

April 8, 2021

IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Worcester, Massachusetts  
Thursday, April 8, 2021  
Agenda #15

The School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools met virtually in Open Session at 5:02 p.m. in Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building on Thursday, April 8, 2021.

There were present at the Call to Order:

Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Ms. McCullough, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick and Mayor Petty

There was absent: Miss Biancheria

Mayor Petty stated that the School Committee would recess into Executive Session to discuss the following items:

1. EXECUTIVE SESSION

gb #1-117 - Administration  
(March 31, 2021)

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and to conduct collective bargaining regarding Grievance #20/21-09.

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares – Coronavirus/COVID-19 Related Issues – Educational Association of Worcester, Units A & B (Educators/Administrators); Aides to the Physically Handicapped, Monitors and Drivers; Instructional Assistants; Parent Liaisons; Tutors; and Therapy Assistants.

To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares – Educational Association of Worcester and Worcester School Committee, Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations, MUP-20-8221, Bargaining Regarding Reopening.

To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares – Educational Association of Worcester and Worcester School Committee, Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations, MUP-20-8368, Interactive Process and Requests for Workplace Accommodations.

To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares – Educational Association of Worcester vs. Worcester Public Schools, Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, MCAD Docket No. 20WEM02609 and EEOC Docket No. 16C-2021-0027.

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares – Successor Contract Negotiations – Educational Association of Worcester, Units A & B (Educators/Administrators).

On a roll call, the vote to recess to Executive Session was as follows:

For the motion: Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley,	
Ms. McCullough, Mr. Monfredo,	
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6

Against the motion:	0
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Absent: Miss Biancheria	$\frac{1}{7}$
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The motion carried.

The School Committee recessed to Executive Session from 5:04 p.m. to 6:09 p.m.

The School Committee reconvened in Open Session at 6:13 p.m.

There were present at the second Call to Order:

Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Ms. McCullough, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick and Mayor Petty

Miss Biancheria was absent.

2. APPROVAL OF RECORDS

(The following items were considered together.)

aor #1-10 - Administration  
(March 31, 2021)

To consider approval of the Minutes of the School  
Committee Meeting of Monday, March 15, 2021.

aor #1-11 - Administration  
(March 31, 2021)

To consider approval of the Minutes of the School  
Committee Meeting of Thursday, March 18, 2021.

aor #1-12 - Administration  
(March 31, 2021)

To consider approval of the Minutes of the  
School Committee Meeting of Tuesday, March  
23, 2021.

On a roll call aor #1-10, aor #1-11 and aor #1-12  
were approved collectively as follows:

For the motion: Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley,  
Ms. McCullough, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Miss Biancheria  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

On a roll call, the vote it was moved to suspend  
rules to report out the action of the Standing  
Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student  
Supports was as follows:

For the motion: Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley,  
Ms. McCullough, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Miss Biancheria  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

Miss Biancheria arrived at 6:16 p.m.

3. **REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**

The Standing Committee on **Teaching, Learning and Student Supports** met at 5:34 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30, 2021 at the Durkin Administration Building in Room 410.

gb #9-288 - Mr. Comparetto/Mr. Foley/Miss McCullough/Mr. Monfredo (August 28, 2019)

Request the establishment of an inclusive and transparent process for selecting and implementing a comprehensive Sex Education Curriculum that is age-appropriate, evidence- based, medically-accurate and LGBTQ inclusive in the Worcester Public Schools.

gb #9-416 - Miss McCullough/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo (December 4, 2019)

Request that the Administration consider incorporating the campaign entitled "RESPECTfully" when the Sex Ed Curriculum is established.

gb #0-31 - Mayor Petty/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/Ms. Novick (January 8, 2020)

Request that the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports recommend a comprehensive, inclusive, evidence-based sexual and health curriculum and an appropriate level of increased classroom time for health education to the school committee for the FY21 budget.

**(These items were considered together.)**

Mr. Bersin, Curriculum Liaison/Physical Education/Heath, stated that the Worcester Public Schools' health teachers examined and rated 7 external health curricula as well as the WPS health curriculum. Mr. Bersin, Health Liaison, Ms. Denault and Ms. Capstick, health teachers, would provide an overview of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade Comprehensive Health Education Curriculum that was reviewed and rated by the health education teachers.  
<https://view.earthchannel.com/PlayerController.aspx?PGD=worceschma&eID=816>)

Ms. Capstick outlined a 9<sup>th</sup> grade health education lesson which included the following topics:

- body image to make better decisions about their bodies
- abstinence
- sexually transmitted infections
- the reproductive system
- the stages of human development and
- the stages of pregnancy

Mr. Bersin stated that the health educators are recommending a commitment to provide two full time health educators at each comprehensive high school and conducting three year-long pilot programs using selectively the curricula Get Real and Rights Respect Responsibility and by also developing its own Sexual Education Curriculum.

