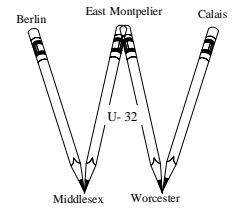


Washington Central Unified Union School District

WCUUSD exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.

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Meagan Roy Ed.D.
Superintendent



Washington Central Unified Union School District School Board Meeting Approved Minutes U-32 930 Gallison Hill Rd. Montpelier, VT

Board Members Present: Diane Nichols-Fleming, Ursula Stanley, Lindy Johnson, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Chris McVeigh, Daniel Keeney, Mckalyn Leclerc, Eric Andersen (by phone), Dennis Hill, Maggie Weiss

Administrators Present: Superintendent Meagan Roy, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Kerra Holden, Aaron Boynton, Karoline May, Susanne Gann, Stephen Dellinger-Pate, Cat Fair, Alicia Lyford, Gillian Fuqua, Chris O'Brien, Mark Kline, Michelle Ksepka

Others Present: ORCA Media, David Lawrence, Alice S

1. **Call to Order:** Jonas Eno-Van Fleet called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **Executive Session – Student Matter/Personnel:** This is tabled tonight, with Flor Diaz Smith's absence. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked if we are within legal timelines if we table this tonight; Jonas Eno-Van Fleet noted that we are.
3. **Welcome:** Jonas Eno-Van Fleet welcomed those present, including guests.
 - 3.1. **Reception of Guests**
 - 3.2. **Public Comments:** Jonas Eno-Van Fleet invited public comments; none were heard.
 - 3.3. **Agenda Revisions:** none, except the tabling of Executive Session.
4. **Reports**
 - 4.1. **Superintendent**
 - 4.1.1. **Welcome Back:** Superintendent Roy noted that today was the first day back for teachers in their buildings. Tomorrow is Convocation; she invited board members if they care to attend. She noted that August is a very busy time; her update next month will have more detail after the start of the school year.

4.1.2. COVID-19 Update: Superintendent Roy shared updated COVID-19 guidance for the start of the school year. She highlighted the updated guidance, which is rooted in monitoring symptoms, staying home when sick, testing when symptoms are present, isolating in the case of positive COVID-19 test. She invited any questions from those present about the updated COVID-19 guidance. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked, with the COVID-19 MOU with staff having expired, does she anticipate an updated MOU? Superintendent Roy shared that Labor Management meetings will begin in September and she is not sure whether this will come up in conversation; this issue has not come up yet. Mckalyn Leclerc asked whether there are any limitations on visitors to the buildings? Superintendent Roy shared that there are no limitations to visitors except with the same guidance around COVID-19 exposure or symptoms. Chris McVeigh asked, and Superintendent Roy clarified: Maria Melekos is the full time nurse at Calais School; she is no longer in the position of COVID-19 coordinator. She noted that our contract allows for teacher leader positions, and there is the possibility of benefitting from COVID-19 consultation from, for example, a school nurse position that is designated as such. This may evolve as needed.

5. Board Operations

5.1. Board Retreat: Superintendent Roy shared the intention to debrief from the recent board retreat, especially for the benefit of those who were not able to attend. The hope is to continue a “Board Retreat, Part 2” at the September 7th board meeting. She invited board members to share from the retreat. Lindy Johnson stated that she appreciated the presentation from Pietro Lynn; she felt that it was very pertinent to board members and that he was responsive to questions from the board. Ursula Stanley reiterated Lindy’s feedback that Pietro’s presentation was useful. She noted that the second presentation from Mr. Gore was more of a back and forth conversation around student outcomes and policies and procedures; she found this to be useful, too. Chris McVeigh stated that he took away from Pietro the concept of the question of whether boards “should” even though they “could” (for example, address or manage certain issues.) Chris McVeigh also felt that the idea of doing some sort of review or study of the book Improving School Board Effectiveness. A Balance Governance Approach. would be meaningful to the board. He liked the format of back and forth discussion rather than “lecture.” Daniel Keeney agreed with what others had stated about the retreat; he would like to have more information about Open Meeting Law. He agreed that the discussion of “could” versus “should” regarding board roles and communications was interesting and he would like to discuss this further with the expertise of Pietro Lynn. He noted that Pietro had offered to share the power point from his presentation; Superintendent Roy will follow up. Superintendent Roy shared that academic outcomes, community engagement and long term planning were themes that came up in the board retreat discussions and she would like to affirm that these continue to be the goal areas and talk more specifically about how to identify these goals and create a work plan, hopefully at the “Retreat Part 2” meeting. Mckalyn Leclerc expressed disappointment that she was unable to attend; she asked whether there is a reviewing document.

- 5.2. Appoint Superintendent as VSBIT Proxy:** Chris McVeigh moved to appoint Superintendent Roy as VSBIT Proxy this year. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.
- 5.3. Appoint Voting Member for the VSBA Annual Meeting:** Chris McVeigh moved to appoint Ursula Stanley for VSBA Annual Meeting voting member. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.
- 5.4. Board Meeting Remote/Hybrid/In-person/Location:** Chris McVeigh noted that he would like to resume in person meetings and to rotate to each of the schools as we have done in the past; he would like to allow online access for those who are not able to attend in person. Ursula Stanley shared that she would like to resume in person as well, but to be sure to allow for a hybrid option; she is under the impression that the elementary schools do not have the technical ability to offer a hybrid option. Mckalyn Leclerc also indicated that she would like to resume in person but to continue to offer an online option, as this allows for more equity in board participation. Ideally she would like to rotate the location, but if technology is an issue at the other schools then she feels it is important to have it at, for example, U-32 where technology allows for the hybrid option. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that we have discussed this in the past and she feels it is important to rotate to each of the schools, as we are a unified district. She feels we could address the technology issues at each location to allow for hybrid options. She noted that when weather is questionable, having the option for online is preferable. Lindy Johnson stated that in the past we had one meeting per month at an elementary school; she feels that we should be able to make this work (regarding technology.) The meeting that we are designating as a community forum, we could have at each elementary school once a month. She would like the agendas to clearly delineate the location of the meeting - for example, tonight's agenda appeared that the meeting takes place at U-32 whereas it is via zoom. Daniel Keeney agrees with the idea of rotating to each school; he would like to hear input from the administrators at the schools to hear whether this has an impact. Maggie Weiss reminded the board that it wasn't too long ago that each elementary school hosted its own board meeting so feels this is not a huge hurdle. She would like to have the meetings in a room with better acoustics (for example, a room that has a rug as opposed to U-32's cafeteria.) She also noted that the agenda and the board information tonight were not clear whether the meeting was in person or online. Dennis Hill indicated that he is in favor of the hybrid option that has been discussed. Superintendent Roy will get information from technology about the logistics of having remote access to meetings rotating at each of the elementary schools. She proposes to the board that the September 7th Community Forum be an in person event, a meet the superintendent/ meet the school board event. She suggests that the September 21st meeting be for "Board Retreat, Part 2" as well as some data review as had been indicated in the spring. She suggested that the September 7th meeting could be an opportunity for her to share her findings regarding technology at the various schools for rotating hybrid board meetings. Mckalyn Leclerc shared the Open Houses at each of the schools are great opportunities as well for board members to meet families. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet recapped that there seems to be consensus that the board would like to meet in person but allow for hybrid options. He noted that he personally is not comfortable with in person meetings and

he will wear a mask; he stated that he has felt fully able to participate in board meetings remotely.

5.5. Staff Appreciation: Diane Nichols-Fleming shared that she would like to get a sub-committee together to take part in staff meetings quarterly and to plan how to recognize staff throughout the school year. She suggested that board members might want to send a “welcome back” note of appreciation to staff. She will work with Flor Diaz Smith about plans to create a sub-committee and begin the work this year.

6. Finance Committee

6.1. Informational Reports

6.1.1. Monthly Reflection: Susanne Gann had provided a written reflection; she invited questions or comments from the board. Lindy Johnson asked whether there was a plan to replace the vacant position in the Finance Office. Susanne Gann stated that she is currently working on reviewing the roles and tasks of the various positions in the Finance Office and is hoping that the position will be posted next week. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether there are items aside from propane and fuel that might affect the budget spending projections for this year. Susanne Gann stated that she might have more information in September, for example, around salaries and benefits. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether we have data yet to consider the future of Free Meals. Susanne Gann stated that we are still gathering information and data and we will have more to share at the October meeting however; at this time there is not a lot of consistent information coming from the government around what is the future of Free Meals, long term. Chris McVeigh asked for some clarification around wood chips versus wood pellets projected costs for this year. Chris McVeigh asked whether we are planning to bid in November, for next year. Susanne Gann affirmed, that is the plan; purchasing in November (early) typically saves money. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet appreciated the comment that had been included in the reflection around having a surplus not necessarily being a positive thing (related to the “human cost.”) Chris McVeigh asked whether we are expecting any more grant money related to COVID-19 funds. Susanne Gann stated that we continue to pay attention; we have not spent or allocated all of our funds yet; we are currently in the process of working on some plans for projects for grant money.

6.1.2. Quarterly Financial Update

6.1.3. Capital Improvement Project Updates: Daniel Keeney asked what are the possible grant opportunities for the boiler project and how this affects the capital improvement plan. Ursula Stanley noted that the board intends to discuss and take action related to the boiler projects; Daniel’s questions may be answered during that agenda item.

6.2. Discussion/Action

6.2.1. Calais, East Montpelier, and U-32 Boiler Projects: Chris O’Brien shared that upgrades at East Montpelier and U-32 are recommended, and replacement to the Calais system is recommended. He noted that there is the opportunity to use grant money for some of the projects. The timeline for the projects is not clear yet, especially full

replacement of the Calais boiler. Susanne Gann clarified that we believe that the East Montpelier and U-32 upgrades can be done in a way that they won't impact school or other projects in the summer (e.g. projects completed in April.) Chris McVeigh asked what is the concern with the Calais replacement not being done in time for an end of 2023 deadline? Chris O'Brien stated that the funding deadline is July 2023 and it is not clear whether this project can be completed by that deadline. He shared some specifics about the boiler upgrade/ update projects (East Montpelier and U-32). Chris O'Brien shared some of the planning and work that will be involved in a total replacement (at Calais) and how it might be not possible to complete by July 2023. Daniel Keeney asked whether these systems have backup - Chris O'Brien shared that all three have oil backup systems; however, the savings when using wood chips and pellets (depending on the climate) is significant. Chris O'Brien shared that the grant money for these projects is significant. He shared that the Calais replacement would be for wood pellet (as opposed to wood chip). **Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved that the Board authorize moving \$250,000 from the FY 2024-25 boiler replacement at Calais Elementary School to FY 2022-23 and authorize the use of capital reserve funds to develop the scope and budget and proceed with the design development and bid documents for the project. Seconded by Eric Andersen, this motion carried unanimously.** **Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved that the Board authorize moving \$250,000 from the FY 2024-25 boiler replacement at East Montpelier Elementary School and U-32 Middle and High School. Seconded by Eric Andersen, this motion carried unanimously.** **Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved that the Board authorize the Superintendent to sign contracts with Messersmith Manufacturing for the boiler system upgrades at East Montpelier and U-32, not to exceed a total of \$250,000 contingent upon the state providing a bid waiver due to a sole source for proprietary equipment. Seconded by Lindy Johnson.** Discussion: Chris McVeigh noted that this motion does not include Calais; Susanne Gann stated that it was intentional, as we don't have the scope and budget yet for the Calais project. **This motion carried unanimously.** Chris McVeigh noted that he gets nervous about using 2% as a fund balance guidance. Susanne Gann stated that the Finance Committee has begun to discuss what is the right fund balance target; she noted that there are many recommendations from different angles; this is something that is up for discussion; she hopes that we will be bringing a proposed plan to the board in the next few months.

7. **Policy Committee:** Chris McVeigh shared that the Policy Committee met for the first time in August and talked about review and updating of policies; he is meeting with Superintendent Roy and Michelle Ksepka to create a plan for this over the course of the year. He also noted that the committee discussed the issue of school choice and will engage with the entire board about this concept before bringing forward a policy related to school choice.

7.1. First Reading for Policy to be Adopted on September 21, 2022: B1 Substitute

Teachers: Maggie Weiss asked whether G.E.D. is included in this consideration; would it be beneficial to have this explicitly included in the verbiage of the policy. Jonas Eno-Van

Fleet asked for a summary of the committee's discussion around this policy creation. Dennis Hill shared that the committee had discussed two topics: are we setting the bar too high? as well as consideration of the shortage that we are facing in staffing at this time. He noted that the policy continues to indicate "preferred" criteria. Chris McVeigh stated that the committee had also discussed whether we should consider "sun setting" this policy, being aware that it is a modification that is meant to address an urgent shortage at this time. Lindy Johnson stated that having college students substitute can be beneficial to all, including that it allows college students who might not be considering education to be exposed to the idea of pursuing education as a career. Daniel Keeney suggested some language for broader language, to include, for example international students. Language under qualifications will be modified: "person with high school diploma or its equivalent." This policy will be moved to second reading/ adoption on September 21st.

- 7.2. Second Reading for Policy to be Adopted: C8 Pupil Privacy Rights: Diane Nichols-Fleming moved to adopt this policy as presented. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously. C1 Student Education Records: Ursula Stanley moved to adopt this policy as presented. Seconded by Dennis Hill, this motion carried unanimously. C14 Section 504 & ADA Grievance Policy for Students & Staff:** Chris McVeigh explained that the committee wanted to make clear that this is not the only method for appeal. Maggie Weiss asked, is this policy new? We have not had this policy in place? Chris McVeigh is not sure; he shared that we used the VSBA's recommended model policy. **Ursula Stanley moved to adopt this policy as presented. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming, this motion carried unanimously.** Daniel Keeney asked about the annotation and legal citation in the body of the policies. Chris McVeigh stated that we use the VSBA's model which includes these citations. He noted that the VSBA provides updated policies as legislation is updated.

8. Consent Agenda

- 8.1. Approve Minutes of 6.15.22, 6.22.22, and 6.23.22: Lindy Johnson moved to accept the minutes of June 15, 22, 23, 2022. Seconded by Ursula Stanley. This motion carried unanimously.**
- 8.2. Approve Board Orders from 6.30.22, 7.20.22, and 8.17.22: Lindy Johnson moved to approve the following three board orders: Date: 6-30-22 in the amount of \$11,287,461.80. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously. Date: 7-20-22 in the amount of \$427,612.36. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously. Date: 8-17-22 in the amount of \$986,657.75. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.**

9. Personnel

- 9.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Retirements, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE: Lindy Johnson moved to approve new teacher nominations: Uriah Proctor-Mattingly, Christiana Usenza, Olga Benoit, Honi Bean Barrett, Maryellen Munday. Seconded by Chris McVeigh.** Jonas Eno-Van Fleet shared that two of the

candidates seem to have no connection to Vermont, which is very exciting, indicating that we are recruiting and bringing new people into Vermont. **This motion carried unanimously. Lindy Johnson moved to approve long term substitute: Maxwell Segalla. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously. Lindy Johnson moved to approve change in position for Margaret Dawkins. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously**

9.2. Update on Vacancies: Superintendent Meagan Roy shared that there has been a lot of activity and work in the last few weeks around hiring new staff. She shared that we have made good progress on vacancies but some still remain; they are centered around interventionists and special education positions. She stated that the SLP vacancies are leading to discussions about the possibility of contracting with outside services. She will keep the board apprised. We continue to have support staff vacancies; however, she noted that this is ever-changing. She feels that we are in better shape than some of our neighbors; this continues to be a universal challenge. Superintendent Roy explained briefly how Act 173 creates some flexibility about providing special education services as of July 1, 2022. Superintendent Roy shared that we have hired for a Driver's Education instructor.

10. Future Agenda Items

10.1. Diversifying the Educator Workforce and Hiring

10.2. VSBA Resolutions

11. Board Reflection: Chris McVeigh thanked Jonas Eno-Van Fleet for chairing the meeting tonight.

12. Public Comments: Jonas Eno-Van Fleet invited public comments. David Lawrence noted that it was difficult to join the meeting tonight; it requires that you provide a full name and there was not the capability to do that. He asked for these technical issues to be rectified so the public is able to join the meetings in the online format.

13. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned by consensus at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary