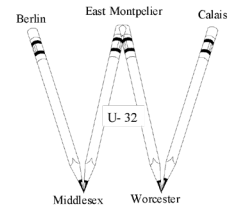


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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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Meagan Roy Ed.D.
Superintendent



Washington Central Unified Union School District School Board Meeting (Virtual Only) 5.24.23 5:45-9:15 PM

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

Others: Superintendent Meagan Roy, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Jessica Wills, Mark Kline, Cari Wilson, Student Family Members, Mark Kline, Aaron Boynton, Allison Fayle, Avery Cochran, Barbara Elliott, Cat Fair, Dan Gauthier, David Delcore, Jasper, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Karoline May, Kerra Holden, Kim Bolduc, Willow Mashkuri, Maya Elliott, Meg Allison, Michelle Ksepka, ORCA Media, Rose London, Shelley Vermilya, Susanne Gann, Wilder Brown

- 1. Call to Order: Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 5:53.** For this part of the meeting, the following were present: **Board Members:** Flor Diaz Smith, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Chris McVeigh, Kari Bradley, Jonathan Goddard, Maggie Weiss, Lindy Johnson, Mckalyn Leclerc, Natasha Eckart, Ursula Stanley **Others:** Meagan Roy, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Jessica Wills, Mark Kline, Cari Wilson, Student Family Members
- 2. Executive Session: Student Hearing: At 5:53 p.m., Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved that the Board enter into Executive Session for the purpose of considering matters related to the discipline of students as authorized by 21 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(7) to include Meagan Roy, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Cari Wilson, and Jessica Wills. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously. At 6:23 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 Student Matter. **Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to accept the Administration's recommendation regarding the related discipline**

in the confidential Student Matter. Seconded by Mckalyn Leclerc, this motion carried unanimously.

3. **Welcome:** Flor Diaz Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting. She noted that U-32 had celebrated prom this past weekend and it was wonderful to see the juniors and seniors gather for the prom. Flor Diaz Smith read the statement from the Humanity and Justice Coalition. She provided a reminder to keep a growth mindset; be inclusive, honest and intentional, and grow together. Ask yourselves this question: How am I an agent of change to achieve our mission/ vision of Washington Central? or to move toward the vision of the Humanity and Justice Coalition?

3.1. Adjustments to the Agenda: no adjustments to the agenda

3.2. Reception of Guests

4. Presentation and Discussion

4.1. Student Flag Request: Avery, a U-32 junior, spoke about the Seeking Social Justice group (SSJ) at U-32 and stated that 70% of student's support raising the flag as presented. She noted that many students feel that we still have a long way to go in supporting LGBTQ students. Jasper spoke to the board about student involvement over the past year; they stated that it is a good exercise to check in every year with the board to follow the protocol for student flag request, because it keeps the work in the forefront and continues the conversation and education: keeps it real, keeps it alive, keeps reminding us that it is more than a flag; that there is action that needs to support as well. Wilder Brown spoke on behalf of the student flag request and reiterated the student comments that had come before. Mckalyn Leclerc shared that her sixth grade child at Doty had enjoyed the visit from SSJ and is excited about the middle school SSJ. Flor Diaz Smith thanked those for presenting. **Ursula Stanley moved to approve the request to fly the Pride flag. Seconded by Jonathan Goddard, this motion carried unanimously.**

4.2. Mascot Follow Up: Superintendent Roy updated the board as had been requested, about the process that would be required in order to designate a new mascot for U-32. She stated that she and Steven Dellinger-Pate had created a "mock up" to try to define or outline what the process might look like. She shared that much of the selection of a new mascot would be student driven. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that the process will take the better part of a year. He stated two parts: gather information about what mascot is selected, and then "vet" the mascot. He had estimated the cost of changing the mascot, for example, uniforms for sports teams. He stated that changing the colors would be an insurmountable task. The mascot would be changed but the colors would stay the same. Chris McVeigh asked who would be involved in the "vetting" process? Principal Dellinger-Pate stated that it would need to be a representative group of people including students, staff, and community members. Superintendent Roy stated that the board

