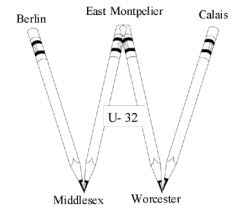


Washington Central UniUnion School District

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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**Washington Central Unified Union
School District
School Board Meeting
U-32
Gallison Hill Rd. Montpelier, VT
2.7.24 6:15-8:15 PM**

Board Members: Flor Diaz Smith, Chris McVeigh, