

IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Worcester, Massachusetts
Monday, October 19, 2020
Agenda #35

The School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools met virtually in Open Session at 5:36 p.m. in Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building on Thursday, October 1, 2020.

The School Committee convened in Open Session at 5:36 p.m.

There were present at the Call to Order:

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

GENERAL BUSINESS

gb #0-330 - Administration
(October 14, 2020)

Parent Forum

To consider feedback from parents on remote learning and present 2 new remote phases.

Superintendent Binienda presented the Worcester Public Schools' Transition From Remote to Hybrid Learning Proposal. The following topics were discussed:

- The Second Term starting November 16, 2020 to January 22, 2020 where the following students will be moving to a hybrid learning model:
 - PreKindergarten - Grade 12 Students with Complex Significant Disabilities
 - Worcester Technical High School 10th, 11th, and 12th Grade Students
 - Comprehensive High Schools Chapter 74 Program Students
 - Innovation Pathway Students
 - New Citizen Center Elementary, Secondary, and Young Adult Students
 - Academic Center for Transition (ACT), Alternative Program @ St. Casmir's, Challenge & Reach Academy, and Gerald Creamer Center Day & Evening

- Programs, Transitions Program
- The Site Locations
- All the staff members involved
- The Third Term starting January 25, 2021 to April 1, 2021 where the following students will be moving to a hybrid learning model:
 - Group C students transition to school of record
 - Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grade 1 Students
 - Seventh, Ninth, and Twelfth Grade Students
 - Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, Tenth, and Eleventh Grade Students
- All the buildings involved as the ventilation upgrades are completed.
- All the staff members involved as ventilation upgrades are completed.

The [Transition From Remote to Hybrid Learning Proposal](#) is posted on the Worcester Public Schools' website and can be accessed at [worcesterschools.org](http://www.worcesterschools.org).

Questions

Mayor Petty entertained questions and the Administration responded to the following questions from the public:

1. If a parent decides to choose the hybrid model for the second quarter and pull the student out due to COVID-19 increases, does that jeopardize the possibility of doing hybrid in the third quarter?
2. If the COVID-19 numbers change, can the students go back more than one day a week?
3. How will switching to the hybrid model impact the students that are learning online?
4. What is the percent of parents that are sending their child/ren back to school for the hybrid learning?
5. Is there a plan to mandate a COVID-19 vaccine if one become available for everybody that attends the public schools?
6. What is the safety protocol for the Group C students who have preexisting conditions that make them more susceptible to the virus?

7. What is happening with the ninth grade students at Worcester Technical High School?
8. What can the child/en do when they have a technical issue on a Friday when schools are closed for deep cleaning?
9. How is the WRTA involved in student transportation?
10. What exactly is the protocol for shutting the schools down?
11. When will the public know if the number of COVID cases become overwhelming and a shutdown of schools is necessary?
12. Will the children be toggling back and forth between teachers?
13. Why can't the cleaning of the buildings be done on Saturday?
14. What do you mean by updating the HVAC system?
15. Can the Administration advise the staff to be more lenient with work assignments due to the fact that this method of teaching is new for the children?
16. To what extent has Worcester and the School Committee tried to work with community partners in order to open more spaces for students who need in person learning who are really struggling at home?
17. How is it possible to update HVAC systems in all in all of these schools by November 16th?
18. Why is it that the students can't do their hands on tech classes at Worcester Technical High School?
19. How is my child with special needs classified in terms of whether he or she will go back to in person learning?
20. How will the Administration alert families that classes are starting?
21. Are the students on the buses required to have masks?
22. What if a child takes off his or her mask and is sick?
23. Are there enough supplies for all students returning to schools?
24. Have there been plexiglass dividers installed in classrooms?

25. Are SAT exams going to be administered at Doherty Memorial High School this year? What happens to the juniors who would take that PSAT?
26. Would I have the ability, at the end of this year, to say whether or not I felt my kid was academically, socially and emotionally ready to move on to the next grade or not?
27. Is it possible to tape lessons for the students and post them on the website?
28. Are there any virtual PTA group meetings and, if so, how can parents participate in them?
29. Have there been any discussions about setting up a liaison or a point contact person that parents could reach out to if they need educational resources, advice, tips or suggestions?
30. How can parents start virtual study groups for high and middle school students to help them get motivated and/or to get work done and to also provide for social interaction?

Comments

1. I am very happy with how the remote learning phase is going.
2. One of my concerns is that I lack the support to successfully home school and support my children and their education remotely.
3. I'm afraid my child won't be able to stay at grade level doing the remote learning.
4. I would like more in person instruction and support to learn effectively by going back to school more than one day a week.
5. Worcester Technical High School students need more than one day a week in their trade.
6. My child receives too many emails.
7. I suggest attempting to contact those students who, to date have not responded to the survey for in person or remote learning.
8. I'd like to see a transportation survey sent to the parents.
9. I think you should cancel Friday for some of the younger learners and give the teachers an extra professional day or technology day so they can prepare their lesson plans and really be more prepared.

10. I've noticed that Google Meet tends to run more smoothly if videos are turned off.
11. I commend the teachers for what they've been doing.
12. Some of the teachers are not understanding that the Google classroom system is very new and should not be reprimanding the students for not being able to use it.
13. I don't recommend that the students rush back to school.
14. I understand that students need social interaction and the in person learning but their health is more important.
15. If this committee continues to focus only on physical health issues and not mental or emotional ones, the system will have bigger problems in the future.
16. You need to figure out a way to get students back in the classroom.
17. Everyday, there's an issue with my son having trouble with connectivity.
18. I don't want my students going back to school until COVID disappears.
19. I'm very relieved and excited for my child to go back to school starting on November 16th.
20. Remote learning has been a disaster.
21. Teachers are giving out much too much work.
22. The ninth grade students from Worcester Technical High School are missing out on the experience of the exploration of all the different trades.
23. Students are looking at the computer screen too long during the day.
24. My child was a straight A student and is now failing in some classes due to too many assignments.
25. Students that are sitting in front of a computer screen for more than six hours a day may end up with back, carpal tunnel, neck and eyesight issues.
26. I think we need to implement more COVID-19 testing.
27. Students need to be taught cursive writing.
28. At first, I was skeptical of the remote learning. However, I've been impressed with a lot of the applications that are available to the students.

Mayor Petty suggested that the Administration contact the Boston Public Schools to get a report on how they are bringing back their special needs students.

Mayor Petty suggested that the Administration review the policies for the Friday asynchronous learning days regarding teachers responding to students' questions.

It was moved and voice voted to accept and file the item.

On a roll call of 7-0, the meeting adjourned at 10:33 p.m.

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