA Assignment of Students to School  
JH Student Absences and Excuses  
JLCB Immunization of Students

PRIOR ACTION:

3-5-20 - Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP: Annexes A-K (26 pages) contain the proposed MASC policy changes and the current WPS Policy Manual policies.

BEDH	<p>Change the words "<b>citizens of the District</b>" to "<b>individuals</b>" and "<b>the wishes of and ideas of the public</b>" to "<b>public comment</b>" in paragraph 2.</p> <p>Replace the remainder of the policy with the new MASC policy.</p>
IC/ICA	<p>Change the words "<b>ensuing year</b>" to "<b>ensuing year/s</b>" in line 1.</p> <p>Add the line "<b>The School Committee shall schedule a school year which includes at least 185 school days for each school in the District.</b>"</p>
IE	<p>Change the words "<b>his/her</b>" to "<b>their</b>" in line 2.</p>
IGA	<p>Add the line "<b>To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators utilizing their professional expertise</b>" at the end of the first paragraph.</p> <p>Add "<b>The Committee expects the</b> " to the beginning of paragraph 2.</p>
IGB	<p>Add the words "<b>to meet the needs of all students</b>" at the end of line 1.</p> <p>Add "<b>The Deputy Superintendent shall be responsible for all services for students who are not eligible for special education assistance, such as psychological services, speech correction, homebound and hospital teaching and such other programs as may be assigned.*</b>"</p> <p>*District to reflect local configuration</p>
IHAM	<p>Add "<b>Health education will be taught as a separate academic discipline in grades 4 and 5 (half year) and grade 6 (full year) and as a separate class in secondary grades.</b>"</p> <p>*Sentence should be changed to reflect district practice.</p>
IHB	<p>Replace the word "<b>disabilities</b>" to "<b>special needs</b>" throughout the entire policy.</p> <p>Replace the words "<b>children requiring special needs services</b>" with "<b>children with identified special needs</b>" in paragraph 5.</p>
JC	<p>No changes</p>
JCA	<p><b>Remove first two paragraphs including bullets 1-4.</b></p> <p>Move the third paragraph to become <b>bullet h</b> and delete the words "<b>or a hardship is involved</b>"</p> <p>Replace the words "<b>School Committee</b>" with "<b>Superintendent</b>" in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph.</p>

JH	<p>Replace the word "<b>parent</b>" with "<b>parents/guardians</b>" throughout the policy.</p> <p>Replace the word "<b>the district</b>" with "<b>each Principal or designee</b>" in line 1 under the <u>Student Absence Notification Program</u> section.</p> <p>Add the words "<b>provided the Superintendent has documented a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian</b>" to the end of paragraph 2 in the <u>Dropout Prevention</u> section.</p>
JLCB	Keep WPS Policy as it is aligned with the Student Handbook.

**File: BEDH - PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The School Committee desires individuals to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear public comment.

Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between individuals and the School Committee. It is an individual's opportunity to express an opinion on issues within the School Committee's authority.

To ensure the ability of the School Committee to conduct the District's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

1. At the start of each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals will sign in for an opportunity to speak during public comment. The public comment segment shall not exceed 15 minutes. All speakers are encouraged to present their remarks in a respectful manner.
2. Speakers will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to present their material and must begin their comments by stating their name and city/town. The presiding Chair may permit extension of this time limit, in extenuating circumstances.
3. Topics for discussion should be limited to those items within the School Committee's scope of authority. The authority of the School Committee primarily concerns the review and approval of the budget of the district's public schools, the performance of the Superintendent, and the educational goals and policies of the district's public schools. Comments and complaints regarding school personnel (apart from the Superintendent) or students are generally prohibited unless those comments and complaints concern matters within the scope of School Committee authority.
4. The Chair of the meeting, after a warning, reserves the right to terminate speech which is not constitutionally protected because it constitutes true threats that are likely to provoke a violent reaction and cause a breach of the peace, or incitement to imminent lawless conduct, or contains obscenities.
5. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the presiding Chair before or after the meeting. All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting. Comments made during the public comment portion of the meeting do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the \_\_\_\_\_ School Committee.
6. Sign up instructions will be provided for those who wish to participate in Public Comment.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. c. 30A: 18-25

CROSS REFS: BE, SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

BEC, EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

BEDA, NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

SOURCE: MASC  
Revised January 2020



## Current Worcester Public Schools Policy

### File: BEDH - PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive Sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The School Committee desires citizens of the District to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public.

In order that all citizens who wish to be heard before the Committee have a chance and to ensure the ability of the Committee to conduct the District's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

1. The citizens and employees of the City shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard regarding any matter presently under consideration by the School Committee. It will be the responsibility of the chair, as guided by the rules established by the School Committee, to determine citizen participation.
2. All petitions filed by a citizen, with the School Committee will be heard by the School Committee if requested by the petitioner. That individual will be given up to five minutes to address the committee and may not make a presentation on more than one petition at any single School Committee meeting. The petition, unless approved or filed, will then be referred without debate to the proper standing committee, the administration or other appropriate individual or body for investigation, recommendation or disposition except for clarification, amendment, supplementation or opposition by members of the School Committee. The Clerk of the School Committee, in preparation of the school committee agenda, shall note the recommendation on the agenda. Whenever possible, the body or the individual to whom the petition was referred will make every reasonable effort to complete its work on the petition within sixty (60) days.
3. In those instances where the referral of a petition shall, by its referral, cause to render the petition moot, the School Committee shall allow only the primary petitioner the opportunity to address the School Committee. It shall be the duty of the chair to determine such instances subject to the challenge of the School Committee. Consistent with other School Committee rules the time for that presentation shall not exceed five (5) minutes.

Once a citizen has been given the opportunity to address the School Committee, members of the School Committee will be allowed to speak guided by the rules of the School Committee governing School Committee participation.

4. On any matter being considered for final disposition by the School Committee, any citizen shall have the opportunity to address the School Committee. Consistent with other School Committee rules the time for that presentation shall not exceed five (5) minutes. When speaking, a citizen shall address all his or her remarks to the chair. He or she shall be requested to state his or her name and residential address prior to addressing the issue under consideration.

(continued)

5. On all matters appearing on the agenda of the School Committee that will be referred to a standing committee or the administration for investigation, recommendations or disposition and which will, at some subsequent time, appear on the agenda of the School Committee for final disposition, debate will be limited to members of the School Committee and the administration.

6. Any individual, except attorneys at law, appearing before the School Committee and claiming to represent another as agent or otherwise in the matter being heard shall file with the School Committee a written authorization signed by the individual, organization or corporation whose interests such individual represents. Said individual will be given the opportunity to address the School Committee consistent with the rules established in this section.

7. No person will be admitted within the rail in the City Council Chamber at any meeting of the School Committee, except upon permission of the Mayor or as voted by the School Committee.

REF: Rules of the School Committee of the Worcester School Committee

CROSS REF: BBA-E

**File: IC/ICA - SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the School Committee for approval annually. The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education:

1. The School Committee shall schedule a school year which includes at least 185 school days for each school in the District.
2. Elementary school will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in regulation. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.
3. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in regulation. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

For the information of staff, students, and parents/guardians, the calendar will set forth the days schools will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; in service days; and parent conferences.

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [4:7](#); [69:1G](#); [71:1](#); [71:4](#); [71:4A](#); [71:73](#); [136:12](#)

603 CMR [27.00](#),

**NOTE: When a policy covers two topics that appear consecutively in the classification system, the codes and headings can be combined, as shown at the top of this page.**

**The category "School Year" is designed for policies about the year for students, rather than the working year for teachers and other staff members.**

**Current Worcester Public Schools Policy**

**File: IC/ICA - SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the School Committee for approval annually. The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education:

1. Elementary school will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in regulation. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.
2. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in regulation. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

According to the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Per 603 CMR 27.05, school districts are encouraged to schedule high school graduation as close as possible to the scheduled closing date of the high school, and graduation may be held up to twelve days before the regularly scheduled closing date. The earliest permissible release day for seniors is twelve school days prior to the regularly scheduled closing date of the school, which means that high schools operating on a 180 day year for students may release the seniors as early as the 168th day of school. If the date for high school graduation has been set and subsequently a few more days are added to the school year to make up for snow days or other emergencies, the original graduation date does not need to be changed, as long as it is no more than twelve school days before the originally scheduled closing date for the school year.

For the information of staff, students, and parents, the calendar will set forth the days schools will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; in service days; and parent conferences.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 4:7; 69:1G; 71:1; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12

603 CMR 27.00.

**The category "School Year" is designed for policies about the year for students, rather than the working year for teachers and other staff members.**

**File: IE - ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION**

The District offers a diversified educational program compatible with the needs of the community and state standards.

The organizational plan is designed to facilitate the philosophy of educating every student, each to their fullest potential.

The structure will consist of multiple levels (for example, Primary/Elementary, Middle and Secondary levels).

The Primary/Elementary level includes schools with kindergarten through grade five. The Middle level consists of schools for grades six, seven and eight. The Secondary level consists of schools with grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve. \*

Special education services are integrated across each grade level in all schools.

The organization is designed to meet the standards established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Curriculum Frameworks, by Time and Learning regulations, and in order to serve the needs of all students.

**\*NOTE: District to reflect local configuration.**

CROSS REFS: IC/ICA School Year / School Calendar

LEGAL REFS: 603 CMR 27.00

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

**Current Worcester Public Schools Policy**

**File: IE - ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION**

The District offers a diversified educational program compatible with the needs of the community and state standards.

The organizational plan is designed to facilitate the philosophy of educating every student, each to his/her fullest potential.

The structure will consist of multiple levels (for example, Primary/Elementary, Middle and Secondary levels).

At the elementary level, students may receive instruction in Pre-K to 6 and K to 6 schools. At the middle school level, students may receive instruction at grade 6 - 8 and 7 - 8 schools. At the secondary level, students may receive instruction at 7 - 12 and 9 - 12 schools.

Special education services are integrated across each grade level in all schools with specialized programs located at selected schools Pre-K to 12.

The organization is designed to meet the standards established within the Curriculum Frameworks as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Time and Learning regulations, and to serve the needs of all students.

CROSS REFS: IC/ICA School Year / School Calendar

LEGAL REFS: 603 CMR 27.00

**File: IGA - CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

Constant adaptation and development of the curriculum is necessary if the District is to meet the needs of the students in its schools. To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators utilizing their professional expertise.

The Committee expects the faculty and administration to regularly evaluate the education program and to recommend modifications of practice, changes in curriculum content, and the addition or deletion of courses to the instructional program.

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 69:1E

603 CMR 26:05

**Current Worcester Public Schools Policy**

**File: IGA - CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

Constant adaptation and development of the curriculum is necessary if the District is to meet the needs of the students in its schools.

Faculty and administration will regularly evaluate the education program to recommend modifications of practice and changes in curriculum content as well as the addition or deletion of courses to the instructional program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 69:1E



**File: IGB - SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAMS**

The Student Services staff will work in cooperation with District building staff and administration to coordinate and supervise the implementation of curriculum, the instructional program, and support services to meet the needs of all students.

The *Assistant Superintendent\** shall be responsible for all services for students who are not eligible for special education assistance, such as psychological services, speech correction, homebound and hospital teaching and such other programs as may be assigned.

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

**\*NOTE: District to reflect local configuration**

CROSS REF.: ACE, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability

**Current Worcester Public Schools Policy**

**File: IGB - SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAMS**

The Student Services staff will work in cooperation with building staff and the administration of the District in the coordination and the supervision of the curriculum implementation of the instructional program, and support services programs.

CROSS REF.: ACE, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap

**File: IHAM - HEALTH EDUCATION**

The School Committee believes that the greatest opportunity for effective health education lies within the public schools because of their potential to reach children at the age when positive, lifelong health habits are best engendered and because the schools are equipped to provide qualified personnel to conduct health education programs.

The School Committee is committed to a sound, comprehensive, research-based health education program as an integral part of each student's general education. **Health education will be taught as a separate academic discipline in grades K through 6 and as a separate class in other grades.\***

The health education program will emphasize a contemporary approach to the presentation of health information, skills, and the knowledge necessary for students to understand and appreciate the functioning and proper care of the human body. Students also will be presented with information regarding complex social, physical and mental health problems, which they might encounter in society. In an effort to help students make intelligent choices on alternative behavior of serious personal consequence, health education will examine the potential health hazards of social, physical and mental problems existing in the larger school-community environment.

In order to promote a relevant, dynamic approach to the instruction of health education, the School Committee will continue to stress the need for curricular, personnel, and financial commitments that are necessary to assure the high quality of the district's health education program.

**\*NOTE: Highlighted sentence should be changed to reflect district practice.**

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1

## **Current Worcester Public Schools Policy**

### **File: IHAM - HEALTH EDUCATION**

Good health depends upon continuous life-long attention to scientific advances and the acquisition of new knowledge.

The School Committee believes that the greatest opportunity for effective health education lies within the public schools because of their potential to reach children at the age when positive, lifelong health habits are best engendered and because the schools are equipped to provide qualified personnel to conduct health education programs.

The School Committee is committed to a sound, comprehensive, research-based health education program as an integral part of each student's general education.

The health education program will emphasize a contemporary approach to the presentation of health information, skills, and the knowledge necessary for students to understand and appreciate the functioning and proper care of the human body. Students also will be presented with information regarding complex social, physical and mental health problems, which they might encounter in society. In an effort to help students make intelligent choices on alternative behavior of serious personal consequence, health education will examine the potential health hazards of social, physical and mental problems existing in the larger school-community environment.

In order to promote a relevant, dynamic approach to the instruction of health education, the School Committee will continue to stress the need for curricular, personnel, and financial commitments that are necessary to assure the high quality of the system's health education program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1

**File: IHB - SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

**(PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS)**

The goals of this school district's special education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at their own level, to gain independence and self-reliance, and to return to the mainstream of school society as soon as possible.

The requirements of law and regulation will be followed in the identification of children with special needs, in referrals for their evaluation, in prescribing for them suitable programs and in assessing their educational progress. In keeping with state requirements, all children with special needs between the ages of three to twenty-two who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent will be eligible for special education.

The School Committee believes that most children with special needs can be educated in the regular school program if they are given special instruction, accommodations and the support they need. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school district's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

The Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children are so great that special programs, special classes or special schools may be necessary. When appropriate programs, services, or facilities are not available within the public schools, the Committee will provide these children with access to schools where such instruction and accommodations are available.

It is the desire of the Committee that the schools work closely with parents/guardians in designing and providing programs and services to children with special needs. Parents/guardians will be informed, and conferred with, whenever a child is referred for evaluation. In event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation, the parents/guardians will be accorded the right of due process.

The Committee will secure properly trained personnel to work with the children with special needs. Since the financial commitment necessary to meet the needs of all of these children is extensive, the Committee will make every effort to obtain financial assistance.

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

LEGAL REFS.: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 108-446, adopted 12/03/04)

Rehabilitation Act of 1973

M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq.

603 CMR 28:00 inclusive

**NOTE: A school district's procedures for implementing Special Education laws and regulations are often too extensive to include in a policy manual. In such instances, a note can be added to the policy to point out the existence and availability of a document containing current procedures.**

**Current Worcester Public Schools Policy**

**File: IHB - SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

(PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES)

The requirements of law and regulation will be followed in the identification of students with disabilities, in referrals for their evaluation, in prescribing for them suitable programs and in assessing their educational progress. In keeping with state requirements, all students with disabilities between the ages of three and twenty-two who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent will be eligible for special education services.

The School Committee believes that most students with disabilities can be educated in the regular school program if they are given special instruction, accommodations and the support they need. Students with disabilities should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school system's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

The Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children are so great that special programs, special classes or special schools may be necessary. When appropriate programs, services or facilities are not available within the public schools, the Committee will provide students with access to schools where such instruction and accommodations are available.

It is the desire of the Committee that the schools work closely with parents in designing and providing programs and services to students with disabilities. Parents will be informed, and conferred with, whenever a child is referred for evaluation. In the event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation, the parents will be accorded the right of due process.

The District will secure properly trained personnel to work with the children requiring special needs services. Since the financial commitment necessary to meet the needs of all of these children is extensive, the Committee will make every effort to obtain financial assistance.

LEGAL REFS: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 108-446, adopted 12/03/04)  
Rehabilitation Act of 1973

M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq.

