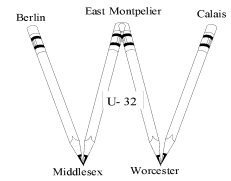


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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 Special Meeting Approved Minutes

1.8.20 6:30 – 9:00 PM

U-32 Middle/High School, Room 128/131

approved 1-15-20

Board Members Present: Scott Thompson, Jaiel Pulskamp, Marylyne Strachan, Flor Diaz Smith, George Gross, Vera Frazier, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Chris McVeigh, Lindy Johnson, Dorothy Naylor; Student Representatives Mia Smith, Townes DeGroot

Administrators Present: Superintendent Debra Taylor, Director of Special Services Kelly Bushey, EMES Principal Alicia Lyford, Berlin Principal Aaron Boynton, Business Administrator Lori Bibeau, Rumney Principal Casey Provost, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Jen Miller-Arsenault, U-32 Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate, Director of Technology Keith MacMartin, Calais Principal Cat Fair, U-32 Assistant Principal Bill Deiss, U-32 Assistant Principal Jody Emerson

Others Present: Anna Van Dine, VPR; Jill Olson, Middlesex; Eric Benedict, Middlesex; Chip Darmstadt, Middlesex; Amy Young, Berlin; Jessica Heinz, East Montpelier; Ray Mikus, Middlesex; Bill Heigis, East Montpelier; Tricia Dwyer, East Montpelier; Denise Towne, East Montpelier; Representative Kimberly Jessup, Middlesex; Gretchen Mashkuri, Middlesex; Javad Mashkuri, Middlesex; Lauri Scharf, Middlesex; Eric Scharf, Middlesex; Liz Scharf, Middlesex; Alan Lattimore, Middlesex; Dave Liebermann, East Montpelier; Richard Kehne, Calais; David Delcore, Times Argus; Michael Sherwin, EMES; Caroline Grace, U-32; Sue Pryce, U-32; Alden Bird, U-32; Brian Albee, U-32

1.0 Call to Order: Scott Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. He wished everyone a happy new year, and welcomed the guests. Scott Thompson noted that the budget forum that had previously been scheduled had been canceled due to weather. Tonight: proficiency based grading, finance/ budget, other board business (including an Executive Session to select Superintendent interview committee members.)

1.1 Reception of Guests: Scott Thompson welcomed those present.

1.2 Agenda Revisions: No revisions were suggested.

1.3 Public Comments: Anna Van Dine introduced herself, as she will be audio-recording portions of the meeting for a VPR story on proficiency based grading.

2.0 Proficiency Based Grading – GPA Calculation: Superintendent Debra Taylor introduced the process of moving toward proficiency based grading. She invited questions from the community, to follow a presentation from Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate and Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Jen Miller-Arsenault.

Discussion followed around proficiency based grading.

Some feedback from the community:

- GPAs not comparable, even to what students in Montpelier are receiving.
- Not setting our students up to show a competitive profile in a very competitive field.
- Scholarships? when numbers truly matter - how does our system fit the criteria?
- Why wasn't this homework done before this was rolled out?
- Suggestion to share information as students are getting replies from colleges re: admission and, e.g., merit scholarships
- Question about weighted grading
- Still asking for more specific information about ranking
- Discussion of transferable skills
- Explanation of why this graduating senior class will not have freshman grades included in the final GPA

Due to the late hour, Scott Thompson wrapped up community forum opportunity and asked board members to share their input.

Vera Frazier: It has been a rough four years, and we are where we are. As a board member, she asked that no student is at a disadvantage because of mistakes and missteps along the way.

Dorothy Naylor: Would like to have a better understanding of proficiency based grading, but feels that we have some work to do.

Chris McVeigh: Would like to revisit this issue to be sure that we are not putting kids at a disadvantage. Considering a system where we are abiding by the proficiency based learning state mandate, but addressing the grading system.

Jaiel Pulskamp: It's important for kids to have an understanding of exactly what they have to do to achieve a "4."

Lindy Johnson: Spoke from her perspective as an educator as well as having worked as a college admissions counselor; this is a longstanding issue.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet: The issue is not with how the students are educated, but more how others outside perceive the students' grade reports.

Flor Diaz Smith: Thanked the administrators for responding to issues and for owning the mistakes along the way. She looks forward to working on other issues such as improving math performance.

George Gross: Thanked the administration for figuring this out and moving us in the right direction.

Marylynn Strachan: Sounds like parents are not completely comfortable with the actions that have been taken; need to continue to have conversations around proficiency based standards and grading. She expressed her appreciation to the administration for the work they have done on this issue.

Townes DeGroot: Shared his perspective that he has not felt disadvantaged; that he has found the administration to be responsive to questions about the system.

Mia Smith: Agrees that the college application process has had an extra layer of stress due to the unknowns around this new system.

Scott Thompson expressed gratitude to the community for providing feedback and discourse. he acknowledged the administration for addressing mistakes in the grading system that have been discovered. He suggested that it would behoove the board to work with other school districts to see what their solutions are. Would like to consider looking at a policy to address grade point average.

Superintendent Taylor thanked Steven Dellinger-Pate, Jen Miller-Arsenault and Lisa LaPlante for their work on the proficiency based grading issue.

3.0 Finance (Discussion)

3.1 Expenditure Budget for FY 20-21: Superintendent Taylor shared a slideshow: WCUUSD FY20-21 Board Budget Presentation, January 8, 2020. She invited questions or feedback from board members. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet thanked her for presenting a budget that is actually lower than the guidance the board had provided. This budget draft reflects a 3.09% increase in net impact on taxes. Lori Bibeau explained some of the specifics of this budget draft.

Scott Thompson asked the building principals to respond to this proposed budget: Principals expressed that they are happy with this budget outcome; they shared that they had appreciated the process which felt collaborative and supportive.

3.2 Tax Estimate Information: Lori Bibeau had shared this information.

3.3 District Warning for Town Meeting: Superintendent Taylor shared this warning draft.

3.4 Summer Capital Projects Proposal: Superintendent Taylor reviewed a memo she and Lori Bibeau had created on January 3, 2020, Capital Projects and Budgeting FY20-21. She invited input from boards. Dorothy Naylor asked the board to consider creating a council in each town, which includes a board member, to consider facilities and maintenance planning. Community member Richard Kehne stressed the importance of long term capital planning (more than 5 years).

3.5 Board Letter for Annual Report: Superintendent Taylor shared a draft letter for annual

report, written by board chair Scott Thompson. Some discussion followed, included a suggestion to include in a positive way, what schools provide for students who face adversity.

4.0 Set Announced Tuition Rate for FY 20-21: Superintendent Taylor explained this annual board business. **Lindy Johnson moved to accept the tuition rate as presented tonight. Seconded by Dorothy Naylor, this motion carried unanimously.**

5.0 Select Superintendent Interview Committee Members

At 9:08 p.m., Dorothy Naylor moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel. Seconded by Jaiel Pulskamp, this motion carried unanimously.

At 9:35 p.m., Lindy Johnson moved to come out of Executive Session, Vera Frazier seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Marylynne Strachan moved and George Gross seconded approval of the composition of the superintendent interview committee as presented by Dorothy Naylor, motion passed unanimously.

6.0 Adjournment

At 9:37 p.m. the meeting adjourned by consensus.

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

Upcoming Meetings:

January 15, 2020 at Berlin Elementary School

5:30 pm Budget Forum

6:30 pm Regular Board Meeting