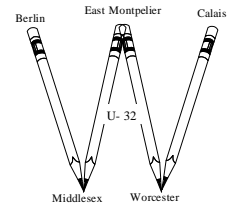


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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 Minute Approved

10.21.20 6:00 PM – 9:30 PM

Present by Teleconference*:

Board Members: Flor Diaz Smith, Lindy Johnson, Scott Thompson, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Dorothy Naylor (by phone), Chris McVeigh, Kari Bradley, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Jonathan Goddard, Jill Olson, Stephen Looke, Townes DeGroot, Anna Farber

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, Student Affairs Director Amy Molina, Principal Casey Provost, Principal Steven Dellinger Pate

Others/Public: Ayla Carey, Claire Gallagher, David Delcore, Ellen Dorsey, Jes Wills, David Lawrence, ORCA Media, Rubin Bennett, Carla Messier, Daniel Diddlemeyer, Dhann, Kelly MacMartin, Lisa Hanna, Lisa Wilson, Michael Sherwin, Sonya Rhodes, Elizabeth Wirth, Ted

1. Call to Order: Scott Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. Welcome

2.1. Reception of Guests: Scott Thompson welcomed the guests.

2.2. Agenda Revisions: Superintendent Olkowski would like to add 3.7: *School Year Calendar Change Request*. Board members agreed to add this to the agenda.

2.3. Public Comments:

Rubin Bennett shared that he has been approached by some community members expressing concern around how an interim replacement for Keith MacMartin was selected. He asked the board whether board members would like his input around what he knows of this. He shared that he had spoken with Superintendent Olkowski about what WCUUSD is looking for in a replacement. He realized that his company did not have the staff to provide what he was looking for. He shared that finding local IT experts is not an easy task. He indicated that when the search is underway for a permanent position, he would be happy to serve on the search committee. He also shared his appreciation for what WCUUSD has done in response to the COVID19 pandemic.

Daniel Diddlemeyer thanked the board for the time and effort that has been put into responding to the COVID19 pandemic. He also thanked Superintendent Olkowski for his willingness to listen to staff. He shared that the staff had been provided information today at a staff meeting, and that he feels that it was well-received; staff members feel “heard.” He stated that while he appreciates the efforts of WCUUSD leadership during the pandemic, the staff is feeling that what is being asked is unsustainable. He asked whether there is a threshold as to COVID19 cases and when schools might opt to go to remote learning. The board will discuss this topic later during the Superintendent’s report.

3. Reports

3.1. Student Reports: Townes DeGroot shared some of the happenings for students at U32. He indicated that he is hearing more nervousness from staff and students alike due to the spike in COVID19 cases in the area. It is having an impact on the overall culture at school. He shared that the Chronicle is underway and that some new staff profiles will be featured. Flor Diaz Smith asked Townes if he has any feedback about the breakfast and lunch program at U32. He stated that he has been impressed with what is being offered.

3.2. Superintendent:

Superintendent Olkowski shared that, regarding the question about threshold, the Agency of Education and Department of Health have not yet set a threshold. He will be meeting tomorrow with the AOE; he indicated that one of the topics will likely be around travel, especially over holidays. He noted that he has seen more expressions of nervousness and anxiousness, regarding an increase in cases in the area. He shared that he has been speaking with administration about ways to support staff through this time.

He shared some data around remote learning: from 84 students to 76. He stated that families are returning to live, in-person instruction; he anticipates this to continue. He asked Jen Miller Arsenault to provide some follow up around the VTVLC learning and transition.

Ms. Miller Arsenault shared that she has reached out to parents and has been meeting with teaching staff and has attended a remote learning session; she continues to stay invested and involved in helping to make the online learning experiences as positive as possible under these circumstances. Superintendent Olkowski thanked her for the work that she has put into this.

Chris McVeigh asked for some follow up around establishing a threshold. He asked whether WCUUSD should create its own criteria for a threshold, in spite of what the AOE is providing. Superintendent Olkowski shared that the AOE and Department of Health uses a combination of metrics to determine on a case by case rather than a hard number. He stated that he will raise the question tomorrow of establishing a local threshold.

Chris McVeigh asked, do we currently have the capacity, if needed, to shift to completely remote learning? Superintendent Olkowski stated that he would like to discuss this further during the discussion at 3.7; he believes that we have the physical capacity but that teachers may need some time to grow their teaching capacity.

Chris McVeigh asked whether there is a communication plan in place. Superintendent Olkowski stated that there is a protocol in place, a COVID19 Action Guide, which includes a communication guide, which has been shared with families by mail but will also be shared on the website.

Jill Olsen stated that we should continue to consider the difference between a cluster of cases versus community spread (where it is unclear where the cases come from). Superintendent Olkowski will bring up this topic at the meeting tomorrow.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet spoke about contact tracing and who is considered “close contacts.” He asked what is the thinking of Elizabeth Wirth about what is considered “close contacts” and whether any thought has been given to expanding our definition of what is a “close contact.” Superintendent Olkowski stated that a teacher had reached out to Elizabeth Wirth about this same question today. He shared her response which takes into account many factors such as times spent in the classroom unmasked (e.g. when eating). Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked whether WCUUSD will consider defining close contacts for contact tracing, with a finer point than the Department of Health’s guidance.

Lindy Johnson shared her experience at her workplace; she stated that she believes that schools have a right to decide what to do on their own regarding determining close contacts and responses to a positive COVID19 case. She believes that being transparent with information to the public is very important.

Chris McVeigh stated that he believes the AOE can establish a minimum regarding the concept of “threshold” but that we can redefine a more stringent threshold. Flor Diaz Smith asked, for the COVID19 Action Plan that is shared, could the document include pictures of local students? She had reviewed the document and the photos did not appear to be local students.

Elizabeth Wirth shared that because each school is different, she believes creating a hard

and fast threshold is not appropriate. She thinks it should be an individual decision, depending on many different factors. She stated that when a case is positive at a school, we would absolutely let people know; we would not identify whether it is a student or a staff member. She indicated that there is a lot of local talk amongst people; she stated that she has heard rumor that there has been a positive case in U32 but she has absolutely no knowledge of it.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked, in the cases where schools have decided on closures, have they followed the Department of Health's guidance or have they created their own threshold. Ms. Wirth indicated that each case is individual and that she believes the districts have made decisions on their own to do more than the Department of Health indicates in many cases.

3.2.1. Central Office Job Descriptions: Superintendent Olkowski had shared two job descriptions: Clerk of the Works and Director of Facilities. At this time there is not a staff member in the position of Director of Facilities; he is not advocating for hiring this position at this time, but to approve a job description to have on file. Superintendent Olkowski explained that these descriptions should include "other duties as assigned by the superintendent."

Flor Diaz Smith moved to approve both job descriptions: Clerk of the Works and Director of Facilities as provided, with added verbiage the superintendent had provided. Seconded by Diane Nichols Fleming.

Discussion: Diane Nichols Fleming asked if there is a reason the job description is so lengthy. Chris McVeigh asked whether evaluation procedures should be included in the job description. Superintendent Olkowski explained that it has never been the case, to include that in the job description. Superintendent Olkowski explained that the superintendent takes action to recommend hiring of these positions to the board.

Flor Diaz Smith noted that the Finance Committee has been discussing hiring this position in the future. **This motion carried unanimously, with noted addition of "other duties as assigned by the superintendent."**

3.3. Leadership Team Report: Lindy Johnson stated that she appreciates the positivity in these reports and that she can feel the commitment of the leadership team in the writing. Administrators shared briefly from each school. Aaron Boynton shared that, in addition to his report, the kitchen at Berlin had received a 100 on its recent Health Department inspection. Principals reviewed highlights from the written report. Principal Dellinger Pate shared that the adrenaline from the beginning of the year is beginning to wear off and everyone is exhausted. He hopes to address this at 3.7 on tonight's agenda.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked for follow up from Gillian Fuqua about the Remote Academy. She shared that the beginning of the year has been a challenging new endeavor; she noted that the team of teachers are great and that they are currently working on assessments and MTSS for remote students. She stated that things are going well in spite of the unprecedented circumstances.

Lindy Johnson asked whether chat could be enabled in a limited way during these online meetings, for example, to the host so that board members or administrators can communicate with the host when random things come up.

3.4. Policy Committee: Chris McVeigh invited board input, comments or questions about the following policies:

3.4.1. First Reading for policies to be adopted on 11/4/20: C7 Student Attendance; C20 Student Conduct and Discipline; C46 Interrogation or Searches of Students by Law Enforcement or Other Non-School Personnel; C49 Kindergarten Entrance Age; D3 Responsible Computer, Internet & Network Use; D4 Title Comparability; D5 Animal Dissection; D6 Class Size; E1 Title 1 Parent Involvement Compacts; E45 Role of Religion in School; F1 Travel Reimbursement: Some discussion followed about the Class Size policy. This policy draft does not list statutes for reference. Chris McVeigh will follow up. Superintendent Olkowski stated that regarding this policy, the superintendent has never in fact developed school district wide class size minimum or maximum so this is a new step in implementation to be spelled out in policy.

Regarding F1: Travel Reimbursement, a suggestion was made to add a clause indicating that this does not refer to commuting to and from work.

These policies will be moved to second readings.

3.5. Education Quality

3.5.1. Local Annual Performance Report – WCUUSD: Kelly Bushey reviewed the

AOE's Local Annual Performance Report, School Year 2018-19. She shared her action steps that result from this report, which include training and participation in the continuous improvement conversation, from the lens of special education.

Stephen Looke stated that he believes we need to continue to work on communicating to the entire district that the performance of all students belongs to the entire district.

