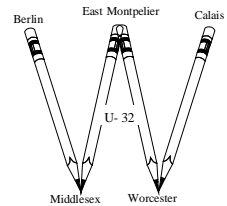


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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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Bryan Olkowski
Superintendent



Washington Central Unified Union School District Board Meeting Minutes Approved 1.6.21 5:00 PM – 9:30 PM

Board Members: Flor Diaz Smith, Lindy Johnson, Scott Thompson, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Kari Bradley, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Jaiel Pulskamp, Karoline May, Townes DeGroot, Anna Farber, Stephen Looke, Jill Olson, George Gross

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

Others/Public: ORCA Media, David Delcore, DHann, David Lawrence, Erin Mullaney

1. **Call to Order:** Scott Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **Welcome:** Scott Thompson took a moment to recognize School Board Appreciation month.
 - 2.1. **Reception of Guests:**
 - 2.2. **Agenda Revisions:** Karoline May would like to add “Superintendent Evaluation” during open session. Will create item 2.2 for this (five minutes). Scott Thompson would like to add item 3.3.6 for the board to provide feedback on his Schoolboard Chair letter for Annual Reports.
3. **Reports:**
 - 3.1. **Student Reports:** Townes DeGroot and Anna Farber reported on student happenings, which include the beginning of winter sports.
 - 3.2. **Superintendent:**
 - 3.2.1. **COVID -19 Update:**

Superintendent Olkowski shared that he had just earlier today learned about a positive COVID19 case in the Berlin Elementary community and Principal Boynton is currently working out the logistics to move to remote learning for tomorrow (Thursday) and Friday as a result. Superintendent Olkowski spoke briefly about possible plans for early release days going forward. He will have more information for the board at future board meetings.
 - 3.2.2. **Administrative Searches Update:** Superintendent Olkowski noted that we currently have approximately 20 applicants for the Director of IT position and approximately 6 for the Business Administrator position. Stephen Looke commended the administration for their search for candidates from a wide pool to foster diversity.

Some discussion followed around the hiring process. Superintendent Olkowski stated that board members should send letters of interest to Carla Messier if they have interest in serving on the search committees.

3.2.3. Class Size Update: Superintendent Olkowski shared that he had worked with administrators to create class size guidelines - this was a collaboration with the leadership team and the superintendent's office. He noted that enrollment trends are declining so we will need to continue to discuss the topic of class size, going forward. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether there is any information to be shared about case load sizes for special educators. Kelly Bushey explained that the workload for a case load can vary; she uses a weighted rubric to weight students on their caseloads, to try to create caseloads of between 30 and 35 students.

3.3. Finance Committee:

3.3.1. Leadership Team Budget Support Letter:

Flor Diaz Smith reiterated the initial guidelines the board had offered, for budget creation:

- Establish a budget that is less than 3%” Net Impact on Taxes”
- Find ways to pay for the three initiatives: Strategic Planning process, Facility Director and Health Instructors (Using Fund Balances where appropriate).
- Prepare a list of contingencies if needed.
- Establish a budget that is less than the “Excess Spending Threshold Amount per equalized pupil”.
- Establish a budget that will move toward supporting a strong multi-tiered system of support in all schools”.

She shared that the Leadership Team had shared a letter with the board expressing their unanimous support of the third draft of the budget.

Flor Diaz Smith explained that the timeline suggests that the board take action to approve the budget tonight.

3.3.2. Review Budget – Draft 3:

Superintendent Olkowski reviewed that he had met with each principal and then as a leadership group. He and Lori Bibeau reviewed this third draft of the budget, based on the feedback they had received to this date. They had prepared a memo dated December 30, 2020: *Budget Draft #3 FY 21-22 and Financial Update*, to explain the changes and details of this budget.

Flor Diaz Smith moved to approve the budget for FY2022, as presented in the amount of \$34,984,949. Seconded by Kari Bradley.

Discussion: Karoline May asked for some specifics about the letter that was signed by administrators. She asked whether this letter had been requested or had it come about from administrators. Flor Diaz Smith explained that the Finance Committee had asked for a letter of support from the leadership team to help present the budget as the result of a collaborative process.

Steven Dellinger-Pate shared that the leadership team had met after the prior board meeting and had come to consensus to draft this letter. He shared that the goal of the team was to come to agreement on necessary reductions to support a fiscally responsible draft.

Jill Olson asked for clarification around early retirements and attrition - she wanted to be sure that the positions that were not filled are not needed; might there be some moving around of staff?

Superintendent Olkowski stated that he thinks he will have a better idea around April 1st as far as staffing, but there likely is not a perfect 1:1 match of retirements/ attrition and staffing patterns as a result.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked, what is the long term impact of this budget? Does it create opportunities to move forward improving student outcomes, once we come out of the COVID19 pandemic? Superintendent Olkowski shared some of the initiatives

in this budget including Early Childhood position and Facilities Director.

