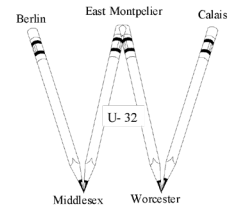


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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 U-32 930 Gallison Hill Rd Montpelier, VT 11.15.23 6:30-9:30 PM

Board Members: Flor Diaz Smith, Chris McVeigh, Kari Bradley, Maggie Weiss, Mckalyn Leclerc, Ursula Stanley, Daniel Keeney, Zach Sullivan, Amelia Contrada, Natasha Eckart, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Jonathan Goddard, Kealy Sloane, Josh Sevits

Others: Superintendent Meagan Roy, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Kerra Holden, ORCA Media, David Delcore, Karoline May, David Lawrence, Susanne Gann, Cat Fair, Beckah Mandel, Alicia Lyford, Honi Bean Barrett, Jill Drury, Lesley Fitch, Gillian Fuqua, Jess, Cat Fair, Caroline May, Jessica Wills, Jessica Heinz, Lisa Hanna, Michael Sherwin, SBroe, Sonya Rhodes, Tyler Smith, Allison Fayle, Aly Mahoney, Ben, Erin Mullaney, Meg Allison, Meg Dawkins, Michelle Ksepka, Nathaniel Schwartz, Nicolle S., Liz Bevins, Jen Donovan, Jenny Bradley, Lauren Chabot, Ben Larrow, Beth Parker, Debra Bloom

- 1. Executive Session - Student Discipline:** At 6:00 p.m., Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of considering matters related to the discipline of students as authorized by 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(7) to include Meagan Roy, Steven Dellinger-Pate, and Student Family Members. Seconded by Natasha Eckart, this motion carried unanimously. At 6:33 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 Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously, with one abstention.
- 2. Call to Order:** At 6:37, Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order.

3. **Welcome:** Flor Diaz Smith spoke about the concept of “perseverance”
 - 3.1. **Adjustments to the Agenda:** Kari Bradly asked for clarification on the agenda items that include board feedback about the budget. Flor Diaz Smith clarified that the board will discuss the budget during “Board Operations.”
 - 3.2. **Reception of Guests**
 - 3.3. **Public Comments:** none at this time

4. **Presentation: Budget Draft # 1:** Superintendent Roy and Susanne Gann presented a slide deck to share the first draft of the budget. Questions from the board, following the presentation: Ursula Stanley asked about the current structure for interventions: Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that we could reduce the total number of intervention needs by changing class configurations (bolster class size) (from 3.8 to 2.5~3.5). Daniel Keeney asked for clarification around the proposed changes to staff FTE. Chris McVeigh asked, how many other staff affected by these proposed changes serve a dual role? (e.g. in Calais, the Library/ Media teacher also teaches math/ reading in the classroom part-time. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked, how is the 10% calculated if we are shifting from “apples to oranges”? Susanne Gann explained how the 10% will be figured. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked for information about central office staffing. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether it would be possible to consider a reduction in staff equitably rather than focusing on intervention position (e.g. the proposal related to U32).
 - 4.1. **Public Input:** Debra Bloom stated that ESSER going away is not new. She expressed disappointment that we are thinking about this now, talking about reducing staff (such as nursing staff - she spoke about the health and safety of students). What are other resources we can consider for funding sources to keep some of these positions? Honi Bean Barrett asked: are you willing to put forth an itemized savings from these proposed budgets? Are you planning to provide transportation for children who would be going to other sites for preschool? Does this affect the savings? Lisa Hanna stated that she has not met another person in education who feels that we have enough supports for children. Looking at teacher, nurse, and counselor cuts, is there any value in speaking more frankly about this? To say due to budgetary concerns we may need to provide less robust supports. It is hard to look at the cuts and feel that there is truth and transparency in the statement that we will be able to continue to provide robust support with the proposed budget.

5. **Reports to The Board**
 - 5.1. **Student Report:** Willow and Linnea shared some student happenings via recorded video message: Word of Mouth, Sports Banquet, Food Drive, Sex Education, SSJ: Seeking Social Justice meeting. The students invited board members to attend school happenings to get an understanding of what goes on with students on campus.
 - 5.2. **Superintendent/Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) Report:** provided in written form.

- 5.3. **Principals Report:** Flor Diaz Smith asked Steven Dellinger-Pate to share about BARWE: Building Anti-Racist White Educators. This group meets monthly to discuss the issues related to white educators teaching students of color. Flor Diaz Smith asked Alicia Lyford to share her report about teacher goal setting. Principal Lyford shared that the focus is around data regarding layers one and two in the MTSS framework, setting goals for students and instructional goals for themselves; we will look at assessments to see how everyone did regarding progress toward goals, and decide next steps. Diane Nichols-Fleming expressed appreciation for the level of detail in the report.
- 5.4. **Central Vermont Career Center Report:** Flor Diaz Smith invited board members to attend Open House 11-16, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. She noted that there is a lot of focus around the state on technological education programs.
- 5.5. **VSBA Report:** The website has resources including webinars to explain current issues such as Act 127.
- 5.6. **Education Quality Update:** Ursula Stanley shared that at the November 1st meeting, the committee considered I-Ready data, and also heard how staff are considering this data to inform their instruction. Ed Quality is going to take a deep dive into EQS (Education Quality Standards) to consider how to present EQS to the full board.

6. Finance Committee

- 6.1. **Configuration Study Report Out:** Flor Diaz Smith shared that the committee earlier this evening brainstormed ideas related to possible configuration, they would like the board to go through the affinity mapping activity, and consider what information would be helpful
- 6.2. **Review and Approve Pre-Qualification Criteria for 2024 Capital Improvement Projects:** Daniel Keeney moved that the Board establish the recommended prequalification criteria that contractors must meet to be included on a selected list of pre-qualified bidders for the 2024 Combined Capital Projects. Seconded by Ursula Stanley. Chris McVeigh asked how this criteria will be proven. Does all of the criteria need to be met or is there a weighting of the items on the list? Susanne Gann stated that all of the criteria must be met; she shared the process for qualifying bidders. **This motion carried unanimously.**
- 6.3. **Review and Approve Scope and Budget for Berlin Fire Alarm Panel:** Ursula Stanley moved that the Board authorize an additional allocation of \$13,894 from the capital reserve funds for the replacement of the Berlin Fire Alarm Panel to be completed in FY 2024-25 and approve the District moving forward with bid document development and bidding as necessary. Seconded by Daniel Keeney. Discussion: Daniel Keeney asked what is the contingency percentage? Susanne Gann: 10%. **This motion carried unanimously.**
- 6.4. **Review and Discuss FY 2024-25 Budget Draft # 1**
- 6.5. **Discuss Budget Parameter # 5:** Flor Diaz Smith spoke about this having been created and shared initially as a “soft parameter.” Two other parameters were offered tonight:

- Consider configuration changes that realize program quality improvements that can better serve students.
- Lowest increase in net spending while meeting EQS and addressing equitable distribution of resources and student needs.

Diane Nichols-Fleming expressed concern with using the 10% parameter when this is new and we do not understand the details or the implications. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet stated that the parameter around the threshold for penalty or around avoiding a tax rate review (related to going beyond the 10% parameter), is not meant to be a hard and fast line but a goal. Some discussion followed around what factors are known now, and what factors are yet to be shared from AOE. Board members agreed to remove parameter #5 and add the two changes above. There was some wordsmithing of the document; Board Chair and Superintendent were taking notes. Karoline May stated that she is hearing that the board would like to avoid going above the 10% but on the other hand hearing that this is not firm, she indicated that this is an administrator's worst nightmare, and is similar to what happened last year when administrators built budgets that were within the parameter, only to have the board change the parameter.

7. Policy Committee

7.1. First Reading of Policies: Chris McVeigh presented the following policies and explained the Policy Committee's work in arriving at these drafts.

7.1.1. B20: Personnel, Recruitment Selection, and Background Checks

7.1.2. D34: Library Media Center Selection & Reconsideration: (this is D22 in the VSBA policy) Ursula Stanley pointed out that the numbering is not consistent with VSBA model policy numbering, and that our own policy: *Policies and Procedures* indicates that our policy numbering will be consistent with VSBA model policies. Some discussion followed around the greater detail included in this updated policy. Ursula Stanley asked why the entirety of the Greater Schools Partnership document is not included in the policy if only part of it is.

7.1.3. A2: Policies and Procedures: (VSBA A30) Some discussion followed around including language to be clear that the administration notifies the board when procedures are developed or changed. Dan Keeney would like to add "adopt, maintain and review" to the language that refers to the board's role in policies.

7.1.4. A20: Board Meetings, Agenda Preparation & Distribution:

7.1.5. A22: Notice of Non-Discrimination:

The policies will be edited as discussed tonight and brought to the next board meeting for a second reading and possible adoption.

7.2. Second Reading for Policies to be Adopted on November 15, 2023: Kari Bradley moved to adopt the following policies. Seconded by Amelia Contrada, this motion carried unanimously.

7.2.1. C3 Transportation

7.2.2. C6 Home Study Students

8. Board Operations

8.1. Board Feedback on FY25 Budget Draft # 1: Mckalyn Leclerc thanked the administration for the hard work. She expressed concerns about the reductions in school nurse positions at Doty and Rumney. Similarly, she has concerns around cutting the school counselor positions. She asked whether this is an issue of equity. Superintendent Roy stated that the proposed budget does keep in mind the three pillars: quality, equity of resources, student need. Discussion followed around the school nurse positions. Zach Sullivan asked whether it is possible to utilize telehealth nurses to some degree to address some of the concerns. Ursula Stanley asked how do we coordinate nurses and resources? Superintendent Roy: to date we have done it informally. Maggie Weiss echoed Mckalyn Leclerc's concerns and she indicated that asking other staff to fill in, in the absence of a full time nurse in the building, is a very hard "ask," especially in light of staffing challenges and shortages. Ursula Stanley asked administrators - how difficult it would be to cut further, to meet the 10%. Administrators spoke about the difficulty in creating this first draft based on board input. To cut further, Alicia Lyford reminded the board of the part in the slideshow that provided some scenarios to cut further; however, she stated that the administration does not whole heartedly support those cuts. Superintendent Roy stated that we aren't fully equitable - the smaller schools take more resources per students. Jonathan Goddard expressed concerns about cuts to both nursing and counseling. Everything he has read about the youth mental health crisis in this country supports his opposition to cutting these positions; it is counter to our mission to provide safe and healthy schools for our students. This is a priority to him right now. Kealy Sloane clarified that the reductions at East Montpelier are based on declining enrollment. Kari Bradley stated that as uncomfortable it is to consider reductions; it is uncomfortable to ask our taxpayers to support an increase in the tax rate. Student enrollment is declining and affordability gets harder; he urged the board to not put off things that will only make next year harder. Daniel Keeney seconded what Jonathan Goddard had said - he spoke about the idea of equitably sharing resources. He would like to find an additional \$30K in reductions but again does not support cutting nursing and counseling positions. Natasha Eckart indicated that she feels strongly about not cutting nursing and counseling. Amelia Contrada echoed concerns around nursing and mental health resources. She expressed appreciation for the help and support that teachers have been offering to students during COVID-19 and after with staff shortages. Given the reality we are given, with the creativity that has been shown, she believes we can find ways to meet the needs of students. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked for some clarification about some of the salary lines in the budget.

