

IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
 Worcester, Massachusetts
 Thursday, July 2, 2020
 Agenda #21

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 5:03 p.m. in the Esther Howland Chamber at City Hall on Thursday, July 2, 2020.

There were present at the Call to Order:

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

GENERAL BUSINESS

Mayor Petty made the following motion:

Request that all three agenda items (gb #0-214.1, gb #0-218 and gb #0-219) be taken collectively.

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

American
 Association of
 School
 Administrators/
 Association of
 School Business
 Officials/cost
 analysis

1. gb #0-214.1 -Administration/Ms. Novick/
 Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/
 Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo
 (June 10, 2020)

Response of the Administration to the request to review the cost analysis of June 8, 2020 prepared by the American Association of School Administrators and the Association of School Business Officials, International, regarding the potential costs of reopening schools.

Mr. Allen began by detailing the terms of the cost analysis done by the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) and the School Superintendents Association (AASA) to reopen schools. He highlighted the costs that will be needed for supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which would be approximately 12.7 million dollars. The estimated cost for a twelve week supply of PPE for the district would be 2.9 million dollars. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

(DESE) provided a draft budget totaling 9.5 million dollars. Based on an October 2020 enrollment estimates the district may be eligible for 5.6 million dollars from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CvRF). Additionally, 40 million dollars in competitive federal funding and grants would be available.

2. gb #0-219 - Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/
Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley
Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo/
Ms. Novick
(June 26, 2020) Budget Update

To consider a budget update.

Mr. Allen stated that the State Budget will not be completed until the end of July. He referenced an article which stated that the Baker Administration advised cities and towns to expect their local aid payments for the beginning of FY21 to match FY20 levels. Two major elements, income tax filing deadline, to get a better sense of what state revenue will look like and the fourth stimulus care package, which will provide guidance on how the district could spend the revenue will impact the numbers.

Three different scenarios were presented that included:

- cuts (a \$45 million deficit)
- level funding (staying at the same level as the previous school year) or
- increases (based on enrollment and inflation rates).

Mayor Petty asked about potential layoffs to which Mr. Allen replied that, from a financial perspective, there is not enough information to address layoffs at this time, but from a collective bargaining standpoint, it may be something to refer to Attorney Sweeney.

Mayor Petty made the following motion:

Request that the item relative to layoffs be referred to Attorney Sweeney.

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

Ms. Novick asked if the Administration has done any of its own estimates regarding facilities, busing and space.

Mr. Allen responded that the Administration is waiting for guidance on what school bus loads may look like assuming that there will be 20 students per bus and a way in which to deal with a national bus driver shortage. As to facilities, he stated that there are 1900 classrooms and measuring the square footage of each of those classrooms will give the Administration a benchmark as to the number of students that could be in the class. Due to the fact that many classrooms have different furniture, it makes it difficult to maintain a distance between students of six feet.

Superintendent Binienda stated that some districts are proposing three feet apart for distance and she asked for guidance from the School Committee on that proposal.

Mr. Foley felt that the survey presented underestimated the costs for custodians, partitions and ventilation which he believes would increase the budget dramatically.

Miss Biancheria asked how the district is accessing PPE.

Mr. Allen stated that the district is going out to bid for state contracts to procure the twelve week supply of PPE.

Miss Biancheria made the following motion:

Request that the Administration study the feasibility of partnering with the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) in order to add bus routes.

Mayor Petty suggested that it would be more appropriate to hold the motion until the next meeting.

Reopening of Schools 3.

gb #0-218 - Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/
Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley
Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo/
Ms. Novick
(June 26, 2020)

To consider plans for the reopening of schools.

Superintendent Binienda outlined the School Reopening Activities List by discussing the following:

- Facilities
- Transportation
- Nutrition
- District Administration and
- COVID-19 Training

The facilities reopening plan starts with the creating of templates of classrooms in order for principals to assess how many students can fit in a classroom. All furniture has to be removed from the classroom and only the teacher's desk and students' desks and chairs may remain. The summer cleaning, needed PPE and cleaning schedules are also part of the facilities plan. Superintendent Binienda, Mr. Pezzella, Mr. Bedard and Mr. Allen met to evaluate the plan for plexiglass barriers starting with the Parent Information Center.

Transportation plans will be determined once there is guidance from DESE.