Dr. Ganas discussed how a pilot process is established and reviewed throughout the year. Teachers, principals, students and parents will be involved in the review process.

Chairman McCullough asked what the potential options are for piloting the two recommended curricula and the WPS curriculum in the schools.

Dr. Ganas stated the Administration, in collaboration with the principals, teachers and the liaisons, will discuss the best way to pilot the three curricula.

Chairman McCullough asked how the 54 lessons at the middle school and the 20 week lessons at the high school levels are broken-down.

Mr. Bersin stated that grades 7 and 8 have 45 classes.

Ms. Denault stated that the high school sexual education portion of the health curriculum is a 20-week one which is elective and takes about 2 to 2 ½ weeks. The teachers will teach lessons in injury prevention, mental health, substance use disorder and prevention.

Ms. Capstick stated that at the beginning of the school year, letters are sent out to parents inviting them to attend a meeting to review the different lessons. At that time, they will be given an option to opt their child(ren) out of the class if they so choose.

Mr. Foley indicated support of the proposed comprehensive, evidence-based sexual health education section of the curriculum. He asked why the Worcester Public School health curriculum was rated so poorly.

Mr. Bersin stated that the Michigan model which is used in grades 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 is accurate and evidence-based, but is not inclusive enough for students in the Worcester Public Schools.

Miss Biancheria asked if there would be a kindergarten through grade 12 sexual education section in the Health Curriculum.

Superintendent Binienda stated that there will only be sexual education classes taught in the middle and high schools. However, there will be health education classes taught from kindergarten through grade 12.

Dr. Castiel stated that the 2019 data from the State indicates that the rate of Worcester's sexually transmitted infection is higher than the state rate. She advocated that the Administration select a comprehensive sex education curriculum that is vetted by the Health and Human Services at the Federal level.

Mr. Foley requested that the Administration consider requiring a health education course for high school students in order to graduate.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the graduation requirements are already too difficult for students to fulfill and if another requirement is added, students will find it very difficult to fit it into their schedule. She also stated that five secondary level health education teachers are being hired.

Chairman McCullough stated that the public could email their questions and comments to her at [McCulloughm@worcesterschools.net](mailto:McCulloughm@worcesterschools.net) for discussion at the next Standing Committee meeting.

The following individuals spoke to their approval or disapproval of the proposed Sex Education section in the Health Curriculum of the WPS:

R. Frazier, C. Berg Powers, A. Bealer, J. Trobough, S. Rodman, Dr. Kimball, Dr. Star, N. Grigas, J. Croke,

M. Roach, K. Thompson, M. Desai, E. Sanchez, K. Pare, J. Berg Power, M. King, R. Araujo, M. Rollo, A. Kaplan and D. Arbetter

Chairman McCullough stated that there will be one or two more meetings scheduled for more discussion regarding the Sexual Education section of the Health Education Curriculum of the WPS.

Mr. Foley stated that he would like to see the Sexual Education portion of the Health Curriculum implemented in the Fall of 2021.

Chairman McCullough made the following motion:

Request that the item be held for discussion at the next meeting.

On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.

gb #9-313 - Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria /Mr. Foley/Mr. O'Connell (September 17, 2019)

Request that the Administration establish a committee by November to include early learning teachers to review the two year kindergarten 1 program for students who are four years old and lack the necessary readiness skills for school success.

Dr. O'Neil stated that the committee met to research and discuss the development of a two-year kindergarten program. The Administration recommended piloting two models and evaluating them over three years. The first pilot would be the Preschool Reggio model at the new South High Community School. The second would be a Kindergarten Co-Teaching for Developmentally Appropriate and SEL Responsive Acceleration.

Dr. Morse stated that there is a potential for an enrollment bubble at the kindergarten level. The Administration is expecting that the students that didn't enroll in kindergarten last year will enroll next year. The Administration is looking at a flex up model where students could potentially be in first grade but may need extra supports and services.

Mr. Monfredo made the following motion:

Request that the Administration forward a letter to the Local Delegation requesting additional funding for full day preschool programs.

On a roll call of 3-0, the item was approved.

Mr. Monfredo made the following motion:

Request that the Administration consider delaying or adjusting the start date for kindergarten entry age for the 2023-24 school year.

On a roll call of 2-1 (nay Mr. Foley), the motion was approved.

On a roll call of 3-0, the item was filed.

gb #0-363.1 - Administration/Ms. McCullough/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey (November 24, 2020)

Response of the Administration to the request to provide an update on Special Education testing to include the types that are taking place, the timeline updates and any other pertinent information.

On a roll call of 3-0, the item was approved and filed.

gb #1-53 - Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough/Ms. Novick (February 12, 2021)

Request that the Administration collaborate with community agencies, retired teachers and other groups, to study the feasibility of establishing a summer learning program to assist K-8 students.

Dr. O'Neil stated that new grant opportunities were announced by the State this week and plans for the 2021 summer programs have begun.

Mr. Monfredo made the following motion:

Request that the Administration provide an update in May regarding summer program possibilities and pandemic planning.

On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.

gb #1-86 - Administration (March 9, 2021)

To consider approval of the following courses:



US History Survey  
Foundations of Modern Biotechnology  
Applications of Modern Biotechnology

On a roll call of 3-0, the item was filed due to the fact that it was approved at the March 23, 2021 School Committee meeting.

### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACTION**

gb #9-313

Mr. Foley made the following amendment to Mr. Monfredo's motion:

Request that the Administration consider **exploring the impact and seek public input on a delay of** the start date for kindergarten entry age for the 2023-24 school year.

On a roll call the motion as amended was approved as follows:

For the motion: Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley,  
Ms. McCullough, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Miss Biancheria  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the amended School Committee's action of the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports was as follows:

For the motion: Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley,  
Ms. McCullough, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Miss Biancheria  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

Miss McCullough left the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

### **IMMEDIATE ACTION**

gb #1-98 - Administration  
(March 22, 2021)

To consider input from the School Committee's student representatives.

On a voice vote, the item was filed.

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### **COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS**

c&p #1-4 - Clerk  
(March 24, 2021)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Quinsigamond School's faculty and staff to donate sick days to a colleague.

c&p #1-5 - Clerk  
(March 24, 2021)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of North High School's faculty and staff to donate sick days to a colleague.

(These items were considered together.)

Mayor Petty allowed Roger Nugent, President of the EAW, and Melissa Verdier to speak regarding donating sick time to a colleague. They requested that the School Committee approve the sick days from the teachers to be transferred to their colleague.

Mayor Petty made the following motions:

Request that the items be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues to be discussed at the next meeting.

Request that the Administration provide enough sick days from the faculty at Quinsigamond and North High schools until such time as the item is discussed at the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues and voted on at the School Committee meeting on May 6, 2021.

On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Ms. McCullough), the motions were approved.

On a roll call, the vote to refer the items to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee issues were as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,  
Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Ms. McCullough  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

6. **IMMEDIATE ACTION**

gb #1-85.1 - Administration/Administration  
(March 24, 2021)

To recognize Nhi Huynh, a junior at North High School, for being selected as a City of Worcester 2021 Young Women of Consequence recipient and for having her selected photograph included in the 2021 Massachusetts Amazing Emerging Artists High School Recognitions Exhibit.

Ms. Houlihan, Principal and Ms. Mulcahy, teacher at North High School discussed the many accomplishments of Nhi Huynh by stating that she is:

- number two in her class
- artist of the Week on March 22nd
- an active member of the Vietnamese community
- a tutor to 5 students
- an advocate for family members new to the country
- an active member of the National Honor Society
- a member of Student Council
- a research assistant for WPI's RAMP program

On a roll call, the vote to recognize Nhi Huynh and file the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,  
Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Ms. McCullough  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

7. **REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

ros #1-6 -Administration  
(March 26, 2021)

UPDATE ON 2020 DROPOUT AND GRADUATION  
RATES

gb #1-105 - Mr. Monfredo (March 25, 2021)

Request that the Administration review the newly released graduation and dropout rates for the Worcester Public Schools.

(These items were considered together.)

Ms. Kuriacose discussed the 2020 overall dropout and graduation rates. She stated that the data that is provided in the PowerPoint can be found on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website.

Graduation Rate Data

Most subgroup graduation rates increased from 2019 to 2020, but the graduation rate for students with disabilities had a slight decrease. The student groups that are performing below the overall graduation rates are economically disadvantaged students who are Hispanic and Latino, English Learners and students with disabilities. Worcester's overall graduation rate has been lower than the State's rate from year to year but that gap has been decreasing. The English learner graduation rate for four years has surpassed the State's graduation rate and the four year graduation rate for students with disabilities was lower than the State's overall graduation rate. The graduation rate for the Hispanic and Latino students was higher than the state's graduation rate. Worcester's four year graduation rate is higher than other urban districts across Massachusetts.

Dropout Rate Data

The dropout rate is the percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 who dropped out between July 1 through June 30 of the 2019-20 school year and those who didn't return by October 1, 2020.

- Worcester's 2020 overall dropout rate was slightly above the State's average.
- The English learners dropout rate was significantly lower than the State and

- The students with disabilities and the Hispanic and Latino student's dropout rate is slightly lower than the State.

Worcester's dropout rate was significantly lower than most urban districts in Massachusetts.

Current District Activities to Improve Graduation and Dropout Rates:

- Panorama Student Success Dashboard to monitor "at-risk" status
- After school and summer programming
- College & Career Readiness curriculum
- Post-Secondary Success work through the BARR Foundation Grant
- EL Dropout Task Force
- Seal of Biliteracy expansion
- Dual Language program expansion
- Leveraging UDL and Co-Teaching instructional practices
- Attendance and Discipline Task Forces

Mr. Foley stated that the Administration should pay close attention to the graduation rates for the students with disabilities. He asked if those students were staying in high school longer than age 18.