603 CMR 28:00 inclusive

**File: JC - ATTENDANCE AREAS**

Attendance areas for the various schools of the town will be drawn up by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee. The primary considerations that govern the establishment of a school attendance area are school capacity and transportation considerations. Generally, students will attend the school in the attendance area in which they live.

In establishing an attendance area, the Committee will take into consideration safe walking conditions consistent with the Committee's transportation policies.

From time to time an overcrowded condition in an existing school, the development of new residential areas, or the opening of a new school may require the establishment or change of previously established school attendance areas.

The Committee will confer with community representatives prior to setting new attendance lines. However, the Committee's primary basis for judgment must be equality of educational opportunity for all students rather than the personal desires of any one group.

The Superintendent is authorized to make exceptions to attendance lines for individual children in the best interests of the student and/or the school.

SOURCE: MASC February 2019

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37C; 71:37D; 71:37I; 71:37J

603 CMR 17.00

603 CMR 26.00

CROSS REF.: JCA, Assignment of Students to Schools

**NOTE: This category is for a statement on methods of establishing attendance areas. A map or written description of areas is sometimes included in a policy manual as an exhibit document coded JC-E.**

**The cross reference above is to a closely related category in the NEPN classification system. Use code JCA for any requirement for students to attend the school in their attendance area and any exceptions to the requirements.**

## Current Worcester Public Schools Policy

### **File: JC - ATTENDANCE AREAS**

Attendance areas for the various schools of the city will be drawn up by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee. The primary considerations that govern the establishment of a school attendance area are school capacity and transportation considerations. Generally, students will attend the school in the attendance area in which they live.

In establishing an attendance area, the following general guidelines will also be applied:

1. Use of safe walking conditions consistent with the Committee's transportation policies; where possible, major traffic thoroughfares and natural barriers will be used for boundaries.
2. Honoring community of interest; where possible, school attendance zones will incorporate community patterns.

From time to time an overcrowded condition in an existing school, the development of new residential areas, or the opening of a new school may require the establishment or change of previously established school attendance areas.

The Committee will confer with community representatives prior to setting new attendance lines. However, the Committee's primary basis for judgment must be equality of educational opportunity for all students rather than the personal desires of any one group.

The Superintendent is authorized to make exceptions to attendance lines for individual children in the best interests of the student and/or the school.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37C; 71:37D; 71:37I; 71:37J

603 CMR 17.00

603 CMR 26.00

CROSS REF.: JCA, Assignment of Students to Schools



**File: JCA - ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOLS**

Generally, students will be required to attend school in the attendance area in which they reside, unless the Superintendent has granted special permission.

Special permission may be granted for the following reasons:

1. If the change involves a hardship case or if there are medical considerations.
2. If the change appears to be in the interests of the child, of the schools, or for disciplinary and administrative reasons.
3. If the legal residence of a child changes from one attendance area to another during the school year and the parents/guardians wish the child to remain in his former school; permission will not extend beyond the current school year.
4. To permit school students to take courses not offered in their assigned schools.

School bus transportation will not be provided for students attending schools outside their attendance area unless they can be accommodated on existing bus routes and schedules or a hardship is involved; or unless specific permission is granted by the Superintendent.

SOURCE: MASC February 2019

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37C; 71:37D; 71:37I; 71:37J

603 CMR 17.00

603 CMR 26.00

CROSS REF.: JC, Attendance Areas

**NOTE: The cross reference is to a related category in the NEPN classification system.**

## **Current Worcester Public Schools Policy**

### **File: JCA - ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOLS**

Generally, students will be required to attend school in the attendance area in which they reside, unless the Superintendent has granted special permission.

Special permission may be granted for the following reasons:

1. If the change involves a hardship case, or if there are medical considerations.
2. If the change appears to be in the interests of the child, of the schools, and for disciplinary and administrative reasons.
3. If the legal residence of a child changes from one attendance area to another during the school year and the parents wish the child to remain in his former school; permission will not extend beyond the current school year.
4. To permit secondary school students to take courses not offered in their assigned schools.

School bus transportation will not be provided for students attending schools outside their attendance area unless they can be accommodated on existing bus routes and schedules, or a hardship is involved; or unless specific permission is granted by the School Committee.

### **Registration Policy**

#### **Elementary (K-6)**

Students in the Worcester Public Schools shall attend schools based upon neighborhood district lines. They are also eligible to attend the five citywide magnet schools based on conditions of space availability and the magnet school being in compliance with the Worcester Public Schools' Deisolation Plan. The five citywide magnet schools are: (1) Chandler Magnet School, (2) City View Discovery School, (3) Jacob Hiatt Magnet School (4) Norrback Avenue School and (5) Worcester Arts Magnet School. Elementary students residing in the North quadrant are eligible to attend the North quadrant magnet school, Roosevelt School, based on space availability. Under the Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy, transfers are permitted to any school within that school's quadrant provided the transfer has a positive effect on the minority percentage of the school and space is available.

#### **Secondary (Grades 7-12)**

Depending on the school district in which the student resides, he/she can attend his/her local high school. This is based on the quadrant of residence of the student at the time of enrollment, unless special permission has been requested by the parent/guardian and approved by the District Administration to attend a different school. Attendance at Worcester Technical High School is based upon an application and selection process approved by the State Department of Education.

### **Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy**

#### **I. Conditions for Out-of-District Transfers**

(continued)

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools that students shall attend schools based upon neighborhood district lines. Exceptions to this policy are allowed under the "Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy" which permits transfers to other elementary, middle and high schools or to citywide magnet schools under the following conditions:

- a. There must be space available in the receiving school.
- b. Elementary, middle and high schools having a minority percentage greater than the citywide average on October 1 of each year will adhere to the following restrictions:
  1. Minority students will not be allowed to transfer into a school which has a minority percentage greater than the citywide average on October 1 of each year.
  2. Majority students will not be allowed to transfer out of a school except in the case where the sending school is in compliance and the receiving school is out of compliance as a result of having a minority percentage greater than 15 percentage points above the citywide minority percentage.
  3. All students, both minority and majority, shall be eligible to attend citywide magnet schools and secondary magnet schools. In order to exercise this eligibility, the magnet school must be in compliance.
- c. Elementary, middle and high schools having a minority percentage less than the citywide average on October 1 of each year will adhere to the following restrictions:
  1. Majority students will not be allowed to transfer into a school which has a minority percentage less than the citywide average on October 1 of each year.
  2. Minority students will not be allowed to transfer out of a school except in the case where the sending school is in compliance and the receiving school is out of compliance as a result of having a minority percentage less than 15 percentage points below the citywide minority percentage.
  3. All students, both minority and majority, shall be eligible to attend citywide magnet schools and secondary magnet schools. In order to exercise this eligibility, the magnet school must be in compliance.
- d. Voluntary transfer requests will be considered for properly documented medical disabilities and other unique circumstances.
- e. Spanish Bilingual, Structured English and Special Education Programs are offered in certain schools. Any student requiring these services will be enrolled in the school that will meet his/her assessed needs.
- f. When a student changes residence and would enter grade 6, 8 or 12, he/she may finish the year in that school provided that he/she is a resident of Worcester and has received the out-of-district principal's permission to remain in that school.
- g. Students who enroll in an out of district magnet program or the Worcester Technical High School must complete the year in the out-of-district school.

## **II. Procedures for Applying for a "Voluntary Transfer"**

(continued)

a. Applications and a policy statement are available at the Parent Information Center or the Office for Instruction and School Leadership:

Parent Information Center: (508) 799-3194

Burncoat/South Quadrants (508) 799-3264

Doherty/North Quadrants: (508) 799-3221

\*Technical Quadrant: (508) 799-3499

\*Applications for Worcester Technical High School may be obtained in all secondary guidance offices or at the Technical School Admissions Office.

b. The application must be filled out and returned to the appropriate office.

Parent Information Center or the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.

c. A written approval or denial will be sent to the home of the parent/guardian and copies will be forwarded to the principals of both the sending and receiving schools.

d. A copy of the application and the approval or denial letter will be kept on file in the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.

### **III. Hardship Appeals Process**

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision of the Office for Instruction and School Leadership, an appeal must be filed before the first day of the school year. A maximum of two weeks will be allowed to appeal the decision in writing to the Chairperson of the Hardship Appeals Board, Parent Information Center, 768 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01610.

The Board will review each case referred to it and make timely decisions relative to the disposition of the appeal. A copy of the decision will be sent to the parent/guardian and the Office for Instruction and School Leadership. Proceedings of the Hardship Appeals Board will be recorded and maintained by personnel in the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.

**File: JH - STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee recognizes that parents/guardians of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons: illness or quarantine; bereavement or serious illness in family; weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child; and observance of major religious holidays.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the Principal or designee.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of his character. Parents/guardians can help their children by not allowing them to miss school needlessly.

Accordingly, parents/guardians will provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justified.

**Student Absence Notification Program**

Each Principal or designee will notify a student's parent/guardian within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence.

Each Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

**Dropout Prevention**

A student who has not graduated from high school and has been absent from school for ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absence shall not be considered permanently removed from school unless the Principal has sent notice to the student, and that student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be sent within five (5) days of the tenth consecutive day of absence and shall offer at least 2 dates and times within the next ten (10) days for an exit interview with the Superintendent or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be in both English and the primary language of the home, if applicable. The notice shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview and shall indicate the parties shall reach an agreement on the date/time of the interview within the ten (10) day timeframe. The timeframe may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian and no extension shall exceed 14 days.

The Superintendent or designee may proceed with any interview without a parent/guardian present, provided the Superintendent has documented a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian.

The Superintendent or designee shall convene a team of school staff to participate in the exit interview and shall provide information to the student and, if applicable, the student's parent/guardian on the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school and the alternative education programs and services available to the student.

SOURCE: MASC February 2019

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:1; 76:1B; 76:16; 76:18; 76:20

## Current Worcester Public Schools Policy

### File: JH - STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

#### **Overview:**

In accordance to the Massachusetts General Laws, the Worcester Public Schools recognizes and enforces that every child, between the ages of six and sixteen, must attend school. School personnel and parents/guardians must work together to ensure that all students, Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12, attend school every day, and on time, during the 180-day pupil calendar.

School attendance is a priority for the Worcester Public Schools. Students' academic, social and emotional growth and development depend upon students' daily attendance, classroom participation and exposure to high quality teaching and learning. The daily interactions among teachers and students are irreplaceable components of the learning experience. In addition, daily attendance and punctuality habits acquired during schooling are essential skills in the adulthood life, and it begins as early as the pre-school years. Students who are chronically absent from school impact their own learning and the school community as a whole. Schools can take the following steps to address absenteeism:

#### **School Attendance**

Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. A school district may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen half-day sessions in any period of six months. In addition to this law, Worcester has an attendance policy and should make sure that parents/guardians are familiar with it.

#### **CRA—Child Requiring Assistance: M.G.L. Chapter 119 Section 39e**

A school can file a CRA application with the Worcester Juvenile Court if the student is a Habitual School Truant or a Habitual School Offender. The following rules must apply:

- i. Habitual School Truant: Student between the ages of 6 and 18 who, without excuse, willfully fails to attend school for more than 8 days in a quarter.
  - a. School must document whether or not the child's family have participated in a truancy prevention program.
  - b. CRA will be dismissed when the child turns 16.
  - c. If the failure to attend school is due to a physical or mental disability rather than a willful failure to attend school, the school should not file a CRA. If the failure to attend is due to a physical or mental disability, the school should convene the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for 504 Team to discuss supports and services necessary to facilitate school attendance.
  
- ii. Habitual School Offender: Students between the ages of 6 and 18 who repeatedly fails to obey school rules
  - a. School must document specific steps taken to improve the child's conduct.
  - b. CRA will be dismissed when the child turns 16.
  - c. If the failure to obey school rules is due to a physical or mental disability rather than willful disobedience, the school should not file a CRA. In such cases, the school should convene the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 Team to discuss supports and services necessary to facilitate good behavior and consider a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) as appropriate. If the student is subject to school discipline, the school should conduct a manifestation of the student's disability as appropriate.

(continued)

### **Failure to Send M.G.L. Chapter 76 Section 2**

Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. It is a crime for a responsible parent or guardian not to cause such a child to attend school. If a child fails to attend school for seven day sessions or fourteen half-day sessions within any six month period, the supervisor of attendance may file a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent/guardian.

### **M.G.L. Chapter 119 Section 51A**

A 51A is a report of suspected child abuse or neglect that is filed with the Department of Children and Families. Under Chapter 119, section 51A of Massachusetts General Laws, a report can be filed on behalf of a child under the age of sixteen for educational neglect if a child is not attending school on a regular basis.

### **Excused Absences**

The following is a list of absences which will not count toward retention or loss of credit:

1. **Religious holy days:** The student's religion must require that the student does not attend school on the specific holy day or that school attendance would interfere with required religious observances. The parent/guardian must notify the school in writing within two (2) school days before or after the absence.
2. **Death in the immediate family:** Up to five (5) consecutive days for bereavement due to the death of a member of the student's immediate family: mother, father, sister, and brother. One (1) day to attend the funeral of grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces or nephews. The parent/guardian must notify the school in writing within five (5) school days after the absence(s) occurred.
3. **Court appearance:** The student must have been subpoenaed to appear in a court of law. The student must be a witness, plaintiff, or defendant in a court proceeding. Within five (5) school days before or after the required court appearance, the parent/guardian must notify the school in writing and provide documentation from the court.
4. **Hospitalization:** The parent/guardian must submit to the school release papers from the hospital documenting the student's hospitalization.
5. **Illness:** The parent/guardian must submit to the school medical documentation of the illness that requires the student's exclusion from school. The principal has the right to require and seek additional medical opinions and diagnosis regarding a student's absence(s) due to illness.

Students who will be out of school for more than fourteen consecutive days because of illness or hospitalization may receive home or hospital instruction. For more information refer to Home and Hospital Instruction on page 61 of the Student Handbook.

Family vacations taken during school time are absences. Families should plan their vacations during the regularly scheduled vacations. Non-emergency appointments should be scheduled after school hours.

(continued)

### Student Absence Notification Program

The District will notify a student's parent/guardian daily of a student's absence based on morning attendance via a ConnectEd automated phone call.

Beginning with 5 absences, parents/guardians will receive an attendance letter via U.S. Mail with each absence. Each Principal, by whatever title he/she may be known, or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

### Dropout Prevention

No student who has not graduated from high school shall be considered permanently removed from school unless the Principal has sent notice to a student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has been absent from school for ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absence. The notice shall be sent within five (5) days of the tenth consecutive day of absence and shall offer at least 2 dates and times within the next ten (10) days for an exit interview with the Superintendent or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be in both English and the primary language of the home, if applicable. The notice shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview and shall indicate that the parties shall reach an agreement on the date/time of the interview within the ten (10) day timeframe. The timeframe may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian but no extension shall exceed 14 days.

The Superintendent or designee may proceed with any interview without a parent/guardian present.

The Superintendent or designee shall convene a team of school staff to participate in the exit interview and shall provide information to the student and, if applicable, the student's parent/guardian on the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school and the alternative education programs and services available to the student.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:1; 76:1B; 76:16; 76:18; 76:20



**File: JLCB - IMMUNIZATION OF STUDENTS**

Students entering school for the first time, whether at kindergarten or through transfer from another school district, will be required to present a physician's certificate attesting to immunization against communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health. The only exception to these requirements will be made on receipt of a written statement from a doctor that immunization would not be in the best interests of the child, or by the student's parent or guardian stating that vaccination or immunization is contrary to the religious beliefs of the student or parent/guardian.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 76:15

## Current Worcester Public Schools Policy

### **File: JLCB - MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

Students lacking proper documentation of required immunizations shall be excluded until proof of such immunization is provided (102 CMR 7.07 and 105 CMR 220.00). If a child cannot be immunized due to medical reasons (requires physician documentation yearly) or if a parent refuses to have a child immunized because of religious beliefs (requires a parent- signed letter yearly), the non-immunized student will be excluded from school during outbreaks of diseases for which the student is not immunized (MGL c. 111, § 3, 6, 7, 109, 110, 112 and 105 CMR 300.00).

- **Lead Screening** documentation is required of all students prior to entering Pre-K and/or kindergarten (105 CMR 460).
- **Physicals Examination** documentation is required from students entering grades K, 4, 7 and 9, and yearly for all student athletes.

An **immunization clinic** is available for students at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center (PIC). All state-required immunizations are provided by an RN at no cost. Please refer to the WPS website for hours of operation or call the Parent Information Center at 508-799-3194.