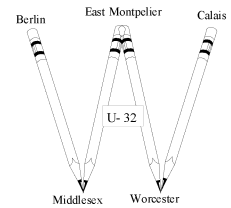


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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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Debra Taylor, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent



Washington Central Unified Union School District Board

Approved Minutes

May 6, 2020

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Via Video Conference*

Approved 5-20-20

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

Administrators: Superintendent Debra Taylor, Business Administrator Lori Bibeau, Technology Director Keith MacMartin, Berlin Principal Aaron Boynton, Calais Principal Cat Fair, Director of Curriculum Jen Miller-Arsenault, Director of Student Services Kelly Bushey, Doty Principal Gillian Fuqua, EMES Principal Alicia Lyford, U-32 Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate, U-32 Associate Principals Jody Emerson and Bill Deiss, Rumney Principal Casey Provost, U-32 Student Affairs Director Amy Molina

Other: Corinne Stridsberg, ORCA videographer, Dave Delcore (Times Argus), Elizabeth Wirth, several members of the public were present via Zoom by phone, Robert Porter, David Lawrence, Daisy Scarzello, Maria Melekos

1.0 Call to Order: Scott Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2.0 Committee Meetings – Were held in breakout sessions

- 2.1 Policy
- 2.2 Quality Education
- 2.3 Finance
- 2.4 Negotiations

3.0 Welcome

3.1 Reception of Guests: Scott Thompson welcomed guests. Board members thanked staff in light of Teacher Appreciation Week.

3.2 Agenda Revisions: an Executive Session will be needed at the end of the meeting. Flor Diaz Smith stated that she would like to discuss teacher appreciation (this was added to the agenda: 7.2)

3.3 Public Comments: Scott Thompson invited public comments

4.0 Board Operations (Discussion/Action)

4.1 Board Steering Team: Chris McVeigh suggested expanding the steering team to a membership of five members, one from each town, as this team/ committee seems to be acting in place of an executive committee. He would like to discuss what the role of the steering committee is. Board members expressed their support in creating a steering committee as suggested, with membership from each town. Scott Thompson shared that he had hoped to avoid an executive committee-type component in the board structure. Lindy Johnson shared that she would be comfortable with having representation from each town. Kari Bradley asked if agenda planning is the only role of the committee. Scott Thompson indicated that it is supposed to be. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet indicated that he would decline being on the committee.

Jill Olson stated that what she understands about the discussion is to expand membership on the committee but the role of the committee will continue to be to create agendas.

Flor Diaz Smith stated that she feels that a board retreat is needed; she is in agreement with expanding membership of the steering team but she encourages the board to find opportunities to build trust as a unit.

Jaiel Pulskamp indicated that she does not feel that she can commit to this expanded team either; this would leave Worcester without representation.

Chris McVeigh moved to formally recognize a steering/ agenda committee, and that we expand to five committee members, one from each town. Seconded by Jill Olson. Flor Diaz Smith stated that she believes the committee should include the Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk. The board had decided to discuss the composition/ membership of the committee at a later date. This motion carried unanimously.

4.2 Superintendent Transition Update –July 1, 2020: Scott Thompson reported that Bryan, the future superintendent, has moved to Plainfield. He shared that he is currently creating an entry plan but welcomes input from the board. Kari Bradley had suggested creating a video interview, with a student acting as interviewer. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether board members can see a draft of his plan. Chris McVeigh suggested asking the superintendent what he needs from the board to support his transition planning.

Debra Taylor shared that there is a two day retreat planned for the end of June; she has plans to schedule time with him to work together as part of the transition. Lori Bibeau shared that in the past the new administrator would earn “comp time” that they might use later in the summer, when they work before their start day.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked Scott Thompson whether he can share some of the conversations that he has had with the incoming superintendent. Some discussion followed. Scott Thompson indicated that the superintendent is an extrovert and is very interested in the “human factors,” and he is interested in trying to soak up what he can. Meeting with each board member is part of his entry plan. Flor Diaz Smith shared that Bryan had asked for a list of people that he could reach out to, to get to know the district.

5.0 Reports (Discussion/Action)

5.1 Superintendent

5.1.1 Student Last Day of School: Superintendent Taylor asked the board to consider June 11 as the last student day. She has discussed this with the leadership team, and she noted that parents and teachers are asking.

Mia Smith asked whether June 11 would be the end for all students, or if the seniors would have a different end date. Steven Dellinger-Pate indicated that this day would pertain to seniors as well, since all students are required to attend 175 days.

Chris McVeigh moved to waive snow days for students, in the current school year. Seconded by Jaiel Pulskamp, this motion carried unanimously.

5.1.2 COVID 19 Update: Debra Taylor had provided a written report.

She reviewed some of the details in the report; she indicated that we have over 96% participation, overall, regarding student attendance. She provided thanks to teachers, support staff and administrators for their effort. She spoke about the meal delivery program which has grown to delivering library books as well as materials/ technology as needed. She thanked the bus drivers, cafeteria staff and support staff. She also commended Amy Molina for her work around facilities and safety. She thanked Kelly Bushey for helping with special education and with negotiations as well. She thanked Jen Miller-Arsenault for her work during this distance learning time. She invited questions from board members. Chris McVeigh asked whether the meals delivery is going to continue beyond the end of the school year. She stated that we still have not received information from the state that would help determine this (e.g., regarding funding.) Chris McVeigh asked when the board's position would be warranted around this issue. She stated that the board's input is always welcome but there are still questions as to whether we have the capacity to sustain.

5.1.3 Future Planning Literacy and Special Education Review: Debra

Taylor stated that earlier this year we had begun to discuss implementing this review in the spring. She recommends that this wait until the fall when students and teachers are back in the buildings.

Marylyne Strachan asked, who is the consultant? Jen Miller-Arsenault: Partnership for Literacy and Learning had been in the beginnings of discussion. Debra Taylor suggested that the quality committee revisit this in the fall; she will share what information she has to date about conversations.

Scott Thompson suggested that this might be a topic that we bring up with the new superintendent. Diane Nichols Fleming reminded the board that this might need to be discussed further, as we don't have a lot of information right now about the financial situation in the coming year.

5.2 Policy (Action)

5.2.1 First Reading of B40 Non-Retribution/Retaliation, C1 Student Education Records, C4 Limited English Proficiency Students Policies. Chris McVeigh introduced these policies and invited comments from board members. Lindy Johnson asked whether B40 is a model policy; Chris McVeigh indicated that it is not based on a model policy. Flor Diaz Smith asked whether it has been vetted by legal counsel yet. It has not. The board is in support of this policy moving forward to legal counsel for vetting.

C1 & C4: Chris McVeigh asked for comments about these policies which are fairly straight-forward.

Lindy Johnson moved to adopt policies C1 and C4. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet indicated that the key phrases in both of these policies are "as required by law." This motion carried unanimously.

5.3 Quality Education: Kari Bradley shared that the committee had worked on a proposed charter to bring to the board. He noted that the committee had looked at data tonight about student outcomes. The committee will propose a draft monitoring calendar to the board, and will work with the agenda setting committee to plan for participation at future meetings.

5.4 Finance – Flor Diaz Smith reported from the Finance Committee meeting.

5.4.1 Approve Rumney Roof Project Bid (Action): Superintendent Taylor indicated that one bidder was received for this project.

Chris McVeigh moved to accept the bid from Beauregard Construction for the roof project, in the amount of \$39,500. Seconded by Jill Olsen, this motion carried unanimously.

5.4.2 Approve Energy Project Consultant (Action): Debra Taylor shared that the board attorney suggests hiring a consultant before making a long term decision around energy savings initiatives. Robert Porter spoke to the board; he described net metering, which is essentially an accounting agreement. He shared that Kari Bradley had suggested creating a short term contract/ agreement, while discussion and decision making is under way about a bigger picture plan.

He spoke about the idea of a consultant, and the difference between agreeing to net metering and considering the broader topic of an energy audit or energy efficiency measures.

Chris McVeigh asked Debra Taylor whether there is an idea about a timeline for a consultant.

Flor Diaz Smith noted that the finance committee meets later this month and can discuss this further.

Debra Taylor suggested that Robert draft a contract that she can share with legal counsel and that the board can consider.

Stephen Looke stated that he does not think it is appropriate for a school board to be engaging with a provider and making a decision at a board meeting in this way. He suggested that the board consider a contract at the next board meeting. Robert Porter is going to follow up with Superintendent Taylor, with a draft contract.

Robert Porter explained to the board why this is not considered a contract that needs to go out to bid.

5.4.3 Overview of Budget Projection (Discussion): Lori Bibeau invited questions from board members with any specific questions from her finance reports tonight. She reported on the fund balance, currently, which is projected to be strong. She stated that we have saved a significant amount of money due to school closure; she reported about costs associated with foodservice, child care, and remote learning.

