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Webinar ID: 875 3045 5289

The following items will be discussed at a virtual meeting of the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports to be held on Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 410 in the Durkin Administration Building:

gb #8-356.1 - Administration/Miss McCullough/Miss Biancheria/Mr. Monfredo/Mr. O'Connell/Mr. Comparetto/Mr. Foley/Mayor Petty (February 13, 2019)

Response of the Administration to the requests to:

- explore the feasibility of implementing the Orton-Gillingham model for dyslexic students for those students in need of specific services.
- provide a summary of the Orton-Gillingham model program.
- study the feasibility of implementing the cost of this program in the FY20 Budget
- study the feasibility of including students from outside the district, on a tuition basis, if a proposed program is established in the Worcester Public Schools.

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.

gb #9-349 - Miss McCullough/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo (October 14, 2019)

Request that the Administration invite educators who currently teach or train NoticeAbility Curriculum and consider implementing it for students with dyslexia.

gb #9-389 - Mr. Comparetto (November 13, 2019)

Request that the Administration provide an update on the efforts of the Administration to create ethnic studies programming.

gb #9-409 - Mr. Comparetto/Miss McCullough (November 26, 2019)

Request that the Administration review recommendations made by the organization Teaching Tolerance for culturally appropriate Thanksgiving programming.

Committee Members

Molly O. McCullough, Chairman
John F. Monfredo, Vice-Chairman
John L. Foley

Administrative
Representative
Susan O'Neil, Ph.D.

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

AGENDA #5

The Standing Committee on TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS will hold a meeting:

on: Thursday, October 22, 2020
at: 5:00 p.m.
virtually in: Room 410, Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. GENERAL BUSINESS

gb #8-356.1 - Administration/Miss McCullough/Miss Biancheria/Mr. Monfredo/Mr. O'Connell/Mr. Comparetto/Mr. Foley/Mayor Petty (February 13, 2019)

Response of the Administration to the requests to:

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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 #9-313 -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.

gb #9-327 -Administration (October 7, 2019)

To consider answers to the fourteen Action Steps made by Mayor Petty and approved by the School Committee:

1. School Department to create clear and transparent process to provide the necessary, student-sensitive data needed to do a thorough review of the suspension rates in our Worcester Public Schools. This should include the last 7 years of data.
2. Worcester State University to re-engage with our school department regarding the 2014 report, "Suspension in Worcester: A Continuing Conversation.
3. Incorporate comprehensive training practices focused on understanding cultural differences, unconscious bias, understanding racial disparities, and trauma informed care for all staff. Included in this training is MGL c222. For all staff including School Committee.
4. Review of the state's school discipline statute, MGL c222, to ensure the city is in complete compliance with the law and make any necessary changes to our policies and procedures.
5. Continue to maintain an English Language Learner Parent Advisory Council that includes Community Based Organizations and Community Partners in compliance with law, which will work with both the Director of English Language Learners and the Chief Diversify Officer.
6. Review the practice of out of school suspension for students in K-2 grade and work with community partners and internal staff to create an in-school program to provide counselling and assessment services for these students, contingent on proper funding and in-kind services.
7. Create an Affirmative Action Advisory Committee that would work with the Human Resource Department and the Chief Diversity Officer. Provide a semiannual report to the School Committee, with the Human Resources Department and the Chief Diversity Officer, as to progress.
8. Create a Superintendents Latino Advisory Committee
9. Quarterly/biannual reports on the progress of the Strategic Plan
10. Review and maintain the existing suspension hearing and appeal practices so that the same WPS person is not allowed to do both hearings and appeals.
11. Hiring a Chief Diversity Officer who shall report to the Superintendent and who shall work collaboratively with the Department of Human Resources of the Worcester Public Schools.
12. Review and assist a comprehensive plan with college presidents to do focused recruitment and retention plans to hire diverse teachers and support staff.
13. Provide a semi-annual report on the work of the English Language Learner Department and programs to the School Committee on compliance with best practices and Federal DOE guidelines.
14. Work with the School Committee to consider and implement recommendations of the Mayors Commission where appropriate. Work with the Commission to benchmark projects.

gb #9-349 - Miss McCullough/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo (October 14, 2019)

Request that the Administration invite educators who currently teach or train NoticeAbility Curriculum and consider implementing it for students with dyslexia.

gb #9-384 - Mr. Comparetto/Mr. Foley (November 13, 2019)

Request that the Superintendent present an annual report on the status of education for Latino students.

gb #9-386 - Mr. Comparetto/Mr. Foley (November 13, 2019)

Request that the Administration provide an update on current restorative justice practices.

gb #9-388 - Mr. Comparetto (November 13, 2019)

Request an "equity audit" of the Worcester Public Schools in accordance to best practices.

gb #9-389 - Mr. Comparetto (November 13, 2019)

Request that the Administration provide an update on the efforts of the Administration to create ethnic studies programming.

gb #9-409 - Mr. Comparetto/Miss McCullough (November 26, 2019)

Request that the Administration review recommendations made by the organization Teaching Tolerance for culturally appropriate Thanksgiving programming.

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.

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 #0-13 -Clerk (August 19, 2020)

To consider a communication from the Racism Free Worcester Public School Group regarding nine areas of concerns.