Ms. Kuriacose stated that the DESE reports for graduation rates tell what percentage of students in each group have remained in school the following school year. The percentage for students with disabilities was 13.9 percent for the class of 2019 and 19.4 percent for the class of 2020. Therefore, students with disabilities are documented as staying in school longer instead of graduating.

Mr. Foley stated that the Administration should also keep track of the English learners dropout rate.

Ms. Kuriacose stated that the MCAS seems to be a significant barrier for a lot of new EL students. The Administration suggested that the modified competency determination could have had a large part in some of EL data specifically for that reason.

Ms. Biancheria asked if the Administration would provide a brief summary of the process used when students drop out of school and indicate what services are provided to them.

Superintendent Binienda indicated that the Administration contacts the parent and tries to find a solution for them. If a student drops out to support

their family, it is suggested that they attend evening classes at the Gerald Creamer Center.

Ms. Biancheria made the following motion:

Request that the Administration provide a report in a Friday Letter for the last two years on the number of students who:

- dropped out of school
- attended the Gerald Creamer Center or
- returned the following year.

On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Ms. McCullough), the motion was approved.

Ms. Novick asked if the Administration could provide the data regarding new English learner students who would possibly not be able to pass the MCAS but did but did graduate due to the approval of the modified competency determination. She further requested that the Administration forward a letter to the Board of Education stating that it has created an artificial barrier to English learners, in particular those who are newcomers.

Mayor Petty suggested that the data be presented at a Standing Committee meeting prior to forwarding a letter to the state.

Ms. Novick made the following motion:

Request that the Administration provide the data regarding new English learner students who would possibly not be able to pass the MCAS but did but did graduate due to the approval of the modified competency determination. It was further requested that the motion be referred to the Standing Committee on School and Student Performance.

On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Ms. McCullough), the motion was approved.

On a roll call, the vote to file ros #1-6 and gb #1-105 were as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
Against the motion:	0
Absent: Ms. McCullough	<u>1</u>

The motion carried.

### **REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES**

8. The Standing Committee on **Governance and Employee Issues** met virtually on Monday, March 22, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 410 at the Durkin Administration Building.

#### c&p #1-1 - Clerk (December 28, 2020)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Burncoat High School's faculty and staff to donate accrued sick time to a colleague.

Mrs. Clancey made the following motion:

Request that the Instructional Assistant be granted the sick time from the faculty of Burncoat High School in accordance with her doctor's orders.

On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.

On a roll call of 3-0, the item was filed.

#### c&p #1-2 - Clerk (February 17, 2021)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Gates Lane School's faculty and staff to donate sick days to a colleague.

Roger Nugent, President of the EAW, stated that the Instructional Assistant will not be able to return to work until the Fall.

Ms. Clancey asked if the number of sick days that were donated are enough to get the Instructional Assistant through the time until she returns to work.

Mr. Nugent stated that colleagues donated one sick day each which will get the Instructional Assistant through the school year.

#### c&p #1-2 (continued)

Mrs. Clancey made the following motion:

Request that the Instructional Assistant be granted the sick time through the remainder of the 2021 school year from the faculty of Gates Lane School.

On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.

On a roll call of 3-0, the item was filed.

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.

Mrs. Clancey stated that the members of the Standing Committee of Governance and Employee Issues would serve as the Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

Mrs. Clancey made the following motion:

Request that the Rules of the School Committee be forwarded to all members for their review in order to submit suggested changes to the Clerk of the School Committee for discussion as its next meeting.

On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.

Ms. Novick suggested that the recommendations that were in the 2017 report from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education be forwarded to the School Committee members and be included as backup for the item.

Mr. Monfredo requested that the Standing Committee members also consider proposed changes from Administration.

**(Consider gb0-59 and gb0-210 together.)**

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

To rewrite the Worcester Public Schools' Student Dress Code.

gb #0-223 - Administration (July 6, 2020)



To consider amendments to the current Student Dress Code Policy to be included in the Student Handbook and the Policy Manual.

Mr. Monfredo stated that there should be no change to the current Dress Code Policy.

Ms. Novick stated that the district should adopt the Seattle Public School's Dress Code Policy.

Superintendent Binienda stated disapproval of the Seattle Dress Code Policy and indicated that the Administration, teachers and students on the Superintendent's Advisory Committee reviewed and approved for adoption of the current Dress Code Policy.

Mrs. Clancey stated that she was in favor of moving forward with the current Dress Code Policy.

Ms. Clancey made the following motion:

Request that the current Dress Code Policy remain unchanged and file items gb#0-59 and gb#0-233.

On a roll call of 2-1 (nay Ms. Novick), the motion was approved.

gb #0-230 - Administration (July 7, 2020)

To consider approval of the proposed 2020-21 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

On a roll call of 3-0, the item was filed.

gb #0-264 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (August 17, 2020)

Consider and redraft as necessary the policies and associated sections of the student handbook considered by "Pandemic Policy Specific for Back to School."

Mrs. Clancey made the following motion:

Request that the item be filed.

On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.

gb #0-368 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (November 23, 2020)

To create Worcester School Committee operational norms.

Mr. Monfredo suggested review of the norms from the Massachusetts Association of School Committee and consider possible amendment for the following year.

Mrs. Clancey made the following motion:

Request that pages 6, 7 and 8 of Annex B of the backup be forwarded to School Committee to fill out and forward back to the Clerk of the School Committee to be discussed at a future meeting of the Standing Committee.

On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.

Mr. Monfredo requested that Annex A of the backup be forwarded to School Committee members.

Mrs. Clancey requested that Ms. Novick forward to the Clerk of the School Committee the norms that she has from other school districts.

gb #1-35 - Administration (January 25, 2021)

To consider approval of the proposed 2021-22 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

Ms. Novick made the following motion:

Request that the last sentence in the first paragraph be deleted under Rule 14 – Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Laser Pointing Devices as follows:

**Rule 14. - Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Laser Pointing Devices**

While on school premises or at a school sponsored event during the school day, a student shall not, without expressed permission of appropriate school personnel, use any cell phone, smart phone, tablet, camera or any other type of electronic device which may potentially be disruptive of school activities or a distraction to students. Electronic devices shall include any cell phone, smart phone, tablet or anything powered by electricity and is suitable for communicating any oral, voice, audio or text messages or postings or for recording or communicating any audio, voice, picture, image or video imagery. **Students are not permitted to have their cell phones or electronic devices while in school unless permitted by a school staff member.**

On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.

On a roll call of 3-0, pages 0 through 33 in the Student Handbook were approved as amended.

gb #1-50 - Ms. McCullough/Miss Biancheria//Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/  
Mr. Monfredo (January 25, 2021)

Request that the Administration review camera use procedures regarding privacy, legal and family contract options.

Attorney Tobin stated in her backup that the district does not require that cameras be turned on due to privacy issues. However, she stated that the Administration would like all students to turn their cameras on for attendance purposes.

Mrs. Clancey made the following motion:

Request that the Administration encourage students to have their cameras on during class and draft a Camera Policy for students to have their cameras on during attendance.

On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.

HOLD

### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACTION**

gb #0-59  
gb #0-223

Mrs. Clancey made the following motion:

Request that gb #0-59 and gb #0-223 be held for discussion at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues on April 27, 2021.

On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Ms. McCullough), the motion was approved.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the amended School Committee's action of the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,

Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty

6

Against the motion:

0

Absent: Ms. McCullough

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The motion carried.

9. The Standing Committee on **School and Student Performance** met virtually on Monday, March 29, 2021 at 4:34 p.m. in Room 410 at the Durkin Administration Building.

gb #1-92 - Mr. Monfredo (March 10, 2021)

Request that the Administration establish an advisory committee to include personnel, community representatives and experts in the field of student health to discuss a later starting time for secondary students, or move the time forward by 30 minutes for everyone.

Motion gb #1-3 - Mr. Monfredo (January 7, 2021)

Request that the Administration consider forming a committee to study the feasibility of changing the secondary school start time to 8:00 a.m. and provide a report to the full committee in the first week of March.

(These items were considered together.)

Chairman Novick and Mr. Monfredo referenced studies performed over decades on the subject of later secondary start times and the positive impact on student performance. Some conclusions were:

- improved attendance rates
- decreased tardiness
- increased standardized test scores
- decreased automobile accidents
- decreased depression
- improved mental health
- decreased substance abuse and
- decreased health issues

Superintendent Binienda provided examples of situations that could potentially be impacted by a later start time which include:

- Innovation Pathways Program at WTHS

- travel to sporting events
- secondary students responsible for younger siblings after school
- Early College classes and
- transportation

Mrs. Clancey asked if there was any data on the impact of later start times at Sullivan and Forest Grove middle schools. Mrs. Kuriacose stated that an analysis could be done, but due to the different demographics, culture and climate at those schools, the results may not necessarily reflect that the data is due to the later start time.

Vice-Chairman Biancheria requested that students and teachers provide their feedback on the issue.

Chairman Novick made the following motions:

Request that the Administration provide a list of the ending times of all schools within the sporting leagues that WPS teams compete against.

Request that the Administration conduct a student survey to include the following:

- How many secondary students are responsible for younger siblings after school?
- How many students work after school and provide the shift times?

Vice-Chairman Biancheria made the following motions:

Request that the Administration provide a list containing a random sampling of secondary school start times for schools in Massachusetts and the other five states in New England.

Request that the Administration provide a list of the elementary dismissal times.

On a collective roll call of 3-0, the motions were approved.

### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACTION**

gb #1-92  
Motion gb #1-3

Ms. Novick made the following amendment to her motion:

Request that the Administration conduct a student survey to include the following:

- the number of secondary students who are responsible for younger siblings **or relatives** after school
- the number of students who work after school and provide the shift times

On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Ms. McCullough), the motion was approved.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the amended School Committee's action of the Standing Committee on School and Student Performance was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
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Against the motion:	0
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Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
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The motion carried.

#### 10. **PERSONNEL**

- 1-14 The Superintendent has APPROVED the RETIREMENT of the person named below:  
Brian, Dara, teacher at Worcester East Middle School, effective March 12, 2021

On a roll call, the vote to file Personnel item 1-14 was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
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Against the motion:	0
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Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
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The motion carried.

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

11. gb #0-286.7 - Administration/Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/

April 8, 2021

Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough/Mr.  
Monfredo/Ms. Novick  
(March 22, 2021)

To provide a brief update on COVID-19 and remote learning.

gb #1-100 - Mr. Monfredo  
(March 19, 2021)

Request that the Administration provide a report at each meeting on the COVID-19 statistics to include:

the number of students  
the number of staff (schools impacted)  
the number of students involved in sports

gb #1-112 - Miss Biancheria  
(March 31, 2021)

Request that the Administration provide a report on the newly implemented COVID-19 program for testing of students.

**(These items were considered together.)**

Superintendent Binienda stated that during the week of March 26 through April 1<sup>st</sup>, there were 7 staff members that tested positive for COVID-19, one teacher was remote and the other 6 were in the school buildings. Seventeen staff members were in close contact with someone who had COVID-19 and needed to be quarantined. Forty-six students have tested positive for COVID-19, thirty-nine were remote and seven were in the school buildings and one needed to be quarantined. During the week of April 2<sup>nd</sup> through April 8<sup>th</sup>, there were 10 staff members who tested positive for COVID-19, one staff member was remote, nine were in the school buildings and fifteen were quarantined. Forty students tested positive for COVID-19, thirteen were remote, twenty-seven in the school buildings and six quarantined.

Mr. Pezzella provided a brief overview of the COVID-19 protocol and the notification program in place at the schools. The response team is monitoring the statistics closely to prevent the spread of it.

Superintendent Binienda stated that hybrid learning is going well and students are happy to be back in the classrooms. The Administration is prepared for

the last group of students to return to school on May 3, 2021.

Mayor Petty asked how many school buildings were impacted by individuals who contacted COVID-19.

Mr. Pezzella stated that almost every school had at least one case documented.

Miss Biancheria asked if the Administration could provide a brief summary of the Family Health Center's testing program.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the Administration continues to meet with members from the Family Health Center to review what has happened during the week and how they can improve the COVID-19 procedures. Once a student is suspected to have COVID-19, the parents are notified to pick the student up and a referral to the Family Health Center is given to the parent. The sooner a child is tested, the quicker contact tracing can be done.

Mr. Pezzella stated that only one game was cancelled since the opening of the sports season.

Ms. Novick requested that the Administration provide weekly clear COVID-19 case numbers on the website, reminding staff members of the mask protocol and make accommodations for students who celebrate Ramadan which starts the week of April 12, 2021.

Superintendent Binienda stated that a message goes out to teachers weekly reminding them of the mask protocol and that she would forward an email to principals and teachers requesting they make accommodations for students celebrating Ramadan.

Mayor Petty asked how many parents/students have responded to the remote learning survey.

Superintendent Binienda stated that approximately 11,247 have responded to it out of 16,000 students. Principals will be calling the families who have not responded to inquire if their child(ren) will be returning to hybrid learning. There are approximately 5,800 surveys that need to be filled out. If a parent/student fills out the survey after the deadline, that student will be put on a waiting list to return to school.



April 8, 2021

Ms. Novick requested that gb #0-286.7 be included on the April 15, 2021 agenda.

On a roll call, the vote to hold gb #0-286.7 for the meeting of April 15, 2021 and refer gb #1-100 and gb #1-112 to the Administration were as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,  
Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Ms. McCullough  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

gb #1-82.1 - Administration/Mr. Monfredo  
(March 31, 2021)

Response of the Administration to the request to consider a kindergarten 2 class for those students not ready for grade 1 and provide an update in the first week of May.

On a roll call, the vote to file the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,  
Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Ms. McCullough  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

gb #1-99 - Administration  
(March 19, 2021)

To review, for informational purposes the Job Description for a Building Automation System Controls Coordinator.

Ms. Novick made the following amendment to the item:

**Request that the School Committee approve** the Job Description for a Building Automation System Controls Coordinator.

On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Ms. McCullough), the motion was approved.

On a roll call, the item as amended was approved as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
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Against the motion:	0
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Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
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The motion carried.

gb #1-101 - Mr. Foley  
(March 23, 2021)

To discuss the use of school buses operated solely on electric power either through acquisition, conversion or a combination of both.