6.0 Consent Agenda (Action)

6.1 Approve Minutes of 4.15.20: Jill Olsen moved to approve the minutes of April 15, 2020. Seconded by Lindy Johnson. Scott Thompson noted that “Board members” should be listed before “Administrators” on the minutes. This motion carried unanimously.

6.2 Approve Board Orders: Chris McVeigh moved to approve the following board orders: \$354,001.83 Check Warrant General 04/16/20-05/06/20, \$23,597.22 Check Warrant Capital 04/16/20-05/06/20. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously. The following board members voted in favor: Flor Diaz Smith, Lindy Johnson, Scott Thompson, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Dorothy Naylor, Stephen Looke, Chris McVeigh, Marylyne Strachan, Kari Bradley, Jill Olson, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Jaiel Pulskamp.

Mia Smith shared a student update under the circumstances of COVID19.

7.0 Personnel (Action)

7.1 Approve Hires, Resignations, Retirements: Superintendent Taylor commended the building principals and central office administrators for the work that has gone into presenting the list of hires.

Kari Bradley moved to accept the recommendation of the administration to hire the following:

- **Julia Pritchard – Special Service Coordinator (WCUUSD/U-32)**
- **Jamie Spector – School Social Worker/Behavior Specialist (WCUUSD)**
- **Alison Byrnes – Math Teacher (U-32)**
- **Hayley Fitzgerald – Special Education (WCUUSD/U-32)**
- **Michael Sutherby - PE Teacher (.7 Rumney/.3 Doty)**
- **Bonne Dunham - Assoc. School Nurse (Rumney)**

- Amy Urling - Science Teacher (U-32 HS)
- Noelle Pinard - Classroom Teacher 2nd grade (EMES)
- James Warden - Classroom Teacher 5/6 grade (Calais)

Seconded by Lindy Johnson. This motion carried unanimously.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve the resignation of Brianne Healy. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.

Chris McVeigh moved to approve the leave of absence starting in late September request of Christine Hertz Hausman, and to also grant the request to reduce FTE from 1.0 to 0.5. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming. This motion carried unanimously.

Lindy Johnson moved to approve the change in FTE status of Maria Melekos, to a combined 1.0 FTE. Seconded by Jill Olson, this motion carried unanimously.

7.2 Flor Diaz Smith suggested that the board could consider a gesture to teachers that is above and beyond previous years, given the unique circumstances. Debra Taylor indicated that building principals have provided gift cards to staff. Marylynne Strachan expressed support for Flor's plan to make a gesture on behalf of the board, in addition to what principals are doing.

Chris McVeigh moved to spend \$20 on each personnel to show appreciation during this Teacher Appreciation week, as this has been a challenging year. Stephen Looke indicated that we can't take action on a budget item without a board warning. Marylynne Strachan suggested writing a card to each school. Lindy Johnson suggested considering an end of year gesture. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that it would be nice to do some sort of "parade" or driving caravan to recognize/ thank staff. Rumney and Calais are both planning "parades" in the next couple of weeks. This motion was not seconded and did not go forward.

Executive Session: Kari Bradley moved to go into Executive Session at 9:52pm for a contractual matter. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously.

At 10:18pm MaryLynne Strachan moved to come out of Executive Session. Seconded by Lindy Johnson, this motion carried unanimously.

During Executive Session the board discussed a contractual matter. No action was taken.

Diane Nichols-Fleming said that if there is a team creating the agenda, then that is the agenda that should stay until it comes to a board meeting, and there is an opportunity for the whole board to approve a change to the agenda, and that the board should follow that procedure. Scott Thompson said that normally, once the agenda is set it stays set, but there are occasions where there are very serious issues that are also very urgent issues that have to be dealt with, it's a bit of a judgement call. Diane Nichols-Fleming responded that when something comes under the name of the chair it gives the impression that the process was followed, and that it was confusing as the board tries to manage lots of different information. Lindy Johnson clarified that when administrators add lines to the agenda that those are appropriate additions to the agenda, in an effort to make sure personnel are able to be brought on board.

8.0 Future Agenda Items There were no future agenda items.

9.0 Adjournment: The board adjourned by consensus at 10:22 pm.

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

***Open Meeting Law temporary changes as of 3/30/20:** Boards are not required to designate a physical meeting location. Board members and staff are not required to be present at a designated meeting location. **Our building will not be open for meetings. All are welcome to attend virtually.**