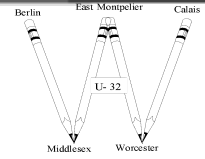


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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 Meeting Minutes

4.15.20 6:00 PM

approved 5-6-2020

Present by Teleconference:

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, George Gross, Student Rep. Mia Smith

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), Hilary Paquet, Elizabeth Wirth, Lisa Wilson, Scott Cameron, Jody Parker, Michael Sherwin, several members of the public were present via Zoom by phone

1.0 Call to Order: Scott Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2.0 Welcome

- 2.1 Reception of Guests: Scott Thompson welcomed those present.
- 2.2 Agenda Revisions: Scott Thompson noted that an Executive Session will be needed as part of the COVID-19 update, to discuss personnel issues.
- 2.3 Public Comments: Scott Thompson invited public comments. None were heard at this time.

3.0 Superintendent Report

COVID-19 School Closure Update

3.1 Succession Plan - Superintendent: Debra Taylor noted that the Governor's stay at home order has been extended to May 15th. Superintendent Taylor had provided a written report for

the board's review. She noted that teacher contracts have been distributed. Support staff negotiations will begin after April break; support staff have been offered "Letters of Intent."

Superintendent Taylor explained that both Kelly Bushey and Jen Miller-Arsenault have Superintendent certification so they would be available to cover if she were to be absent unexpectedly. She had shared information with the board about a succession plan.

She shared some information about education funding in light of the impact of COVID-19. She expressed concerns about the 2020-21 calendar year.

Kari Bradley asked whether a list of options has been developed to help plan for next year, financially. Superintendent Taylor indicated that she will have a more thorough response to that at the next board meeting.

3.2 Continuity of Learning - Leadership Team: Superintendent Taylor shared that the Continuity of Learning plan and the Distance Learning Plans (for special education) have been developed. April break will take place next week; however, the meal delivery plan will continue through the break. She reported that a small number of children are continuing to participate in the child care program, and she anticipates that more may participate after the community begins to transition back to work; this program will continue at this time. She stated that Scott Cameron, the board's attorney, has been providing support around leave procedures. She noted that no employees have received a reduction in pay due to COVID-19 leave.

Superintendent Taylor shared that the Continuity of Learning plan began on April 13. Administrators shared briefly with the board. Aaron Boynton: Berlin - two focuses currently: understanding the Continuity of Learning plan, and clear communication to families. Cat Fair: Calais - chromebooks have been deployed and this week is the third week that Calais staff have been reaching students remotely. Focus currently is around supporting families and caregivers. She spoke about the phenomenon of entering people's homes via technology, and that this can be overwhelming to some families. She would like to find a way to publicly acknowledge the heroic efforts of staff. She encourages them to take April break and "unplug" and rejuvenate. Gillian Fuqua: Doty - spoke about the challenges of technology in Worcester. She shared that she has been in touch with families and has been trying to maintain positive working relationships with families, as will be crucial in the fall. She noted that her staff has expressed concerns around equity: how can we do everything in our power knowing that the achievement gap is probably going to widen during this period? How to keep children engaged? Alicia Lyford: East Montpelier - echoed what others reported; special educators have been working incredibly hard. Trying to keep things consistent and keeping focus on what has been working. She noted that Michael Sherwin has become more of a home-school coordinator during this period. Casey Provost: Rumney - focus on maintaining relationships with students; balancing trying to not overwhelm and overburden families. He shared that there are technology challenges in Middlesex. He noted that faculty and staff are going above and beyond in order to support families. Steven Dellinger-Pate: U-32- He shared that the planning time last week was utilized earnestly. He stated that the first line of contact for families continues to be TA. He shared ways that TAs are maintaining connections. He stated that we are learning that we have not taught enough transferable skills - for example, time management. He believes this will be something that we think about more critically after this pandemic. Mia Smith shared her perspective as a student. She noted that she is fortunate to not have technology access issues. She stated that the school providing a schedule to all students was helpful, as students trying to manage their schedules individually was challenging.

Marylynn Strachan asked administrators whether they have found that some students or families have fallen off the radar, and what is done if that happens. Cat Fair shared that this is a very difficult time for families but particularly for those that have already been vulnerable. She stated that it is hard to know what indicators to look for with children at risk, during this online contact period.

Gillian Fuqua reiterated that concern. For some families this is the straw that breaks the camel's back. Superintendent Taylor indicated that we will continue to problem solve around these issues. Alicia Lyford shared that EMES staff spends much of their Wednesday meeting each week talking about individual student concerns and problem solving around who can, and how to, reach out and support families.

Kelly Bushey shared that case managers have been reaching out to families to create Distance Learning Plans. She is reviewing these plans and providing some feedback and problem solving around creative ways to reach out to families. She expressed her concern around her special educators who are doing some pretty heavy lifting right now, continuing to receive updated guidance from the Agency of Education. Currently working on para schedules which is very stressful; she indicated that we need some guidance around how to support staff. She stated that staff have gone above and beyond to make efforts to connect with families and children.

Jen Miller-Arsenault spoke about the Continuity of Learning plan - she has received feedback from the Agency of Education. She noted that some of the questions are around attendance logistics and around data. Will need to figure out a robust, immediate screening and assessment plan for when we come back together at school.

Superintendent Taylor noted that we are still up in the air about the end of the school year, and summer services are still being discussed; all of this is still unknown as the situation continues to play out.

Dorothy Naylor expressed pride in our staff; that we are doing everything humanly possible to reach families; she noted that the entire nation is experiencing something similar and she believes, relative to the rest of the nation, we are going to be in great shape when we return to school.

Keith MacMartin reported on the technology challenges that have been faced. He noted that at this time there are approximately 25-30 students who do not have internet access. A separate issue, though, is bandwidth.

Lori Bibeau thanked technology for setting up the fiscal office for working from home. She thanked the administrative assistants at each school for being flexible; she stated that the workload has escalated over the past few weeks.

3.3 COVID-19 Leave of Absence - Business Administrator: Lori Bibeau shared that the information about this topic continues to change as guidance comes from the state and federal entities. She had shared a document that reflects what is currently known. She asked that if the board or administrators get questions or concerns from staff around these issues that they refer them to either she or Virginia Breer. She explained some changes to the leave tracking system in light of COVID-19 absences. Some discussion followed around this topic of continuing to work and receive pay during this time period, and the topic of leave. She explained that there is COVID leave time for a variety of circumstances. Lori Bibeau explained that Virginia Breer will be reaching out to staff that have used leave time during this period, to answer questions and to clarify leave, under these circumstances.

At 7:41 p.m., Flor Diaz Smith moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of legal counsel. Seconded by Marylynn Strachan, this motion carried unanimously.

The board came out of Executive Session at 9:01 p.m.

Flor Diaz Smith moved that all regular contracted employees will continue to be paid their regular salary or wages, subject to statutory leave benefits, but without charge to personal accrued leave balances, whether the administration is able to assign them full time work or not, provided that any employee who is available to work follows any and all legal and reasonable administrative directives to perform regular, temporary or emergency work assignments. Seconded by Lindy Johnson. Jill Olson wanted to be clear that the intent of the motion is that if you are willing to work, you will be paid, regardless of whether they are assigned full time work. This motion carried unanimously.

Lindy Johnson moved that during school closure all employee compensation will continue to be funded in the same manner as it is funded when there is not a school closure. Employees paid with federal funds and multiple funding sources will continue to be paid from the same sources they are paid from when there is not a school closure.

This motion will authorize the Superintendent to execute procedure effective March 16, 2020 through the mandated school closure. This procedure may be amended upon the advice of counsel as conditions of law and regulation change. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. Discussion: Chris McVeigh moved to amend the motion to edit: "school closure or dismissal." This motion to amend was seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. Lindy Johnson withdrew her original motion.

The amended motion: Lindy Johnson moved that during school closure or dismissal, all employee compensation will continue to be funded in the same manner as it is funded when there is not a school closure. Employees paid with federal funds and multiple funding sources will continue to be paid from the same sources they are paid from when there is not a school closure.

This motion will authorize the Superintendent to execute procedure effective March 16, 2020 through the mandated school closure or dismissal. This procedure may be amended upon the advice of counsel as conditions of law and regulation change. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.

Scott Thompson thanked Scott Cameron for his work on this effort, and he thanked the administration and the board for their work as well.

4.0 Board Operations

4.1 Board Steering Team: Scott Thompson reviewed that the chair and vice chair meet with the superintendent to draw up the agenda for board meetings. Chris McVeigh suggested that this discussion might be put off until a later date. He proposes expanding this team to five members to represent each town, and to think of this team as a sort of "Executive Session" as with the previous board governance configuration. The board agreed to discuss this at a later date.

4.2 Superintendent Transition Update: Superintendent Taylor shared that she has been in contact with Bryan Olkowsky, the future Superintendent. Kelly Bushey has been identified as the liaison for the administrative team. She also shared that she and Bryan Olkowsky will have time to collaborate before her tenure as Interim Superintendent ends. June 25, 26, and July 29, 30 are planned

for administrative retreat dates, and Mr. Olkowsky intends to join these dates. Board members are in support of this plan.

