

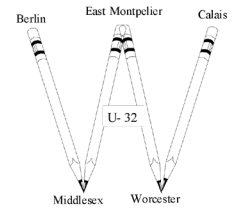
# Washington Central Unified Union School District

*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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1130 Gallison Hill Road  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
Phone (802) 229-0553  
Fax (802) 229-2761

Meagan Roy Ed.D.  
Superintendent



**Washington Central Unified Union SD  
Community Forum Meeting  
U-32  
(In-person & Virtual)  
930 Gallison Hill Rd. Montpelier, VT  
4.19.23 6:15-8:15 PM**

**Board Members Present:** Diane Nichols-Fleming, Ursula Stanley, Lindy Johnson, Daniel Keeney, Mckalyn Leclerc, Kari Bradley, Flor Diaz Smith, Maggie Weiss, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Natasha Eckart, Eric Andersen, Joshua Sevits, Chris McVeigh, Student Representative Willow Mashkuri

**Administrators Present:** Superintendent Meagan Roy, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate, Technology Director Mark Kline, Director of Student Services Kerra Holden, Business Manager Susanne Gann, Alicia Lyford, Cat Fair, Aaron Boynton, U-32 Assistant Principal Jessica Wills, Karoline May

**Others:** ORCA Media, Michelle Ksepka, Shelley Vermilya, Michael Sherwin, Kai LaRosa, Nolan Lyford, Times Argus David Delcore, David Lawrence, Amelia Garland, Ms. Garland, Kristin Freeman

- 1. Call to Order:** Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.
- 2. Welcome**
  - 2.1. Adjustments to the Agenda:** none
  - 2.2. Reception of Guests:** Flor Diaz Smith welcomed guests to the meeting.
  - 2.3. Public Comments:** Time limit strictly enforced, see note: no public comments at this time
- 3. Student Report on Mascot Review:** Superintendent Roy introduced students Kai LaRosa and Amelia Garland. She briefly explained the process for students to engage in the mascot review. Students Kai and Amelia introduced themselves. Students reported on responses from polling fellow students about the issue of the mascot for U-32 (which is currently a raider.) Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked the students: is it fair to say that there are not a lot of strong opinions

among students about the Raiders mascot? The students agreed that this is a fair statement based on the information that they collected. Board members thanked the students for their input.

4. **Presentation and Discussion: Winter Assessment Results:** Superintendent Roy presented a slide deck: *Monitoring Student Achievement, Winter 2022/23*. Jen Miller-Arsenault and Ursula Stanley (Education Quality Committee Chair) provided a brief overview of this presentation. Board member responses: Jonas Eno-Van Fleet noted that the data in this report is much more clear than in previous reports. Daniel Keeney spoke about the “grain size” of the data that is considered, and he asked the administrators to adjust the grain size when there is a story that is relevant for board members to see. Chris McVeigh asked why are we seeing these disparities, and how are we planning to address them, and how do we check back in to see if these plans are effective? Jen Miller-Arsenault spoke about the importance of ongoing monitoring, as well as strategic planning, to answer those questions. Superintendent Roy suggested sharing and considering: “Here’s what the data shows, here’s what we think is going on, here is what we are doing about it.” Diane Nichols-Fleming asked to consider the level of fidelity across teachers. Mckalyn Leclerc suggested that there are other domains to measure besides literacy and math.

## 5. Reports to the Board

- 5.1. **Student Report:** Willow Mashkuri shared that students in the Spanish classes and French classes are now traveling in Europe. She spoke about “Infinite Campus” (IC) and the frustration that students are experiencing with this student information system. She told the board that she believes they will be hearing more student feedback about IC. Willow reported that the musical “Pippin” wrapped up its performance; she spoke about a drugs and alcohol discussion/ forum that recently took place. She stated that seniors are getting college decision letters and making college choices at this time. Willow reported briefly about spring sports. She shared that the prom is scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup>. Word of Mouth: students performing original art (music, dance, poetry, etc.) during student transition time. This Friday, April 21: Talent Show. Natasha Eckart stated that the U-32 students had presented at the Education Justice Conference and had been very well-received.
- 5.2. **Superintendent/Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) Report:** Superintendent Roy had provided a written report. She briefly reviewed some highlights from the report: Climate Survey results and planning for next steps. Chris McVeigh asked for some specifics around the work around procedures related to human resources. Dan Keeney asked whether a collection exists of all of the procedures (as opposed to, or in addition to, policies). Lindy Johnson stated that an organizational chart/ overview would be helpful for board members.
- 5.3. **Principal Report:** Flor Diaz Smith invited questions from the board related to the written report which had been shared in the board packet. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that she appreciated hearing information around field trips, as these had been halted for some time due to COVID-19.

