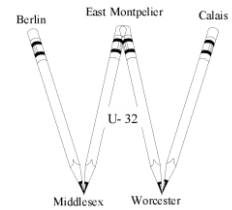


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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 August 19, 2020

Present by Teleconference*:

Board Members: Flor Diaz Smith, Lindy Johnson, Scott Thompson, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Dorothy Naylor, Stephen Looke, Chris McVeigh, Kari Bradley, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Jaiel Pulskamp, Jill Olson, Townes DeGroot

Administrators: Superintendent Bryan Olkowski, Technology Director Keith MacMartin, U-32 Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate, U-32 Student Affairs Director Amy Molina, Principal Gillian Fuqua, Principal Alicia Lyford, Principal Casey Provost, Principal Aaron Boynton, Principal Cat Fair, Director of Curriculum Jen Miller-Arsenault, Director of Student Services Kelly Bushey, Business Administrator Lori Bibeau

Others/Public: Lauriana Capone, Lisa Levangie, Liz Guilfoile, Michael Sherwin, Michele Turcotte, ORCA Media, Pat Fair, Ralph & Brenda Vernile, Glenn Gannon, Jill Drury, Julia Pritchard, Karoline May, Kate Grims, Chris Stanley, David Delcore (Times Argus), David Lawrence, Erin Mullaney, Eros Bongiovanni, Erica Zimmerman

1. Community Forum – School Reopening:

Present for Forum:

Superintendent Bryan Olkowski, Technology Director Keith MacMartin, U-32 Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate, U-32 Student Affairs Director Amy Molina, Principal Gillian Fuqua, Principal Alicia Lyford, Principal Casey Provost, Principal Aaron Boynton, Principal Cat Fair, Director of Curriculum Jen Miller-Arsenault, Director of Student Services Kelly Bushey, Business Administrator Lori Bibeau, Adrian Wade-Keeney, Albert Petrella, Alison Soccodato, Alyson Mahoney, Flor Diaz Smith, Lindy Johnson, Scott Thompson, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Dorothy Naylor, Stephen Looke, Chris McVeigh, Kari Bradley, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Jaiel Pulskamp, Jill Olson, ORCA Media, Priscilla Carr, Ralph Vernile, Richard Maizelle, Robin Gannon, Shawna Kasulka, Spunqi Young, Tammy Joslyn, Kim Buldoc, Larraby Fellows, Lisa Hanna, Lisa LaPlante, Lisa W, Liz Guilfoyle, Lori Potvin, Mary A, Matthew Pelkey, Michele Turcotte, Meg, Monika, Jane Coffey, Jennifer Chambers, Jill Drury, Julia Pritchard, Karoline May, Kathy Christie, Katrina Rob, Kelly Bushey, Claire Gallagher, David Lawrence, Deanna Murray, Denise Roy, Elizabeth Wirth, Erica Zimmerman, Erin

Mullaney, Glenn Gannon, Honi Bean Barrett, Anne Lamere, Becca, Beth, Brenda Vernile, Buffy Langlois, Caitlin Morgan, Carol, Casey Provost, Cates, Chris Stanley

At 5:00 Scott Thompson (WCUUSD Board Chair) reviewed a few norms for participating in the forum, regarding muting audio, etc.

Board members who were present for the forum introduced themselves.

Scott Thompson introduced Superintendent Bryan Olkowski.

Superintendent Olkowski facilitated a brief Powerpoint presentation about the return to school: *WCUUSD School Reopening: Task Force Presentation, Community Forum, August 19, 2020.*

Amy Molina presented on behalf of the Health Task Force.

Gilian Fuqua presented on behalf of the Facilities Task Force.

Jen Miller-Arsenault presented on behalf of the Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment Task Force.

Casey Provost present on behalf of the Logistics Task Force (Schedule, Food, Transportation, Technology).

Cat Fair presented on behalf of the Social Emotional Learning Task Force.

Aaron Boynton presented on behalf of the Funding, Policy and Communication Task Force.

Superintendent Olkowski reminded those present that the WCUUSD COVID19 webpage has a FAQ page that is updated regularly as new information is received.

Scott Thompson invited questions and comments.

Karoline May indicated that the district has done an amazing job communicating information to parents.

Chris Stanley asked about the 5-ft desk distancing. He stated that the CDC is still indicating 6-ft as guidance. Superintendent Olkowski stated that the guidance has recently been updated to reflect the 5-ft distance. Mr. Stanley asked, regarding "close contact," will the schools be using the 6-ft guidance or the 3-5 ft guidance? Amy Molina shared the AOE guidance around this issue.

Jennifer Chambers asked, if one child in the family is sick, should all of the siblings be kept home as well? Elizabeth Wirth responded to this - each case would be different but would depend greatly on whether the symptoms are COVID19 related.

David Lawrence indicated that the Department of Health has provided specific guidance around this on their website. He asked whether there is a specific address to provide feedback around the FAQ page (answer: use the "contact us" link on the page or email Superintendent Olkowski directly.) Mr. Lawrence asked whether we have an idea of how many students intend to attend remotely-only? Superintendent Olkowski answered around 78 elementary students. Mr. Lawrence stated that pushing the date to September 7th has provided valuable wait time to see how others are handling back-to-school. He referred to UNC which recently shut down in-person instruction after attempting an in-person opening. Superintendent Olkowski indicated that Vermont is looking at data, specifically, more local data, as indicators for guidance. He stated that the Department of Health has not provided a specific "threshold" number. He stated that the data in Vermont is so promising that we are opening in "Step II" but there is hope and expectation that we may move quickly to "Step III." On the other hand, this is a dynamic situation and we may have to pivot to "Step I." This is why the planning has had to be flexible.

Monika asked about the logistics - and enforcement of - laundering masks as recommended. Elizabeth Wirth responded to this issue. There are extra masks in the school and on the bus; families and staff are asked to do the best they can re: laundering

masks on a daily basis. Monika asked whether it makes more sense to consider a more medical model where paper masks are available at the door. Elizabeth Wirth indicated that a supply of masks will be available.

Lisa Hanna asked about health screenings and the “ask” of students and teachers to stay home if they have symptoms. Elizabeth Wirth responded to this question, indicating that under these circumstances we will be erring on the side of caution.

Kevin Nadzam asked about the sharing of information TO the community (respecting privacy), specifically the number of new cases in the school or the number of new cases in a pod, so that families can make their own informed decisions. Superintendent Olkowski and Elizabeth Wirth answered this question. When a child tests positive, the classroom will be closed for 24 hours and contact tracing will occur; so parents will immediately know. Some discussion of privacy versus “right to know” followed. She stated that very clear information will be shared with families; this discussion is still underway.

Scott Thompson shared a question from the chat: Are teachers being tested prior to students coming back? Is there a way to test all students before returning to school? Superintendent Olkowski indicated that, because of the contagious nature of the virus, there will be no testing in advance.

Honi Bean Barrett asked about guidance for middle school fall sports. Steven Dellinger-Pate indicated that we are continuing to work on guidance around this and should have some updated info in the next few days.

Jane Coffey asked whether the school day hours will be changing. Superintendent Olkowski stated that the plan right now is to have full school days, five days a week. Amy Molina reminded that Wednesdays are always early release days, for professional development.

Jill Drury asked about safety precautions when it comes to a much greater prevalence of outdoor learning. Superintendent Olkowski stated that we have recently gotten guidance from the AOE around safety, including drills (e.g. “active shooter” safety.) Gillian Fuqua shared that VSBIT had recently shared some guidance around this topic, with a focus on balancing what is the most imminent risk, under the unique circumstances. She stated that this continues to evolve. Ms. Drury stated that schools in neighboring districts are not in favor of longer periods of learning outdoors, due to safety issues.

Lisa W asked whether there is a protocol for what students do with soiled masks. Elizabeth Wirth stated that each school will have their own protocol around students keeping track of masks; however, generally, students will have two bags, one for dirty masks and one for clean.

Spunqi Young asked if there are plans in place for students who have extended absences. Jen Miller-Arsenault shared that we will be using Canvas so that teachers, students and parents can use this platform to help stay up to date. However, Alicia Lyford indicated that when students are too sick, they are expected, as usual, to take time off to get well. Each situation will be addressed on a case by case basis.

Erica Zimmerman asked whether there is anything that the community can provide to help support the schools. Superintendent Olkowski indicated that many of the offers for help and support have been around helping prepare for outdoor learning (for example, providing tents.) He noted that safety and liability is always an issue. Ms. Zimmerman offered to help get the word out.

Carol asked - will our district implement something like colleges, with sending children home for Thanksgiving break and then not returning until the new year? Superintendent Olkowski indicated that we will be following the guidance that the state provides, which will depend on how the situation evolves. Steven Dellinger-Pate indicated that there will be information coming shortly around transportation for after school activities, for example, during the week that a cohort of students is remote.

Chris Stanley asked who is going to be managing data for contact-tracing. Elizabeth Wirth stated that within the schools, students will be kept in their pods as much as possible and attendance/ data will be kept as accurately as possible, to help with contact tracing as needed.

Question: Will middle school students be allowed to take outdoor breaks from masks?
Amy Molina - yes.

Will there be a plan in place for pick up and drop off? Amy Molina - yes.

Ms. Pelkey: Will tests be required before students return to school after testing positive? Elizabeth Wirth stated that in Vermont, testing is typically not indicated. However, families will be following the advice of their own primary care providers.

Larraby Fellows: Is there additional support, or additional information available to parents who have two children in the same school in different grades. Elizabeth Wirth stated that encouraging hand washing and mask wearing at school is the best recommendation. There is more likely to be cross contamination for siblings in different classrooms but the contact tracers will take this into consideration if and when a positive case arises.

Scott Thompson asked the attendees whether they feel that another public forum is warranted. He observed that the majority of those who responded indicated “yes.” He stated that it can’t be promised, but we will do our best to keep families informed. He asked families in the meantime between now and the first student day,

Superintendent Olkowski invited those present if they have questions, use the “contact us” link on the WCUUSD Covid page or if they are school specific, contact the school principal.

2. Call to Order: Scott Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

3. Welcome

3.1. Reception of Guests: Scott Thompson welcomed those present.

3.2. Agenda Revisions: Flor Diaz Smith suggested adding “board membership” to the discussion.

3.3. Student Reports: Townes DeGroot shared that students received their schedules today and are very excited to have a concrete measure to prepare for the upcoming school year, and he thanked the administration for the work to make this happen as it is very much appreciated. Steven Dellinger-Pate thanked Lisa LaPlante especially for her work on this, and noted that he is currently recruiting interest for a student representative.

4. Board Operations (Discussion/Action)

4.1. Board Retreat: Flor Diaz Smith shared information about the board retreat at Trapp Family Lodge; the date will be September 12th, 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Breakfast and lunch will be served. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked whether there will be a remote option for the board retreat. Flor Diaz Smith indicated that remote participation will be an option. Kari Bradley asked whether the board has defined goals for the retreat. Flor Diaz Smith stated that she, Scott Thompson and Superintendent Olkowski had met with the facilitator once and intend to meet once more before the retreat. Superintendent Olkowski indicated that the overall theme that he has heard is full board participation to talk about the direction of WCUUSD. He expects that a tangible outcome from the retreat will be goals for the board. Scott Thompson indicated: goals, values, norms. Flor Diaz Smith stated that the facilitator had asked to prioritize and the top priority is to have something tangible as a result of the retreat, with an overarching theme of getting acquainted as a

board and new superintendent. Chris McVeigh asked whether the facilitator is aware of the quarantining requirements, based on where he originates? Superintendent Olkowski will follow up to be sure.

4.2. Board Calendar Draft: Superintendent Olkowski had shared a draft: WCUUSD Board Meeting Calendar 2020-2021. He noted that the locations of the board meetings are assuming, in the future, that the board meetings occur in person rather than via zoom. Superintendent Olkowski indicated that we may need to have a Finance Committee meeting in September. Scott Thompson invited questions or comments about this calendar. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether the Quality Committee needs to be reviewing anything regarding remote learning or any unique circumstances related to COVID19, since the committee does not plan to meet until October. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked whether the board will continue to meet at 6:30 p.m. The board agreed to begin board meetings at 6:00 p.m.

4.3 Board Membership/ Vacancies: Chris McVeigh shared that two letters of interest have resulted from the Front Porch Forum posting about a Middlesex board vacancy. The board agreed that a special meeting may be warranted before the next regular meeting (September 2nd), at which time the board can take action to appoint a board member. Some discussion followed to clarify that the selectboard, while informed of the appointment, is not part of the decision making. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet indicated that there has been no interest from Worcester yet, in spite of attempts to canvas. Lindy Johnson asked whether Principal Fuqua could post something in the Doty newsletter. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet will share with her the posting that had been in the March newsletter; she will repost it.

Flor Diaz Smith suggested that Scott Thompson share something with central office, to share across WCUUSD, about the Worcester opening and the student representative opening. Stephen Looke asked what the board process will be around selecting new members. Scott Thompson indicated that he will share the letters of interest and the board will have a vote; Stephen Looke reminded the board that in the past the board has interviewed candidates to help make the selection. Scott Thompson stated that he will invite the candidates to the board meeting for an interview.

5. Reports (Discussion/Action)

5.1. Superintendent

5.1.1. School Reopening Update: Superintendent Olkowski shared that staff leave procedures have been established. He thanked Carla Messier who has been working around the clock on this. He had shared a memo dated August 14, 2020, sharing staff leave information: 4 teachers have applied for EFMLA; 6 have applied for unpaid leave; 5 teachers have applied to enroll their children, for a total of 8 students. He had provided a list of teachers who were appointed to remote learning teaching positions. He shared some information about reallocating positions to cover these positions and that this, in the end is a cost neutral solution. Chris McVeigh asked how many staff members requested the early retirement offering. Superintendent Olkowski shared that one person recently has requested early retirement; he recalled that three had already done so, earlier in the summer.

Superintendent Olkowski shared with the board that we have submitted a grant application through Efficiency Vermont for some of the ventilation and renovation issues related to in-person school after COVID19.

5.1.2. School Calendar: Superintendent Olkowski had shared a revised calendar for the 2020-21 School Year. Jen Miller-Arsenault shared that this calendar reflects 175 student days versus 180, to allow for preparation days related to COVID19.

Chris McVeigh moved to reduce student days for 2020-2021 school year from 180 to 175, and to approve the revised calendar, as recommended. Seconded by Jonas Eno-Van Fleet. Discussion: Kari Bradley asked how snow days' factor into this calendar. Superintendent Olkowski indicated that June 18- 24 are contingency days, however he noted that with remote learning in place and the Canvas platform, missing school for snow might be a thing of the past. **This motion carried unanimously.**

6. Consent Agenda (Action)

6.1. Approve Minutes 7.30.2020 and 8.5.2020: Diane Nichols-Fleming moved to approve the minutes of July 30 and August 5. Seconded by Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, this motion carried unanimously.

6.2. Approve Board Orders: Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve the board orders in the amounts of \$232,584.93 and \$397,413.06. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.

7. Personnel (Action)

7.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Retirements, Leave of Absence and Changes in FTE: Chris McVeigh moved to authorize the following leave requests, for the 2020-2021 year, without pay, for the following: Amber Perry, Jackie Taylor, Robert Reade, Dena Cox, Nicolle Shaeffer, Peter Comtess. Seconded by Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, this motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Olkowski noted that U32 is seeking a full time middle school math teaching position; this position is already factored into the budget. Dorothy Naylor asked how many staff have opted to not continue in their positions, for those positions that the board does not take action. She is curious, in light of COVID19. Superintendent Olkowski indicated that this continues to evolve; however, he will ask Carla Messier to provide an update to Dorothy.

8. Public Comments:

Steven Dellinger-Pate shared that Julia Pritchard has joined the team at U-32 as Special Education Coordinator.

David Lawrence asked: if families feel that they need to keep their children home from school, will this be an absence if the child is able to participate in remote learning? If it is, then why would the child be unable to participate in remote learning? What would "Step III" mean for students who have opted for remote learning? Superintendent Olkowski shared that this conversation continues at the state level, and he intends to ask Dan French about this tomorrow at their weekly meeting. David Lawrence asked whether teachers are identified as remote teachers; Superintendent Olkowski shared that six teachers have been identified. Additionally, we continue to talk about allied arts offerings remotely.

Chris McVeigh expressed his understanding that we are able to keep with remote learning for the entire year if we want to.

9. Executive Session for a Student Matters:

At 7:46, Lindy Johnson moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing student matters. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming, this motion carried unanimously.

At 8:03, Flor Diaz Smith moved to leave Executive Session. Seconded by Lindy Johnson, this motion carried unanimously.

During Executive Session, the board and superintendent discussed student matters.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to accept eight children of district teachers who live outside the district to attend district schools for the 2020-21 school year at no tuition cost to the parents of these students. Seconded by Lindy Johnson, this motion carried unanimously.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve a change of school for a student. Seconded by Dorothy Naylor, this motion carried unanimously.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to accept a foreign exchange student to U32, on the condition that the student maintain a quarantine according to state guidelines. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.

10. Future Agenda Items

Bryan Olkowski said there may be a need for a special meeting next week, August 26, to address teacher hirings and retirements. Lindy Johnson proposed that a meeting be held on Wednesday, August 26. Dorothy Naylor said any new teachers should be on board soon in order to participate in in-service training. Jill Olson said she will be on vacation next week, in a “green” county in Maine. Scott said a special meeting will be scheduled for August 26, even if it is eventually not necessary. Diane Nichols-Fleming said the board should revisit early retirement options, to see if it is providing what the board intended, and which positions will need to be replaced. Flor Diaz Smith said VSBA dues should be on the agenda for September 2. Bryan Olkowski said more information should come from the state regarding Efficiency Vermont, and a finance committee meeting may need to be scheduled for the hour before a board meeting.

11. Adjourn: The board adjourned by consensus at 8:11.

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