



# 2022

# ANNUAL MEETING

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Worcester  
Education  
Collaborative 



# One Community. One Heart. One Common Goal.

The United Way of Central Massachusetts has provided more than \$7.9 million in the last year to organizations and programs working to support individuals and families who are struggling with food insecurity, loss of housing, and financial stability. We continue to provide the resources necessary to expand youth programming, both during the summer and out of school time. And we are focused on responding quickly to urgent needs when they arise in our community. We collaborate, coordinate and provide leadership to advance our mission of connecting people and resources to support our community.



SCAN ME

Dear WEC Community, Supporters and Friends,

I am exceptionally proud of all that WEC has accomplished this past year and eagerly look forward to our next chapter of work toward education equity and excellence.

Under the direction of WEC Board Member Patty Eppinger, WEC has developed an impressive, encompassing, and idealistic-yet-realistic Strategic Plan from now through 2025. What makes all of this attainable, and not simply aspirational, is the incredible depth and breadth of community partnership – on every level.

These opportunities for shared work toward a common goal are made possible by new representation on the school committee as a result of a legal consent decree and the approaches to leadership and fresh perspective on public engagement brought by our new Superintendent, Dr. Rachel H. Monárrez. Also seeding a collaborative approach is unprecedented funding to our public school system from state and federal sources and a new progressive orientation on the WPS School Committee. We have the time, talent, commitment, momentum, and resources to ensure that excellence in education is available to ALL of our students so that they are prepared for success in college, career, and life.

Partnerships between municipal leadership and a diverse network of community and service organizations to provide a wide array of out-of-school programs is but one shining example of assembling a constellation of opportunities for students to assure that learning does not stop when the bell rings at the end of the school day. WEC continues to promote excellence and equity through our broad portfolio of community education and capacity building, advocacy, and our targeted set of educational programs. Throughout the Annual Meeting, you will hear of WEC's leadership and accomplishments through the Worcester Education Equity Roundtable, Woo-Labs, Reading Together, and its extensive portfolio of work to inform and build community will for the work toward education excellence.

WEC is blessed to have Jennifer Davis Carey at the helm as our founding executive director. She guides us with her moral compass, strength of expertise, depth of experience and perspective, and unwavering commitment to enhancing education for Worcester's students and families.

Our incredibly strong, unparalleled, and diverse Board of Directors continues to grow and to strengthen our ability to engage all of the sectors that contribute to Worcester's vibrancy in fulfilling their responsibility to students and families. We are so pleased to have Linda Looft at the helm of our newly revitalized Advancement Committee, which is marshaling the required resources and creativity to raise the funds necessary to fulfill, enact, and make real our Strategic Plan.

The recent Esler and Eppinger leadership gifts are but two examples of the public's confidence and investment in our mission, our work, our vision, and our plans for the future. It is with great pride that I pass the baton to our next Board Chair, Kim Davenport, who has long been faithfully involved in WEC and in serving our community. What an exciting time to be involved with education in Worcester -- the stars have aligned themselves like never before and we are poised to spring forward and become a national example of what is possible in urban education.

Thank you for your support and engagement. We have work to do, but we have a solid plan and a capable team. I am so glad we are all in this together.

With great pride and tremendous appreciation,

Kate Salmon-Robinson  
Former Board Chair, WEC



# AGENDA



## WORCESTER EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE 13TH ANNUAL MEETING

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**Welcome** | Jennifer Davis Carey, WEC Executive Director

**Advocacy in Action** | Kim Davenport, WEC Board Chair

**Keynote Address** | Ron Walker, Director, COSEBOC

*Ron will share his lessons learned from supporting school leaders serving boys of color, and how relationship building, cultural relevance, and centering the student voice is critical to building an equitable education ecosystem.*

**Critical Conversation** | Facilitated by Thu Nguyen

*A guided conversation with Dr. Rachel Monárrez, Superintendent of Worcester Public Schools, and Ron Walker.*

**Audience Q&A** | Facilitated by Thu Nguyen

**Closing Remarks** | Jennifer Davis Carey, WEC  
Executive Director



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# SPEAKERS



Keynote Speaker

## Ron Walker

*Founder & Executive Director,  
Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color*

Ron Walker has over 5 decades of experience serving as a teacher, principal, staff developer, and consultant in various educational communities. Currently, Ron serves as the Executive Director and is a founding member of the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color.

The mission of COSEBOC, founded in 2007, is to connect, inspire, support and strengthen school leaders dedicated to the social, emotional and academic development of boys and young men of color. Under his leadership, COSEBOC is impacting over 600 schools across the nation with a combined student population of over 300,000. COSEBOC has been recognized for its work on changing the negative narrative often perpetuated by the media and others to a positive counter narrative that lifts up the gifts, talents and promise possessed by boys and young men of color.

Featured Speaker

## Rachel H. Monárrez, PhD

*Superintendent,  
Worcester Public Schools*



Rachel H. Monárrez, PhD believes in the possibility of every child, and this approach will guide her daily interactions as the Superintendent for Worcester Public Schools. Beginning her twenty-ninth year of education, Dr. Monárrez holds a vast knowledge base for academic excellence, professional development and collaborative practices. Rachel has served as a teacher, school principal, Director of English Learner Programs and Special Education, Assistant Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent.

As a social justice champion, she works collaboratively with all stakeholders to foster a culture of equity, academic excellence and high expectations for all learners. Dr. Monárrez received a BA, History from UC Irvine, an MA in Education and Ph.D. from Claremont Graduate University with an emphasis in Urban Education.



**WORCESTER EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE  
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Dr. Carey founded WEC in 2010, building on a lifelong career of dedicated public service. In 1998, she served as Special Assistant to Governor Cellucci of MA, and a year later became Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulations under Governor Jane Swift. Dr. Carey served in Governor Mitt Romney's and briefly in Governor Deval Patrick's administrations as Secretary of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Before joining MA state government, Dr. Carey worked at Ohio University, Harvard University and Bancroft School. Dr. Carey is also the founding director of the Initiative for Engaged Citizenship, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that provides educational workshops about effective, meaningful participation in the public policy processes of the local, state and federal governments.

Speaker  
**Jennifer  
Davis Carey**

*Executive Director,  
Worcester Education  
Collaborative*



Speaker  
**Kim Davenport**

*Managing Director,  
Edwards Street Child Services*

Kim brings more than 25 years of experience in early education and non-profit management. She represents Central MA on several state-level advisories to impact policy solutions and systems change.

Prior to her work in Worcester, she was the Chief Program Officer at Jumpstart for Young Children, where she led a team to research, create, pilot, and roll out an evidenced-based curriculum that increased preschool school readiness skills. She also created the first national early education teaching fellowship program, which launched the careers of nearly 150 early childhood teachers.

Thu is a proud Vietnamese refugee, an artist, a youth worker, and the first non-binary candidate for Worcester City Council At-Large. Thu came to Worcester at the age of one when their family immigrated to the United States as refugees. Thu grew up in Main South and graduated from Claremont Academy and Clark University.

Over the last decade, Thu has dedicated their career to serving our young people, from facilitating after school programming at the Worcester Youth Center to hiring young people for Recreation Worcester to work at our local parks. Most recently, during COVID-19, Thu helped build Mutual Aid Worcester, which has raised nearly \$75,000 to support families in Worcester.

Facilitator  
**Thu Nguyen**

*City Council,  
City of Worcester*



# SPEAKERS



*nellie mae*  
**EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION**

## WEBSTER FIVE

*committed, indebted and forever inspired.*

We are all about community and supporting those who support us all. Webster Five is proud to sponsor the Worcester Education Collaborative, and we thank you for the important work that you do.



[web5.com](http://web5.com)



**UMass Memorial Health**  
is proud to support the Worcester Education Collaborative and its mission to ensure that excellence in education is available to all public school students.





# COMMUNITY

## Briefings & Knowledge Sharing

WEC has a well-earned reputation as a knowledgeable contributor to the work of education and as a tenacious and critical friend of both our schools and our community—one that keeps the needs of our children unrelentingly at the fore. We are regarded as an honest broker and are consistently called upon to lend our expertise to projects and working groups focused on teaching and learning.

Examples of information shared with the community over the past year include:

- Community briefings on the Worcester Public Schools budget and promoting community advocacy around education funding in Worcester
- Co-hosting and producing a report on the qualities and conditions needed for effective district leadership in conjunction with the Worcester Regional Research Bureau
- Contributing to the development of a Family Funding Toolkit through the Massachusetts Education Equity Partnership
- Co-hosting the Worcester School Committee debate in partnership with the Worcester Regional Research Bureau
- Co-hosting a conversation with New York Times best-selling author Heather McGhee on the devastating true costs of racism



## MEEP Toolkit for Families on School Funding

*The Worcester Education Collaborative supported the development of the Massachusetts Education Equity Partnership's Family Funding Toolkit. Following the toolkit's development, WEC organized a two-part series to enhance community understanding of the Worcester Public Schools budgeting process and highlight this resource as a tool for continued advocacy for community stakeholders.*



*The mission of the Worcester Education Collaborative is to advance excellence and equity in education for all Worcester Public School students. We will achieve this mission through community mobilization and partnership, advocacy, and strategic action.*





*Our vision is that every Worcester Public School student graduate with the knowledge, habits of mind, and qualities of character to live a rewarding and productive life.*

## Worcester Education Equity Roundtable (WEER)

WEER is a coalition of partners—colleges, universities, cultural organizations, nonprofits, businesses, youth, and families—working to align key programs, outreach, and advocacy efforts with a commitment to equity for historically marginalized people in the PreK-12 public education system in the City of Worcester.

Complementing the work of the District, WEER has played a vital role in developing a strong learning ecosystem across Worcester that collaboratively works to address school improvement, social-emotional learning, district accountability, funding advocacy, and school-community relations.

- The Roundtable is currently focused on cultivating a community-district partnership with the new Superintendent of Schools to promote excellence and equity in Worcester's K-12 education system. Phase one of this work involves supporting the Superintendent's transition to the district, laying the groundwork for a new strategic vision, and developing a shared community-district learning ecosystem to build capacity for fostering student-centered, equitable environments.*

### WEER Partners

Action! by Design	HOPE Coalition, Clark University	The Education Trust / Massachusetts Education	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Adam Institute, Clark University	Latino Education Institute	The Village	Worcester Public Library
African Community Education	Main IDEA	Equity Partnership	Worcester Regional Research Bureau
Black Excellence Academy	Mass Audubon	Together for Kids	WPI STEM Education Center
Boys & Girls Club of Worcester	Mass Hire	United Way of Central Massachusetts	YMCA of Central Massachusetts
City of Worcester / Division of Youth Opportunities	No Evil Project	Worcester ACTS	Youth Connect
Community Legal Aid	Parent/Prof Advocacy League Worcester	Worcester Area Mission Society	YWCA
Edward Street	Shannon Initiative, Clark University	Worcester Art Museum	
Girls Inc	SHINE Initiative	Worcester Education Justice Alliance	
	Showing Up for Racial Justice	Worcester Interfaith	

## WEC'S Trauma Work

Initially funded by the Daniels Foundation and The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, WEC has worked to address the impact of trauma on learning with the development of highly regarded trainings and web-based resources for practitioners in the youth development, education, and juvenile justice sectors. Trainings utilize short videos to provide participants with a theoretical understanding of relevant issues, as well as practical tools to foster students' positive behavior and resilience. Over the past year, WEC has delivered 6 trainings reaching over 120 professionals supporting local youth.



### Trauma Trainings

*Over the past year, WEC provided our intensive training series on the impact of trauma to Early Education & Care (EEC) Providers, as well as ASOST-R grantees. These trainings fostered participants' knowledge and skills around how to support all young people's sound social and emotional development.*

# CAPACITY

The Hanover cares about making a positive change in youth and empowering the difference makers who support them.

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# ACHIEVEMENT

## Reading Together

Funded by the AbbVie Foundation, WEC's Reading Together program made a roaring return in the 2021-2022 school year. Through this program, over 1,300 children at 7 Worcester elementary schools received a selection of new, high-interest books chosen to emphasize qualities of character and community, and aligned with elements of the WPS' curriculum.



**1,300**  
STUDENTS  
SERVED



**11,000**  
BOOKS  
PROVIDED

Special thanks to our WEC Reading Assistants, who join students in classrooms the City to share their energy, enthusiasm, and love of reading with the children and families.

### Summer Literacy Kits

Building on a successful program during the summer of 2021, WEC worked with 8 Woo-Labs partners to deliver Summer Literacy Kits to over 1,100 students this summer. The Summer Literacy Kits provided a set of 10 books, a summer activity guide, and school supplies for K-6 grade students enrolled at these summer programs. The Kits are intended to prevent learning loss typically experienced during the summer months (the "summer slide") during what continues to be a critically important time following multiple years of interrupted learning as a result of COVID.

Reading Together is made possible by a generous contribution from

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# Working for better

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# Woo-Labs

Led by WEC, Woo-Labs is a network of community-based partners advancing educational and racial equity by increasing their capacity to provide high-quality, culturally responsive, project-based learning in out-of-school time. Woo-Labs' 11 Host Partners target Worcester K-6 grade students experiencing persistent gaps in opportunity and achievement. WEC supports program capacity building by providing Host Partners with extensive professional development, support implementing a joint measurement-for-improvement data system, and a local college student, called "Hanover Fellow," to help implement key Woo-Labs activities.

## Hands-On, Project-Based Learning

Partners developed and implemented over 20 standards-aligned projects that placed students in the driver's seat of their own learning. Students researched and presented on how to reduce plastic waste at the YWCA, expressed their identities through art at Main IDEA, and re-designed their program space to be more welcoming and inclusive at Girls Inc Worcester.



**2,000**  
STUDENTS  
SERVED

## Learning through a Community of Practice

Partners engaged in extensive professional development on project-based learning, measurement-for-improvement, and positive youth development, totaling over 50 hours. Participants regularly reported gaining skills, knowledge, and confidence through these trainings that improved their practice.

## Measurement Catalyzed Improvement

These investments in training and capacity building resulted in tangible improvement and student skill building. This school year, programs increased their program quality, as measured in third-party program observations. Students consistently provided positive program feedback on anonymous surveys, reporting they had supportive adults and found the program enjoyable and challenging. This transferred into skill gain, with students demonstrating significant social emotional skill growth.



Guild of St. Agnes participant Ethan shares his Community Heroes project about his mom at the Guild's end-of-program project showcase.



Woo-Labs was launched in 2021 with seed funding from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation and the United Way of Central Massachusetts' Worcester Together Initiative





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