Superintendent Binienda stated that a survey will be sent out to find out exactly how many parents are planning to send their children back to school. It is imperative that parents answer this survey which will be translated into eight languages. A video is being developed that will explain, in the eight languages, the importance of answering the survey. The Administration will be working with community agencies to help get the message out to all families.

The Nutrition plan will be determined by the decision to return full time or the implementation of the hybrid model.

The Administration is evaluating whether to continue to rent out building space and/or have outside programs in WPS buildings.

The COVID-19 Training has begun with videos presented to custodians and staff. There is also an email address established for families, the public and WPS staff to submit questions or concerns regarding the reopening of school. The email address is COVID-19@worcesterschools.net.

The Superintendent read the names of the chairs of the Working Group Committees and encouraged School Committee members and parents to join the groups.

She stressed that the Administration has to look at all three models for reopening in order to submit its findings to the Commissioner by the first week of August.

The last backup that was presented focused on the Learning Accelerator and Ariadne Labs which is working in partnership with the One 8 Foundation. Eight districts were invited to participate in the project which will focus on working with faculty, parents and community groups to develop best practices for the safe reopening of school for students and staff. One elementary, one middle and one high school will participate.

Mayor Petty suggested focusing on the hybrid model as much as possible and still submit the results of the other models to DESE.

Ms. McCullough agreed that the hybrid model should be the focus. She asked for clarification on the plexiglass barriers to which Mr. Pezzella detailed two different models, one being a stand-alone station and the other a hanging model. She also asked for information regarding technology training for parents to which Superintendent Binienda stated that it was a question that is contained in the survey.

Mayor Petty stated that he has spoken to churches and interfaith groups who are willing to volunteer to assist in getting the survey completed by families. Ms. McCullough also suggested that next year's student representatives be involved in providing their feedback.

Ms. Novick stated that she believes that with the conditions of the schools, the HVAC issues and space, that it would be impossible to have 25,000 students return to school. Superintendent Binienda reiterated that she has to prove that statement to the Commissioner.

Ms. Novick suggested that the groups that the Superintendent assembled also include a representation of all nationalities and languages and that translators be available for those groups.

Ms. Novick made the following motion:

Request that the Administration contact the Diocese of Worcester to enlist their help in reaching parents.

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

Mr. Monfredo was also in favor of a hybrid model but was concerned how the model will impact Pre-k to Grade 3 students as well as ELL students.

Mr. Foley agrees that focusing on the hybrid model should be the goal. He stated that it is a daunting task to have all of this information compiled and decision making done in 7 weeks.

Mrs. Clancey suggested reaching out to the EAW as we move forward with any recommendations. She also spoke to the need to focus on the Special Education population in an effort to keep all families involved.

Miss Biancheria made the following motions:

Request that the Administration partner with neighborhood centers in order to get the information out to parents.

Request that the Administration provide an update on the Chromebook funding and distribution.

Request that the Administration survey parents in order to assess their level of comfort with computers when helping their child/ren.

Request that the Administration consider the hours of teaching in order to provide evening and afterschool classes to those at-risk students who work during school time.

On a roll call of 7-0, the motions were approved.

Mayor Petty made the following motion:

Request that the Administration provide any updates on reopening on the website.

Mayor Petty and Ms. Novick made the following motion:

Request that the Administration focus on the hybrid model.

On a roll call of 7-0, the motions were approved.

Mayor Petty asked that any updates be presented at the July 16, 2020 meeting.

At the end of meeting Mayor Petty asked if anyone wanted to speak to any of the items.

Roger Nugent, President of the EAW, spoke on behalf of its members and asked the School Committee to consider the health and safety of staff and students by surveying families on whether they feel comfortable allowing their child/ren back into buildings.

Dawn Johnson asked who will be providing the technology help for families where English is not their native language and how will teachers communicate with non-English speaking families. She also wanted to know what the WPS policy and EAW contractual agreement is regarding one-on-one communication between teachers, students and parents. She requested that the Administration provide a report to school site councils on the plans for their individual schools. She agreed with the School Committee motions to collaborate with local agencies to connect with families where relationships are already established.

Community members Trini and Abby agreed that the hybrid model was the best option.

Mr. Foley made the motion to adjourn the meeting.

On a roll call the motion to adjourn was as follows:

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

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