**5.4. Central Vermont Career Center Report:** Flor Diaz Smith provided a brief overview from the CVCC report.

**5.5. VSBA Report:** Flor Diaz Smith provided a brief overview from the VSBA report. She invited board members to provide feedback for her to take to the VSBA as it considers resolutions at the close of this school year. Kari Bradley again noted the topic of rural schools and whether there is an opportunity for VSBA to take on the study of some of the unique challenges faced by small and rural schools.

## **6. Board Operations**

**6.1. Next Steps for Mascot Review:** Flor Diaz Smith reviewed that a letter had been shared on behalf of the administration, in response to the written complaint that had been lodged about U-32's mascot. She invited feedback from the board about suggested next steps. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked, have we followed the procedure that is required, according to policy? Superintendent Roy shared the administrative duties that are delineated in the policy and procedure related to Nondiscriminatory Mascots & School Branding. She noted that a hearing had been offered to the author of the letter of complaint but we have not heard a response. Chris McVeigh suggested that a follow up letter be sent to set a time frame to respond and schedule a hearing, or to affirm that no hearing is desired. The letter that had been received had been a "blanket letter" that had been sent to many districts. Kari Bradley asked what if anything else does the board need in order to make a decision around the school mascot. Chris McVeigh suggested that we need community input. Flor Diaz Smith suggested engaging student voice further in the discussion - for example, from the elementary schools, and to invite community input. Diane Nichols-Fleming suggested that it would be helpful when asking for further input (e.g. from the community) to provide information such as possible next steps from the board depending on the feedback that is received. Joshua Sevits asked whether it is the board's responsibility to make a determination around this. Mckalyn Leclerc suggested that clarity is needed related to the name of the mascot and the imagery connected to the mascot (a knight to represent U-32 Raider). Ursula Stanley suggested that the board still needs to have a conversation about whether the mascot is discriminatory and even if the answer is "no," should consideration be given to changing the mascot? She spoke about intent versus actual impact. It doesn't matter what the original intent was - the impact matters. Daniel Keeney stated that he feels that we need to get more input from the communities in the five towns that constitute U-32. Chris McVeigh stated that he does not believe there is any connection to the "red raiders." He suggested though that the board periodically review and reconsider the mascot. Eric Andersen asked whether we have had any complaints from the community or anything in the past - or after the blanket letter was received - about our mascot. Superintendent Roy stated that to her knowledge there have been no complaints. Natasha Eckart spoke about the violent nature of the mascot, both at U-32 (raiders), and in the past at Worcester

(warriors). She referred to the policy and stated that “raider” fits within the language in #3 under Administrative Responsibility of the policy. She suggested that if the board polls the community, there may be a response more around “the legacy” that alumni feel (“I was a raider/ we’ve always been the raiders”) versus what the mascot actually connotes. Flor Diaz Smith stated that this is why she is interested in student voice versus polling the entire community. Superintendent Roy asked board members to consider what they need in order to plan next steps around this topic. Mckalyn Leclerc clarified that the board’s role is to determine whether the mascot is discriminatory. Superintendent Roy stated that the board could decide that it is not discriminatory but that the board would still like to consider changing the mascot. Chris McVeigh stated that he believes ultimately it is a board decision, but that he believes we should invite community input. Kari Bradley stated that he feels it is for the board to ask “Does the mascot cause anyone harm?” - and the feedback from the student body indicated that the answer is no. To him this is enough of an answer. The next step, though, if a next step is desired, would be to invite feedback from the community. Ursula Stanley suggested that if an indigenous group is indicating that the mascot is discriminatory, that is enough information for her. She does not believe we should engage the community in debate about this. Josh Sevits suggested that he believes we should change the mascot; however, does the bottom line question need to be whether or not the mascot is discriminatory. Diane Nichols-Fleming referred to the language in the Policy under #3B. Maggie Weiss stated that she sees no ambiguity around the name “Raider.” Flor Diaz Smith took a straw poll from board members: “Raider” - the majority of the board indicated that they do agree that the name “Raider” fits the criteria from the language of the policy. Josh Sevits asked, what would happen next if the board took action to agree that Raider fits the criteria from the language. Superintendent Roy suggested that there would be next steps around changing the name. She suggested providing a suggested outline of next steps for the board’s consideration in their decision making. She suggested that the process of changing the name and/ or mascot is a big endeavor. Some discussion followed around the capacity of the board to take on this work at this time. The board discussed this issue at great length.

- 6.2. Approve 2023-2024 Calendar:** Superintendent Roy had provided a draft. **Chris McVeigh moved to approve the 2023-2024 Calendar. Seconded by Ursula Stanley. This motion carried unanimously.**
- 6.3. Approve Last Day of School, 2023:** Superintendent Roy had provided a memo explaining the impetus for June 16 (partial day) for students; teachers and ESP June 20th. **Lindy Johnson moved to approve this proposal by the administration. Seconded by Jonas Eno-Van Fleet.** Natasha Eckart expressed appreciation for the administration’s acknowledgement of Juneteenth as a holiday. **This motion carried unanimously.**
- 6.4. WCUUSD District Clerk:** Flor Diaz Smith expressed appreciation for Rosie Laquerre. She explained the next steps for appointing a District Clerk, according to guidance from the Secretary of State. Lindy Johnson asked that when this type of

resignation occurs, the board is notified immediately. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that this type of communication issue might be a good topic for discussion at the board retreat.

**6.5. Policy Committee Appointment: Chris McVeigh moved to appoint Maggie Weiss to the Policy Committee. Seconded by Natasha Eckart, this motion carried unanimously.**

## **7. Finance Committee**

### **7.1. Discussion/Action**

**7.1.1. EMES Playground: Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve the use of the capital improvement fund reserved for EMES to pay for improvements to the playground, cabin and path for an amount not to exceed \$43,183. Ursula Stanley seconded. Alicia Lyford shared some of the student voice around this topic. This motion carried unanimously.**

**7.1.2. Quarterly Financial Report:** Susanne Gann had prepared a written report. She invited questions or feedback from board members. She explained that we are projected to come to the year's end with a greater fund balance than had been anticipated.

## **8. Policy Committee**

**8.1. Third Reading for Policy to be adopted 4.19.23: C5 Weapons and Firearms:** Chris McVeigh shared this draft and invited questions or comments from board members. He noted that there is language in the policy related to reporting to the board, as board members had requested. **Ursula Stanley moved to adopt Policy C5. Seconded by Natasha Eckart.** Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked for clarification around the possession of knives. Superintendent Roy explained the knives are prohibited and covered under the discipline policy regardless. **This motion carried unanimously.**

**8.2. Second Reading for Policy to be adopted 4.19.23: E20 Building Use:** Chris McVeigh shared this draft. **Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to adopt Policy E20. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.**

## **9. Consent Agenda**

**9.1. Approve Minutes of 3.15.23, 3.29.23, 4.5.23:** Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve the minutes of March 15, March 29, April 5, 2023. **Seconded by Natasha Eckart, this motion carried unanimously.**

**9.2. Approve Board Orders:** Lindy Johnson moved to approve the board orders dated 3-16-23 through 4-19-23, in the amount of \$893,958.18. **Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.**

## **10. Personnel**

**10.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE: Ursula Stanley moved to approve the hire of Sarah Cousins, SLP. Seconded by Maggie Weiss. Ursula amended the motion to indicate the year 2023-2024. This motion carried unanimously. Ursula Stanley moved to approve the following rehires: Olga Benoit – U-32 Math Interventionist, Lindsay Wright – U-32 Social Studies Teacher, Karen Chesser – Berlin School Counselor, Nancy Robinson - Berlin Health Teacher, Annalissa Kirby – Berlin Special Education Teacher, Uriah Proctor-Mattingly – Calais School Wide Student Support Services Seconded by Natasha Eckart. This motion carried unanimously. Ursula Stanley moved to approve the following long term substitutes for 2022-23 school year: Richard Terrien – LTS Music– U-32, Clarissa Gold – LTS Science – U-32, Aiden Maher - LTS Physical Education/Health – U-32. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously.**

**11. Future Agenda Items:** Superintendent Roy shared the board work plan. The next board meeting will include a public forum. Action item regarding the mascot issue will be added to the June agenda.

## **12. Board Reflection**

## **13. Public Comments**

**14. Executive Session: Negotiations: At 8:58 p.m., Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved that the Board enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Negotiation Strategy, to include Meagan Roy and Susanne Gann. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously. At 9:16 p.m., Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to leave Executive Session. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously. During Executive Session the Board discussed Negotiation Strategy.**

## **15. Executive Session: Personnel**

**At 9:20 p.m., Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved that the Board enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a Personnel Matter. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously. At 9:25 p.m., Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to leave Executive Session. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously. During Executive Session the Board discussed a Personnel Matter. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to authorize Board Chair Flor Diaz Smith to engage in negotiations with Superintendent Meagan Roy for an extended contract, with the understanding that the final product will be presented to the Board for final approval. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.**

**16. Adjourn: At 9:29 Daniel Keeney moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.**

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