



WORCESTER

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Worcester Public Schools Caregivers:

It is hard to believe but we are in the seventh month of the 2022-23 school year and have already celebrated the 100th day of school. I sincerely hope your children and entire family are having a positive school experience filled with multiple opportunities to expand thinking, discover new concepts, make new friends, and positively impact those around you. I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to lead Worcester Public Schools.

The purpose of this letter is to celebrate a variety of accomplishments in WPS, provide a status update from my listening and learning tour, and share what you should expect and how to stay connected moving forward.

Celebrations:

- **Student Activity Highlights:** Our student body continues to impress with their numerous and impressive talents and skills. WPS is home to talented, sensational scholars, athletes, artists, scientists and musicians and more!

South High's football team and **Doherty's field hockey team** went deep into playoffs following very successful seasons. **Burncoat's dance team** went to nationals and were national semi-finalists, and 30 WPS students were accepted to the Junior Music Festival from **South, Burncoat, and Sullivan**. On top of that, our talented scholars submitted over 1,000 entries in the **Worcester Historical Society's** 45th Annual "Be My Valentine" contest.

If you ever wondered about the brilliance of our students, tune into WGBH and watch **South High** compete in the very competitive **High School Quiz Show**. ([Watch the episode online!](#))

Doherty and South High Schools proudly represented the WPS and participated in the

High School VEX Robotics Tournament at the Bancroft School.

And finally, our winter sports teams: **North boys basketball** and **South's girls basketball** are two top teams in the area to watch! Whether it is in the classroom, the field or court, performing, or building robots, Worcester Public Schools' students can do it all.

- **Safety improvements:** We have contracted with *Guidepost Solutions* to conduct a safety audit of our district facilities. We anticipate receiving recommendations for improvement in areas of physical security measures (door locks, cameras, exterior lighting, access controls), arrival and dismissal procedures, student and staff safety drills and exercises. Additionally, all school principals, district level administrators and members of Worcester Police Department completed a one day training with *I Love You Guys*. You should anticipate learning more about *I Love You Guys* in the future including options to receive a care-giver workshop. www.iloveyouguys.org
- **Enhanced Family and Student Supports:** With the support of the School Committee we were able hire key positions to support students and families. You should expect to see enhanced communication with families including improved social media presence and other modes of communication from schools and the district office. Furthermore, we aim to improve family engagement and have hired people to help lead this important work. Finally, we have contracted with local providers to support the mental health needs of our youth at our middle and high schools.

Listening and Learning Tour Themes:

Thank you to those who were able to etch time out of your busy schedules and attend a listening forum this past fall or provide input through the digital survey.

The following themes emerged from what you shared:

1. Modernized & Safe Facilities
2. School Climate and Culture
3. Communication & Ongoing Engagement
4. Wellness & Mental Health
5. Equitable Resources & Educational Programs
6. Acquire & Retain Talent

So, What is Next?

1. Advancing the existing Strategic Plan through the inclusion of themes from the listening forums and the data I have collected while visiting classrooms.
2. Convening a diverse group of stakeholders to advance the strategic plan.
3. Outlining benchmarks, metrics and fiscal allocations within the enriched strategic plan to monitor and ensure impact on student learning.
4. Launching enriched Strategic Plan September 2024.

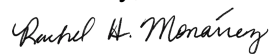
5. Implement safety audit recommendations including budget allocations, as necessary.
6. Continue to seek methods to stay connected to schools, families and community partners.

How can you stay informed and connected?

- Be sure to follow the WPS [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) pages to stay connected with what is happening in our schools!
- To find updates on the formation of the Strategic Plan, visit worcesterschools.net/planupdates. We will post information here soon.

I continue to believe in the possibility of Worcester Public Schools. We are a committed group of individuals who are here to serve this great community of Worcester. Together with you, our School Committee and our community partners there is nothing we cannot and will not achieve. Please continue to lean in, act courageously, ignore the noise and stay focused on our purpose for existence – to educate future generations. From here, anywhere... *together*.

Sincerely,



Rachel H. Monárrez, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools