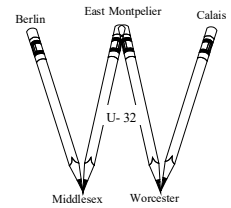


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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



WCUUSD Policy Committee Meeting Agenda 10.27.20 4:30-6:30 pm

Present: Superintendent Olkowski, Jody Emerson, Aaron Boynton, Michelle Ksepka, Townes DeGroot, Chris McVeigh, Dorothy Naylor, Carla Messier, Ellen Knoedler, Jaiel Pulkamp (arrived at 5:20 p.m.)

1. **Call to Order: Chris McVeigh called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.**

Chris McVeigh suggested that the committee discuss the topic of board membership and possibly draft some language for the board to consider.

2. **Approve Minutes of 9.29.20:** Dorothy Nadler moved to approve the minutes of September 29, 2020. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously.

3. Review Existing Policies

3.1. October 21 Board Meeting Policy Follow up:

Michelle Ksepka followed up from the board meeting. The *Class Size* policy does not have statute listed as a reference; the model policy has not indicated such, nor did the previous iteration. The committee agreed to leave it as is, then.

She also noted that, regarding travel reimbursement, this has never been addressed specifically, in the policy. Chris McVeigh and Dorothy Naylor agreed to include this verbiage as discussed in the language of the policy.

Superintendent Olkowski shared that the recent MOU: Memorandum of Understanding includes mileage reimbursement for staff who have been assigned a different campus due to emergency placement. Carla Messier explained that the additional travel allowance does not include the staff member's commute to their usual workplace. The MOU expires June 30, 2021.

Committee members agreed to add the language to the policy: "Mileage reimbursement does not apply to an employee's normal commute to and from work."

3.2. **E46 Memorials – July 15 follow up:** Chris McVeigh asked for input around this policy. He noted that concerns had been raised by board members around how long to leave memorials, and who makes the decisions. Jody Emerson clarified that: U32 has had a policy as the board and administration had not wanted to allow a number of memorials to collect; however, the elementary schools had not wanted such a stringent policy. The committee discussed the idea to have whatever is currently in place, stay in place, but to have a new process for approving new memorials going forward, and how long they should last. This discussion included considering sunsets for certain memorials, is there a common area to share

memorials at each school? Some discussion included the idea of equity. Ellen Knoedler shared that EMES plants trees in memorial. Dorothy Naylor indicated that maybe we need to think about a way that the district creates a more universal type of memorial.

Chris McVeigh proposed having a common area outside - and the district buys and installs granite benches and then etches names into the bench for memorials. Aaron Boynton responded to the idea of a bench, that it brings equity; his experience has been that any time a tree needs to be removed when it was planted in memory - it has been a problem - this has been inevitable in all of the cases in which he's been involved. He likes the idea of something that is long lasting and has some level of equity for everyone.

Dorothy Naylor suggested the idea of a large plaque/ monument of some sort that can have names etched into it over time. Chris McVeigh asked, would we have one at each school? Would we "grandfather" what we currently have in terms of memorials? Or would we transfer names from existing memorial areas to what is agreed upon going forward? Dorothy Naylor would like to list names from the beginning of the district (1971?)

Chris McVeigh asked Jody Emerson and Aaron Boynton: is there a need for an immediate, temporary type memorial when these occasions arise? Jody Emerson shared that usually the counseling that happens with students creates an immediate memorial. At U32, if a family can't provide a memorial in the memorial wall, U32 will provide it; if the family wants to provide their own, they have that option, as long as it meets the criteria.

Chris McVeigh asked - e.g., would it be beneficial at U32 to use what is now the memorial wall, as a temporary memorial, if we were to opt for granite etching?

Jody Emerson indicated that U32 would need to contact each family that is currently represented in the memorial wall. Also, the memorials that go into the wall case take time too, so it doesn't make sense to use it as a temporary space while waiting for the more permanent product.

Dorothy Naylor stated that it makes sense to plan to have an engraver come once a year. At EMES a scholarship was established at one time; not sure how that would happen now. Or maybe scholarships are not considered memorials?

Chris McVeigh asked what the group's thoughts were, e.g. if a family decided to donate money in memoriam; would this be considered a memorial? Would this be included in the policy? Committee members and administrators discussed that money that has been donated in the name of scholarships have not typically been considered in this policy.

Chris McVeigh stated that it makes sense for the sake of this policy to consider memorials that take up space - tangible memorials - versus memorials such as scholarship funds.

Aaron Boynton stated, if we are moving toward creating a permanent memorial, it seems like there will be a lot of communication to staff and families, and within the communication will be language around equity and acknowledging people's individual rights to have something on their desk or in their classroom - different from "school sanctioned memorials."

Chris McVeigh suggested, would we want to get the pulse of the community on this? Including those who already have memorials in place? Townes DeGroot stated that, yes, he thinks that is a good idea, especially with a topic this sensitive.