Joshua Sevits shared appreciation for the work that went into this budget draft and he feels it is a good start. Wonders is it way too soon to think about larger reconfigurations plans (aside from the pre-K and K between Doty and Calais)? Superintendent Roy spoke about the risk of taking larger steps around reconfiguration before our configuration study provides guidance, as we run the risk of making a big change only to rescind the change the following year and making a different big change. Mckalyn Leclerc stated that nursing and counseling are related to basic living needs. She would rather have health care providers in each school full time rather than having a Spanish teacher in only one or two of the schools. Gillian Fuqua spoke about the current configuration at Doty with nursing and counseling staff. Maggie Weiss reiterated what Mckalyn had said. Ursula Stanley reiterated what Kari Bradley had stated. She reminded the board that last year when we made budget decisions, we knew we would be facing difficulty this year. She feels that the board should trust the administrators in their recommendations for staffing. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet stated that the idea of Act 127 is to right-size per pupil spending. He asked Susanne Gann - you are confident that our tax rate will go down? He supports this budget as it stands today. Chris McVeigh asked whether the position at EMES that will decrease is the same position that the board approved two years back due to a bubble in student enrollment. He stated he would like to consider cuts that are more equitably distributed. He spoke about other things to consider cutting: administrators, central office staff. He asked what is the budget for the Equity Scholar? He shared concerns with cutting positions that provide direct services to students. He would look for other budgetary cuts, not the positions that provide direct services to students. Josh Sevits stated that the cuts related to pre-K and K are based on EQS, so it is not as simple as making a comparison to cutting, for example, administrators. Chris McVeigh alluded to the comment that was made from the parent earlier, indicating that we cannot purport to provide robust opportunities to students when we are making these cuts. Zach Sullivan indicated that it would be helpful to get a picture of how the needs of students will be met with the proposed cuts. What does service delivery look like? Superintendent Roy stated that it would be helpful information to provide what the system of support looks like.

What does the service delivery system look like given the needs of the students right now? Flor Diaz Smith stated that we don't operate in isolation across the state. She would like to think about sustainability toward the future; feels that we could do more, take more steps toward reconfiguration. She stated that the desire of the board to have a full time nurse at every school, and a school counselor, would require some reconfiguration. It is not sustainable to have a full time nurse at every school. Superintendent Roy stated that we need very concrete direction: she hears a desire for more information about what service delivery looks like with the current budget draft. We also need a concrete number; if we have a financial direction we can come back with an updated draft. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked, what exactly are we asking our communities to understand? What are the cost savings to the positions that were discussed at length tonight - school nurse and counselor staffing?

Some discussion followed around the desire to come under the 10% threshold. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet stated that we have come as far as we can go and the only way to get to the threshold is to look at a larger reconfiguration. Zach Sullivan stated that, in terms of what the community can bare, it seems like there is a one-year cushion at this time. Amelia Contrada spoke about creative ways to meet social emotional needs of students, to bolster the peer support structure. Kari Bradley suggested leaving the budget as it is at this time and having the administration bring back the information as discussed tonight, and let the Finance Committee take a closer look for the board's future consideration.

8.2. Strategic Plan Update

8.3. District Clerk: Daniel Keeney moved to nominate Melissa Tuller for School District Clerk. Seconded by Maggie Weiss; this motion carried unanimously.

9. Consent Agenda

9.1. Approve Minutes of 10.18.23. 11.1.23: Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve the minutes of October 18 and November 1, 2023. Seconded by Daniel

Keeney. Discussion: move student reps into board members - Oct 18 indicates that it is a special meeting; it is not. This motion carried unanimously.

9.2. Approve Board Orders: Ursula Stanley moved to approve the board orders for 11-15-2023, in the amount of \$1,782,549.60. Seconded by Amelia Contrada, this motion carried unanimously.

10. Future Agenda Items

10.1. 2023-2024 Board Work Plan

10.2. Communication and Engagement Planning

10.3. Strategic Plan Update

10.4. Location: East Montpelier

11. Board Reflection: Ursula Stanley was on fire tonight! ::jazz hands all around::

12. Executive Session: Student Residency Request: At 9:55 p.m., Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to enter Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a) 1 (D) for the purpose of a Student Residency Request, to include Meagan Roy. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously. At 10:02 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 Residency Request. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve the Administration's recommendation regarding the Student Residency Request. Seconded by Amelia Contrada, this motion carried unanimously, with one abstention.

13. Executive Session: Negotiations: At 10:03 p.m., Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved that as premature general public knowledge of labor negotiations would clearly place the Board at

a substantial disadvantage per 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a) 1 (B) that the Board enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing labor negotiations, to include Meagan Roy. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously. At 10:04 p.m., Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to leave Executive Session. Seconded by Kealy Sloane, this motion carried unanimously. During Executive Session the Board discussed negotiation strategy.

14. Adjourn: At 10:05 p.m., Jonas Eno-Van Fleet 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