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The following items will be discussed at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues to be held virtually on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building:

gb #0-359 - Administration (November 12, 2020)

To consider approval to turn on the self-harm filter that is available with the current software that monitors those students' behaviors.

c&p #1-1 - Clerk (December 28, 2020)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Burncoat High School's faculty and staff to donate accrued sick time to a colleague.

Committee Members
Laura Clancey, Chair
John F. Monfredo, Vice-Chair
Tracy O'Connell-Novick

Administrative Representative
Jennifer Boulais
Helen A. Friel, Ed.D.

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

AGENDA #1

The Standing Committee on GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES will hold a meeting:

on: Tuesday, January 19, 2021
at: 4:30 p.m.
virtually in: Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL
- III. GENERAL BUSINESS

gb #9-350 - Miss McCullough/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo (October 14, 2019)

Request that the School Committee work with the Clerk of the School Committee to determine 3 or 4 dates in 2020 for policy forums/conversations that will be open to the community.

ros #0-9 - Administration (September 23, 2020)

RENNIE CENTER FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH & POLICY – REPORT ON THE TECHNOLOGY SECTION FROM THE STRATEGIC PLAN

c&p #0-13 - Clerk (August 18, 2020)

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

gb #0-28 - Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (January 8, 2020)

To create an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Worcester School Committee to consider changes to the school committee rules, meetings and agendas to make the work of the School Committee and our meetings more effective and better aligned with the focus on the strategic direction of the district. These changes should reflect best practices and address the recommendations included in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's report from 2017.

gb #0-59 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley (January 29, 2020)

To rewrite the Worcester Public Schools' Student Dress Code.

gb #0-109 - Mr. Monfredo (March 16, 2020)

Request that the School Committee submit to the Clerk any proposed changes to the Rules of the School Committee.

gb #0-210 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough (June 10, 2020)

To conduct an equity audit of the Worcester Public Schools' policies and student handbook.

gb #0-213 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough (June 10, 2020)

To review for possible implementation the Massachusetts Attorney General's Model Memorandum of Understanding for School Resource Officers.

gb #0-223 - Administration (July 6, 2020)

To consider amendments to the current Student Dress Code Policy to be included in the Student Handbook and the Policy Manual.

gb #0-230 - Administration (July 7, 2020)

To consider approval of the proposed 2020-21 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

gb #0-264 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (August 17, 2020)

Consider and redraft as necessary the policies and associated sections of the student handbook considered by "Pandemic Policy Specific for Back to School."

gb #0-288.1 - Administration/Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (September 22, 2020)

Response of the Administration to the request to outline in writing under what circumstances the Department of Children and Families is called regarding a family or child, particularly with regard to student attendance.

gb #0-293 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (September 9, 2020)

To ensure Worcester Public Schools remote learning policies ensure all Worcester Public Schools administrators, staff, and students behave as guests in each other's homes.

gb #0-359 - Administration (November 12, 2020)

To consider approval to turn on the self-harm filter that is available with the current software that monitors those students' behaviors.

gb #0-368 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (November 23, 2020)

To create Worcester School Committee operational norms.

c&p #1-1 - Clerk (December 28, 2020)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Burncoat High School's faculty and staff to donate accrued sick time to a colleague.

V. ADJOURNMENT

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

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, January 19, 2021

ITEM: Administration (November 12, 2020)

To consider approval to turn on the self-harm filter that is available with the current software that monitors those students' behaviors.

PRIOR ACTION

11-19-20 - Mr. Walton spoke about Lightspeed, a system that monitors when a student searches for information that may suggest an intent to self-harm. He stated that the program is currently being used at four schools.

Mayor Petty made the following motion:

Request that the pilot be turned off and the item be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues in order to invite school psychologists, administrators, parents and students to be part of a panel for discussion on the subject.

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

On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

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

Subject: Information Regarding Safety Check, a new feature on the district's web filter

The district is implementing a new version of the district's Lightspeed web filter system. One of the features of this new filter is called Safety Check. Safety Check is a feature that can monitor two types of keyword activities, Violence and Self Harm. If enabled, when a student or staff member types in words related to these categories, the filter flags that activity and sends an alert to pre-designated administrators. It also records screenshots of what the user was typing at the time of the alert.

What specifically triggers the alerts is unclear. The vendor uses a proprietary algorithm to determine what triggers an alert. The alert can be sent to a central administrator(s) and/or to the principal of a building. Safety Check can be set to monitor 24 hours a day or just during specified hours of the school day. Safety Check is a global feature, applying to all devices that we filter. This includes all district issued Chromebooks and iPads for student and staff, as well as all devices on the district's network.

The district briefly tested Safety Check and determined the Violence check is too broad and triggers too many false positives.

The district feels the Self Harm feature is a worthwhile feature to enable. While piloting this feature, an alert was triggered where a student threatened to harm themselves over a dating situation. The principal contacted the parent and the parents intervened. The district feels if this feature has the potential to save lives, it is worthwhile to enable.

The administration seeks the School Committee approval to enable the Self Harm feature of Safety Check.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, January 19, 2021

ITEM: Clerk (December 28, 2020)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Burncoat High School's faculty and staff to donate accrued sick time to a colleague.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 1-7-21 - Mayor Petty allowed Roger Nugent, President of the EAW, Patricia Chamberlain and Thomas Davis to speak regarding donating sick time to a colleague at Burncoat High School. They requested that the School Committee approve a total of 108 sick days from the teachers to be transferred to their colleague.
- Ms. Boulais stated that she would work with Mr. Nugent to determine the names of the Burncoat faculty who will be donating the sick days.
- Mayor Petty made the following motions:
- Request that the item be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues to be discussed at the next meeting.
- Request that the Administration provide enough sick days from the faculty at Burncoat High School until such time as the item is discussed at the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues and voted on at the School Committee meeting on January 21, 2021.
- On a roll call of 7-0, the motions were approved.

BACKUP:

Annex A (1 page) contains a copy of the petition from the EAW.



December 23, 2020

Mayor Joseph Petty
c/o Dr. Helen Friel Clerk of School Committee
20 Irving Street
Worcester, MA 01609

VIA Email Scan

Dear Dr. Friel,

I would like to speak at the next School Committee meeting on January 7th with a few educators at Burncoat High.

We will be speaking about donating sick days to a co-worker (IA at Burncoat High).

Please let us know when we will be presenting.

Sincerely,

Roger Nugent

Roger Nugent EAW President