Lindy Johnson shared her concern with eliminating such a significant number of FTEs (full time employees). Lori Bibeau shared some details around these reductions.

Scott Thomson expressed his support for this budget and he stated that he believes as a board, we will have to continue to consider how to reduce the budget in coming years. He is grateful for having pre-emptive discussions and for working on a more long term vision toward that end.

Flor Diaz Smith expressed her support for this budget.

Kari Bradley commended the team for their thoughtful and diligent work on this budget. He noted that, seeing CLA and the impact on tax payers, he supports the reductions that were needed to create this draft.

Diane Nichols-Fleming expressed that the level of detail and information that is provided in this draft and its explanation helps her to understand and support this budget in a way that she feels she can share with community members.

This motion carried unanimously.

3.3.3. Review Cares Relief Fund Grants

3.3.4. Review Reserved Fund Balance: Flor Diaz Smith moved reserve fund balance for the early retirement program in the amount of \$499,136. Seconded by Karoline May. This motion carried unanimously.

Flor Diaz Smith moved to reserve fund balance for the COVID19 coordinator and full time nurses, subject to a reduction in cares relief or other grand funds, in the amount of \$190,004. Seconded by Karoline May. Discussion: Lindy Johnson asked for clarification about the need for taking this action. Lori Bibeau explained and discussed this action.

This motion carried unanimously.

3.3.5. Review Draft 2 Warning: Board members had been provided this warning in writing. **Flor Diaz Smith moved to approve the warning as discussed, changing the location “Middlesex Town Office” to “Middlesex Town Hall.” Seconded by Stephen Looke. This motion carried unanimously.** Board members will stop by central office to sign this document. A budget information meeting is scheduled for next week.

3.3.6. Annual Report Letter: Scott Thompson had shared with the board his letter for the Annual Report. He invited feedback. Brief discussion followed.

4. Board Operations:

4.1. Diversifying Educator Work Force: Flor Diaz Smith shared a presentation with the board about the importance of Diversifying Educator Work Force. Mia Smith also spoke to the board about the topic. Diane Nichols-Fleming thanked them for sharing the report and for preparing the board to continue to address this important work. Kari Bradley asked whether we have data for our district regarding diversity of staff, and diversity of student population. He noted that he could see this topic being a thread in the Strategic Planning process. Collecting this data would be helpful in preparing for the planning process and for monitoring progress toward goals.

Stephen Looke stated that if we want meaningful change, we need to decide as a board what we want to see and communicate our expectations to administrators. He agreed that data is an important element in setting goals and measuring progress. Board members discussed this topic. Flor Diaz Smith would like to bring to a future agenda the idea of WCUUSD supporting the Diversifying Educator Work Force effort. Karoline May shared that the Superintendent Evaluation plan is not yet

finalized. She feels that the board needs to put more effort into the Superintendent Evaluation plan - it needs to be broader and clearer. She would like to charge the Evaluation committee with drafting a plan and bringing it to the board for review. She would like to start with the previous evaluation plan or take other plans across the state, so that we are creating a template for a position and not a particular person. She would like the members of the committee to go back to the table and bring back a formalized and clear plan/ process. Jill Olson expressed her support for this idea; she noted that this is a “process” issue to her and bears no reflection on the current superintendent. Stephen Looke shared his understanding that this is an ongoing process. He suggests giving the committee a charge and asking them to continue the work to develop an effective evaluation process for the superintendent. Flor Diaz Smith would like to take this topic to a board retreat. Jill Olson stated that she is not aware of a committee or the formal meeting or work of the committee; however, she supports the creating of a smaller committee to do the work and bring to the board; she would not like to do this work as a whole group/ board. Stephen Looke stated that the ad hoc group that has been informally doing the work should continue its work and bring a proposal to the whole board at a future meeting. Kari Bradley offered to serve on this committee.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1. Approve Minutes of 12.16.20: Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve the minutes of December 16, 2020. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.

5.2. Approve Board Orders: Lindy Johnson moved to approve the board order in the amount of \$1,041,359.62. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming. This motion carried unanimously.

6. Personnel

6.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Retirements, Leave of Absence and Changes in FTE Karoline May moved to approve the leave of absence request recommended by the superintendent. Seconded by Stephen Looke. This motion carried unanimously.

7. Public Comments: None

8. Future Agenda Items

8.1. WCUUSD Name; Other governance issues: size of board, pay for board members

8.2. Assessment Needs for Building Bright Futures: Flor Diaz Smith will share information; a presentation is planned for Monday, 1-10-21.

8.3. Board Retreat

8.4. Curriculum Management Review Update

8.5. Diversifying Workforce

9. Board Reflection

Diane Nichols-Fleming noted that we are ahead of schedule tonight (8:15).

Stephen Looke reflected that he is pleased with how the board is working; however, he feels that the board has not yet started the difficult discussions and work that lie ahead.

Karoline May - the time estimates for tonight were accurate and this is helpful in making the meeting successful.

10. Adjourn: The board adjourned by consensus at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary