

IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Worcester, Massachusetts
Wednesday, April 8, 2020
Agenda #14

In order to participate in all future public meetings in the Esther Howland Chamber, please call 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 735751404) to participate.

The School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools met in Open Session at 12:30 p.m. in the Esther Howland Chamber at City Hall on Wednesday, April 8, 2020.

The Pledge of Allegiance was offered.

There were present at the Call to Order:

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

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

Executive Session 1.

gb #0-135 - Administration
(April 6, 2020)

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.

On a roll call, the vote was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick,
Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: 0
7

The motion carried.

There were present at the Call to Order:

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

On a roll call of 7-0, the School Committee recessed to Executive Session from 12:30 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The School Committee reconvened in Open Session at 1:04 p.m.

There were present at the second Call to Order:

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was offered.

There were present at the second Call to Order:

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

2. Pursuant to action taken in Executive Session, it was moved to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement between the School Committee and the Educational Association of Worcester, Units A & B regarding Coronavirus-related negotiations.

Memorandum of Agreement/Units A & B

On a roll call of 7-0, the Memorandum of Agreement was approved.

3. Pursuant to action taken in Executive Session, it was moved to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement between the School Committee and the Educational Association of Worcester, Aides to the Physically Handicapped, Monitors and Drivers Unit regarding Coronavirus-related negotiations.

Memorandum of Agreement/Aides to the Physically Handicapped, Monitors and Drivers Unit

On a roll call of 7-0, the Memorandum of Agreement was approved.

Memorandum of Agreement/
Instructional Assistants Unit,
Parent Liaison Unit,
Therapy Assistant Unit, and
Tutors Unit

4. Pursuant to action taken in Executive Session, it was moved to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement between the School Committee and the Educational Association of Worcester, Instructional Assistants Unit, Parent Liaison Unit, Therapy Assistant Unit, and Tutors Unit (collectively referred to herein as the "ESP Units") regarding Coronavirus-related negotiations.

On a roll call of 7-0, the Memorandum of Agreement was approved.

GENERAL BUSINESS

April Vacation/
consider
cancellation of

5. gb #0-136 - Administration
(April 6, 2020)

To consider the cancellation of the upcoming April vacation.

Superintendent Binienda stated that teachers were asked, through a survey from the EAW, if they would be willing to work through April vacation (April 21, 22, 23 and 24) and end the school year on June 12, 2020. This survey will be finalized at 4:00 p.m. on April 8, 2020. At this point, prior to the final tally, there is an overwhelming response from the teachers that they are in favor of this change.

Ms. Novick questioned why the Administration would change the end of the school year date from June 18th to June 12th when there would not be enough instructional days to meet the requirement of the State. She further stated that she would like to know if there is a contractual agreement for this change.

Superintendent Binienda stated that if the teachers work during the April vacation and the last day of school is June 18th it would be adding four additional days to the work year.

Ms. Novick stated that it is her understanding that in the teachers' contract they are paid for 183 instructional days. The Memorandum of Agreement was just reinstated on Monday, April 6, 2020 when the teachers have been already out two weeks prior to this.

Mr. Allen stated that if the system keeps the end of school date as June 18, 2020, that would cost the system approximately 1 million dollars a day to pay the teachers.

Ms. Novick stated that the two weeks were considered work days not instructional time and she feels this is a contractual issue.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the addition of the four days at the end of the school year would have a significant financial impact on the system. In addition, teachers continued to provide instructional support to students during the start of the shutdown. In summary, the EAW has forwarded the survey to all teachers, principals and staff regarding working through April vacation and ending the school year on June 12, 2020.

Ms. Novick requested that her colleagues vote on the cancellation of April vacation not on the June 12, 2020 date to end the school year. She further stated she would like a legal opinion on the contract terms for the last day of school and whether or not it is a negotiable issue.

Mayor Petty agreed that a legal opinion should be sought. He also stated that teachers were providing instruction for the last few weeks and that they were under the assumption that they were working under their contract terms.

Miss Biancheria stated that if the School Committee only votes on half of the agreement with the EAW then it will have to schedule another meeting to vote on the last date of school. She further stated that the survey that, was forwarded to all teachers, included working during the April vacation and changing the final day of school to June 12th rather than June 18th.

Mr. Foley stated that he agrees that the WPS needs more instructional time but his understanding was that during the first two weeks of the shutdown, the teachers were doing voluntary instructional time for which they were paid. Therefore, he believes that those days count as instructional days in the contract. He further stated that if four additional days were added, it would have a financial impact on the system.

Mayor Petty stated that it was also his understanding, with the agreement from the EAW, to have the teachers work through April vacation and have June 12, 2020, as the end of the school year.

Mrs. Clancey asked the Administration when the survey would be completed and Superintendent Binienda indicated that it will be finalized at 4:00 p.m. During the meeting Roger Nugent President of the EAW informed her that 93% of the teachers voted to work during April vacation for this year only and end the school on June 12th.

Mayor Petty made the following motion:

Request that the School Committee vote to cancel the April vacation which extends from Tuesday April 21, 2020 through Friday, April 24, 2020 and to end the school year on June 12, 2020 rather than June 18, 2020.

On a roll call of 7-0, the motion was approved.

Ms. Novick asked for clarification that Friday, April 10, 2020 will still be considered a vacation day.

Superintendent Binienda stated that Friday is a vacation day and that all the principals and teachers were notified and asked to notify parents and students.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

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