- 3.6. Finance Committee:** Flor Diaz Smith stated that the Finance Committee had met before this meeting. Lori Bibeau had shared a memo sharing staffing projections. She noted that these projections will be factored into the first draft of the budget. She reviewed the Fund Balance Summary report. She reminded the board that a first draft of the budget will be provided at the next board meeting, to begin the budget development discussions.

3.6.1. Financial Report

- 3.6.2. Curriculum Review Bid:** Flor Diaz Smith stated that the Finance Committee had reviewed the bid process and recommends moving forward. **Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to move forward with the bid process for the curriculum review. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith.** Discussion: Superintendent Olkowski reviewed the memo that had been drafted for the board's consideration. Brief discussion followed. **This motion carried unanimously.**

- 3.7. School Year Calendar Change Request:** Superintendent Olkowski shared that he had met with the Leadership Team earlier today. He asked for early release days for pre-K through middle school on November 4th and November 18th, to provide time for planning, in the event that we are forced to teach remotely. He reminded the board that these early release dates may be necessary further along into the school year as well, depending on the status of the pandemic.

Diane Nichols-Fleming moved to change the 2020-21 school year calendar to add early release days to elementary and middle schools on November 4th and November 18th. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. Discussion: Diane Nichols-Fleming asked what the early dismissal time would be. Alicia Lyford explained, at U32 11:30, at the elementary schools 12:30. Lindy Johnson asked about the weekly Wednesday early dismissal; Alicia Lyford clarified. Superintendent Olkowski explained that he is expecting to hear from the AOE about some guidance around holiday travel/holiday calendar guidance. **This motion carried unanimously.** Superintendent Olkowski thanked his leadership team for their advocacy, and, the hour being 8:30, he invited them to check out of the meeting.

4. Board Operations

4.1. Board Goals

4.1.1. Board Governance Goal: Flor Diaz Smith stated that the committee is working on a board manual which will be a collaborative document which includes, for example, board norms. The topic of Executive Session is the first piece of the board manual that she would like to address.

4.1.2. Student Achievement Goal: Kari Bradley shared two goals regarding student achievement. (1) Establish a board process for review and analysis of student achievement of our Student Learning Outcomes, and (2) Develop a district-wide strategic plan incorporating input to improve learning for all students that reflects the values of our community.

Kari Bradley moved to approve the two goals as presented in writing (with more detail) in a memo, dated October 2020, from the Education Quality Committee to the School Board. Seconded by Dorothy Naylor. This motion carried unanimously.

- 4.2. Review Proposed VSBA Resolutions:** Dorothy Naylor had prepared a resolution statement. **Dorothy Naylor moved to approve the resolution:**

"Whereas:

The Vermont School Board Association provides advice to School Boards regarding labor and professional contracts, staffing levels, working conditions and legislative actions.

Therefore be it resolved:

The VSBA shall maintain complete independence from professional associations and labor organizations including but not limited to the Vermont Superintendents Association, the Vermont Principals Association, the NEA and any other labor or professional organizations representing administrators or workers in our schools. "Complete independence" shall mean the organizations shall not share office space, legal counsel, mailings, staff or officials in any capacity,"

for consideration at its annual meeting. Seconded by Chris McVeigh. Discussion: Dorothy Naylor explained that her understanding is that the committee at the annual meeting will determine whether to consider each resolution. She sees it as sending a message to the VSBA. Flor Diaz Smith explained the process. Nine resolutions have already been vetted by the VSBA; if this were to be considered it would need to be brought up on the floor at the meeting. Lindy Johnson shared her concern in the language in the resolution that dictates where their office space should be located. **This motion failed with six in favor; seven opposed.**

5. Consent Agenda

5.1. Approve Minutes of 10.7.20: Chris McVeigh moved to approve the minutes of October 7, 2020. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.

5.2. Approve Board Orders: Chris McVeigh moved to approve board orders in the following amounts: \$308,746.59, \$18,525.00. Seconded by Kari Bradley, this motion carried unanimously.

6. Personnel

6.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Retirements, Leave of Absence and Changes in FTE:
no action tonight

7. Public Comments:

Ellen Dorsey thanked the board for agreeing for the two half days; she noted that teachers have been working really hard on Canvas and they are much appreciative of this added time for professional development.

8. Executive Session for Negotiations and Superintendent Evaluation: At 9:00 Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of Negotiations and Superintendent Evaluation, and to invite Lori Bibeau and Carla Messier. Seconded by Lindy Johnson, this motion carried unanimously.

At 10:10 Lindy Johnson moved to leave Executive Session. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously.

During Executive Session, the Board discussed negotiations. The Board also decided to create a working group to craft a Superintendent job description, and a process for Superintendent evaluation, to bring back to the Board for approval. The members of that group will be Scott Thompson and Chris McVeigh.

9. Future Agenda Items

9.1. Energy Project Consultant

9.2. Business Administrator

Kari Bradley proposed a future agenda item to revisit the Articles of Agreement, particularly the size of the board.

10. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 10:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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