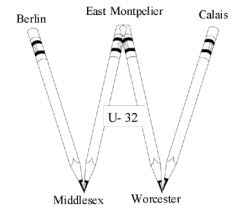


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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
Special School Board Meeting
Virtual Meeting Only
Central Office
1130 Gallison Hill Rd., Montpelier, VT
Board Room
12.6.2023 7:00PM - 8:00 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 Sloan, Josh Sevits Student Rep: Willow Mashkuri

Others: Superintendent Meagan Roy, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Kerra Holden, ORCA Media, David Delcore, David Lawrence, Beckah Mandel, Alicia Lyford, Honi Bean Barrett, Gillian Fuqua, Jessica Wills, Lisa Hanna, Michael Sherwin, Sonya Rhodes, Chris O'Brien, Katherine Biggam, Lydia Faesy, April Bergeron, Ben, Ma, Nate Lovitz, Jeanie Phillips, Robert Hall, Scott Hess, Mary Beth Langevin, Beth Parker, Alicia Lyford, Ellen Cooke, Jade Walker, Lisa LaPlante

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: Flor Diaz Smith noted that ratifying the contract will be added to the agenda tonight - there will be an Executive Session. She would also like to add an update during Board Operations about the Annual Meeting. **Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve the adjustments to the agenda. Seconded by Chris McVeigh. This motion carried unanimously.**

2.2. Reception of Guests: Flor Diaz Smith welcomed guests.

2.3. Public Comments-Time limit strictly enforced, see note: Jade Walker advocated for the importance of not reducing FTE of counseling staff. She spoke about how this reduction will affect students and their families. Ellen Cooke spoke about the mental health needs for students and advocated for maintaining counseling staff. Nate Lovitz continued the message and reiterated the need for maintaining positions in student services. Ralph Hall proposed to move Calais to East Montpelier and Doty to Rumney. He spoke about student enrollment data. He asked to consider what the number/ what is the cutoff for considering consolidating school campuses. Sonya Rhodes a teacher at Doty expressed concern about guidance counselors and nursing staff “on the chopping block” compared to line the item for sports. Willow Mashkuri gave a report to the board on behalf of students. (She was reporting from her car!) She asked board members to visit the schools and gain that in-person perspective.

3. Local Presentation: Social Emotional Learning (SEL): Alicia Lyford presented to the board about East Montpelier Elementary School’s social-emotional learning opportunities.

4. Reports

4.1. Strategic Planning Status Update: Flor Diaz Smith stated that the work on strategic planning continues; the committee is working on goals around the core values; and will have more to share at the next board meeting. She stated that updated information is available on the website. The work continues to stay on schedule.

4.2. Configuration Study Report: Jeanie Phillips led the board through an affinity mapping protocol. The question for the brainstorming: *Given our focus on robust student programming, sustainability, and keeping the broader community in mind, how might we creatively imagine configurations for the future?* The activity resulted in the following configuration brainstorms: (top ten *)

- Equitable Opportunities * (4)
- AM/ PM Care for all Elementary
- Equitable SEL Opportunities
- Expand Middle School @ U32 or Separate Building * (5)
- Merge Elementary Schools * (10)
- Specialized Schools
- Repurpose any Closed Buildings to Meet Community Needs
- Get Input from Communities
- Community Partnership in Programming / Community School * (5)
- Attract Families
- Expanding Early Ed @ 1 or more Buildings * (7)
- District Level Mergers

Flor Diaz Smith asked board members to consider what else is needed, what data is needed in order to further consider the configuration study. Amelia Contrada - we are doing this to

get people's input for future planning vs. budget planning at the moment?

Maggie Weiss - explicit invitation to development review boards and planning commissions in all five towns. If housing is a significant barrier, then we need to address this. Diane Nichols-Fleming - how do we engage the community in the conversation?

Natasha Eckart - when we start naming specific schools that should be closed or merged, you are going to turn off a lot of the community. Is there a way to do this and take names out of it? Kari Bradley - what would it save to close the average school? (not any one school) Kealy Sloan - also presenting it through the lens of what it would provide for students. Ursula Stanley - what would our class size look like if we closed one school? Two schools? How would that benefit our students? Jonas Eno-Van Fleet - what are some of the visions of repurposed school buildings? (an abundance mindset versus a scarcity mindset - what are the opportunities?) Chris McVeigh - what do communities need? what other vibrant center could take the place of the repurposed school building? Community input is critical. Amelia Contrada - showing explicitly and speaking about data regarding how to get the needs met for our students and families, even if cuts occur. Daniel Keeney - the importance of nonfinancial smart goals that come from the choices we make; student outcomes that result from the choices we make. Kari Bradley - how do they align with our strategic plan? Kealy Sloan - information about bus routes/ distances between towns and schools. Natasha Eckart - the possibility of rethinking the boundaries of community that belong to each school (e.g. versus town property lines) Flor Diaz Smith read/ shared the results from the Finance Committee's activity which mirrored the board's activity tonight. Kari Bradley stated that we are going to have to put some thought into how we talk about this with our communities. It was hard for us as a board to participate in this activity; imagine how hard it will be for our communities and staff. Diane Nichols-Fleming - we need to be very clear with our thinking - if we are thinking we have specific questions, then we need to ask them up front. If not, then we need to suspend our ideas and opinions alone and allow for the input. Josh Sevits - plain language and plain speech is what is going to be helpful (rather than a lot of data that may not be easily understood).

- 4.3. **Approve Scope and Budget for U-32 Baseball Field: Ursula Stanley moved that the Board authorize the final budget allocation of \$151,000 from the capital reserve funds for the refurbishment of the U-32 Baseball Field to be completed in FY 2024-25 and approve the District moving forward with bid document development and bidding as necessary. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet seconded this motion.** Discussion: Diane Nichols-Fleming reflected what Sonya Rhodes had shared earlier during public comment and would like to consider that perspective. Chris McVeigh stated that he believes we should vote this down, based on concerns around student needs in counseling and cuts in positions as presented earlier. He stated that teachers, counselors, nursing staff are a greater priority to him than athletics. Flor Diaz Smith stated that this is part of the capital improvement plan and this has been a goal of the board. We don't move capital planning funds back. Ursula Stanley asked some specifics about how the use of the baseball field impacts students; she asked, regarding the amount in question, how many teaching positions would that translate

to? (Superintendent Roy: approximately 1 or 1.5) **A vote was called. 3 abstentions, 1 vote of “nay,” 8 votes in favor. This motion carried.**

5. Board Operations

5.1. Communication & Engagement Planning (this was discussed above): Flor Diaz Smith had shared information with board members about annual meeting planning; she will email a board member from each town so that they can make plans to attend their town’s select board meeting.

6. Future Agenda Items

6.1. 2023-2024 Board Work Plan

7. Executive Session: Negotiations: At 8:19 p.m., Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved that as premature general public knowledge of labor negotiations would place the Board at a substantial disadvantage per 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a) 1 (B) that the Board enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing labor negotiations, to include Superintendent Meagan Roy. Seconded by Mckalyn Leclerc, this motion carried unanimously. At 8:23, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to leave Executive Session. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously. During Executive Session the Board discussed labor negotiations. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to approve the Educational Support Personnel Collective Bargaining Agreement for the 2023-24 – 2025-26 school years. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming, this motion carried unanimously with one abstention.

8. Board Reflection

9. Adjourn: At 8:24 Kari Bradley moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.

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