

**Rules of the School Committee  
Beginning January 2, 2024**

1. The School Committee shall consist of the Mayor and eight (8) members. All members are, by municipal charter, elected during odd year November municipal elections for a two-year term beginning each even-numbered January. Two members shall be elected at large citywide; six shall be elected from geographic districts as designated by the municipal chart.
2. At all meetings of the Worcester School Committee, five (5) members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
3. The Mayor shall, by municipal charter, serve as the Chair of the School Committee. The Mayor shall have no power to veto, but shall serve as a full voting member of the Committee.
4. The Chair shall call the School Committee to order at the time appointed for the meeting and shall preside and cause the records of the last regular meeting and subsequent special meetings to be presented or read, and if they are found correct, the School Committee shall declare them approved. The Chair shall have the power to open the session at the time the School Committee is to meet, by taking the Chair, and calling the members to order; to announce the business in the order in which it is to be acted upon; to recognize members entitled to the floor; to state and to put to vote all questions which are regularly moved and to announce the result of the vote; to enforce on all occasions the observance of order and decorum among the members; to decide all questions of order (subject to an appeal to the committee by any member who submits the question to the entire School Committee). The Chair cannot close debate unless by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the School Committee present.
5. The Chair shall sign all diplomas awarded in all schools.
6. A Vice-Chair shall be chosen by Committee vote at the first meeting of the term for the full term. Each member shall name their selection for Vice-Chair. Any chosen Vice-Chair must have attended the Massachusetts School Committee Charting the Course training prior to being eligible for Vice-Chair.
7. The Vice-Chair shall, in the absence of the Chair, call to order and chair any meeting of the full committee, shall take the chair should the Mayor wish to address business before the Committee, and shall have further duties as delineated below.
8. No member of the School Committee, including the Chair, shall exercise authority outside of Committee meetings nor exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools unless such authority has been specifically delegated to him/her by statute, by Committee rule, or is consistent with state statutes. No member of the Worcester School Committee may direct any Worcester Public Schools employee.

9. The School Committee by its vote or as individual members of the School Committee shall deal with any School Department employee through the Superintendent, its executive officer, who under the general direction of the Committee, is charged with the care and supervision of the public schools.

Individual School Committee members may deal with any School Department Cabinet level employees, without notice to the Superintendent, concerning day-to-day matters of a routine nature regarding the administration of the school system, as long as such dealings would not cause any disruption in the course of the performance of that employee's duties or direct their work. In those situations where the definition of "routine" is in question, that issue may be resolved by the Superintendent.

Any requests requiring reporting beyond information already available must be filed as an item and passed by the full Committee to be fulfilled. School Committee members may attend school events during the school day when invited by the school staff in conjunction with school-based leadership and should notify the Superintendent or Executive Directors of any other visits to individual schools that have been coordinated with school-based leadership. School committee members acting in the capacity of parent/ guardian or vendor associated with the schools need not notify executive directors or superintendents when acting in this capacity.

10. No member of the School Committee shall vote on any question or serve on any committee where his/her private interest is immediately concerned or where a conflict of interest exists as defined by state statutes and/or judicial interpretation.
11. A meeting of the Committee may be called by the Chair, by the Vice Chair, or by any other four members of the Committee.
12. All meetings must be posted in accordance with the Open Meeting Law at least 48 business hours in advance of the meeting. Worcester School Committee meetings are posted by the City Clerk.
13. Regular meetings of the Worcester School Committee will take place on the first and third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. The Chair can set the meeting to start earlier than this time but no sooner than 5 p.m. based on the expected length of any scheduled executive session. In July and August, the Committee will meet solely on the third Thursday. In June, both meetings will begin at 4 pm for budget deliberation. The School Committee will approve a meeting calendar for the upcoming calendar year.
14. The seats of the members, with the exception of the Chair, should be numbered and determined by lottery and may not be changed unless by permission of the Chair. As a matter of protocol, the Chair while presiding at regular School Committee meetings shall be seated between and flanked by the Superintendent and the Clerk of the School Committee.

15. The Chair shall observe the following procedures in conducting the meetings:

- a. recognizing members in order of request to be heard
- b. acting upon the motion on the floor before other motions are entertained
- c. discouraging argumentative and repetitive discussion
- d. relinquishing the Chair when desiring to engage in discussion or debate of the agenda item

When a question is under debate the Chair shall receive no motion but:

- a. to refer
- b. to hold to a certain day/indefinitely
- c. to allow debate to continue on a motion
- d. to hold
- e. to amend
- f. to move the question
- g. to file
- h. to adjourn

16. Every member, when about to speak, shall respectfully address the Chair, and wait until they are recognized, shall confine themselves to the question under debate, and shall avoid personalities. Respect shall also encompass professionalism including wearing professional attire to meetings.

17. No member speaking shall be interrupted by another, but by calling for a point of order or explanation.

18. Any member present must vote either “Yes,” “No,” or “Abstain” from voting. Members needing to recuse themselves from a vote must declare their recusal ahead of time.

19. Motions requiring a two-thirds (2/3) vote and a roll call of the members of the Committee present shall be as follows:

- a. To amend, repeal, rescind or annul any part of the policies of the district or Rules of Order (These also require previous notice.)
- b. To suspend the Rules
- c. To move the question
- d. To rescind previous vote
- e. To limit or extend one's limit of debate

20. Any action voted by the School Committee shall be effective 48 business hours after said vote.

21. No action of the School Committee shall be reconsidered unless the motion to reconsider is made within forty-eight (48) business hours of the date the vote to be reconsidered was taken, excluding legal holidays, Saturdays, and Sundays, with the Clerk of the School Committee. Any member may move or file for reconsideration. The motion for

reconsideration can be made during the meeting at which the action to be reconsidered was taken provided that the motion to reconsider is approved by two-thirds of the members of the School Committee who are present. The reason for filing for reconsideration must be included as part of the backup with the caveat that the entire item would be open for discussion. An item to be reconsidered shall be the first item on the agenda for action at the next regular meeting. The motion cannot be postponed, amended or referred to Committee. Items to be reconsidered or held concerning personnel organizational patterns, or budgetary items shall be reconsidered or acted upon within two (2) weeks of the date (or the next regular meeting, whichever comes first) of the vote to be reconsidered or held was to be taken. No more than one (1) motion for reconsideration of any vote shall be entertained.

22. All School Committee meetings shall terminate no later than midnight. Items that are still pending action at that time shall be carried forward as the first order under General Business at the next regular or special School Committee meeting.
23. When an item is filed by a member of the School Committee and that item is to be referred either to a Standing Committee, Special/Ad-Hoc Committee or the School Administration, debate will be limited to opposition, amendment, clarification or supplementation of a motion except for the member who filed the item who, in addition to the debate, may also introduce the item.
24. Any member wishing to place an item on an upcoming agenda shall send it to the Clerk, copying the Vice Chair of the Committee by the Wednesday preceding a regular meeting.
25. The Chair may approve an item after the Wednesday deadline and prior to the 48-hour posting requirement of a meeting to be added to the agenda if the Chair so determines that an item is time sensitive.
26. Agenda items filed by School Committee members shall be under the purview of the Committee, focus on the business of the Committee, and should be concise and specific. Members shall not file items that can be disposed of via contact per rule 9. Items not following this rule shall not be placed on the agenda. Items that are recognitions will be placed on the consent agenda; items that note upcoming events will be placed under announcements.
27. On the Thursday preceding a regular meeting, the agenda of the Committee will be assembled by the Clerk, in consultation with the Superintendent and the Vice Chair. The agenda will then be posted by the Clerk of the Worcester School Committee and will be officially posted by the City Clerk.
28. The assembly of the agenda should be done with respect to the calendar of the Worcester Public Schools as well as the calendar of the Committee.

The agenda of the Committee will be as follows:

- a. General Business items taken in Executive Session
- b. Call to order
- c. Pledge of Allegiance
- d. Roll call
- e. Consent agenda
  - i. Approval of minutes
  - ii. Approval of donations
  - iii. Notification of personnel records
  - iv. Initial filing of recognitions
  - v. Notices of interest to the district or to the public
- f. Items for reconsideration
- g. Held Items
- h. Recognitions
- i. Public comment
- j. Public petitions
- k. Report of the Superintendent
- l. Report of the Standing Committee/s
- m. Report of the Student Representatives/Student Advisory Committee
- n. Approval of grants and other finance items
- o. General business
- p. Announcements

*During the bi-monthly Student Advisory meeting, item M will be taken up directly following the roll call.*

- 29. Any item may be removed from the consent agenda to the general business agenda by majority vote of the Committee.
- 30. Any member of the public may address the Committee regarding any item before them for two (2) minutes. Those speaking will state their name, their residence, and the item on which they wish to speak for the record. Those speaking may do so in person or via remote participation. Members of the Committee may not respond to the comments of the public at the meeting.
- 31. Any member of the public may file a petition to the Committee on any matter under the Committee's purview by submitting such a petition in writing (on paper or electronically) by the Wednesday of the week prior to a regular meeting of the Committee. Anyone so filing will be invited to address the Committee on their petition at the meeting of the Committee on which such item appears. Any Standing Committee receiving such a referral will endeavor to take up any such petition within 60 days. When such an item appears on Standing Committee agenda, the petitioner will be invited to the meeting.

32. There will be a report of the Superintendent at every regular meeting of the Committee. Said reports will specifically be in reference to the goals of the district and/or of the superintendent.
33. There will be a calendar of regular reports of the Superintendent, as follows:
- Following the filing of the Governor's budget: Report on the Governor's budget • July meeting: Evaluation of the superintendent August meeting: Back to school report • October meeting: MCAS report
  - December meeting: Superintendent's midcycle review
34. All petitions, communications, items or any matter before the School Committee may be referred as follows:
- a. to a Standing Committee of the School Committee
  - b. to a Special Committee of the School Committee
  - c. to the Superintendent/Administration
35. All items referred to Administration for study and recommendation shall include in the item a suggested date for a report back to the full Committee. The length of time allowed for the study shall be determined by its complexity. The Committee shall be aware of the limited time available for study items during budget preparation and hearing months. The direction, scope and intent to the study shall be specific.
36. A petition, resolution, order, communication or other matter acted upon unfavorably by the School Committee including placing on file such petition, order, or other matter or the substance thereof, shall not again be docketed on the School Committee agenda for consideration by the School Committee within a period of three (3) months of such unfavorable action unless previously authorized by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the School Committee Members present.
37. The conduct of meetings of the business of the School Committee shall be in accordance with the laws of the State, and except as otherwise provided, in accordance with the rules of parliamentary procedure laid down in Robert's Rules of Order, 12<sup>th</sup> edition for [small bodies](#).
38. All meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public except for executive sessions as described below:

No executive session shall be held until the School Committee has first convened in open session for which notice has been duly given, a majority of the members have voted to go into executive session, and the vote of each member is recorded on a roll call vote and entered into the minutes, the Chair has cited the purpose for an executive session, and the Chair has stated before the executive session if the School Committee

will reconvene after the executive session.

39. All (Standing) Committees shall be appointed by the Chair unless otherwise ordered by the School Committee. All (Standing Committee) Chairs must have attended the Massachusetts Association of School Committees Charting the Course training prior to their assignment. All standing committee chairs must take MASC charting the course prior to the assignment, or be subject to removal by the chair. Each School Committee member shall serve on no less than one standing committee. A majority of each (Standing) Committee shall constitute a quorum. All reports made by (Standing) Committees to the School Committee shall be presented by the Standing Committee Chair. Minority reports may be given by members of the Standing Committee as long as the issues raised were discussed in the Standing Committee.
40. There shall be appointed Standing Committees of the School Committee as follows:
  - a. Finance, Operations, and Governance
  - b. Teaching, Learning, and Student Success

#### **Finance, Operations, and Governance**

The Standing Committee on Finance, Operations, and Governance provides the full year oversight of the budget of the Worcester Public Schools as required by Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 71, sec. 37 through the review of quarterly budget reports, the reception of reports of the auditors, and issues of payroll, procurement, and financial management and planning that may fall under the purview of the Committee. The Standing Committee provides for facilities management, repair, and capital planning so far as it is under district purview. The Standing Committee also oversees the operational aspects of the district under the departments of School Nutrition, Student Transportation, Information Technology, and School Safety. The Committee will also review, update and/or institute all policies governing the Worcester Public Schools. This committee is also responsible for issues related to employees/staff including human resource recruitment, hiring, retention, and evaluations, so far as it is under Committee purview. The Deputy Superintendent will be the Administrator in Charge of this Committee. The content and annual edits to the Student Handbook and the Policies Handbook will be referred to the Standing Committee on finance operations and governance prior to approval by the Full School Committee.

#### **Teaching, Learning and Student Success**

The Standing Committee on Teaching, Learning and Student Success addresses topics, policies and practices related to curriculum, instruction, assessment, district and school-level performance and improvement, research and program evaluation, accountability planning, professional development, instructional materials, and student support services. In doing so, the Committee monitors and reviews the

structures and processes integral to the delivery of the core curriculum. It focuses as

well on supplemental and intervention instruction, designed to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students as each school strives to reach the intended outcomes of college and career readiness for every student. The Assistant Superintendent will be the Administrator in charge of this committee.

41. Each Committee shall consist of no less than four (4) School Committee Members.
42. Meetings of the Standing Committee may be called by the chair of the Standing Committee or by the three other members of the Standing Committee.
43. If an item is referred to a Standing Committee and has no action for two consecutive meetings, the maker of the original item may request the item be returned to the full committee.
44. The principal petitioner of any petition to be heard by a Standing Committee of the School Committee must be notified of the date, time and place at which their petition is to be heard by the Clerk of the School Committee. No petition may be voted by a Standing Committee of the School Committee unless the principal petitioner has been notified as specified above.
45. The Chair of any Standing Committee who does not call a meeting of the committee for six months shall be removed as chair, and the Mayor shall appoint another member in that member's stead.
46. Whenever a vacancy occurs among School Committee Officers, or in any Committee, the same shall be filled by election or appointment in the same manner and by the authority which first elected the officer or appointed the Committee.
47. The Clerk of the School Committee shall create and maintain an accurate record of all meetings of the School Committee and all of its committees, including executive sessions, setting forth the date, time and place, the members present or absent, and a summary of the discussions on each subject. The record shall include all documents and other exhibits, such as photographs, recordings or maps, used by the School Committee or any committee thereof at any open session or executive session.
48. The minutes of any open session, whether approved or in draft form, shall be made available upon request by any person within ten (10) days of the request to the extent required by subsection 22(e) of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A §§ 18-25.
49. The minutes of any executive session, the notes, recordings or other materials used in the preparation of such minutes and all documents and exhibits used at the session, shall be withheld from public disclosure to the extent provided by subsection 22(f) of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A §§ 18-25. The Mayor shall, at reasonable intervals or as otherwise required by subsection 22(g)(2) of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A



§ § 18-25, review any previously unreleased minutes of all executive sessions and

determine whether continued non-disclosure under the Open Meeting Law is warranted. In conducting this review, the Mayor may seek the advice and assistance of the Superintendent, Clerk of the School Committee, the City Manager or City Solicitor. The Mayor shall file a report containing such determinations at the next regular meeting of the School Committee.

50. The Chair/Vice Chair shall be the ones to seek official legal opinions on any item. These requests can come on behalf of School Committee members through the Chair/Vice-Chair. This does not preclude individual members from contacting the School Committee attorney.
51. There will be a School Committee Student Advisory Committee, as created by G.L. c. 71§§ 38M. Members shall be elected each spring by their peers at each city secondary school, including the alternative programs for a term the succeeding year. The results of such election will be forwarded to the Clerk of the School Committee by the first week of June.
52. The members of said Committee are recognized by the Worcester School Committee as the elected representatives of the students of the Worcester Public Schools. The members of the Student Advisory Committee thus are not to be subjected to district pressure regarding their opinions. The contact information of the members of the Student Advisory Committee will be shared with all K-12 Worcester Public School Students.
53. It will be the responsibility of the Clerk and the Vice Chair to ensure that the Student Advisory Committee meets once a month on its own and once every other month, as required by G.L. c. 71§§ 38M with the entire Worcester School Committee. (MGL 71 Section 38M. School committees of cities, towns and regional school districts shall meet at least once every other month, during the months school is in session, with a student advisory committee to consist of five members to be composed of students elected by the student body of the high school or high schools in each city, town or regional school district.)
54. Members of the Student Advisory Committee will decide, when meeting among themselves, what items will be brought forward to the Worcester School Committee on its next agenda and shall prepare those items for submission to the Clerk and the Vice Chair with the same deadlines as items submitted by other members.
55. The chair of the Student Advisory Committee, as elected by its members, shall serve as a non-voting member of the Worcester School Committee. This member will have dedicated time on each agenda to bring forward the business of the Student Advisory Committee. This, and any, member of the Student Advisory Committee has the same right to be recognized by the Chair and to speak on any business before the Committee

as any other Worcester School Committee member in public session.