

# Washington Central Unified Union School District

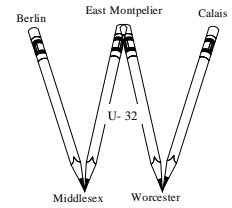
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*WCUUSD exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.*

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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 Budget Training and Board Meeting Minutes Approved

**11.18.20 5:00 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, Jill Olson, Townes DeGroot, Anna Farber, Stephen Looke, Chris McVeigh, Jonathan Goddard

**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 Aaron Boynton, Principal Casey Provost, Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate

**Others/Public:** Kelly MacMartin, David Delcore, ORCA Media, Lisa Wilson, Elizabeth Wirth, Corinne Stridsberg, Barrett Jones, Betsy Parah, Caitlyn Usticke, Daisy Scarzello, Ellen Dorsey, Hollis St. Peter, Jamie Bohn, Keith MacMartin, Rhonda Prensky, Sonya Rhodes, Ted

1. **Call to Order: Scott Thompson called the meeting to order at 5:03.**
2. **Board Budget Training:** From 5:05 until 5:45, the board participated in a budget training presentation and discussion led by business administrator Lori Bibeau.
3. **Welcome**
  - 3.1. **Reception of Guests:** Scott Thompson shared that the agenda setting committee had decided to hold public comments at the end of the board meeting. Lindy Johnson asked why this decision was made. Scott Thompson explained that the committee had decided since board meetings are public meetings held in order to carry out board business, it is critical for the board to take care of business and allow for public comments in a planful way. The COVID19 developments had influenced the agenda setting committee to create two separate opportunities during the meeting for public comments; however, at this time, the committee felt that having one designated time at the end of the meeting for public comment is appropriate.
  - 3.2. **Agenda Revisions:** Karoline May stated that during 4.4.4 she will abstain from the discussion and the vote.
4. **Reports**
  - 4.1. **Student Reports:** Townes DeGroot and Anna Farber shared updates. Some of the clubs have begun to meet, including Seeking Social Justice. Students are looking forward to Thanksgiving break beginning next week.

## 4.2. Superintendent

**4.2.1. COVID-19 Update:** Superintendent Olkowski shared that, as of yesterday, the Department of Health had sent an email praising the WCUUSD leadership team and the school board for continuing to provide opportunities for students to attend school in person daily. He noted that we are following state guidance; however, if he feels the need as superintendent to implement additional measures, to ensure the safety of students and staff, he will do so.

He shared that just before the board meeting this evening, he received notice of a positive COVID19 case at U32. He believes that we will continue to operate school, but there will be some notifications and some changes in the coming days. Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate indicated that one of the pods in the middle school is affected. Scott Thompson asked for clarification - who is doing contact tracing? Principal Dellinger-Pate stated that the school is notifying people about quarantining, etc, but the Department of Health is doing the contact tracing. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked whether testing is easily accessible for those affected or in question. Principal Dellinger-Pate indicated that details about testing is made available when the school contacts families.

Superintendent Olkowski asked the board to consider additional early release dates for the elementary schools and middle school at U32 on Dec 2, 9, 16th. He shared some of the reasons for requesting these dates, all related to COVID19 responses and preparation.

Jill Olson moved to approve early release dates on Dec 2, 9, 16th for elementary and middle school. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming. Discussion: Chris McVeigh asked whether there are anticipated early release dates in future months. Should we be giving families advance notice? Flor Diaz Smith asked whether we should take action to give the superintendent the authorization to create early release dates as needed, going forward, for example, through March 2021.

Discussion of friendly amendments: authorize superintendent to create early release dates as needed, from November 18, 2020, through March 31, 2021. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet indicated that he thinks we should make this through the end of the school year, June 2021. Lindy Johnson suggested adding the specification that the days be Wednesday.

