

IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
 Worcester, Massachusetts  
 Thursday, August 20, 2020  
 Agenda #29

The School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools met virtually in Open Session at 5:16 p.m. in Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building on Thursday, August 20, 2020.

There were present at the Call to Order:

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

1. gb #0-248 - Administration (August 17, 2020) Modified ELA Pilot/approval of

To consider approval of a pilot high school ELA virtual curriculum for 2020-21.

Dr. Magdalena Gantias, Manager of the Office of Curriculum and Professional Learning, presented a modified pilot for high school English Language Arts for grades 9-12 entitled StudySync. She stated that the modified pilot was the result of an endorsement from middle schools that are currently implementing StudySync. The curriculum allows for lessons to be designed by teachers and is supported in a variety of languages. It is compatible with Clever, provides ongoing support, has over 1700 classics and categories and is interchangeable with print and digital.

Ms. Novick asked for information on who the teachers were that were involved in this decision.

Dr. Gantias stated that the decision was not the typical pilot process for choosing a curriculum. This modified pilot was chosen in part based on the fact that it has an online assessment option to assist in collecting data.

Ms. Novick asked for the cost of the program and Dr. Gantias stated that the cost of the program is \$256,500.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the money will come from the Foundation Budget's District Instructional Materials account.

Ms. Novick stated that while she was pleased to see a balance of diverse and women authors, she felt that as a district we are saying that this is what you should be using.

Ms. McCullough stated that she was happy that the district is looking at more diverse texts in this modified pilot.

Colleen Dyer, English Language Arts Liaison stated that teachers would be able to recommend a book to be taught and that monthly meetings would be held with department heads.

Mr. Monfredo stated that, although he has a problem with the cost, he would support the modified pilot for the benefit of the students.

Mr. Foley questioned the timing of the approval process and thought that spending the money this year and going to something different next year is an issue.

Miss Biancheria made the following motion:

Request that the Administration provide a report in January or February 2021 on:

- how the pilot is working
- what the challenges were and
- a list of authors

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

Mrs. Clancey asked how the teachers are being trained and supported with this curriculum.

Dr. Ganius stated that the publishing company is holding some dates for training with multiple sessions planned, contingent on the approval of the curriculum.

Ms. Novick asked when the district will know about next year's curriculum to which Superintendent Binienda replied May of 2021.

On a roll call of 6-1 (nay Ms. Novick) the item was approved.

Mayor Petty asked for an item to be placed on the August 27, 2020 agenda regarding the fall sports recommendations.

Superintendent Binienda stated that there will be an item on the agenda.

On a roll call of 7-0, the meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

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