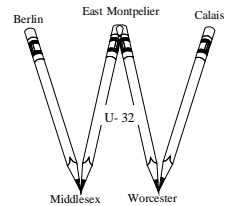


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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

1130 Gallison Hill Road
Montpelier, VT 05602
Phone (802) 229-0553
Fax (802) 229-2761

Bryan Olkowski
Superintendent



Washington Central Unified Union School District Board Meeting Minutes Approved 3.17.21 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Board Members: Flor Diaz Smith, Lindy Johnson, Scott Thompson, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Kari Bradley, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Karoline May, Townes DeGroot, Anna Farber, Dorothy Naylor, Christina Pollard, Jonathan Goddard

Administrators: Superintendent Bryan Olkowski, Interim Technology Director Jim Garrity, Business Administrator Lori Bibeau, Curriculum Director Jen Miller-Arsenault, Student Services Director Kelly Bushey, Associate Principal Jody Emerson, Amy Molina, Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate, Principal Aaron Boynton, Principal Cat Fair, Principal Gillian Fuqua, Lisa LaPlante, Julia Pritchard

Others/Public: David Delcore (Times Argus), David Powelson, Deb, Ellen Dorsey, Karen, Kelly Iverson, LP, Lucinda Garthwait, Matthew DeGroot, ORCA Media, Elizabeth Wirth, David Lawrence, Erica Zimmerman, Susan, Sarah, Shelley, Virginia Burley, Soccodato Family

1. **Call to Order:** Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **Executive Session – Negotiations:** At 6:00, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations, to include Lori Bibeau and Carla Messier. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously. At 6:27 Jonas moved to leave Executive Session, Chris seconded, the motion carried unanimously. During Executive Session the Board discussed negotiation strategy.
3. **Welcome**
 - 3.1. **Reception of Guests:** Flor Diaz Smith welcomed those present and celebrated Steven Dellinger-Pate's Principal of the Year award.
 - 3.2. **Agenda Revisions:** Scott Thompson asked to add an agenda item under Board Operations, to discuss "reinforcements for the Finance Committee." Flor Diaz Smith would also like to add the creation of a subcommittee to plan for U-32's 50th Anniversary.
4. **Reports:**
 - 4.1. **Student Reports:** Townes DeGroot and Anna Farber reported some of the student happenings, including college decisions.
 - 4.2. **Superintendent:** Superintendent Olkowski congratulated Steven Dellinger-Pate for Principal of the Year award.

4.2.1. COVID-19 Update: Superintendent Olkowski and Elizabeth Wirth provided an update about COVID-19 in the WCUUSD community. Vaccinations are underway for teachers and school staff. He shared that the Covid-19 Recovery plan creation will be underway. He noted that a board quorum may be needed on May 29th or 30th, for a special board meeting to address some contractual matters.

4.2.2. Equity Supports:

4.2.2.1. Equity in WCUUSD: Superintendent Olkowski had provided a memo to the board: *March 12, 2021, Equity in Washington Central Unified School District.*

4.2.2.2. Equity Supports Letter: Superintendent Olkowski shared a letter that had been sent to families, dated March 12, 2021, regarding this issue.

4.2.2.3. Equity Supports Presentation: Jen Miller-Arsenault provided a presentation sharing information from the Vermont Agency of Education about this topic. Karoline May asked, how much discretion does each district have in how they address this? She would like to take the time to assess where we are, to thoughtfully plan for next steps. Jen Miller-Arsenault shared that this does overlap some with the recovery from COVID-19; it also addresses systems that were in place before COVID-19. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that this is a systemic problem that we have been aware of for a while; she believes it will take hard work and a long term commitment. Stephen Looke stated that we have made no appreciable steps in closing the equity gap in decades. He is impressed that we are taking these steps, and he suggests that everything that we consider needs to have equity as a factor. Some discussion followed about how Continuous Improvement Planning, this Equity initiative, as well as COVID-19 Recovery might overlap. All will involve considering data and student outcomes.

4.2.2.4. Equity Course: Jen Miller-Arsenault shared some information about the Equity Course that she and some others are attending. A memo providing an overview had been provided: *March 17, 2021, Equity Course.* Some teachers and staff members who are attending the course shared their positive experiences engaging in the material and examining current practice through the lens of equity.

4.2.2.5. Equity Scholar in Residence Presentation: Erica Zimmerman on behalf of Washington Central Friends of Education shared a presentation and invited questions/ comments. Erica had presented a proposal for the board's consideration. **Scott Thompson moved to authorize WCUUSD to enter a contract with Washington Central Friends of Education to support the Equity Scholar in Residence, at a cost no greater than \$79,184, for the 2021-22 school year, and to use the fund balance to pay for this. Seconded by Chris McVeigh.** Discussion followed. Kari Bradley asked, how will we measure whether this program is successful? Lucinda Garthwait spoke about the research behind educators engaging in equity work as a measure of progress. Some discussion followed. **Stephen Looke asked to call the question. This motion carried unanimously.**

4.3. VSA Instructional Leadership Academy: Superintendent Olkowski had provided a memo to the board, *March 8, 2021, VSA Instructional Leadership Academy.* This program will start in fall 2021 and continue through the year; building principals and Central Office leadership will participate.

4.3.1. Presentation of WCUUSD Literacy Student Learning Outcomes: Kari Bradley and Jen Miller-Arsenault shared a presentation. Kari Bradley invited questions or comments. He asked board members: what information from this

review do you want to carry forward into Strategic Planning? Diane Nichols-Fleming noted that the Ed Quality Committee realizes that they have not had the opportunity to dig deeply into data; she hopes that the new board meeting schedule will allow more time for the committee to “dive deeper” into this information. Stephen Looke asked to consider, which student outcomes have the greatest equity gap? Karoline May asked to use the data to see whether there was a grade level more affected over the course of the past year, to help make decisions about supports going forward? Flor Diaz Smith asked whether there is an opportunity to disaggregate the data even more so than as presented tonight. Kari Bradley shared that the committee will meet at 5 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month, and he invited others to attend.

4.4. Finance Committee:

4.4.1. Technology Bid: Scott Thompson moved to award the Storage and Virtualization bid to Cambridge Computer in the amount of \$189,499. Seconded by Karoline May. Jim Garrity had provided a memo, *March 16, 2021, Storage and Virtualization Refresh 2021*. Discussion: Stephen Looke asked that the board keep a running tab on what we are approving from the fund balance. Lori Bibeau stated that technology has its own tech reserve fund balance. **This motion carried unanimously.**

4.4.2. Capital Timeline Review/Facilities Director Update: The Finance Committee had provided a document showing the estimated/ proposed timeline for capital projects.

4.4.3. Authorization for Finance Committee to Award Bids: Karoline May moved to authorize the WCUUSD Finance Committee to award bids on capital projects as necessary for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year. Seconded by Scott Thompson. This motion carried unanimously.

4.4.4. Electric Vehicle Charger at Rumney: tabled

4.4.5. House Ways and Means Testimony: Lori Bibeau shared some updates from the legislature. She shared that she believes that we will see a continuation of small schools grants. She noted that it also seems that legislation will be passed to support the hold harmless calculation regarding declining enrollment.

4.4.6. Statewide Financial Software Update: Lori Bibeau shared some information about having testified to support changing requirements around financial software.

4.5. Policy Committee:

4.5.1. First Reading for policy to be adopted on 4/28/21: F46 Flag Raising Policy: Chris McVeigh explained Bernie Lambek, Esq.’s counsel about the flag raising policy. He noted that, regarding First Amendment rights, the flag pole is considered “board speech” and not “student speech.” Chris McVeigh invited questions or comments from board members. Jonathan Goddard suggested using “offensive” in place of “vulgar” in the verbiage of the policy. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that although “vulgar” is not used as often, the definition of the word is helpful and appropriate in the context of the policy. This policy is moved to the next reading.

5. Board Operations:

5.1. Steering Committee: Flor Diaz Smith shared that Diane Nichols-Fleming, Scott Thompson, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Karoline May and she serve on the Steering Committee.

5.2. Finance Committee: Scott Thompson asked the board to consider replicating the same pattern from the Steering Committee for the Finance Committee. There currently is not representation from Berlin or Worcester. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether it is possible to get the committee agenda ahead of time so that board

members might attend accordingly. She indicated that board members have committed a great deal of time to the work of the board and other committees. Stephen Looke stated that the desire in the committee is to have five members, one from each town. In reality if that can't be achieved, then we can continue to revisit and offer committee membership and reconfiguration; however the reality is that board members have limited available time.

5.3. Board Retreat: Flor Diaz Smith suggested that the board meet on April 7th for a Board Retreat, three hours maximum, with a meeting facilitator. She asked other board members to join the subcommittee to plan the retreat. Scott Thompson volunteered.

5.4. Public Comments Committee Report: Stephen Looke shared that he, Chris McVeigh and Scott Thompson had prepared a document for the board to consider. Some topics: "comments" versus "dialogue." Possibilities: (1) public forum that is separate from a board meeting (possibly on the first Wednesday of the month); (2) extend board meeting by 15 or 30 minutes and have public comments at the very beginning; (3) invite comments throughout the meeting before the board takes action; (4) keep current plan where public comments are at the end of the agenda. Stephen Looke suggested that the board might discuss this further at the Board Retreat. Kari Bradley stated that he likes the idea of a forum which would invite more dialogue and would not limit discussion. Karoline May stated that in other board meetings, there is an opportunity for public comment at the beginning of the meeting, and then public input during the agenda if the public had requested to be included in the agenda. Her preference though would be for a public forum. Flor Diaz Smith suggested taking 15 minutes of the board retreat to discuss this issue. She noted that she likes the idea of public engagement/ forums during the first week of the month, and that she would like to limit public comments during board meetings to either the beginning or the end - not throughout. Stephen Looke suggested that the committee will provide a written description of the options so that board members can consider, discuss, and take action. This will be prepared for the April 7th Board Retreat.

5.5. Staff Appreciation (mid-year appreciation/acknowledgement to staff and communities): Christina Pollard, Diane Nichols-Fleming and Lindy Johnson will take this on.

5.6. U-32 50th Anniversary: Scott Thompson indicated that he feels this is outside the scope of the board. Flor Diaz Smith offered to organize a group of alumni. Lindy Johnson indicated too that she believes the alumni associations are more appropriate to plan this sort of event; that it falls outside the purview of WCUUSD Board.

6. Consent Agenda:

6.1. Approve Minutes of 3.1.21 and 3.3.21: Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve the minutes of March 1, 2021 and March 3, 2021. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming. Discussion: Scott Thompson noted that he should be listed on the Finance Committee. **This motion carried, with noted edit.**

6.2. Approve Board Orders: Lindy Johnson moved to approve the board orders in the total amount of \$174,386.71. Seconded by Stephen Looke, this motion carried unanimously.

7. Personnel:

7.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Retirements, Leave of Absence and Changes in FTE: Lindy Johnson moved to approve the nominations of Erica Smith and Gwyn Gauthier, SLPs for 2021-2022. Seconded by Karoline May, this motion carried unanimously. Jen Miller-Arsenault shared that Anne Carter is retiring from WCUUSD. She read the letter that Ms. Carter had submitted.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to accept the retirement of Anne Carter, with appreciation for thirty years of service. Seconded by Lindy Johnson, this motion carried unanimously. Lindy Johnson moved to accept the resignation of Emily Heckler, WCUUSD SLP. Seconded by Karoline May, this motion carried unanimously.

8. Public Comments: Flor Diaz Smith invited public comments.

9. Future Agenda Items:

9.1. WCUUSD Name

9.2. Assessment Needs for Building Bright Futures

9.3. Diversifying Educator Work Force

9.4. Net Metering Proposal

9.5. Strategic Planning

9.6. Board Governance Goals/Retreat/Reflection on the year/Board Self Evaluation

9.7. Superintendent Responsibilities/Board Roles and Responsibilities

9.8. 50 year anniversary of U-32

10. Board Reflection: Lindy Johnson shared that she feels the board had rich discussion at tonight's meeting but still managed to end on time. Flor Diaz Smith shared that she appreciated the board taking extended time for a rich discussion with Shelley Vermilya about the topic of equity.

11. Adjourn: Lindy Johnson moved to adjourn at 9:06. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming, this motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary