
WEJA School Committee Policy Questionnaire

The Worcester Education Justice Alliance (WEJA) is a group of students, parents, teachers, school staff, and community members standing together to fight for education justice in Worcester. We are a chapter of the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance (MEJA) and a member of the Fund Our Future coalition advocating for policy at the state level to fully fund public schools.

<http://worcesteredjustice.org/>

<https://massedjustice.org/>

Please answer each question by selecting either yes or no. You may use the comments section to explain your reasoning for your selection below each question.

Name *

Chantel Bethea

Questions related to curriculum

1) Would you vote in favor of a comprehensive age appropriate sexual education curriculum as was advocated by the Worcester Impact of Sexual Health (WISH) taskforce (<https://www.wishtaskforce.org/sexual-education/recommended-curricula/>) like the Making Proud Choices? (<https://www.etr.org/ebi/programs/making-proud-choices/>)

Yes

No

1) Explanation of response (optional)

2) Would you advocate for the elimination of the MCAS as a high school exit exam?

Yes

No

2) Explanation of response (optional)

3) Would you advocate for the elimination of high stakes standardized tests, like the MCAS, to evaluate school performance?

Yes

No

3) Explanation of response (optional)

4) Do you believe that teachers should be required to follow the state curriculum frameworks to ensure that all students are learning the same curriculum across the state (as opposed to giving school sites and teachers more flexibility to teach the topics and content that they believe most important)?

Yes

No

4) Explanation of response (optional)

Questions Related to Funding

5) Do you support the Promise Act and would you advocate for its passage with the state legislature?

Yes

No

5) Explanation of response (optional)

6) State spending requirements enable local communities to spend more than the minimum required by the Chapter 70 Foundation formula. Since most local communities do spend more than required to address the educational needs of their students, on average, local communities spend over 25% above their required allocation. Worcester typically funds right at the minimum required by the Chapter 70 Foundation formula (give or take roughly 1%). If you were elected to school committee would you advocate for the city to spend 10% or more above the required foundation formula even if that means the city would have to secure additional revenue?

Yes

No

6) Explanation of response (optional)

7) Facing fiscal shortfalls as a result of the Great Recession, in 2010, the City of Worcester became one of the few municipalities in the state that began taking a 3% indirect of the state and federal grants that pass through City Hall. This amounts to over a million dollars that is designed to cover the costs of developing and administering the grants (which in Worcester are all handled by the school department). Would you, if elected to the school committee, advocate for City of Worcester to continue to take this 3% indirect?

Yes

No

7) Explanation of response (optional)

Questions related to Staffing and Leadership

8) Would you support merit pay or bonuses for teachers who are considered highly effective in producing strong education outcomes (based on measured test score improvements) for students?

Yes

No

8) Explanation of response (optional)

I would support bonuses for those teachers that go above and beyond for their students. The teachers that are doing what is required (by law, ie., mcas testing) but also finding ways to teach our students new things that are helping our students be whole young adults and ready for the real world. I would also have the teachers that are going above and beyond reach out to other teachers at other schools to share their joys and challenges. This could inspire other teachers to start doing the same things finding ways to bring themselves into the class room. Teacher become teachers because its a passion that they have, we need to utilize that.

9) Would you support hiring bonuses or stipends for certified bilingual teachers in our Worcester Public Schools?

Yes

No

9) Explanation of response (optional)

10) Do you support utilizing 'diversity bonuses' in order to recruit more teachers of color in Worcester?

Yes

No

10) Explanation of response (optional)

11) Do you support 'Grow Your Own' programs that recruit teacher candidates from non-traditional populations (e.g., high school students, paraprofessionals, and after-school program staff) who are more likely to reflect local diversity and more likely to continue to teach in their communities?

Yes

No

11) Explanation of response (optional)

12) Do you support the hiring of the Associate Superintendent for Diversity and Inclusion?

Yes

No

12) Explanation of response (optional)

Questions related to student discipline and student life

13) Would you advocate for secondary schools to begin later in the morning to allow adolescents to sleep later?

Yes

No

13) Explanation of response (optional)

14) Do you support the continuation of the current WPS policy that bans “hats, bandanas, scarves or sweatbands,” as well as “outerwear” and “droopy pants.” See the full dress code in the 2019 handbook.

(<https://worcesterschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2018-19-English-with-updated-links.pdf>)

Yes

No

14) Explanation of response (optional)

15) Would you support a moratorium on suspensions and expulsions that are not directly associated with violence or drugs or issues of direct safety for the educational communities?

Yes

No

15) Explanation of response (optional)

16) Would you support a ban on all suspensions in grades pre-K through 3rd grade?

Yes

No

16) Explanation of response (optional)

Yes I support the BAN on all suspensions in grades pre-k through 3rd grade

17) Do you support continuing to hire and station police officers in schools?

Yes

No

17) Explanation of response (optional)

18) Do you support the creation of restorative justice programs in the schools?

Yes

No

18) Explanation of response (optional)

I would support this in the schools if we had the community involved we have a lot of people in the city of Worcester that have been through a lot of issues dealing with police, gang violence, gangs, and more and some not all have turned their lives around. I think that the children that are facing these things now would respect this program if they new these people coming in were from the hood they group up in. So my answer is YES I would if done with the community.

19) Would you support an amendment to the Community Based Juvenile Justice Program

(<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter12/section32>) that would require the notification of parents by the school district of all youth in the Worcester Public Schools who are identified by the district attorney's office as a juvenile "most likely to pose a threat to their community?"

Yes

No

19) Explanation of response (optional)

This is tricking for me because we don't want to have kids bullying the so called troubled kids nor do we want to have these so called troubled kids feeling like they have to prove themselves in order to gain respect from their peers and administration for the choices that they made. Do I feel that parents should know whats going on in the schools yes, I think if there is mention to what this program is to parents in person not a paper being sent home but a real dialogue so that parents could ask questions I think that would be great. Because there is always a transition for all people to turn their lives around being a youth it is so hard for them because there are so many factors that we would have to consider. Our youth today are growing up in a time where they are the adults in their homes and raising their siblings and so much more, we have to encourage, educate and empower our youth (the so-called troubled kids) they are more resilient than we think, and knowledgeable and we have to acknowledge that and help foster that in our youth.

Questions related to school choice

20) Do you support the creation of additional innovation schools in Worcester?

Yes

No

20) Explanation of response (optional)

21) Are you in favor of supporting the creation of additional charter schools in Worcester?

Yes

No

21) Explanation of response (optional)

Community based Charter Schools Yes,
NO to Private Funded Charter Schools.

22) Are you in favor of supporting vouchers for low-income students to be able to attend schools of choice, including public schools, charter schools or private schools?

Yes

No

22) Explanation of response (optional)

Questions related to community voice and accountability

23) Will you demand that the Worcester Public Schools ensure that school site councils are established and active in every single school in order to develop the school improvement/accountability plan, develop site specific goals and review the school site budget as stipulated by state and federal law? (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/schoolcouncils/>)

Yes

No

23) Explanation of response (optional)

24) Will you ensure that parents (and students in high schools) are part of the hiring committee for faculty and administration?

Yes

No

24) Explanation of response (optional)

25) Will you make sure that all data that the school district collects and all research that is completed by outside researchers in the Worcester Public Schools is made available to the public?

Yes

No

25) Explanation of response (optional)

26) Would you vote in favor of allowing 16 and 17 year-olds to vote in local elections?

Yes

No

26) Explanation of response (optional)

27) Would you support the creation of an online (and phoned) anonymous bias incident reporting and investigating process for incidents that occur in the Worcester Public Schools?

Yes

No

27) Explanation of response (optional)

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