

# Washington Central Unified Union School District

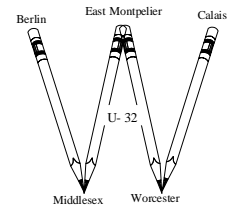
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*WCUUSD exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.*

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Bryan Olkowski  
Superintendent



## Washington Central Unified Union School District Board Meeting Minutes Approved 12.2.20 6:00 PM – 9:00 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, Chris McVeigh, Dorothy Naylor

**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

**Others/Public:** ORCA Media, Elizabeth Wirth, Rhonda Prensky, Sonya Rhodes, Cindy, David Lawrence, Gloria Roy, Jeff Dean, Mack Gardner-Morse, Susan Carborra, Carla Messier, Ellen Dorsey, KM

1. **Call to Order:** Scott Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
2. **Budget Community Forum – Presentation:** Scott Thompson, Flor Diaz Smith, Kari Bradley presented a slide show WCUUSD FY 21-22 *Board Draft #1 Budget Presentation, December 2, 2020*. Kari Bradley explained that the first draft of the budget is a level-service budget.
  - 2.1. **Public Feedback:** Flor Diaz Smith asked for small groups to discuss the following:
    - What clarifying questions do you have?
    - What are your reactions to this information?
    - Are we properly balancing the budget impacts on students, schools, and taxpayers?

Sharing out after small groups:

- Main concerns: costs
- Expression of appreciation for how remote learning has been implemented and how school has continued to operate. Concern about assessment plan-is this a duplicate of MTSS? Or is this competing with MTSS?
- Concern – is there too much administrative overhead?
- People are hurting financially – this pain should be shared by all including employees of the school district.
- The issue of debt – the pooling of pre-existing debt and the debt service that goes along with it.

- Question for Lori or Bryan: need for new money for building repairs and maintenance in this year's budget – why was this not allocated in last years?
- Lori- at U32 we used capital fund transfer money- this year we are considering a list of possible capital projects and will have more information coming in the future.
- How did 20/21 enrollment get calculated?
- Slice of Special Ed from last year's budget to this year's budget-thank you Kelly Bushey for trying to realize cost savings there.
- Some questions about how budgeting is done? Is it done at each school and then put together into one?
- Balance between education and budget and tax payers - FPF posts about aging population combined with declining enrollment - are we considering all of the tax payers?
- "Right sizing" - interventionists, allied arts, throughout the district
- Programming from Pre-K to graduation - what is the 2, 3, 5 year plan? Is there alignment?
- Questions around expected increases/ decreases - what is meant by level service budget? What will the next round look like?
- Discussion regarding the impact of the pandemic on the budget
- Tightening financial strains - switching to remote learning in the spring had implications on the needs of students
- Concerns around cutting resources having an impact on students
- Discussion around - is this the best time to have a level service budget? Our children have lost a lot of learning - doesn't feel appropriate to cut our budget right now; our kids need more than ever due to the pandemic
- Two year equalized pupils on the chart are not yet updated
- Essential workers - does our staff qualify for CARES support?
- Tax commissioner letter today - will have more information for the next budget draft
- Figuring out where our kids are and what their needs are going to be
- What does it mean to lose a "tuition" student? around \$21K per student
- Question for Lori? Re: 9 cent increase - what impact does it have on the 3.7% budget increase?
- Lori: planning to meet on Tuesday to address issues related to this - will report at the next meeting; will be factored into the next budget iteration
- Want a budget that meets the needs of the students AND the community members, given the impact of COVID19 pandemic. Not a lot of support for reducing teaching staff and services - students are likely to need extra support going forward.
- Maintain current levels - keeping in mind what students need, and what the community needs, keeping in mind the pandemic that we are all experiencing.

Flor Diaz Smith shared next steps:

**Dec 16** - Budget Draft 2

**January 6** - Budget Draft 3

**January 13** - Finalize Budget

**January 13** - another community budget forum

**Feb 17** - Informational Meeting

**March 1** - Informational Meeting

**March 2** - Town Meeting

Scott Thompson thanked the members of the public who had participated in this activity.

Flor Diaz Smith thanked the administration for the work that they continue to do in budget development.

### 3. Welcome

#### 3.1. Reception of Guests

3.2. **Agenda Revisions:** Kari Bradley reminded the board that we are planning to save time at the end of the meeting to process how the meeting went. (This should be a standing board agenda item) He also would like to have board norms included in the board packet.

### 4. Reports (Discussion/Action)

4.1. **Student Reports:** Townes DeGroot and Anna Farber shared some of the updates from the student community. Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week had been remote because of COVID19 cases at U32. Juniors and seniors have taken PSATs, SATs, and ACTs and are awaiting results. Scott Thompson asked if there is any student reaction to the decision to shut down winter sports until at least the end of December. Townes and Anna indicated that while they have been schooling online for the past three weeks, they have a sense from students that they are disappointed about not having the opportunity to participate in winter sports.

#### 4.2. Superintendent

4.2.1. **COVID –Update:** Superintendent Olkowski shared that he has been keeping in touch with the Department of Health and that COVID19 testing is underway; he thanked Elizabeth Wirth for her ongoing work and also thanked Calais Principal Cat Fair for helping to manage Calais Elementary during their remote learning and effort to re-open for in person learning. Elizabeth Wirth shared that it takes a lot of people working together. Superintendent Olkowski shared that student attendance over the past few days has been over 94% altogether. He thanked the staff at WCUUSD for their dedication.

Superintendent Olkowski reminded everyone that Calais Elementary will be going remote on December 7th - this is not COVID19 related, but is a pre-planned event to deal with ventilation issues.

4.2.2. **Projected Student Enrollment:** Superintendent Olkowski had shared a memo with the board, dated November 24, 2020: *WCUUSD Projected Student Enrollment Report - 2020-21*. He had included key findings from the NESDEC data for student enrollment projections. He explained that over a two year period there is projected to have a 219 decline in student enrollment. This will affect the next iteration of the budget.

Lori Bibeau explained a change in the formula for calculating average daily membership, due to COVID19. She will prepare some slides for the next board meeting to help clarify this change.

#### 4.3. Finance Committee

4.3.1. **Curriculum Review Bid:** Flor Diaz Smith shared that the Finance Committee had met about curriculum review.

**Flor Diaz Smith moved to offer a contract to Curriculum Management Solution, Inc. for curriculum review, in the amount of \$36,250. Seconded by Kari Bradley.** Some discussion followed. This will be grant funded. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that she has strong concerns about analyzing our system right now as we are currently operating under a crisis. Our focus needs to be how to get through the here and now. She also shared her concerns with hiring a company that is not familiar with the uniqueness of Vermont schools.

Superintendent Olkowski shared that this would be part of a larger strategic planning effort. Brief discussion followed. Jen Miller-Arsenault shared that she supports this endeavor as part of continuous improvement. **A vote was called. This motion carried unanimously.**

### 5. Consent Agenda

5.1. **Approve Minutes of 11.18.20:** Chris McVeigh moved to approve the minutes of November 18, 2020. Seconded by Lindy Johnson, this motion carried unanimously.

5.2. **Approve Board Orders:** Lindy Johnson moved to approve the board orders in the amounts of: \$1,117,434.66, \$19,327.24, \$58,869.48. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously.

**5.3. Approve Central Office Job Descriptions:** Chris McVeigh moved to approve the job descriptions as presented. (*Administrative Assistant to Central Office Administration - Special Services & Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Administrative Assistant to Central Office Administration - Superintendent & Finance; District Operations Manager - Data & Applications, Food Service and Transportation*) Seconded by Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, this motion carried unanimously.

**6. Personnel (Action)**

**6.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Retirements, Leave of Absence and Changes in FTE:** Dorothy Naylor moved to approve the long-term substitutes: Jenna Dufford and Colleen Dunn. Seconded by Lindy Johnson, this motion carried unanimously.

**7. Public Comments:** Georgia Roy - middle school math teacher (Earth Core): shared about working conditions – all students are fully attending, none are remote, following a different schedule than grades 8-12. She stated that contracts have been in direct violation since the beginning of the school year, in light of the current demands on teachers in her core. She shared a typical day’s schedule which typically does not include a duty-free lunch period. She shared her hopes that the board would hear the concerns of her team.

**8. Executive Session to discuss Legal, Negotiations, Personnel and Superintendent Evaluation:** **Flor Diaz Smith moved to go into Executive Session at 8:17 for the purpose of discussing Legal, Negotiations, Personnel and Superintendent Evaluation, to include legal counsel Scott Cameron and Carla Messier. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously. At 10:46 pm Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to leave Executive Session. Seconded by Jaiel Pulskamp, this motion carried unanimously.**

During Executive Session the Board discussed legal issues, personnel issues, labor issues, superintendent evaluation, and negotiations.

**Lindy Johnson moved to approve the MOUs as presented in the Executive Session packet, and to authorize the superintendent to sign the agreements. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion passed unanimously.**

**9. Future Agenda Items**

- 9.1.** WCUUSD Name
- 9.2.** Assessment Needs from Building Bright Futures
- 9.3.** Diversifying Educator Workforce
- 9.4.** Superintendent Evaluation

**10. Reflection on Board Norms:** Karoline May said the Board stayed on target regarding time during open session, and that there was no real way to shorten the Executive Session. Jaiel Pulskamp said that the Board always goes long in Executive Session, so the agenda should reflect that reality.

**11. Adjourn:** The board adjourned by consensus at 10:51.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary  
and Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Board Clerk