

Committee Members

Dianna Biancheria, Chairman  
Tracy Novick, Vice-chairman  
Brian A. O'Connell

AGENDA #3

ASA

10-22-13

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A C T I O N S

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Student Achievement met on Tuesday, October 22, 2013 at 5:40 p.m. in Room 410 at the Dr. John E. Durkin Administration Building.

There were present: Ms. Novick and Chairman Biancheria

There was absent: Mr. O'Connell

Mr. O'Connell arrived at 5:50 p.m.

Ms. Colorio was also in attendance.

Representing Administration: Dr. Perda and Dr. Friel

Others in attendance: R. Walton

gb #2-48 - Ms. Novick/Mr. Monfredo/Mr. O'Connell (February 8, 2012)

Request that the Administration provide an assessment report on Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and highlight particularly both technology needs and the phasing out of the current state assessment.

Dr. Perda stated that the first part of the item was taken up at both a previous Standing Committee meeting and as a Report of the Superintendent and the remaining part of the item pertains to technology.

Mr. Walton indicated that there are three factors that need to be ready for PARCC from the technology perspective:

Computer Specifications

The Worcester Public Schools is going to enter into a five year lease for computers in the Fall of 2013 for use for the PARCC testing. Certain parts of the testing require headsets and other parts both headsets and microphones. The Administration estimates that 3,500 headsets would be needed which cost \$14 each for a total cost of \$49,000. It recommends that the testing take place in the computer labs at each school.

gb #2-48 (continued)

PARCC Technology Readiness Tool

To utilize this tool, you put in the number of students at a particular school, by grade and the number of computers in the lab. With that information, the computer will indicate the number of computers needed to test in the 20, 15, 10 and 5 day windows.

Bandwidth

The PARCC tool indicates that the system needs to move 37 schools from Mbps to 100Mbps next year and the estimated cost, after e-rate reimbursement which pays \$.83 on the dollar, would be \$70,189 if PARCC tests are implemented next year. Mr. Walton suggested that the Internet connection be increased to 500Mbps.

Mr. O'Connell made the following motion:

Request that the Administration, provide the following information as part of the FY14 Budget:

- a recommendation designed to fully fund the bandwidth requirements for the needs of the school system for PARCC with a view to those being funded through e-rate priority 1 for the 2014-15 fiscal year
- a projected cost for installation of enhanced fiber optic capacity for expanding bandwidth capacities for all of the Worcester Public Schools.

On a voice vote, the motion was approved.

Ms. Novick indicated that she is concerned regarding the requirement of having students that do not have keyboard experience faced with trying to express themselves in sentences and paragraphs through a computer keyboard.

FILE.

gb #3-115 - Ms. Novick/Mr. Monfredo (March 28, 2013)

Request administration ensure that the Worcester Public Schools' is abiding by 201 CMR 17.00 Standards for the Protection of Personal Information of Residents of the Commonwealth and further request administration share student information only with those who can demonstrate that they comply with 201 CMR 17.00.

gb #3-115 (continued)

Dr. Perda made a presentation relative to the sharing of student information only with those who can demonstrate that they comply with 201 CMR 17.00.

Ms. Novick made the following motions:

Request that the Administration provide in a Friday Letter a copy of the master list of those individuals who have access to student data, to include the date when they became vendors. In addition, request that this information be made accessible on the WPS website.

Request that the following motion be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues:

Request that the School Committee update the Student Records section of the Policies Handbook for 2014-15 to include information on parent and student rights under FERPA.

On a voice vote, the motion were approved.

FILE.

gb #3-116 - Ms. Novick/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Colorio/Miss Biancheria (March 28, 2013)

Request administration notify parents of any organization or agency with whom student or family information is shared and procedures for parents denying the sharing of their child's information.

Dr. Perda stated that the procedure that is currently utilized by the system is to obtain written permission from parents prior to sharing information about a student's record. The practice of the Worcester Public Schools requires a letter because it would include information about why we are requesting the parent's authorization to share the information.

Ms. Novick made the following motion:

Request that the following motion be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues:

gb #3-116 (continued)

Request that the School Committee update the Policies Handbook for 2014-15 regarding the sharing of student information to include:

- rights of individuals to access student information
- circumstances under which the district shares such information
- district's obligations in terms of notifying parents
- parent rights in terms of denying the sharing of information

On a voice vote, the motion was approved.

Ms. Novick and Mr. O'Connell made the following motion:

Request that the Administration interact with the MASC in preparing appropriate opt out language that provides a reasonably detailed explanation to parents as to what their rights are in connection with FERPA.

On a voice vote, the motion was approved.

Dr. Perda indicated that the draft language should come back in time to be included in the Policies Handbook for 2014-15.

FILE.

gb #3-275 - Ms. Novick (October 7, 2013)

Request administration report on the DESE legal opinion regarding parental opt out of state mandated testing

Dr. Perda provided an update on the topic of feasible language, if any, for parental opt out for MCAS testing.

Ms. Novick requested that the DESE legal opinion be referred to the City Solicitor and to the MASC to determine whether the opinion lines up not only with Mass General Laws but also with case law surrounding parental and student rights with regard to not only student assessment but simply decision making rights in education.

On a voice vote, the motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.