**Motion: Jill Olson moved to authorize the superintendent to create early release dates on Wednesdays as needed, from November 18, 2020 through the end of the school year, June 2021. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming, this motion carried unanimously.**

Superintendent Olkowski shared that we will receive an \$80K grant from the Coronavirus relief fund, in addition to a \$50K grant we had already received. These grants are for use in food programs.

**4.2.2. Central Office Job Descriptions:** Superintendent Olkowski had shared updated job descriptions: Accounts Payable, Senior Payroll Cash Accountant, Financial Accountant, Medicaid and Human Resources Criminal Record Check Clerk. Flor Diaz Smith moved to approve these job descriptions. Seconded by Jaiel Pulskamp. Discussion: Stephen Looke stated that he does not believe this is something that the board needs to approve; he sees that as micro-managing. Lindy Johnson stated that she agrees, the board does not need to approve job descriptions, however she appreciates seeing the flowchart that provides an overview of job roles. Chris McVeigh stated on the other hand that he feels it is important for board members to stay informed. Kari Bradley agreed that this is not something within the purview of the board, however if

the superintendent feels that it is important, he would like the board to move through it quickly and take action. This motion carried unanimously.

**4.2.3. Enrollment Trends:** Superintendent Olkowski shared an update on enrollment trends. At this time, it looks like we may have a decrease of around 60 students next year. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet wondered whether this trend is in response to COVID19 (more families opting to homeschool). Diane Nichols-Fleming indicated that she would like to be able to take a broader look at enrollment trends. Stephen Looke stated that he believes the board should take a closer look at the trends and provide guidance to the administration based on current trends. Some discussion followed regarding Roxbury, Orange and Washington students.

**4.3. Leadership Team Report:** A written report had been provided. Jen Miller-Arsenault shared updates on assessment windows this year in light of COVID19. Kelly Bushey shared that special education case managers are creating schedules based on contingency plans for IEPs, in the event that we have to shift to remote. Superintendent Olkowski shared that the leadership team continues to meet and plan for the possibility of moving to remote learning. Principals shared from each location.

Some discussion followed around the challenges around COVID19 and planning for possible remote learning.

**4.4. Finance Committee:** Flor Diaz Smith shared that the Finance Committee is planning for the December 2<sup>nd</sup> budget presentation which may include small group discussions.

Flor Diaz Smith shared that she, Lori Bibeau and Bill Ford have met to consider possible projects for next year and the use of Capital Projects fund. She will provide more information to the board as the work of the group progresses.

**4.4.1. Share Finance Committee Recommendation for Budget Parameters:** Flor Diaz Smith had shared some recommended parameters for board members to consider, in preparing the first budget draft. She had invited feedback from board members.

**4.4.2. Middlesex Electric Vehicle Charger: Flor Diaz Smith moved that WCUUSD would continue to provide the EV unit and the electricity service to the community, but the district would not pay for the Assure service agreement, maintenance costs or the Network Service costs. We would ask the town to pick up these costs. If the town refuses to pick up the Assure, maintenance or Network Service costs, WCUUSD would eliminate the EV charger. Seconded by Kari Bradley.** Discussion: some discussion followed. Some board members noted that this is an awkward location for an electric vehicle charger, and does not get a lot of use currently. Jaiel Pulskamp suggested that in the future there may be incentives to purchase electric vehicles. She asked about the possibility of considering solar panels to power the charger. She asked whether we can consider turning off the charger but keeping the option to reinstate it in the future. Jim Garrity indicated that this is a possibility. **This motion carried unanimously.**

**4.4.3. Review and Award U-32 Van Recommendation: Flor Diaz Smith moved to purchase 2017 Toyota Sienna in the amount of \$17,984.00. Seconded by Kari Bradley.** Lori Bibeau reviewed this proposal. She noted that there is no budget impact to this purchase, as it will be covered by grant funds. **This motion carried unanimously.**

**4.4.4. Substitute Rate of Pay: Flor Diaz Smith moved (1) that WCUUSD no longer differentiate between licensed and non-licensed for substitute pay and that the rates of pay continue to be paid at a daily and half day rate, and (2) that WCUUSD substitute rates should be increased as follows: Daily rate (over 3.5 hours) \$115.00 Half day rate (3.5 hours or less) \$ 63.00. Seconded by Jonas Eno-Van Fleet.** Discussion: Superintendent Olkowski shared that sub pay has not been updated since 2015. **This motion carried.** Karoline May abstained from the vote.

#### 4.5. Education Quality

**4.5.1. Presentation of Financial Literacy Student Learning Outcomes:** Kari Bradley reviewed the work of the Education Quality committee, around Financial Literacy. He invited board members to attend the next Education Quality Committee meeting on December 2nd.

#### 4.6. Policy Committee

**4.6.1. Second Reading and Adoption: C12 Prevention of Sexual Harassment as Prohibited by Title IX: Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve the second reading and adoption of Policy C12. Seconded by Lindy Johnson.** Chris McVeigh shared that this policy had been provided by the Agency of Education. Superintendent Olkowski stated that this policy may be changing in the future, but at this time we are recommended by legal counsel to adopt the policy and follow the procedures included. **This motion carried unanimously.**

### 5. Board Operations

**5.1. Board Norms Draft: Jill Olson moved to adopt Board Norms as presented. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith.** Discussion: Jill Olson shared how this draft had been created, using previous U32 Board norms as a starting point. Stephen Looke suggested an edit, to eliminate “practice mindful listening” and replace with “listen.” Chris McVeigh suggested eliminating the phrase “but not respond” regarding the Community Involvement bullet. He suggested adding “and ask clarifying questions, if necessary.” Some discussion followed. **Board members approved Board Norms, with the two edits as agreed upon.**

**5.2. Board Size:** Some discussion followed around the concept of a smaller board membership:

Pro: fill board seats, increase the likelihood of contested elections, less time spent on board recruitment, simplify group decision-making, less unwieldy

Cons: fewer people directly involved/ reduced connections in the community; more burden on the board members that serve; is this where our energy should be spent right now? smaller committees

Scott Thompson took a straw poll to see how many board members are interested in pursuing a smaller board size and to assign a smaller group to explore this. Board members were in support of this.

Flor Diaz Smith and Chris McVeigh expressed interest in creating a small group.

### 6. Consent Agenda

**6.1. Approve Minutes of 11.4.20: Chris McVeigh moved to approve the minutes of November 4, 2020. Seconded by Jonas Eno-Van Fleet. This motion carried unanimously.**

**6.2. Approve Board Orders: Lindy Johnson moved to approve the board orders in the amounts of \$699,634.07, and \$26,406.63. Seconded by Jill Olson. 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 resignation of Damian Middleton at Calais, effective June 30, 2020. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming, with regret, and with thanks. This motion carried unanimously.**

## **8. Public Comments**

Barrett Jones: Described the various options for staff to take leave to address COVID19-related issues and asked the board to consider the hardship on families and staff.

Keith MacMartin expressed concerns around COVID19 community spread, and he asked whether there is a specific threshold in mind that will dictate when the schools decide to move to remote learning.

## **9. Executive Session for Personnel for Superintendent Evaluation:** tabled

SSIP: School System Improvement Plan: Superintendent Olkowski shared that he is currently exploring this option from the Agency of Education. He will share information with the board as it is received.

## **10. Future Agenda Items**

**10.1.** WCUUSD Name Change

**10.2.** Budget Community Forum

## **11. Reflection on Board Norms:**

Kari Bradley and Stephen Looke indicated that the board has delved too far into “the weeds” at tonight’s meeting (e.g., taking action to approve job descriptions)

Kari Bradley: Less time for leadership report from each school, which took over an hour tonight; also consider having this later in the meeting.

Diane Nichols-Fleming: it’s important to hear from schools, though, especially during COVID19 when we are not able to get into the schools.

Stick with the time frame and end on time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Stoudt