would have a role as well, as the board would need to assure that we are following the policy. Chris McVeigh asked how would the final choice be made? Would it be one choice or multiple choices? Principal Dellinger-Pate guessed that it would be the top few choices, they would be vetted, and then voted upon. Jonathan Goddard asked what is the level of student support for changing the mascot? What is their feeling? Superintendent Roy reviewed that the survey data that was presented at the previous board meeting showed that, overall, there is not a large number of students who are tied to the mascot and not a large number of students who feel that it needs to change. Mckalyn Leclerc asked for clarification of the process: is the board going to discuss this now? Flor Diaz Smith stated that now will be the time for public comment and the board will discuss this later in the meeting (as indicated under Board Operations.)

- 5. Public Comments:** Kim Bolduc asked what are the bylaws? Is this a student vote? Is this written in the bylaws? Flor Diaz Smith stated that the board will follow policy; she had provided a link to the policy. Kim Bolduc stated that, as a business owner, as a tax payer, and as a parent, she would like to know more information at the beginning of the process, about the cost - and share this with the public. She is concerned that people do not have a lot of discretionary income at this time. She suggested that we do more polling of the community to see what is their feeling about this. She asked the board to not move too quickly on this; to really take its time and give careful consideration. Dan Gauthier stated, as a former coach, a tax payer and a parent in the community, he expects the board members as elected positions, to engage the community; he noted that he had read a lot of “I” statements in the Times Argus article. He would like to have other stakeholders considered in the matter; not only students. He is curious about the process. Rose London stated that she is fine with the mascot as it is; she does not see a need to change it, unless there was some objection made? She was not aware of any objection. Jasper noted that we should consider the perspective/ perception of other schools who visit U-32. The name itself has a prejudiced connotation and other schools may not understand the history of how we chose the name of our mascot.

6. Reports to the Board

- 6.1. Student Report:** Willow and Maya shared some of the student happenings – sporting events are well attended due to the spring/ sunny weather. There are a lot of senior events going on right now, being the end of the year. Maya shared that the show “Pippen” had a good run; Willow and Maya shared about the Art Show which is planned for next Friday, June 2nd. Maya shared that SSJ has been touring around the elementary schools and sharing about the club; they spoke with teachers in the elementary schools as well and answered any of their questions. Tomorrow is the Pep Rally! Willow gave a tour through the school to show the hallways that each class decorated for spirit week. Maya shared about “Word of Mouth” which is a regular student performance; she shared about the Pilot program’s final presentations. Willow and Maya shared about the prom; it was a very successful and fun evening and all of the students made it home

safely! Maya stated that she has been working on connecting students with the school board. The board said goodbye to Maya, as it is her last board meeting.

- 6.2. Superintendent/Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) Report:** Superintendent Roy had presented a written report. She highlighted that the board had been asking in an ongoing way about staff vacancies and hiring; she noted that there are several personnel hires on the action agenda tonight. She stated that we currently have about half as many vacancies as we had last year at this time. The number of staff who have either asked for extensions or have not signed contracts for next year is about on par with years prior. She highlighted from the report, regarding an Options Based Response safety system. Staff will begin training in June. She anticipates that legislation will be passed that will require this safety training. She shared that we have some transitions coming - a Principal transition at Berlin and a central office staff transition (Michelle Ksepka.) Chris McVeigh asked about student participation in the training that was discussed. Superintendent Roy shared that the student training will vary by grade/ age, based on level of development. Superintendent Roy stated that what makes Options Based response different is that we are trained to know our options and have some agency in how we respond. She offered that the board view the same training in which staff will participate. Maggie Weiss would like as a board to understand what the students and teachers are receiving for training. Flor Diaz Smith acknowledged the departures of Principal Boynton, Michelle Ksepka, and Maya Elliot.
- 6.3. Principal Report:** Board members were invited to respond to this written report. Lindy Johnson asked whether the state testing process has gone more smoothly. Jen Miller- Arsenault shared that the process did get better and go more smoothly over time. She stated that there are still some makeup tests planned at U-32 but are expected to be complete by next week. Flor Diaz Smith invited comments from principals about the book talks which were recently completed. Jen Miller-Arsenault provided a brief review. She expects a debriefing and then some discussion about next steps to present to the Humanity and Justice Coalition.
- 6.4. Central Vermont Career Center Report:** Flor Diaz Smith shared that graduation is Thursday, June 15th. She shared briefly on behalf of CVCC.
- 6.5. VSBA Update:** Flor Diaz Smith provided a quick update.

7. Board Operations

- 7.1. Policy F2 Mascots:** Flor Diaz Smith asked - what additional information does the board need? Chris McVeigh stated that we have had student input; he would have expected more public comment tonight; he shared that two letters have been received from the community. He asked how widely publicized has this been? If it has been publicized widely, then he would assume that there is not a lot of strong opinion about this. He is on the fence about whether we need more public input. Lindy Johnson stated that the information that had been shared earlier in the board meeting was enough information from her perspective. There seems to be a plan to go forward; she did not think the board would be making decisions tonight. Joshua Sevits stated that he would be

interested to know what happens if a member of the community makes a report to the state? Would the decision be taken away from the board? He appreciates the work that Superintendent Roy and Principal Dellinger Pate had provided and he feels that he has enough information at this time from the students and from the public. Mckalyn Leclerc clarified - is the role of the board to determine whether the mascot violates our policy? She is not sure we have gotten representative response from the community; she stated that she has spoken with some community members and alumni. Superintendent Roy shared how this discussion had been publicized which is typical of previous publication of board agendas. Ursula Stanley stated that she has enough information. She stated that the impacted group is a minority group; she is not comfortable with seeking the majority's opinion. Kari Bradley stated that he feels we have all of the information that we need, but it would be prudent to inform the community that this is on the table, as far as a respectful process. Chris McVeigh asked for clarification about the process of making a complaint to the state. Superintendent Roy stated that the law indicates that the decision be in the hands of the board. Her understanding of the complaint to the state is around disagreement overall that the decision making be in the hands of the boards. She shared that according to legal counsel, at this point, the initial written complaint that had been submitted by a group is effectively "withdrawn," as the WCUUSD Board had replied and offered a hearing and there was no follow up. Jonathan Goddard stated that he feels it is important to get a better feeling from the community; he does not have an idea at this time how the Berlin community feels about this; he would like to have a better sense. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that this issue is about the policy. Our policies stand as they are. We can hear from a lot of other people but ultimately it is going to come down to our understanding of, and application of, policy. Ursula Stanley stated that we all have a duty to make sure that we take a hard look at information that is provided, keeping in mind that there are biases in the story telling. Mckalyn Leclerc stated that we all agree that "raiding" is violent, but does it represent oppression or discrimination? Chris McVeigh asked, are we voting tonight? He asked, is there a difference between the name "Raiders" and the mascot which seems to be a knight. He suggests putting this on the next agenda and inviting public input. Joshua Sevits stated that it is wise to point out the question from public comment: what else are we asking of our community? He thinks we have more time to consider this further. Ursula Stanley suggested that the board vote tonight or in June and discontinue "kicking the can." Eric Andersen stated that he is considering the community perspective as well as the original intent: there are both positive and negative aspects. Flor Diaz Smith invited the board to consider where are we now? What do we want to be going forward? It is OK to be open to different things; it doesn't mean we are canceling or negating the past. She suggested that the board can wait to make this decision in June and communicate again with our communities about the agenda item. The board could decide to take more time moving forward with the process, if that is the decision, to not compete with the strategic planning. Maya Elliot

stated that she does not think everyone has a good idea of what has transpired; for example, that we were contacted by the NAACP regarding our mascot. She suggested that if the board waited until June, there might be an opportunity for more student input, with a greater understanding of the context. Kari Bradley suggested that we wait until June but take a definitive step at that point. He suggested providing information in the board packet in preparation for the meeting. He agrees with the idea of not competing with strategic planning. Mckalyn Leclerc reminded the board to stay clear on our task right now, which is to answer, does this violate the policy? The feedback to elicit from the community and our students would be “is it oppressive and discriminatory”? Chris McVeigh asked the students, if they gather more student feedback, to please let the board know how the information is gathered, and if possible provide some written comments. He suggests separating the two processes - taking board action and then as appropriate, planning the process moving ahead. Flor Diaz Smith reiterated the board’s next steps: June 21, include a motion as part of the memo to the board, and inform the public and students of this agenda item.

7.2. Student Flag Request: This was acted upon earlier in the meeting.

7.3. Ed Quality Committee Charge: **Ursula Stanley moved that the board adopt the recommended Ed Quality Committee Charge from the board packet. She read the charge aloud. Seconded by Kari Bradley.** Chris McVeigh asked, is there value in having the Ed Quality Committee make recommendations about moving in other directions when current programs aren’t working. Ursula Stanley stated that she sees the committee’s charge to monitor and support the administration’s work in that realm. Maggie Weiss asked what are the changes in this version? Kari Bradley stated that the original charge included strategic planning. **This motion carried unanimously.**

7.4. Ed Quality Proposed Monitoring System: **Ursula Stanley moved that the board adopt the recommended system for monitoring student achievement. Seconded by Lindy Johnson.** Discussion: Maggie Weiss stated that this looks really robust and she thanked the committee. Daniel Keeney asked if there is space for other types of monitoring that don’t fall within this proposed plan; for example, alternative pathways. Ursula Stanley stated that this monitoring system represents half of our work as a committee. There is space and time to work on other topics (such as his suggestion). Superintendent Roy shared that when the board creates its work plan, a cycle of presentations will be part of the planning, and this could include alternative pathways, or personalized learning plans. **This motion carried unanimously.**

8. Finance Committee

8.1. Discussion/Action

8.1.1. Review Capital Improvement Project Plan and Five-Year Budget: **Daniel Keeney moved to approve the amended capital improvement plan. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.**

- 8.1.2. Accept Annual Fiscal Management Questionnaire:** Ursula Stanley moved to accept the Annual Fiscal Management Questionnaire as presented. Seconded by Eric Andersen, this motion carried unanimously.
- 8.1.3. Authorize Superintendent to Sign Contracts and Accept Grants for WCUUSD:** Eric Andersen moved to authorize the Superintendent to sign all contracts and accept grants on behalf of Washington Central Unified Union School District effective throughout FY 2023 - 2024. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.
- 8.1.4. Blanket Authorization for Board Warrants/Check Orders:** Daniel Keeney moved to authorize the Blanket Authorization for Board Warrants (included in packet) effective throughout FY 2023-24. Seconded by Eric Andersen. Discussion: Chris McVeigh asked, what is the difference between this authorization and how we currently practice? Susanne Gann stated that all warrants will still come to the board for approval; this is no change in practice from previous years. **This motion carried unanimously.**
- 8.1.5. School District Clerk Vacancy Update:** Flor Diaz Smith stated that this has been posted in Front Porch Forum; the hope is to hold interviews at the June board meeting.

9. Policy Committee

- 9.1. First Reading for Policy to be Adopted on June 21, 2023: C29 District Equity Policy; C70 Seclusion and Restraint Policy:** Chris McVeigh stated that the District Equity Policy (C29) is likely to be a work in progress but he invited board members to provide input or feedback to the policy as presented. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that she appreciates the “track changes” format and she also appreciates the changes that are made in this iteration. Ursula Stanley stated that she appreciates some of the changes in language in this policy. This policy will come to the board for adoption at the June meeting. **Lindy Johnson moved to adopt C70: Seclusion and Restraint Policy. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming, this motion carried unanimously.**

10. Consent Agenda

- 10.1. Approve Minutes of 4.19.23, 5.3.23:** Chris McVeigh moved to approve the board minutes from April 19, 2023, and May 3, 2023. Seconded by Kari Bradley; this motion carried unanimously.
- 10.2. Approve Board Orders:** Lindy Johnson moved to approve the board orders dated 4-13-23 through 5-17-23, in the amount of \$958,366.19. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.

11. Personnel

- 11.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE:** Ursula Stanley moved to approve the following new hires: Richard “Jay” Terrien

U-32 Music Teacher, Noah Fink – U-32 Special Education Teacher, Sarah Fisher Snow – U-32 Special Education Teacher - Zenith Program, Dakota Garrow – Physical & Health Education Teacher, Ainsley Burroughs - Calais Classroom Teacher, Danielle Kent - EMES SLP, Alexander Donelson-U-32 Math Teacher, Jason Woodard - U-32 Science Teacher, Jennifer Chambers - Calais/Berlin Special Education, Scott Benerofe - U-32 Science Teacher. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously. Flor Diaz Smith thanked Superintendent Roy and the Administrative Team. **Ursula Stanley moved to approve the retirement of Julie Kiefer – U-32 Math Teacher, with thanks for her service to our district. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.** Ursula Stanley moved to approve the rehire of Honi Bean Barrett. **Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.** Ursula Stanley moved to accept the following resignations, with thanks. **James Warden – Calais Classroom Teacher, Stacey Rupp - Calais Librarian/Technology Integrationist, Erin Wysolmerski - U-32 Science Teacher, Jessica Abisla - Doty School Nurse. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.** Ursula Stanley moved to approve the following extended leaves of absences: **Kimberly McKellar – U-32, Mary Carpenter - Calais .3 FTE extended leave. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.**

11.2. Update on Vacancies: Superintendent Roy provided an update to the process for the hire for Berlin Principal. We have hired a consultant, Jay Nichols; the committee will meet on the week of June 5th; interviews the week of June 12th. She shared committee makeup which includes community members. She invited a board member from Berlin to join the committee if there is interest. Kari Bradley asked what is the involvement of Superintendent Roy in the process; she reviewed her role. Lindy Johnson asked whether this will be considered an interim or a permanent hire. Superintendent Roy stated that if a candidate is not chosen in the first round, then we may shift to an interim position. She anticipates at this time that the intent is to hire a permanent position, depending on the candidate pool.

12. Future Agenda Items: Superintendent Roy shared the work plan going forward. Interview District Clerk, action re: mascot, approve Equity Policy.

13. Board Reflection: Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that she misses not meeting in person. She feels that the dialogue is different when we are remote versus in person. Mckalyn Leclerc stated that she enjoyed the amount of student input/ student voice at this meeting. Eric Andersen appreciates the decorum and respect in the conversations about mascot - we have varying opinions but are able to have deep and meaningful conversation about the topic.

14. Public Comments: Patrick Wood stated that the strategic planning process is based on an assumption of declining enrollment. He would like for the community to have information about the board's projected enrollment - please make public all of the analysis related to declining

enrollment. He stated, regarding Board Clerk, a portion of the job is related to elections, an important part of that would be to make public information about those who are running for positions, as part of the democratic process. Kim Bolduc thanked the board for the time they put into their roles. She stated that the process for public engagement is intimidating; this may have contributed to the lack of public participation in the discussion tonight. She noted that the agenda tonight indicated that there would be discussion; she suggests that the next agenda clearly communicate intended action, and that it is made clear that the action will be around the board's role regarding the policy related to this issue (mascot).

15. Executive Session: At 8:51, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations, because prior knowledge would put the board at a disadvantage, and to invite Susanne Gann and Superintendent Roy. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously.

16. Executive Session: Personnel: Lindy Johnson motioned to go into Executive Session for a Personnel Issue. Ursula Stanley seconded. During Executive Session the Board discussed a Personnel Issue. The Board authorized the chair to sign a contract with the Superintendent as discussed.

17. Adjourn: The board adjourned by consensus

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