



WORCESTER CENTRAL SCHOOL

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January 16, 2020

Dear Worcester Community,

Since late December of 2019, Worcester Central School has been working diligently with Schenevus Central School on the exciting possibility of tuitioning students to Worcester for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year. During that time, we began to carefully and thoughtfully examine many potential areas such as, academic programming, athletics; extracurricular activities, school resources, class sizes, facility space and personnel. After careful investigation of those areas some favorable possibilities were evident, however, there remains too many unknown variables to be adequately prepared for the 2020-2021 school year. It was also during that examination of various topics that some negative effects on personnel came to light. It is important to note that the personnel issues are in no way the fault of either district but in the current education laws that govern tuitioning of students between districts.

In the tuition proposal Schenevus Central School would send its 7th-12th grade students to Worcester Central School. In doing so, Schenevus Central School would eliminate their 7-12 teaching positions. Under current New York State law, the sending district's teachers (Schenevus teachers) are then considered employees of the receiving district (Worcester). The law states those teachers would then be placed on a preferred eligibility list for 7 years. Our district must hire from that list of candidates when any similar teaching position, as previously held, becomes open or created. The law also says at the time of appointment Worcester Central School must grant those teachers with the same tenure status, years of service, salary, and sick leave they have earned from Schenevus Central School.

The cause for concern in this area is that as we look closer at staffing, we will inevitably have to hire additional teachers in order to accommodate the tuitioned students. The concern with this is that teachers hired from the eligibility list could potentially have more seniority than the current Worcester Central School teaching staff. The pay scales between the two districts also differ greatly. Therefore, the newly hired teachers, paid at their current salaries and in accordance to the law, would be paid at a higher salary than our current Worcester teachers with the same years of experience. In addition, should a reduction in force be necessary in the future, there is the very real potential our staff would be terminated based on the newly created seniority list.

From the beginning, the Worcester Central School Board of Education would only receive tuitioned students if it was in the best interest of our entire school community. Unfortunately, due to the current law and under the advisement of our legal counsel, the Worcester Central School Board has decided that tuitioning creates too many potential risks to our staff and we cannot go forward. While it is an unfortunate finding, we remain sensitive to the needs of Schenevus Central School and will assist them as much as possible in other areas of collaboration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Gonzales".

Tim Gonzales
Superintendent