



WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN EVALUATION



As part of the Worcester Regional Research Bureau's continued commitment to examining education in Worcester, the Bureau has recently produced several analyses focused on the systems and resources shaping student opportunity. This includes [Paying for Public Education](#), which explains the structure and changes to the Worcester Public Schools budget from the prior fiscal year. In 2024, the Bureau published [Building the Future](#), a report focused on Worcester's aging school facilities, local and state partnerships, and the long-term investments needed to modernize the district's buildings. In October 2025, in partnership with MassINC, the Bureau expanded that work with [Fixing the Foundation](#), analyzing statewide disparities in school facility funding and calling

for data-driven, equitable investment in the Commonwealth's cities.

To continue this effort, the Bureau—partnering with the Worcester Education Collaborative (WEC)—has developed the [Worcester Public Schools Strategic Plan Evaluation](#), an interactive Tableau dashboard that displays progress on [Our Promise to the Future](#), the Worcester Public Schools' 2023–2028 Strategic Plan. The dashboard is designed to help the public understand progress to date on the district's more than 50 performance indicators spanning 2023–2028. This accompanying brief explains what the strategic plan is, how it was created, and summarizes key findings from the district's early progress monitoring data.

WHAT IS THE WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN?

The Worcester Public Schools Strategic Plan 2023–2028 is the district's central roadmap for improving student outcomes, strengthening instructional quality, and modernizing the systems that support teaching and learning. Worcester Public Schools (WPS), like other large Massachusetts city districts, serves a disproportionately high share of historically disadvantaged students: roughly 72 percent of students are low-income, nearly one-third are English Learners (students whose first language is not English and who require language-development support to access academic content), and approximately 64 percent of students identify as Black or Hispanic. These demographics shape the district's goals and underscore the importance of monitoring progress toward educational equity.

Ultimately, the Strategic Plan is a roadmap designed to improve educational outcomes and learning experiences for Worcester students.

The Strategic Plan is organized into six Key Priority Areas, which represent the district's highest-level areas of focus and are shown below.

Each Key Priority Area contains detailed Aims, which outline more specific improvement objectives, and Promises, which describe what students, families, and staff should expect as these goals are carried out. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) serve as the measurable outcomes tied to each Promise, allowing WPS to track and publicly report progress.

PLANNING PROCESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

The Strategic Plan was developed in 2023 under former Superintendent Rachel Monárrez and approved by the School Committee in December of that year. The process included support from Hanover Research, guidance from a Steering Committee co-led by former Deputy Superintendent of Finance and Operations Brian Allen (now Superintendent Allen), and a Community Task Force

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chaired by the Worcester Regional Research Bureau's Executive Director with the Worcester Education Collaborative's Executive Director serving as Vice Chair. The process incorporated extensive engagement with educators, families, students, and community partners, resulting in a multi-year framework that aligns policy goals with operational priorities and measures of progress.

In March 2025, the Strategic Plan Committee formally adopted an updated mission statement as part of its broader work to refine the district's core values and vision. The new mission statement reads:

"Worcester Public Schools is committed to cultivating an educational ecosystem in which everyone is safe, known, and supported. We prepare thoughtful, engaged scholars through high-quality instruction for lifelong success in the evolving world."

FINDINGS

To support public transparency and help the community understand the district's early implementation of the Worcester Public Schools Strategic Plan, the Bureau conducted a detailed review of the district's recently released [progress-monitoring Google Sheet](#). This dataset serves as the district's first systemwide attempt to report on each Key Performance Indicator (KPI) tied to the plan, providing baseline values, and year-to-year updates.

The Bureau classified the district's progress on each KPI according to the direction of progress reported so far. Each KPI was assigned to one of four categories: progress, no progress, mixed findings, or not enough data. KPIs were coded as progress whenever there was evidence of improvement—even if the change was small. Indicators showing declines or no improvement were coded as no progress. When a KPI contained multiple measures and those measures pointed in different directions, the Bureau coded the KPI as mixed findings to reflect the complexity of the measure. Finally, KPIs were coded as not enough data when information was either not yet collected or so limited that meaningful year-over-year comparison was not possible, particularly for new initiatives still in the early stages of implementation.

The table provides an overall summary of the progress status of all 57 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from the Strategic Plan. Each KPI is counted once (even if it has multiple data points or subgroups). The majority of KPIs show progress, while a significant portion have insufficient data to judge progress. Only a few KPIs show no progress or mixed findings overall.

KPI Category	Number of KPIs	Percentage of KPIs
Progress	26	45.6%
No Progress	5	8.8%
Mixed Findings	4	7.0%
Not Enough Data	22	38.6%

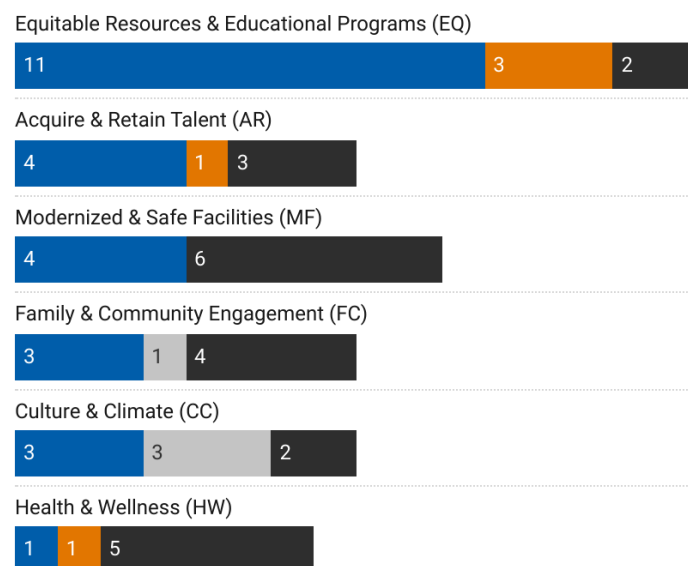
Across the six Key Priority Areas, progress varies substantially, with some areas showing strong forward movement and others limited mostly by insufficient data. Equitable Resources & Educational Programs (EQ) shows the strongest performance, with 11 of 16 KPIs (69%) making progress. Acquire & Retain Talent (AR) follows, with 4 of 8 KPIs (50%) improving.

Culture & Climate (CC) and Family & Community Engagement (FC) each show 3 of 8 KPIs (38%) making progress, reflecting moderate improvement. Modernized & Safe Facilities (MF) reports 4 of 10 KPIs (40%) progressing.

Health & Wellness (HW) shows the weakest measurable progress, with 1 of 7 KPIs (14%) improving so far.

Progress and Data Readiness Across Strategic Priority Areas

■ Making Progress ■ Not Making Progress ■ Mixed Findings ■ Insufficient Data



Source: Worcester Public Schools • Created with Datawrapper

CONCLUSION

The district's early progress reports offer a preliminary but meaningful view into how implementation of the



Strategic Plan is unfolding. Some measures already show improvement, while others remain difficult to evaluate until additional years of data are collected. Superintendent Allen's recent presentation to the School Committee outlined the district's next steps—strengthening data systems, refining reporting tools, expanding access for decision makers, and maintaining public progress monitoring through 2028—which will be essential for assessing long-term impact.

Ongoing oversight by the School Committee, coupled with transparent reporting from district leadership, will shape the next phase of this work. The Worcester Regional Research Bureau, the Worcester Education Collaborative, and other community partners will continue to monitor developments and provide independent analysis as more information becomes available.

SOURCES

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