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, evidenced-based sexual and health curriculum and an appropriate level of increased classroom time for health education to the school committee for the FY21 budget.

gb #0-101 - Mr. Monfredo (March 5, 2020)

Request that the Administration work with the City Administration to see if there is a building available for the expansion of a full-day pre-school program.

gb #0-125.1 - Administration/Mr. Foley (April 8, 2020)

Response of the Administration to the request to present comprehensive data showing the test scores for all student subgroups since these initiatives started. This data should show changes over the years, with a particular emphasis upon the WPS student subgroups targeted through SOA funding (Hispanic students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities).

gb #0-313 - Ms. McCullough/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (September 23, 2020)

To consider the items filed by the City Council and request WPS consider Councilor Sean Rose's order to offer civil service exam study groups and to research a mechanism for students to acquire school credit for participation in these cohorts.

motion (gb #9-195.2) Mr. O'Connell (June 20, 2019)

Request that the Administration provide a report on the funding that the Worcester Public Schools receives through Education Access Channel 11 revenues, and provide information on the four positions and refer the report to the Standing Committee on Teaching Learning and Student Supports for discussion with gb #9-207.

motion (gb #9-195.2) Mr. O'Connell (June 20, 2019)

Request that the Various Grant Program section of the Budget be referred to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

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

STANDING COMMITTEE: **TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS**

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, October 22, 2020

ITEM: Administration/Miss McCullough/Miss Biancheria/Mr. Monfredo/
Mr. O'Connell/Mr. Comparetto/Mr. Foley/Mayor Petty
(February 13, 2019)

Response of the Administration to the requests to:

- explore the feasibility of implementing the Orton-Gillingham model for dyslexic students for those students in need of specific services.
- provide a summary of the Orton-Gillingham model program.
- study the feasibility of implementing the cost of this program in the FY20 Budget
- study the feasibility of including students from outside the district, on a tuition basis, if a proposed program is established in the Worcester Public Schools.

PRIOR ACTION:

12-6-18 - Mark Portuondo and his daughter Bella spoke to the item.

(Continued on page 2.)

BACKUP:

Annex A (7 pages) contains a copy of information regarding the item.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 12-6-18 - Mr. O'Connell made the following motions:
(continued) Request that the Administration provide a summary of the Orton-Gillingham model program.
Request that the Administration study the feasibility of implementing the cost of this program in the FY20 Budget.
Request that the Administration study the feasibility of including students from outside the district, on a tuition basis, if a proposed program is established in the Worcester Public Schools.
On a voice vote, the motions were approved.
Referred to the Administration.
Mayor Petty requested that his name be added to the item along with Mr. Foley and Mr. Comparetto.
- 2-28-19 - Mr. O'Connell made the following motions:
Request that the Administration notify Mr. Portuondo, his daughter Bella and any other interested citizens of the date and time of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports when the item is discussed.
Request that the Administration conduct the meeting of the Standing Committee meeting early enough to have an impact for next year's FY20 Budget.
On a voice vote, the motions were approved.
Miss McCullough requested that any information that was presented at the School Committee meeting be provided as backup for the item when it is discussed at the Standing Committee level.
Mayor Petty suggested that the Administration discuss with the City Manager the financial impact to implement a Dyslexic program.
Referred to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.
- 1-29-20 - STANDING COMMITTEE ON TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS
(Considered with gb #9-349.)
Mrs. Seale stated that the Worcester Public School's team visited schools that currently incorporate Orton-Gillingham to assess what the program provided. Worcester Public Schools currently uses Wilson language and reading. The Administration was asked to do a cost analysis of the Orton-Gillingham model which is a very intensive training and is not a curriculum but rather a methodology. The system does have some teachers that are certified in the program.
Mrs. Seale stated that early identification is the first step in the needs assessment process. The Administration is meeting with principals to review the data, look at an educational plan and train special needs teachers. There will be a Dyslexia Forum held on February 12, 2020 at the Worcester Art Museum and the Administration is inviting consultants to look at adding additional supports. It is essential to get feedback from parents.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 1-29-20 - Ms. Gallagher discussed the collaboration between the WPS and Mass
(continued) General. All kindergarten students have been screened to determine the number of at risk students in order to provide early support to children with dyslexia with the consent of the parent.
- Ms. Pelletier discussed the Lindamood-Bell Program with the three tier approach as follows:
- Tier 1 is the Core Instructional Program.
 - Tier 2 is the Targeted Group Intervention.
 - Tier 3 is the Intensive Intervention which is a small group setting.
- Ms. McCullough questioned whether the students with a multitude of disabilities that are in a smaller group setting benefit more from the smaller group. Ms. Seale stated that each student's disability is addressed differently depending on their IEP, evaluations and recommendations from the special education teachers. It is on a case by case basis.
- It was moved to allow the following individuals to speak regarding the item:
- Ms. Rodriguez stated that all student disabilities should be individualized and commented that the Wilson Program is an excellent one. She added that she would like to see the district adopt a special education research based reading program because the current one is in contrast to what a student with dyslexia needs to succeed. She asked what evidence based reading is used to identify the Kindergarten and 1st grade students with dyslexia because Wilson doesn't start until 2nd grade.
- Mrs. Seale stated that she believes the system is not using anything right now as targeted evidence based tools.
- Ms. Rodriguez stated that is very important and thinks the district is doing a phenomenal job with the help of Mass General to test the students in Kindergarten but there are no next steps for students in first grade.
- Mrs. Portuondo stated that there are about 1,000 students in the WPS that have dyslexia. She asked if Foundations is being provided at all the schools. Dr. O'Neil responded that it is not being implemented at all schools.
- Mrs. Portuondo would like to have Foundations used again in all schools in the system. She appreciated the backup that was provided at the meeting and asked that it be provided to all teachers in the school system.
- Mrs. Seale stated that the Administration has started training at the beginning of 2018 with the Evaluation Team Chairs and the next step is providing more specific information at the Professional Development meeting in May to all the Special Education teachers across the district.
- Mrs. Portuondo stated that the class sizes are a concern and the district should be concerned also. Teachers are not able to teach a child with dyslexia when there are 26 students to one teacher. She further requested to know the number of teachers that are Orton-Gillingham certified and what is being done to screen first and second graders. She also wants to know what schools are using Lively Letters.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 1-29-20 - Mrs. Seale stated that she will get the information and stated that if a parent requests that a child be screened for a disability it is the district's obligation to screen that child.
(continued) Ms. McCullough stated that the Administration should let parents know that if they want their student screened for dyslexia, the district will provide it.
Mrs. Portuondo asked if there would be a summer intervention program for dyslexic students.
Mrs. Seale stated that she has spoken to Lindamood-Bell and Dr. O'Neil and the system is looking into partnering with some of the general education programs to put together a program for students with language based disabilities for the summer.
Mr. Portuondo asked if the system is training or is going to train teachers in the Orton-Gilligham program.
Mrs. Seale stated that it is one of the initiatives that the Administration is looking at for the FY22 Budget.
Mr. Monfredo made the following motions:
Request that the Administration provide a report on what is being done to bridge the gap between K and 1st grade students.
Request that the Administration study the feasibility of including students from outside the district on a tuition basis, which would provide the funding to meet the needs of students.
Mr. Foley made an amendment to Mr. Monfredo motion:
Request that the district study the feasibility of in-house cost effective solutions to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
On a roll call of 3-0, the motions collectively were approved.
Mr. Foley asked if the blended approach allows flexibility for the students when Wilson is not working and inquired as to whether the system can move to Orton-Gillingham or other programs easily.
Mrs. Seale stated that the district is looking into a 4 year literacy plan for students with disabilities. Wilson will not be the only intervention tool that will be used in the district.
- 2-6-20 - It was moved and voice voted to hold the item at the Standing Committee level.
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.

- I. The district's written plan to implement dyslexia screening procedures or protocols for students that demonstrate 1 or more potential indicators of a neurological learning disability including, but not limited to, dyslexia as approved in 2018 by the state include the following initiatives:

Chapter 272 of the Acts of 2018 requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), in consultation with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to "issue guidelines to assist districts in developing screening procedures or protocols for students that demonstrate one or more potential indicators of a neurological learning disability, including, but not limited to, dyslexia. DESE has not yet issued its guidelines. Until the guidelines are issued, Worcester Public Schools (WPS) has three ways to implement dyslexia screening with the notation that screening determines the level of risk for reading problems and neurological learning disability indicators in general and the potential risk of having or developing dyslexia.

- A. The long standing Student Support Process (SSP) is in place at all grade levels for screening students, identifying and providing supports/interventions, and referring for a special education evaluation as indicated. When a parent or educator brings forward a concern with a student's progress/performance relating to one or more potential indicators of a neurological learning disability including but not limited to dyslexia, the building Teacher of Moderate Special Needs (TMSN) and Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP) have screening tools to address a variety of areas including: phonological and phonemic awareness; sound symbol recognition; alphabet knowledge; decoding skills; rapid naming; and encoding skills. Dyslexia screening tools include the following:

- CUBED Screening Tool (identification and progress monitoring)
The TSMN and/or the SLP can administer the CUBED.
- Dyslexia Evaluation Checklist Parent and Teacher Forms from Woodcock Johnson(WJIV)
- WJ IV & Kaufman Test Educational Achievement (KTEA)
Selected tests items are considered as a dyslexia screener.
- Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF-5) Screener
The Speech and Language Pathologist administers the CELF.
- Observations and Informal Assessment
- The Learning Disabilities Specialist, TMSN, or SLP may observe and report on an informal assessment. SLPs often conduct this with preschool and kindergarten students who they work closely with.

- B. The district has several tools administered to students at specific times that are used to screen and monitor for progress:

- The Early Screening Inventory, ESI (K entrance screener and followup as indicated)
 - The STAR* Early Literacy Assessment (K-1) 3 times annually
 - The STAR* Reading Assessment (K/1-grade 9) 3 times annually
- *STAR is administered in English and Spanish to students in dual language classes.

- C. The Speech and Language (SAiL) Literacy Lab at the MGH Institute of Health Professions is in partnership with Worcester Public Schools since 2019 to conduct the *Orthography and Word Learning (OWL)* research study funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The OWL research study is a longitudinal investigation of children with typical development and children with language and reading impairments who are in kindergarten through second grade. The **purpose** of this study is to better understand how children learn spoken and written words.

The research study involves the following general activities:

1. Screening of kindergarten students to identify those at risk for language and/or reading impairments.
 2. Recruitment of eligible students to participate in the study and further testing of their language, reading, and cognitive abilities.
 3. Professional development opportunities for teaching staff on language as related to reading and academic achievement and implementation of evidence-based language and reading comprehension instruction.
 4. Assistance in data management and integration of screening and other testing data to inform teaching and clinical decisions.
- D. In accordance with the Massachusetts Dyslexia Screening Law (Bill H.2872; AN ACT RELATIVE TO DYSLEXIA), WPS and the SAiL Literacy Lab are working together to develop “screening procedures or protocols for students that demonstrate 1 or more potential indicators of a neurological learning disability including, but not limited to, dyslexia”.

Specifically, these are:

1. District-wide professional development opportunities to better understand the different types of learning disabilities, including dyslexia, and evidence-based practices to identify and support these students.
 2. Training of teachers and clinicians to administer evidence-based screening measures to identify students at risk of learning disabilities, including dyslexia.
 3. Use of screening data to inform decisions on further evaluation, targeted instruction, and continuous progress monitoring.
 4. Continuous evaluation to optimize screening procedures and ensure appropriate identification and support of students with learning disabilities.
- II. **The name of the reading program currently implemented in grades kindergarten through third grade in general education, title 1, or special education program, where applicable.**

A. General Education, Title 1 Reading/Literacy Program Grades K-3

For classroom literacy instruction in general education, Worcester Public Schools is currently using Fountas and Pinnell classroom, a comprehensive model of responsive teaching to tailor language and literacy instruction to the strengths and needs of the individual children within each classroom cohort and to provide culturally responsive and relevant teaching to assure access and equity in literacy. The classroom teachers use a comprehensive language and literacy continuum and a comprehensive phonics/word study guide linked to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks to assess specific literacy behaviors and to plan for specific teaching within each instructional context.

Utilizing whole group, small group and individual teaching, the teachers use a sequence of high quality trade books for interactive read aloud and discussion groups, grade level enlarged print books for shared reading and specially developed small books for differentiating instruction based on the specific needs of smaller groups of children and for independent reading.

The systematic phonics/ word study sequence explicitly addresses essential categories of word analysis including early literacy concepts, phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, letter-sound relationships, spelling patterns, vocabulary, high frequency words, word structure and word solving strategies. The phonics/ word study competencies are addressed in whole group and small group lessons and are also applied in the reading of books and writing of a variety of texts.

A major goal of the general education literacy program is building an inclusive classroom community of thinkers, readers and writers who use high quality books for pleasure and learning and write for authentic purposes and audiences daily to develop their real world competencies and their identities as literate individuals.

The Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) kit is used in K-3 general education classrooms with students as needed for catch up growth and to support development of grade level skills. See: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/InterventionReport/679>

In the roll out process of the classroom program, general education teachers, ESL, and special education teachers K through 3 are learning to use “The Literacy Continuum” which describes text characteristics and behavioral goals for prekindergarten through grade 8, across the areas pertinent to the language arts in planning and implementing whole group, small group and individual lessons.

Please see the attached article, “Twelve Compelling Principles from the Research on Effective Phonics Instruction” by Fountas and Pinnell in support of the District’s general education approach. [Twelve Compelling Principles from the Research on Effective Phonics Instruction](#)

III. Current Special Education Language-Based Interventions Tools and Strategies

Wilson Reading System [WRS] a structured multisensory language-based literacy program based on phonological-coding research and Orton-Gillingham principles, WRS directly and systematically teaches the structure of the English language. Through the program, students learn fluent decoding and encoding skills to the level of mastery.

Just Words® is a highly explicit, multisensory decoding and spelling program for students who have mild to moderate gaps in their decoding and spelling proficiency but do not require intensive intervention. The program is designed for students with below-average decoding and spelling scores and should be combined with other literature-rich programs.

Heggerty: Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum provides 35 weeks of daily lessons, focusing on eight phonemic awareness skills, along with two additional activities to develop letter and sound recognition, and language awareness. Lessons are designed for a classroom setting and only take 10-12 minutes.

Heggerty Phonics Implementation Plan:

Woodland and Norrback along with other LD teachers have been using this program and the feedback has been very positive.

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curriculum is available in English and Spanish Pre-K, Kindergarten and Primary: All versions of the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curricula are based on the curriculum that Dr. Heggerty originally developed for his own classroom. The daily lessons in the three English versions contain the same eight phonemic awareness skills:

Rhyming, Onset Fluency, Blending, Identifying Final or Medial Sounds, Segmenting, Adding Phonemes, Deleting Phonemes, and Substituting Phonemes. Daily opportunities with letter names and sounds are included within a Letter Naming activity and students work with repeating sentences and nursery rhymes during Language Awareness activities.

Project Read:Project Read Programs (Language Circle Enterprises):Jill Pompei is the trainer we have been working with for the past two years.

Phonics: Leads teachers through a systematic order of phonics skills using direct instruction and visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, and body language teaching strategies. Lessons include multisensory activities, letter formation, vocabulary enrichment, syllabication, spelling generalizations, sentence dictation, student practice exercises, and reading materials for skill mastery. The phonics program integrates decoding, vocabulary development, narrative and expository reading, and questioning strategies to foster higher-level thinking and comprehension

Framing Your Thoughts Sentence Structure (Project Read) – This is a sequential systematic method of instruction that teaches sentence structure from simple to complex. Using graphic symbols to represent the sentence parts and how they function, students learn to construct compound-complex sentences with accuracy and creativity. Teachers will use and understand multisensory structured language techniques utilizing various strategies. Student impact: Students will develop skills in sentence writing and editing and understanding of syntax, grammar, and punctuation.

Report Form (Project Read): This curriculum teaches students a systematic multisensory process for interacting, analyzing, systematizing, classifying and organizing informational text for higher-level thinking and test-taking.

Project Read Implementation Plan and Update: We are in the process of updating our partnership with Learning Circle and negotiating a contract for a move to virtual training programs and developing an implementation plan. At the present time we have 25 special education staff members trained in Framing Your Thoughts: Sentence Structure and 5 special education staff members trained in Report Form.

Lively Letters™: Is a research-based and clinically-proven, multi-sensory reading program that turns plain, abstract letters and sounds into lively characters. Created by Nancy Telian, MS, CCC-SLP, forty-seven letters and letter combinations are embedded into colorful pictures that show students what to do with their mouths when making the letter sounds. Note: Lively Letters is used in our integrated preschools as well as through the Speech and Language Pathologists.

IV. In Process/Planned Language- Based Intervention Tools and Strategies

Orton Gillingham: The Orton-Gillingham approach is a direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive way to teach literacy when reading, writing, and spelling does not come easily to individuals, such as those with dyslexia.

Orton Gillingham (OG) : The District currently has Orton - Gillingham trained special needs teachers. This coming school year (2020-2021) additional training will be coordinated to identify selected teachers across various levels to obtain OG training. Practicum and certification.

Orton Gillingham Implementation Plan and Update:

After researching a number of different Orton Gillingham programs we have chosen to partner with The Institute for Multisensory Education [IMSE]. We are in the process of negotiating a contract and developing an implementation plan. Please see the link below for more information specific to our new partner IMSE, the virtual training offerings, course descriptions for initial training as well as additional coursework for certification, comprehensive course calendar and program costs.

[IMSE Orton Gillingham training information](#)

Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing® (LiPS®) Program: develops phonemic awareness—the ability to determine the identity, number, and order of sounds within words. The program teaches students to discover and label the oral-motor movements of phonemes. The established articulatory feedback enables students to verify the identity, number, and sequence of sounds in simple, complex, and multisyllabic words. The sensory-cognitive function of phonemic awareness is applied to reading, spelling, and speech. Anticipated SY 2020-2021 implementation year.

Lindamood Bell The Seeing Stars®: Symbol Imagery for Phonemic Awareness, Sight Words, and Spelling Program (SI) successfully develops symbol imagery for reading and spelling. Anticipated SY 2020-2021 implementation year.

Lindamood Bell The Visualizing and Verbalizing® (V/V®) The program helps to develop concept imagery - the ability to create an image gestalt from language - as a basis for comprehension and higher-order thinking. The development of concept imagery improves reading and listening comprehension, memory, oral vocabulary, critical thinking, and writing. Anticipated SY 2020-2021 implementation year.

Lindamood Bell Implementation Plan and upcoming training dates: The Special Education Department has partnered with Melissa Garner and Joni Rose from Lindamood Bell. We have a confirmed contract involving virtual trainings for the Seeing Stars and Visualization and Verbalization programs. The Special Education Department has identified Special Education Teachers, Instructional Assistants and Speech and Language Pathologists who will participate in these training opportunities.

There are training sessions planned in early November and the end of January.

SRA Phonemic Awareness Kindergarten - A comprehensive phonemic program for developing phonological and phonemic awareness. The program contains 110 15-minute lessons featuring activities that follow the developmental sequence for teaching all levels of phonological awareness. Phonemic Awareness Kindergarten is used to help establish the early framework necessary to help pre-k to grade one students progress into fluent and confident readers. SY 2020-2021 implementation year.

Reading Mastery Signature (K-3) - Reading Mastery is a direct instruction program designed to provide explicit, systematic instruction in English language reading. Students are grouped by similar reading level, based on program placement tests. The program includes placement assessments and a continuous monitoring system. SY 2020-2021 implementation year.

Noticeability

Unlocking the Dyslexic Potential Link: (<https://www.noticeability.org/get-involved>) is a small, Boston based non-profit organization in collaboration with Professors from Harvard University, MIT and Boston University Description: NoticeAbility has created a new paradigm for educating middle school students with dyslexia. While remedial reading programs are essential to dyslexics' early education, the traditional school curriculum does a profound disservice to millions of students by failing to meet the specific and powerful capabilities of the dyslexic mind. NoticeAbility disrupts this narrative by introducing tailored enrichment curricula to students with dyslexia at the point (middle school) where the students have achieved a level of reading proficiency, but their negative self-image has not yet solidified. Once students come to recognize their strengths, they are more inclined to embrace their educational experience and fulfill their personal and professional potential. Instructors training ranges into two (3) courses trainings: Entrepreneurs & Innovators Curriculum (Founder worked with the assistance of Harvard Business School and Harvard School of Education) and Consensus Arts & Storytelling Curriculum. The introduction to the courses is free as each bundle cost range at \$760 per person. This is a program to empower dyslexic students based on social-emotional growth in identifying personal strengths. Link: <https://noticeability1.teachable.com/courses>

Next steps: Representatives from the SPED - Learning Disabilities Department and SEL- Child Study School Adjustment staff held a conference call with NoticeAbility for additional information regarding this tool given the Dyslexia and social emotional learning needs of our district. Additionally, the Boston Public Schools (BPS) is a partner of this organization, and district representatives will also reach out to BPS to discuss their program implementation. perceived impact to date, in order to assess piloting NoticeAbility in the district given the alignment of district initiatives. **This a program to empower students as it does not have an academic focus, but more for social-emotional growth in identifying personal strengths.** District representatives from the Special Education and Office of Social Emotional Learning will coordinate a follow-up meeting to further discuss the alignment of “NoticeAbility” given our current tiered interventions tools. <https://noticeability1.teachable.com/courses> .

STANDING COMMITTEE: **TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS**

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, October 22, 2020

ITEM: 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.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 10-3-19 - Mr. Monfredo made the following motions:
Request that the Administration form a committee by November to study the feasibility of establishing a two year kindergarten 1 program.
Request that the Administration consider revising the date of eligibility to start kindergarten.
On a voice vote, the motions were approved.
Referred to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.
- 1-29-20 - STANDING COMMITTEE ON TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS
Mr. Monfredo stated that the Worcester Public Schools is the only system in the state that has the entrance date of December 31st.

BACKUP:

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

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 1-29-20 - Mr. Monfredo made the following motions:
(continued) Request that the Administration establish a committee comprised of early learning teachers and administrators and report back to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports in May 2020 to consider the following:
- establishment of a two year kindergarten 1 program for four year old students
 - involvement of parent groups in meaningful workshops
 - change the entry date for kindergarten from December 31 to November 1 and at a later date from November 1 to September 1
 - provision of a report to the full School Committee in May 2020
- 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 motions were approved.
Mr. Foley suggested adding more teachers in the K-1 Program to address class size and the Superintendent stated that space limits the possibility to implement that suggestion.
A question was posed relative to a possible correlation between early date of birth and disciplinary issues. The Superintendent indicated that there is no correlation between the two.
- 2-6-20 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.
- 6-9-20 - STANDING COMMITTEE ON TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS
Mr. Monfredo stated that Worcester is the only school district with the late start date of December 31.
Dr. O'Neil stated that the Administration will look at research done on the subject and will send an email by Friday to solicit committee members.
Mr. Monfredo made the following motions:
Request that the Administration work with the city administration and check on various schools to see if it is possible to secure space for additional pre-school or K1 programs.
Request that the Administration move the start date from December 31 to November 1 and then to September 1 by the 2021-22 school year.
Request that the Administration consider implementing a pilot program for kindergarten and Grade 1.
On a voice vote, the motions were approved.
On a roll call of 3-0, the item was held for a report in October.
- 6-18-20 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.

The committee will begin meeting the week of October 26 with Susan O'Neil, Deputy Superintendent. A principal and three early childhood teachers will be added to the committee this week. The committee work will include district and national data review and a review of the current research. The committee will be expanded to include parents after initial work is done. The committee includes:

- Christina Kuriacose, Director Of School and Student Performance
- Laurie Kuczka, Director of Head Start and Early Childhood Education
- Tammy Murray, Department Head Special Education, Early Childhood
- Ellen Kelley, Elementary Manager
- Marie Morse, Ed.D., Elementary Manager
- Carmen Melendez-Quintero, Manager of ESL

STANDING COMMITTEE: **TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS**

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, October 22, 2020

ITEM: Miss McCullough/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo (October 14, 2019)

Request that the Administration invite educators who currently teach or train NoticeAbility Curriculum and consider implementing it for students with dyslexia.

PRIOR ACTION

11-7-19 - Referred to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.

1-29-20 - STANDING COMMITTEE ON TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS

(Considered with gb #8-356.1.)

Mrs. Seale stated that the Worcester Public School's team visited schools that currently incorporate Orton-Gillingham to assess what the program provided. Worcester Public Schools currently uses Wilson language and reading. The Administration was asked to do a cost analysis of the Orton-Gillingham model which is a very intensive training and is not a curriculum but rather a methodology. The system does have some teachers that are certified in the program.

Mrs. Seale stated that early identification is the first step in the needs assessment process. The Administration is meeting with principals to review the data, look at an educational plan and train special needs teachers.

There will be a Dyslexia Forum held on February 12, 2020 at the Worcester Art Museum and the Administration is inviting consultants to look at adding additional supports. It is essential to get feedback from parents.

BACKUP:

Annex A (3 pages) contains the Administration's response to the item.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

1-29-20 - Ms. Gallagher discussed the collaboration between the WPS and (continued) Mass General. All kindergarten students have been screened to determine the number of at risk students in order to provide early support to children with dyslexia with the consent of the parent. Ms. Pelletier discussed the Lindamood-Bell Program with the three tier approach as follows:

- Tier 1 is the Core Instructional Program.
- Tier 2 is the Targeted Group Intervention.
- Tier 3 is the Intensive Intervention which is a small group setting.

Ms. McCullough questioned whether the students with a multitude of disabilities that are in a smaller group setting benefit more from the smaller group. Ms. Seale stated that each student's disability is addressed differently depending on their IEP, evaluations and recommendations from the special education teachers. It is on a case by case basis.

It was moved to allow the following individuals to speak regarding the item:

Ms. Rodriguez stated that all student disabilities should be individualized and commented that the Wilson Program is an excellent one. She added that she would like to see the district adopt a special education research based reading program because the current one is in contrast to what a student with dyslexia needs to succeed. She asked what evidence based reading is used to identify the Kindergarten and 1st grade students with dyslexia because Wilson doesn't start until 2nd grade.

Mrs. Seale stated that she believes the system is not using anything right now as targeted evidence based tools.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that is very important and thinks the district is doing a phenomenal job with the help of Mass General to test the students in Kindergarten but there are no next steps for students in first grade.

Mrs. Portuondo stated that there are about 1,000 students in the WPS that have dyslexia. She asked if Foundations is being provided at all the schools. Dr. O'Neil responded that it is not being implemented at all schools.

Mrs. Portuondo would like to have Foundations used again in all schools in the system. She appreciated the backup that was provided at the meeting and asked that it be provided to all teachers in the school system.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

1-29-20 - Mrs. Seale stated that the Administration has started training at the beginning of 2018 with the Evaluation Team Chairs and the next step is providing more specific information at the Professional Development meeting in May to all the Special Education teachers across the district.

Mrs. Portuondo stated that the class sizes are a concern and the district should be concerned also. Teachers are not able to teach a child with dyslexia when there are 26 students to one teacher. She further requested to know the number of teachers that are Orton-Gillingham certified and what is being done to screen first and second graders. She also wants to know what schools are using Lively Letters.

Mrs. Seale stated that she will get the information and stated that if a parent requests that a child be screened for a disability it is the district's obligation to screen that child.

Ms. McCullough stated that the Administration should let parents know that if they want their student screened for dyslexia, the district will provide it.

Mrs. Portuondo asked if there would be a summer intervention program for dyslexic students.

Mrs. Seale stated that she has spoken to Lindamood-Bell and Dr. O'Neil and the system is looking into partnering with some of the general education programs to put together a program for students with language based disabilities for the summer.

Mr. Portuondo asked if the system is training or is going to train teachers in the Orton-Gilligham program.

Mrs. Seale stated that it is one of the initiatives that the Administration is looking at for the FY22 Budget.

Mr. Monfredo made the following motions:

Request that the Administration provide a report on what is being done to bridge the gap between K and 1st grade students.

Request that the Administration study the feasibility of including students from outside the district on a tuition basis, which would provide the funding to meet the needs of students.

Mr. Foley made an amendment to Mr. Monfredo motion:

Request that the district study the feasibility of in-house cost effective solutions to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

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

Mr. Foley asked if the blended approach allows flexibility for the students when Wilson is not working and inquired as to whether the system can move to Orton-Gillingham or other programs easily.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 1-29-20 - Mrs. Seale stated that the district is looking into a 4 year literacy
(continued) plan for students with disabilities. Wilson will not be the only
intervention tool that will be used in the district.
It was moved and voice voted to hold the item at the Standing
Committee level.
- 2-6-20 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - The School Committee approved the
action of the Standing Committee as stated.

Response

NoticeAbility: Unlocking the Dyslexic Potential Link:

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Description: NoticeAbility has created a new paradigm for educating middle school students with dyslexia. While remedial reading programs are essential to dyslexics' early education, the traditional school curriculum does a profound disservice to millions of students by failing to meet the specific and powerful capabilities of the dyslexic mind. NoticeAbility disrupts this narrative by introducing tailored enrichment curricula to students with dyslexia at the point (middle school) where the students have achieved a level of reading proficiency, but their negative self-image has not yet solidified. Once students come to recognize their strengths, they are more inclined to embrace their educational experience and fulfill their personal and professional potential.

Instructors training ranges into two (3) courses trainings: Entrepreneurs & Innovators Curriculum (Founder worked with the assistance of Harvard Business School and Harvard School of Education) and Consensus Arts & Storytelling Curriculum. The introduction to the courses is free as each bundle cost range at \$760 per person. This is a program to empower dyslexic students based on social-emotional growth in identifying personal strengths. Link: <https://noticeability1.teachable.com/courses>

Next steps: Representatives from the SPED - Learning Disabilities Department and SEL-Child Study School Adjustment staff will contact NoticeAbility for additional information regarding this tool given the needs of our district. Additionally, the Boston Public Schools (BPS) is a partner of this organization, and district representatives will also reach out to BPS to discuss program implementation, perceived impact to date, in order to assess piloting NoticeAbility in the district given the alignment of district initiatives.

The introduction to the courses is free and then each bundle is \$760 per person. This a program to empower students as it does not have an academics focus, but more for social-emotional growth in identifying personal strengths.
<https://noticeability1.teachable.com/courses>

What is in the training?

The instructor training will provide you with insight into the dyslexic experience, the correlation between social emotional learning interventions and academic performance, and how NoticeAbility's courses are designed to increase students' self-esteem and academic tenacity. Lastly, the training will provide you with step-by-step instruction on how to facilitate a course with students.

What will I need to teach the course?

When you purchase a bundle you will receive a course materials book that includes lesson plans with time stamps, vocabulary lists and learning objectives for both the online videos and classroom exercises. Optional teacher scripts are included to get you started.

How do I run a course?

Each course requires a minimum of 3 students (they may vary in age and grade levels). You will need a internet accessible space where the group can meet one or twice a week for an hour (the total course time is 20 hours).

In school settings, we recommend two hours a week spread over 10 weeks. This can happen either during the school day or during after school in a 'club' setting. For summer intensive workshops, we recommend approximately 2 hours a day for 3 weeks. Important to note: Regardless of where you offer a NoticeAbility course, you will want to plan ahead and schedule a time and space for the students' final presentation. Parents, teachers, and fellow students may be invited to this presentation to celebrate the accomplishment of the students.

Do I need to be an subject matter expert to teach a particular course?

Absolutely not. NoticeAbility is responsible delivering the content of each subject area (entrepreneurship, engineering, arts, or architecture) through our online learning portal. Your responsibility is to provide students with course facilitation, scaffolding, and encouragement.

Does NoticeAbility replace literacy training?

No. NoticeAbility is a complement to reading remediation, not a substitute. NoticeAbility courses focus on social emotional learning (SEL) and executive function (EF) competencies. Students are introduced to the cognitive assets of dyslexia and work in teams to exercise these strengths.

What if my students are not clinically diagnosed as dyslexic?

Different states classify dyslexia in different ways. Sometimes, a student will receive a dyslexia diagnosis. More often than not, however, a student with dyslexia will be diagnosed as having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) or Language Based Learning Disability (LBLD). To address this confusion, NoticeAbility suggests that students should be either "identified, diagnosed, or suspected of having dyslexia". It is important to note that the word 'dyslexia' is used throughout NoticeAbility's courses and instructor should be prepared to speak with caregivers and students who may be confused by the use of this term.

What age range do your courses target?

NoticeAbility has piloted its curricula with students ranging from 4th - 12th grade. However, we recommend the following age ranges:

Entrepreneurs & Innovators - grades 5-9

Engineering & Architecture - grades 5-9

Consenses Arts & Storytelling - grades 7-11

Can I squeeze this course into my busy classroom schedule?

We understand that scheduling time can be a real challenge. Whether it's as an elective, an after school club, a pull-out class, or a study-hall, we urge you to give your students the time they need to become engrossed in the coursework. In other words, we don't recommend asking students to choose between a NoticeAbility class and other attractive options like sports or recess. Trust us, it is worth the time and investment.

Why not have a 1-on-1 course, like tutoring? Why does NoticeAbility suggest group setting?

Social emotional learning requires peer interaction. For example, negotiation and conflict resolution (examples of SEL) cannot be deployed in isolation. When students engage as teams in project based learning, they rub up against each other's 'sharp edges'. This is where the learning happens.

How important is my presence as an instructor? Can't they just do it themselves?

According to the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 report (Newman et al., 2011), the two predictors of long-term success for students with learning disabilities are (a) supportive teachers who understand their learning differences and (b) close relationships with mentors.

You will be that understanding mentor if you are present, reliable, and consistent. Class meeting times should be established, in advance, as student attendance will enhance team cohesion. You are at the core of this trust dynamic.

What's this about a 'Final Presentation'?

NoticeAbility's curricula culminate in a student final presentation, preferably in front of a small audience. This process is essential for students to receive the affirmation of their new strength-based paradigm of dyslexia. NoticeAbility will consider posting photos and videos of student presentations that are submitted to us.

ITEM: gb #9-389

STANDING COMMITTEE: **TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS**

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, October22, 2020

ITEM: Mr. Comparetto (November 13, 2019)

Request that the Administration provide an update on the efforts of the Administration to create ethnic studies programming.

PRIOR ACTION:

11-21-19 - Referred to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.

BACKUP: Annex A (1 page) contains the Administration's response to the item.

For the 2020-2021 school year, the WPS have added African American Studies to the course catalogue under Social Studies.

The following schools are currently teaching the elective: North High, South High, UPCS and Claremont Academy are currently offering the course.

The teachers meet quarterly to discuss effective and engaging activities and lesson plans with the Social Studies Liaison.

For the 2020-2021 School year, the WPS have added African American Literature to the course catalogue as an ELA. Burncoat High School currently offers this course.

For the 2020-2021 school year, the WPS has added Historia De Latin America to the course catalogue under Foreign Language.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS**

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, October 22, 2020

ITEM: Mr. Comparetto/Miss McCullough (November 26, 2019)

Request that the Administration review recommendations made by the organization Teaching Tolerance for culturally appropriate Thanksgiving programming.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 12-5-19 - Miss Colorio made the following motion:
Request that items gb #9-408 and #9-409 be filed.
On a roll call of 3-4 (yeas Miss Biancheria, Ms. Colorio , Mr. Monfredo) the motion to file was denied.
Dr. Karrie Allen , Principal of Goddard School of Science and Technology, spoke on behalf of the staff and students regarding the successful Thanksgiving activities at the school.
Kwaku Nyarko, Ex-Officio of the School Committee, requested a copy of the State standards for the teaching of American History.
Referred to the Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Supports.
- 6-9-20 - STANDING COMMITTEE ON TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS
Superintendent Binienda stated that culturally responsive training regarding holidays is being addressed.
Mr. Foley made the following motion:
Request that the Administration review the recommendations contained in Teaching Tolerance and compare some of the findings to the WPS policy on cultural sensitivity.
On a voice vote, the motion was approved.
Chairman McCullough made the following motion:
Request that the Administration provide an update in October on the results of the culturally responsive training.
On a voice vote, the motion was approved.
On a roll call of 3-0, the item was held.
- 6-18-20 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.

BACKUP:

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

The following resources will be shared in the Managers Weekly Newsletter for Principals with the following note:

As we look ahead to November, please share with staff these resources from "Teaching Tolerance" to support teaching about Thanksgiving from a culturally responsive, inclusive lens:

- **Project Archeology** provides links to resources and activities adaptable for all grade levels. Retrieve from: <https://projectarchaeology.org/2013/11/15/native-american-perspectives-thanksgiving/>
- **The National Museum of the American Indian** offers a comprehensive resource with teacher-facing ideas and activities for grades 4-8. Retrieve from: https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/thanksgiving_poster.pdf
- **Plimoth Plantation** has a [Just for Teachers](#) section that outlines professional development opportunities, workshops, a virtual Thanksgiving field trip and activities that incorporate the Wampanoag perspective. In one interactive activity, kids are detectives figuring out what really happened at the first meal. Retrieve from: <https://www.plimoth.org/learn/just-teachers>
- **The Mashpee/Wampanoag Tribe's** brief history and cultural timeline outlines the nation's "contact experience" from their contemporary perspective. Retrieve from: <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/culture>

Additional resources include:

Culturally Responsive Teaching for Thanksgiving (Elementary) Retrieved at: <https://blog.leeandlow.com/2017/11/13/a-culturally-responsive-approach-to-discussing-thanksgiving-in-the-classroom/>

Teaching Thanksgiving from the Perspective of Native Americans Retrieved at: <https://teacher-blog.education.com/teaching-thanksgiving-from-the-perspective-of-native-americans-d66c5cb9eb0c>

Culturally Responsive Instruction for Holiday and Religious Celebrations Retrieved at: <https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/culturally-responsive-instruction-holiday-and-religious-celebrations>