On a roll call, the vote to refer the item to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
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Against the motion:	0
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Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
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The motion carried.

gb #1-102 - Miss Biancheria  
(March 23, 2021)

Request that the Administration discuss with the City's Department of Public Works the overhead bridge near Belmont Community School about cleaning the surrounding areas of both the entrance and exit ramps including the painting/art work.

Miss Biancheria stated that Worcester Public Schools should work in partnership with the City of Worcester to clean, paint and maintain the bridge near Belmont Community School.

On a roll call, the vote to refer the item to the Administration was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,  
Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Ms. McCullough  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

gb #1-103 - Ms. McCullough  
(March 25, 2021)

To set a date to recognize the following staff, teachers  
and Administrators of the Worcester UNITES  
program:

**Coaches**

Burncoat High School

Isabella Montalvo

Elijah Villanueva

Dorneles

Riley West

Scott Zalomis

Worcester Technical High School

Vera Kacevich

North High School

Raven Falcon

Rafael Magalhaes Santos

**Teachers**

Burncoat High School

Jeff Conner

North High School

Jacob Gross

Jeremy Zglobicki

Lincoln Street School

Joanne Daly

**Administrators**

Burncoat Middle School

Margarita Baez

North High School

Mike Cardin

**Program Manager** - Lisa Leach

On a roll call, the vote to set the date of Thursday,  
May 6, 2021 was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,  
Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Ms. McCullough  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

gb #1-104 - Ms. McCullough  
(March 25, 2021)

To explore the feasibility of including recess for students in grades seven and eight.

On a roll call, the vote to hold the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
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Against the motion:	0
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Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
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The motion carried.

gb #1-106 - Administration  
(March 25, 2021)

To consider approval of the following courses:

- Introduction to Gender Studies Computer Science for Innovators and Makers
- Freshman Advancement and Success Tools 1-4
- Latin American Studies
- Music Production & Engineering Intro to Dance Non-Magnet
- Integrated Theater
- Performing Arts Teaching Assistant
- Peace Building Computer Science for Innovators and Makers
- Introduction to Materials Science
- Spanish Language & Literature Level 3

Ms. Novick stated that the Administration should set deadlines for submitting new courses so they can be properly referred to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the Administration is aware of the process for the referral of courses but teachers put the requests for the new courses in later than expected.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the courses and refer the item to Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports to discuss the proper recommendations of course approvals was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo,
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April 8, 2021

Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
Against the motion:	0
Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
The motion carried.	

gb #1-107 - Administration  
(March 25, 2021)

To approve the following prior fiscal year payments:

1. \$5,897.40 to MacMillan Holdings, LLC.
2. \$4,012.40 to Follett School Solutions, Inc.
3. \$409.84 to Pocket Nurse Enterprises, Inc.
4. \$41,015.04 to a Special Education parent for tuition payments for FY19 and FY20.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
Against the motion:	0
Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
The motion carried.	

gb #1-108 - Administration  
(March 31, 2021)

To accept the Grant from FY20 Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grants for ESOL-Enhanced Training and Placement Programs.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
Against the motion:	0
Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
The motion carried.	

gb #1-109 - Administration  
(March 31, 2021)

To review, for informational purposes, the Job Description for a Director of Payroll, Procurement, and Accounts Payable Services.

Ms. Novick made the following amendment to the item:

**Request that the School Committee approve** the Job Description for a Director of Payroll, Procurement, and Accounts Payable Services.

On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Ms. McCullough), the motion was approved.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the item as amended was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
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Against the motion:	0
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Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
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The motion carried.

gb #1-110 - Ms. Novick  
(March 31, 2021)

Request administration provide an update on student transportation.

Ms. Novick asked what the contractual agreement is for paying Durham School Services and their provision of services.

Mr. Allen stated that due to the anticipation of the return to school model, which was originally scheduled for January 25th, the system started paying Durham School Services on December 1, 2020. This allowed them to get the busses inspected, their drivers back on schedule and everything they would need to begin transporting students. The system began paying for the drivers on January 4, 2021. The Administration continued to meet weekly with representatives from Durham School Services to discuss the numbers of drivers that they have available to the Worcester Public Schools which can range from 139 to 147 drivers. He also stated that more information will be provided on this topic at the meeting of the Standing

Committee on Finance and Operations on Monday, April 12, 2021.

Ms. Novick asked what the payment structure was in regards to reimbursements from Durham School Services.

Mr. Allen stated that the agreement that was reached with Durham School Services was that the system would pay them no less than 50 percent of the 138 contracted busses. The intent of that method was to ensure some stability while schools were fully remote. On January 4, 2021, the system paid 77 percent of the daily rate which also guaranteed that the drivers got paid. The Worcester Public Schools is using fewer busses than anticipated. Therefore, the school system does receive some savings. The Administration's biggest challenge was combining bus routes which increased ridership on some busses. The planning for the students to return to school on May 3rd is going to be critical. Based on students' selection of returning to school or remaining remote the system to know the number of busses needed. The Administration has requested that Durham School Services provide, at the meeting on Tuesday the number of busses they can commit for May 3, 2021.

M. Foley asked if the Worcester Public Schools would be reimbursed from Durham School Services for the 13 weeks and the 36 bus driver vacancies that the system started paying for on January 4, 2021.

Mr. Allen stated that Durham School Services had submitted copies of their payroll which were verified during those weeks. The Administration is working with the Law Department to change the wording of the contract.

Mayor Petty requested that the Administration provide a detailed report regarding the current bus routes, the pickup and drop off bus stops and how many students missed the bus.

Mr. Foley stated that Mr. Allen would be providing that information for the meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations on Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup> and it would be reported out at the full School Committee meeting on Thursday, May 6, 2021.

On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Ms. McCullough), the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations.

gb #1-111 - Mayor Petty  
(March 31, 2021)

To consider an amendment to number 29 of the School Committee Rules as follows:

- The Clerk of the School Committee will forward by blind carbon copy the items for the agenda for each School Committee meeting to the School Committee members on the Wednesday prior to each Friday's delivery inquiring as to interest in co-sponsoring the various items on the agenda.
- The School Committee members will complete a form and forward it back to the Clerk of the School Committee on or before the Monday prior to each meeting by putting their initials next to the item(s) they wish to co-sponsor.
- The Mayor will read the names of the co-sponsor(s) for each item prior to its discussion at each School Committee meeting.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the item as amended was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
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Against the motion:	0
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Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
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The motion carried.

gb #1-113 - Miss Biancheria  
(March 31, 2021)

Request that the Administration review the handling of breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria, classroom, pick up or brought in.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the protocol for how breakfast and lunches are handled varies from school to school but students can pick up their breakfast as they walk into the school building and go to their classroom to eat it. If the students eat lunches in the cafeteria, there are chairs marked "do not sit here" to maintain proper distancing. The



students can also eat lunch at their desk and are encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands before eating.

Mr. Monfredo requested that the Administration consider having the grounds crew help with mowing lawns at school buildings where there is only one custodian.

On a roll call, the vote to file the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
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Against the motion:	0
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Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
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The motion carried.

gb #1-114 - Miss Biancheria (March 31, 2021)

Request that the Administration review the sites for high school graduations and include the dates and times.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the middle school graduations will be held at Foley Stadium and the high school ones will be held at Polar Park. The following are the dates and times for the graduations:

Middle Schools at Foley Stadium:

Sullivan Middle School – Friday, June 11, 2021 at 1:00 PM

Worcester East Middle - Friday, June 11, 2021 at 9:00 AM

Claremont Academy (8) - Monday, June 14, 2021 at 12:00 PM

University Park Campus (Grade 8) - Monday June 14, 2021 at 9:00 AM

Forest Grove Middle - Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 9:00 AM

Burncoat Middle School - Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 1:00 PM

High Schools at Polar Park

Doherty Memorial High School - Monday, June 7, 2021 at 6:00 PM

South High Community School - Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Burncoat High School - Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Worcester Technical High School - Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 6:00 PM

North High School - Friday, June 11, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Claremont Academy (12) - Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Gerald Creamer Center - Sunday, June 13, 2021 at 10:00 AM

University Park Campus School - Sunday, June 13, 2021 at 4:00 PM

St. Casimir – Friday, June 11, 2021 at 2:00 PM in a private room at Polar Park.

Superintendent Binienda stated that, if it should rain during the middle school graduations, another time and/or date will be scheduled. If it rains during a high school graduation, parents are asked to bring an umbrella and students will be brought inside where the graduation will commence and be broadcasted out to the field to a large screen.

On a roll call, the vote to filed the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
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Against the motion:	0
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Absent: Ms. McCullough	$\frac{1}{7}$
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The motion carried.

gb #1-115 - Mrs. Clancey  
(March 31, 2021)

Request that the Administration provide an update on transitioning high schools back to 5 day in-person learning.

On a roll call, the vote to refer the item to the Administration was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
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Against the motion: 0

Absent: Ms. McCullough  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

gb #1-116 - Mrs. Clancey  
(March 31, 2021)

Request that the Administration consider renaming the bullying hotline or establishing a separate line of communication to provide a safe and confidential reporting line for students to anonymously report incidents.

On a roll call, the vote to refer the item to the Administration was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,  
Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Ms. McCullough  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

Mayor Petty stated that it is the Regional Environmental Council's birthday celebration on Saturday from 8:00 to 2:00 p.m.

On a roll call 6-0-1 (absent Ms. McCullough), it was moved to

On a roll call, the vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,  
Mr. Foley, Mr. Monfredo,  
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Ms. McCullough  $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

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