Scott Thompson conveyed that Mr. Olkowsky had asked the board whether they had any direction or input as to his opportunities to “cross over” with others as part of his entry plan. Stephen Looke suggested that board members give some thought to this and provide input at the next meeting. Lindy Johnson asked to be kept in the loop with plans for Bryan Olkowsky’s plans to visit, and to be kept in the loop regarding questions he has about the transition. Scott Thompson indicated that Mr. Olkowsky’s family intends to move in May, assuming this works in light of COVID-19.

5.0 Consent Agenda

5.1 Approve Minutes of April 1, 2020: Chris McVeigh moved to approve the minutes of April 1, 2020. Seconded by Stephen Looke. This motion carried unanimously.

5.2 Approve Board Orders: Lindy Johnson moved to approve the board orders in the amounts of: \$80,822.34, \$13,113.67. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming. This motion was approved by the following: 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, George Gross. This motion carried.

6.0 Personnel:

Chris McVeigh moved to accept the recommendation to hire the following:

- Sarah Glynn
- Sean McIntire
- Melissa Wheeler
- David Matthias
- Alan Hefernen.

Seconded by Stephen Looke, this motion carried unanimously.

Flor Diaz Smith moved to accept the retirements, with appreciation, effective June 30, of the following:

- Paula Emery
- Kit Walker
- Margarite Desch.

Seconded by Lindy Johnson. Discussion: Diane Nichols-Fleming would like to extend appreciation. This motion carried unanimously.

Stephen Looke moved to accept the following resignations:

- Sarah Richardson
- Elizabeth Wirth (reducing to 0.5)
- Sam Mishken (reducing to 0.6).

Seconded by Chris McVeigh. This motion carried unanimously.

Flor Diaz Smith moved to approve the request for one year leave of absence:

- Jill Abair.

Seconded by Lindy Johnson. Discussion: Superintendent Taylor explained the administration's recommendation to not approve this request under the circumstances. Motion failed with all opposed except one board member.

Lindy Johnson moved to accept the following resignation, with appreciation:

- **Sheila Patterson.**

Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.

7.0 Future Agenda Items

- steering team
- superintendent transition
- budget update

8.0 Executive Session (if needed)

Debra Taylor thanked the board for their careful and thoughtful deliberation earlier this evening during Executive Session.

9.0 Adjournment: The meeting adjourned by consensus at 9:52 p.m.

Board members would like to include the transcript from the "chat" from this online forum into the minutes. The transcript is attached.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary

May 6 - next board mtg; first hour will be committee work:
Policy Committee
Quality Committee

18:08:35 From Flor DiazSmith to Keith MacMartin(Privately) : Jonas is still having a hard time. Can you text him or email him

18:08:38 From Flor DiazSmith to Keith MacMartin(Privately) : Thank you

18:09:18 From Keith MacMartin to Flor DiazSmith(Privately) : I just emailed him

18:10:43 From Flor DiazSmith to Keith MacMartin(Privately) : thanks

18:15:44 From Scott Thompson : Keith, just got an e-mail from Jonas - he's still unable to join, he reports.

18:16:17 From Elizabeth Wirth : Keith - Michael Sherwin also cannot get in

18:17:36 From Keith MacMartin to Scott Thompson(Privately) : I'm working on it, not sure why it's not working for him

18:17:46 From Scott Thompson to Keith MacMartin(Privately) : OK, thanks very much!

18:21:21 From Kelly Bushey : Michael is in

18:21:26 From Kelly Bushey : still no jonas

18:21:46 From Flor DiazSmith : Jonas is in

18:21:59 From Kelly Bushey : see him now! Yay!

18:25:20 From Scott Thompson : Welcome, Jonas!

18:25:47 From Jonas : on phone

18:40:24 From Jill Olson to Keith MacMartin(Privately) : Hi Keith, I need to control my mute from my phone because my wifi is terrible and cuts in and out. if it's controlled in zoom and wifi cuts out I can't unmute.

18:41:42 From Keith MacMartin to Jill Olson(Privately) : *6 will mute/unmute you if you're using phone audio

18:45:50 From Jill Olson to Keith MacMartin(Privately) : thanks that's helpful!

18:49:17 From Scott Thompson : Mia, after Steven D-P speaks his piece, may I ask you how things are going from your perspective?

18:54:02 From Flor DiazSmith : Thank you to all of our Principals and their staff! Cant thank you enough.

18:54:36 From Diane Nichols-Fleming : Agree, Flor. Thanks to all who are making this happen.

18:55:09 From karib : Agreed. Very impressive quantity and quality of work. Thank you very much.

18:56:53 From Lindy Johnson : The information for families that was sent out or posted, leading into this week, was very organized. I like the Zoom etiquette/rules in U32's information!

19:00:46 From Keith MacMartin to Scott Thompson(Privately) : Steven has his hand up

19:03:08 From Scott Thompson to Keith MacMartin(Privately) : Thanks, Keith. Appreciate the tip.

19:05:39 From Marylynne Strachan : I just want to thank all of the teachers, principals and special educators. From a parent perspective the support, and also listening to parents needs has been amazing. Kelly the parent support available from the special ed case managers has been incredibly helpful, at least to me, as a parent, and I appreciate that they have been open that implementing that level of services. Kudos to all you guys- I honestly am amazed how much you can do on a daily basis.

19:10:50 From Kelly Bushey : Input from Keith?

19:13:04 From Marylynne Strachan : yes I would love to hear from keith

19:14:49 From Kelly Bushey : do messages from the chat box get included in the board minutes? Would be great for staff to see the thank you messages that have been put in here

19:15:37 From Debra Taylor : yes

19:20:01 From Flor DiazSmith : I just shared it from here with all

19:21:09 From Gillian Fuqua : My brother in Canada is on the phone. I have to run.

19:29:29 From Jodi Parker : I am guessing that we will be now putting "sick" time into the new COVID tabs in AESOP. Will this time be deducted from our banks of time? With the time we have already put in under "sick" will that get transferred into the COVID tab and that time gets put back in?

19:30:07 From Flor DiazSmith : Jodi has one

19:33:43 From Jodi Parker : They aren't worried about being paid they are worried that they when this is cleared and we start back up their next paycheck will be taken from them for "sick" time that was out of their control.

19:35:05 From Jodi Parker : yes Lindy

19:36:17 From Kelly Bushey : right...paras are worried they will lose their personal sick time-- when they were available to work- but unassigned

19:36:23 From Flor DiazSmith : Scott Cameron is trying to speak

19:37:08 From Keith MacMartin to Scott Thompson(Privately) : Lisa W has her hand up

19:37:10 From Marylynne Strachan : Scott Lisa W had a question

19:37:35 From Lindy Johnson : Internet froze for a moment. I wasn't ignoring if someone asked me something.

19:37:43 From Flor DiazSmith to Keith MacMartin(Privately) : Can you tell Scott Cameron he is in mute

19:43:16 From Lisa Stoudt : is it recording during your executive session?

20:44:11 From Cat Fair : I'm off. Have a good night everyone!

21:08:11 From Flor DiazSmith : All regular contracted employees will continue to be paid their regular salary or wages, subject to statutory leave benefits, but without charge to personal accrued leave balances, whether the administration is able to assign them full time work or not, provided that any employee who is available to work follows any and all legal and reasonable administrative directives to perform regular, temporary or emergency work assignments.

21:12:07 From Flor DiazSmith : During school closure all employee compensation will continue to be funded in the same manner as it is funded when there is not a school closure. Employees paid with federal funds and multiple funding sources will continue to be paid from the same sources they are paid from when there is not a school closure.

Authorize the Superintendent to execute procedure effective March 16, 2020 through the mandated school closure. This procedure may be amended upon the advice of counsel as conditions of law and regulation change.

21:13:37 From Lindy : During school closure all employee compensation will continue to be funded in the same manner as it is funded when there is not a school closure. Employees paid with federal funds and multiple funding sources will continue to be paid from the same sources they are paid from when there is not a school closure.

Authorize the Superintendent to execute procedure effective March 16, 2020 through the mandated school closure. This procedure may be amended upon the advice of counsel as conditions of law and regulation change.

21:17:52 From Lisa Stoudt : I did reflect it in the minutes

21:18:15 From Lisa Stoudt : The amended motion: Lindy Johnson moved that during school closure or dismissal, all employee compensation will continue to be funded in the same manner as it is funded when there is not a school closure. Employees paid with federal funds and multiple funding sources will continue to be paid from the same sources they are paid from when there is not a school closure.

This motion will authorize the Superintendent to execute procedure effective March 16, 2020 through the mandated school closure or dismissal. This procedure may be amended upon the advice of counsel as conditions of law and regulation change.

21:18:17 From Lindy : During school closure or dismissal all employee compensation will continue to be funded in the same manner as it is funded when there is not a school closure or dismissal. Employees paid with federal funds and multiple funding sources will continue to be paid from the same sources they are paid from when there is not a school closure or dismissal. Authorize the Superintendent to execute procedure effective March 16, 2020 through the mandated school closure or dismissal. This procedure may be amended upon the advice of counsel as conditions of law and regulation change.

21:31:32 From Marylynne Strachan : He's going to have to quarantine for 2 weeks as well

21:46:52 From Alicia Lyford : Debra - One got missed for tonight

21:53:39 From Jodi Parker : thank you everyone stay safe