



# The Research Bureau

## FACTS ABOUT THE WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- The Worcester Public Schools Superintendent holds a position on a par with the City Manager.
- She heads the largest department in municipal government, the budget of which is larger than all other departments combined.
- WPS has about 23,000 students, with a very diverse student body.
- It is a majority minority district. About 41% of the students enrolled are Caucasian, 36% Hispanic, 13% African American, and 8% Asian.
- 2/3 of students come from low-income households, almost 40% speak a first language other than English, 21% cannot perform ordinary classroom work in English (limited English proficiency). 20% qualify for special education services.
- Student mobility is 41%, a measure of all student transfers into and out of the WPS during the course of one year.
- WPS is a Commissioner's District, one of 10 in Massachusetts – these are all cities with similar challenges. They serve among the highest percentage of students living in poverty statewide and contain more than 80% of schools that have been designated as Commonwealth Priority Schools.
- The State is working with 13 Priority Schools in Worcester. These are schools that have failed to meet state performance and improvement standards on MCAS scores for four or more consecutive years. After identifying a school as a “priority” school, the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provides technical assistance in developing a plan to address the school's underperformance.
- 2009 MCAS Scores have improved slightly in grades 4 and 8 except in grade 4 math and more significantly in 10<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts and math. The scores are still far below the statewide average.
- WPS budget comes from Ch. 70 funding from the state and tax levy funds from the City. The total budget for FY10 is \$268 million; about \$91 million is the City's contribution. (This does not include State and Federal grants.)
- Per pupil spending is \$11,321, up from \$10,168 in FY05, an increase of 11%.
- Average teacher salary in WPS is over \$70,000.

More detailed information on the Worcester Public Schools can be found in *Benchmarking Public Education in Worcester: 2009* at <http://www.wrrb.org/documents/PublicEducation2009.pdf>