Superintendent Olkowksi asked, would it make sense to have a public forum or workshop to work on some of the topics within this policy? How to best engage the public? Chris McVeigh indicated that a workshop would be a great idea but also thinks we should have some proposed draft language to start the work.

Discussion followed about a timeline, with holidays and budget development - agreed on mid- to late-January: work out some language to discuss at the November Policy Committee meeting, and at that time decide on a day to plan the

“workshop” with plenty of time to notify families and communities. Jody Emerson indicated that Lesley Fitch has a list at U32 of families who have memorials in place (for contact).

Superintendent Olkowski stated that he would start with having an inventory from each school, of memorials from past to present.

Action steps:

- inventory of memorials (share google docs with school principals to create inventory - Aaron will do this - deadline of Thursday before the next Policy meeting)
- draft language of policy (Chris McVeigh will draft language before the next Policy meeting)
- Jody will find the letter that U32 already has, and will share with Superintendent Olkowski to start thinking about communication to families.
- At the next Policy Committee meeting, will determine the date for the workshop and how to notify families.

3.3. Title IX: Kelly Bushey shared the most recent information, from a training she had attended with Carla Messier. She had shared a model policy; she recommends that the board approve this policy, as it is overdue. She also shared that the leadership team is attending a training in November related to this issue.

Chris McVeigh asked whether there is a definition of “Bad faith” within the body of this policy. It’s good to have guideposts regarding what behaviors indicate “bad faith;” it would be good to have a reference for how “bad faith” is defined within the context of this policy - there is an intentional aspect to it. Superintendent Olkowski and/ or Kelly Bushey will visit that topic with Heather Lynn, legal counsel.

Some discussion followed around the 1st Amendment language in the policy draft. Chris McVeigh suggested adding the language “under the Vermont Constitution” as well. Follow up with Heather about “rights protected under the First amendment” -does it relate to the rights of a public employee? Chris McVeigh doesn’t think they are as broad as a public citizen; thinks there are limitations on the scope of public employee’s first amendment rights in regard to their employment.

Some discussion followed about policy and procedure being separate in both this policy and in C10: Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying (HHB). Kelly Bushey noted that we can modify procedures more readily than we can modify policies. Chris McVeigh stated that sometimes the procedure can overwhelm the policy and undermine it.

Jaiel Pulskamp expressed concern about the cross examination of the accuser. Kelly Bushey shared that a big difference between the Title IX policy and the HHB policy is that the language under this new Title IX policy indicates that we have to disclose to the respondent the details of the claim, including who makes it.

Chris McVeigh and Superintendent Olkowski discussed, in the interim before this policy is adopted, the administration would follow the law as written.

This policy will be shared for first reading at the next WCUUSD board meeting, even if feedback from legal counsel is not yet received.

4. Policy Creation

4.1. School Choice

4.2. School Closure

School Choice/ School Closure: Committee members agreed that School Choice is a big conversation and tonight does not allow time. The committee would like to

address School Closure as well as Board Membership when time allows for discussion and deliberation.

Some discussion followed around the requirement to change the articles of agreement - whether individual town votes are required. Chris McVeigh will refer to the articles of agreement to see how the requirements were spelled out.

Discussion followed about board membership: Dorothy Naylor asked - if we have fewer board members, can we create committees that include non-board members? Can we have committee members who are not board members? She would like clarification about that before she is willing to discuss much farther around creating smaller board membership.

Some discussion followed about the idea of designating a board member "at large."

Do we need an odd number of board members? Dorothy Naylor suggested, to the people who feel that we need a smaller board, how do they envision it? Chris McVeigh feels that we are the policy committee and we need to create the first draft for this - he proposes an odd number: 2 members from each town and 1 "at large" member.

Chris McVeigh asked, if we were to reduce the board size, how do we retire current board members? Some discussion followed - when their position expires? Or start the entire process over?

Dorothy Naylor suggested asking at Town Meeting Day 2021 if the will exists to change the board membership numbers, and then to vote on board membership for a new board configuration at Town Meeting 2022. Dorothy Naylor stated that people have "voting fatigue," so she would like to keep it to Town Meeting Day and not try to insert any more voting activities in the near future.

Ellen Knoedler was trying to recall discussions about board representation - was there another issue discussed rather than one or two towns having greater power to vote? Something about funding or budgeting? Dorothy Naylor reminded those present that the Act 46 discussions were long and arduous and she does not care to revisit them.

Jaiel Pulskamp asked, are the Articles of Agreement on the website? Can they be listed there? Michelle Ksepka indicated that they are in the "Archived Documents."

5. **Future Agenda Items:** Next Committee meeting: Wednesday, November 11th. The committee agreed to put the Memorials policy discussion off until the December committee meeting, to allow for administrators to have the time to collect data, as well as to allow for time during the November meeting to discuss other policies and issues
6. Adjourn: The committee adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt, Committee Recording Secretary

***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.