
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 *

Molly McCullough

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)

am fully supportive of a comprehensive sex Ed curriculum that encompasses topics such as consent, reproductive rights, safe sex, sexual health, and one that is LGBTQ inclusive. It is our responsibility as committee members to work together with health educators, parents and community stakeholders to initiate a curriculum that is appropriate and comprehensive for the students in WPS. While the previous conversations on this topic became heated, I believe that we can all work together to right for our students and our community. And just like with any class, we have to have the right teachers teaching them so that students feel comfortable having conversations and asking questions.

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

Yes

No

2) Explanation of response (optional)

If the State of MA were to eliminate this requirement, I would certainly be in support of this. I believe that our teachers are our best tools for measuring student success and achievement.

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)

Teachers need to follow frameworks in order to best accommodate all students to give them an even playing field. Think of students that are more transient and switch between cities and schools. Having frameworks allows for more consistency for students and educators. I would like to see more freedom in creativity with teachers not necessarily having to teach to a specific test.

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)

We have seen an increase in financial support from the City over the last 4+ years. Additionally, the City has repeatedly worked with us to fund initiatives and needs. I will always advocate for additional funds but feel where we need to advocate most is at the State level.

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)

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

Yes

No

9) Explanation of response (optional)

Any type of hiring bonus for one group vs another is a legal matter based on teacher contracts.

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

Yes

No

10) Explanation of response (optional)

I support working together to encourage a more diverse applicant pool of qualified teachers. We need to work with all children at a young age to show them the teaching is not only an attainable career but a desirable one.

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)

I support opportunities that allow us to grow our diversity amongst our staff.

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)

I have been a part of these conversations and while we know that for some students, this can be beneficial, it is logistically very difficult in a City of our size due to bussing, after school jobs, sports and other extra curriculars. However, it is something that we should continue to look at.

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)

I do support many aspects of our dress code and have a great deal of respect for the teachers and administrators who work together to present us these policies for review based on their first hand experiences in buildings each and every day. However, I do believe policies can always be reviewed in order to be more culturally relevant.

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)

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

Yes

No

17) Explanation of response (optional)

I support our officers in the high schools as conduits for our community and positive relationships within our community as well as for supporting a safe environment. I believe the admins and teachers should be the ones handling discipline and the officers should be there as resource officers, only being involved in discipline when absolutely necessary; not as a means of a school to prison pipeline. I do believe we need to continue to add additional options for more restorative justice as opposed to suspensions. However, we have a job to provide a safe learning environment for all students and staff so we can't simply allow unsafe behavior to continually occur in school. We need to work together with all stakeholders to provide all students supports they need.

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

Yes

No

18) Explanation of response (optional)

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)

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 am in support of us continuing to evaluate our programs across the district and perhaps adding additional innovation schools; particularly via academies.

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)

Each of our schools currently has a site/school council. For years, the issue has been getting parents and guardians involved; similar to the issue we have with CPPAC. I am in support of us working together with principals and families to work on ways we can work together to get more people involved.

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)

I believe that is our responsibility to review and share data that we receive from DESE. Having them come and present at the SC meeting will provide an opportunity for us to hear a breakdown of the data from the organization tang actually generates it.

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)

Personally, even being well educated in politics and community happenings at that age, I don't believe I would have been ready to vote in elections at that age in an educated and responsible way. Granted age isn't always necessarily a factor.

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)

I believe that anyone should feel comfortable coming forward with an issue to administration without retaliation. However, as we know that it isn't always the case in the world we live in. I would be supportive of exploring a method in which someone could have a conduit to report incidents or concerns with anonymity as long as it was in a responsible way where appropriate and necessary information could be gathered.

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