

As of Friday, January 26, 2018, WPS enrolled 338 students evacuating from Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria. Currently 286 students are actively enrolled and attending. The other 52 students have withdrawn from the district to attend another school system. The current breakdown of enrollments by school is on the attached sheet.

City Response to Hurricane Maria Evacuees

Kate Kerr, Superintendent Binienda's Chief of Staff, is a member of the Citywide Hurricane Evacuee Working Group assembled by the Mayor and City Manager, and is comprised of an executive committee and 5 working groups: housing, health, employment, education, and community resources. Executive committee meets biweekly and the working groups meet in varying frequency based on need.

The executive committee consist of: the Mayor's Chief of Staff, the City Manager's Chief of Staff, City Councilor Sarai Rivera, the Superintendent's Chief of Staff, Tim Garvin from United Way, Gordon Hargrove, Friendly House, Ann Bureau, Worcester Community Connections, and Juan Gomez, Centro. The executive committee meets biweekly to address issues in real time and coordinate services and access to resources through the city for families as they resettle.

Ms. Kerr co-chairs the Hurricane Evacuee Education Working Group. Members of the working group include representation from: Latino Education Institute, Quinsigamond Community College, Congressman McGovern's office, the City of Worcester's the division of Youth Opportunities, Worcester Youth Center, Boys and Girls Club, and Amor Para Puerto Rico. The working group meets once a month. The goals of the working group are: share information and resources, triage/troubleshoot issues in real time, work to create short and long term recommendations for the City Manager and mayor to address.

As part of this work, the executive committee was notified on Tuesday, January 23, 2018, of potentially 40 families sheltered in three area hotels. Not all families sheltered by FEMA have school aged children. The committee, under the leadership of Councilor Rivera, assembled an outreach night by bringing community agencies to the hotel to meet with families and address needs in housing, health, education, and elder services.

Ms. Kerr met with families on Thursday, January 25, 2018, at the Marriot Residence on Plantation Street. Of the 22 families being sheltered at that hotel, only 10 were listed in the WPS SAGE database as having school-aged children. The visit brought forward many challenges families face as they resettle in the city of Worcester. This visit highlighted that as families move from doubled up, to hotels, to apartments, there addresses are not being changed/updated at the school level creating issues with transportation. Ms. Kerr met with families individually to access needs, triage transportation issues, and offered bus passes for families to attend school related meetings and appointments. Continued collaboration with agencies should reduce this confusion. She also identified several preschoolers and referred them to Head Start. Additional community agency meetings are being set up at the other hotels over the next week.

Recently, this group supported the Three Kings celebration in City Hall. It was advertised through the schools to identified hurricane refugee families from Puerto Rico. The event was well attended.

Through the community business partnership with UMass Medical School, and with the support of WEDF, UMMS held a winter clothing drive for new arrivals from PR and USVI resulting in: 1,200 coats; a total of 1,000 hats, pairs of mittens and scarves; 50 pairs of boots; and gift certificates totaling \$1,215.

In addition to the working groups, the following information was shared with community groups working with families evacuating from Puerto Rico.

The process for registration in the Worcester Public Schools is as follows:

EL ENROLLMENT PROCESS

The enrollment process at the Parent Information Center (PIC) for all Els (grades K-12) is as follows:

Secondary EL students who report to the high school first, are referred to PIC for intake, testing and registration.

Parents/guardians complete the home language survey and ethnicity forms in their home language if they choose.

Parents/guardians present birth certificate/passport, immunization (if available), transcript (if available), IEP (if available and applicable), proof of address, and ID.

All homeless students are registered if documents are not available.

Intake forms are completed with the EL Intake Parent Liaison who can interpret. Available staff are bilingual in Spanish, Arabic, Greek, Swahili, Twi and Kinyarwanda. In addition, the language translation line is available as needed to ensure parents understand.

Students are administered a language proficiency test, the WAPT or WIDA Screener, by EL office staff on site.

EL students coming from another state or town will not receive this screening if they have an ACCESS test score with an English Proficiency Level (EPL) or a WAPT score.

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) in Spanish is available at Chandler Magnet. Presently, some grade levels are currently full. The district is in the process of hiring teachers for the grades with high numbers to ensure no one is turned away that requests this type of service.

Parents are asked if their child has identified special needs, an individual Education Plan (IEP). See process below when applicable.

Registration information is sent to the receiving school via email. Students are welcome to report to their assigned school the following day if they are able. After EPL Testing and enrollment at PIC is complete, EL staff sends an email to the school including ESL teachers, principal, guidance (at the secondary level), and front office staff.

SPECIAL EDUCATION EL STUDENTS:

If the parent indicates the child has an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), and the IEP is written in Spanish, a bi-literate Spanish speaking staff member works with the coordinator to briefly summarize services to determine if they were inclusion (ex. occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language, academic support, learning disabilities) or substantially separate (developmental/social-emotional).

Translation services are available/used for IEPs in additional languages.

INCLUSION SPECIAL EDUCATION EL STUDENTS:

Students requiring inclusion services are registered by PIC to attend their home school. Principals and school Special Education Liaisons are notified of the student's educational needs.

PIC completes registration process and sends the IEP and relevant assessments to the SPED Department.

The IEP and relevant assessments are scanned and sent to the SPED office with the home language survey and brief summary of services required. The document is sent for translation through the district, which can take up to two weeks. Upon return from translation the IEP is entered into SAGE.

The special education team chair will schedule a TEAM meeting at the school to review and update the student's educational plan.

SUBSTANTIALLY SEPARATE SPECIAL EDUCATION EL STUDENTS:

When a student with profound needs (developmental/social-emotional) they are registered SPED pending.

The IEP is scanned and sent to the SPED office with the home language survey and a brief summary of services required. The document is sent for translation through the district, which can take up to two weeks. It is important to note that the process for sped pending is applied equally to all students in need of a sub-separate placement. The district does not wait for the translated documents to place the student.

The un-translated IEP is given to the appropriate SPED department head for review of school placement. The department head contacts the parent to meet with the student regarding a school placement. Typically, the meeting is set within a couple of days. The child is placed as quickly as possible in a sub-separate classroom. Placement is facilitated by the school based Evaluation Team Chair (ETC).

Notes regarding enrollment:

1. Contact with the parent at the PIC is important so that EL staff has the opportunity to explain the results of the testing, programs available, and their right to opt out of ESL support.
2. The home language survey may reflect the home language or simply another language background in the home. According to the state if another language is listed anywhere on the home language survey the district must proceed with English proficiency testing to determine whether they are or are not an EL.

Transitional Bilingual Education

The city's transitional bilingual education program, K-6, is housed at Chandler Magnet Elementary School. Parents may choose to send their children to this program. We are in the process of hiring 2 additional elementary transitional bilingual education teachers for the program and working with the principals to ensure our students have the appropriate materials.

For general education teachers, the Office of English Learners sent a list of on line, instructional resources to elementary and secondary staff in December 2017.