

---

## 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 \*

Mariah Martinez

---

---

### 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)

Batting a blind eye towards the percentage of teen pregnancy within Worcester is one of our school system's biggest flaws. Teenagers are well aware of the term sex; many are involved in it. Students need to be educated on the consequences it can bring.

---

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

Yes

No

### 2) Explanation of response (optional)

MCAS should not be an exit exam. It is crucial to understand that many students can achieve highly within the classroom yet fail upon a pressurized exam. Many students work hard throughout the entire school year and should not be penalized by one test.

---

### 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)

This question I am in between about because schools do need some form of measurability to compare to other schools. We need to ensure students are receiving the proper education within the classroom regardless of which school they attend. The accountability should lean more towards the teachers rather than the students. Teachers need to ensure every student is understanding the curriculum. If a student transfers to another school, it is important for that child not to fall behind due to the differences between the educational quality.

---

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)

Teachers should be allowed to input their own creative ideas into the syllabus but it is important for students to be learning the same curriculum so they are receiving quality education regardless of which schools they attend. Students should not fall behind when the move on to the next grade or if they are transferred to a different school. Not every child has stability and too much flexibility within a classroom can hinder a student's performance.

---

---

## 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)

Worcester is a safe haven. It is important for every child to be protected by our city and school system.

---

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)

Worcester is home to 25,000 + students. In order to properly fulfill the needs of our students and schools, we need to spend more than the bare minimum.

---

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)

Being the second largest city in New England, Worcester deserves additional funding to provide for its community.

---

---

### 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)

A teacher who is producing higher outcomes is working harder to meet the needs of every single student within their classroom. This hard work deserves to be recognized.

---

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

Yes

No

### 9) Explanation of response (optional)

A bilingual teacher has the ability to assist students in ways other teachers cannot. Worcester needs to embrace its diversity and push for a variety of languages within the school system.

---

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

Yes

No

### 10) Explanation of response (optional)

Our school system NEEDS diversity; it is crucial but I do not agree with a person's skin color determining their salary.

---

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)

Students need to be dressed appropriate but we also need to ensure there is no exclusion of a child’s cultural and religious attire.

---

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)

Absolutely! Students can be removed from a classroom if needed but they should be helped, not kicked out of school. We need to promote therapy and guidance, not turn our backs on students who are misunderstood and lack proper communication skills.

---

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

Yes

No

## 17) Explanation of response (optional)

Schools need to be safe but students should obtain more guidance, not discipline. We should not encourage the school to prison pipeline. We need to promote therapists and well trained guidance councilors who can seek out negative behavior before it escalates.

---

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

Yes

No

18) Explanation of response (optional)

We need to ensure students are following the proper path to become contributing members of society. Restorative justice programs should help develop students who are heading downhill and need direction.

---

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 puts a target on a child's back and it is crucial to understand that correlation does not imply causation. Therefore the entire community is assuming a child to go downhill due to statistics that do not prove a child's outcome. This student needs more support. Well trained professionals need to seek out this behavior and work one on one to improve this child's flaws. The student needs to be closely monitored to ensure they are not a danger to their peers.

---

## Questions related to school choice

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

Yes

No

20) Explanation of response (optional)

I need more information before I advocate for either side. I believe that rather than creating an alternative, we need to focus on improving our current schools. Adding innovation to the classroom is positive but we need to ensure we have measurable and quality education for all students.

---

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

Yes

No

21) Explanation of response (optional)

---

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)

Feedback from the community should be included when discussing the hiring of administration but the deciding factor should be qualifications, not a popularity contest.

---

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)

Yes but students need to be educated. Current local events should be discussed within the classroom. Students deserve a say if they are educated on the topic first.

---

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)

---

---

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms