



August 27, 2020

Contacts: racismfreewps@gmail.com | defundworcesterpdp@gmail.com

All quotes attributable to Defund WPD and Racism-free WPS

Racism-free WPS and Defund WPD Supporters Ask School Committee for Changes

Nearly two dozen educators and former students called in expressing concerns about racism, sexism and the emotional environment of the Worcester Public Schools

On Thursday, August 27 [Racism-free WPS](#), a group of recent Worcester Public Schools graduates, presented a petition of nine demands to the Worcester School Committee: cop-free schools, restorative justice for disciplined students, an inclusive dress policy, mandatory health and consent classes for students, cultural competency training for faculty and staff, mental health competency for faculty and staff, an ethnic studies curriculum, diversity counselors, and environmental action. All of these items are meant to address the pervasive problems of racism, sexual harassment, and environmental inequality within the Worcester Public Schools.

Signs remain, however, that these changes may not be taken seriously. First, School Committee member John Monfredo began the meeting asking to push the petition items off until names could be attached to the petition, even though the petition was submitted with 850 signatures and was cleared for the agenda by city lawyers. Second, callers rightly expressed their disbelief that such a vital and admirable body of work put forward by WPS students and alumni could be dismissed by those who did not want to hear them. Many teachers argued that the work Racism-free WPS is doing is exactly what we should want our students to engage in, and uplifted once again that students should not have to feel so unsafe in our schools that they must take matters into their own hands.

A number of callers pointed out the \$1 million cost of keeping cops in schools and how that money would be exponentially better spent if reallocated to the other programs demanded by Racism-free WPS. Teachers and students alike voiced their preference for building up WPS's capacity for supporting students' holistic needs over armed officers stalking the halls.

We are grateful to have heard all of the impassioned Worcester residents, including WPS students, WPS alum, WPS parents, WPS faculty and staff, and more share why they support Racism-free WPS' demands. Now that all of the petitions have been sent out to various subcommittees focused on their topics, we look forward to their meaningful and just implementation. We will be here should those demands not be met.

-###-

[Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#)