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## 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 \*

Dianna Biancheria

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### 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)

In reference to sex education- Include LGBTQ, Reproductive rights of women, equally respectful of religious rights. Includes addressing the concepts of consent which equips students with the tools to form healthy mutually respectful relationships. I look forward to our discussions as school committee members reviewing a variety of frameworks including DESE frameworks with a thorough review.

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

Yes

No

### 2) Explanation of response (optional)

There are options as you exit high school, you receive your diploma or perhaps a certificate of attainment. Each include hard work dedication and commitment by student and by staff members.

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### 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)

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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)

The mobility factor must be taken into consideration as we move forward for all students. As mobility is always a concern consistent curriculum frameworks is beneficial to all students. The option is available to have special projects, beneficial team activities or an afterschool program which can be interesting and exciting for all students.

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## 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)

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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)

Our Superintendent , City Manager and Mayor diligently work collaboratively providing additional programs which need funding, with agreeable circumstances mutually respectful Agreements are completed to provide these additional experiences for our students. Presently our City , our Communities will benefit from their Collaborative efforts with a new South High Community School , two other high schools on the horizon and a new middle school .

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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)

Our students and our community have benefits of mobile libraries and 60 million dollars on parks throughout our city because of collaboration and team efforts.

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## 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)

Choosing the profession of teaching requires a variety of areas , emotional and social including determination and commitment by all teachers working towards success for all students.

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

Yes

No

## 9) Explanation of response (optional)

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

Yes

No

## 10) Explanation of response (optional)

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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)

As a school committee member and as the former Worcester public school district school to career partnership coordinator I have and will continue to promote educational careers including vocational education teaching careers.

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

Yes

No

### 12) Explanation of response (optional)

Worcester public schools presently does have a detailed job description of a diversity officer position , This description is available through the superintendence office/human resource department . The position of a diversity officer has been recently filled and discussions and updates of success and plans of accomplishments will follow through our superintendent at our school Committee meetings which are held at City Hall every two weeks .

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## 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)

The concept of changing times for our high schools to begin their day at later times would need numerous detailed discussions of our Superintendent,principles, teachers and our parents including our business community. As this concept would also have an impact on the school budget and our community every day lives.

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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)

Our Worcester public schools hand book continues to be included in discussions not only at the school committee level but also in our standing committees meetings. Discussions include input from principles, teachers and students all of which had taken under consideration as we address challenges and concerns..

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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)

A safe environment promotes teaching and learning for all students. .

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

Yes

No



## 16) Explanation of response (optional)

A safe environment promotes teaching and learning for all students. .

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

Yes

No

## 17) Explanation of response (optional)

Our present Mayor and our former Superintendent set the path of collaboration with a memorandum of agreement with our City establishing a set of Priorities In the area of police in our schools. Our present Superintendent recognizes the importance of safety in our schools and continues the recommendation of the memorandum of agreement.

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

Yes

No

## 18) Explanation of response (optional)

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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)

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### Questions related to school choice

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

Yes

No

## 20) Explanation of response (optional)

Under the Worcester public schools umbrella of programs and opportunities for students I continue to advocate for Vocational education opportunities . Vocational education opportunities have a positive impact on students and our community. As a school committee member I have and will continue to advocate and spearhead vocational educational opportunities that are beneficial to all students.

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

Yes

No

## 21) Explanation of response (optional)

Charter schools impact our Worcester Public School budget drawing on funds that could provide additional beneficial programs ,additional services and staff including vocational educational programs for our students.

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## 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)

Worcester public Schools offers opportunities, with dedicated and committed staff , including sports , arts , music , vocational education and many other beneficial opportunities....

Worcester Public Schools - our investment in our schools and our community is the commitment I advocate for. As a School Committee member who believes our schools are our most important public resource , I will continue my commitment to our success.

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## 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)

Suggestions of supportive strategies working with school site councils along with setting agreed upon priorities to overcome challenges may enable this to be successful.

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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)

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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)

Utilizing the Strategic plan over a period of time should enable the necessary avenue for data once reviewed by administration to then be presented to the school committee members and the public.

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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)

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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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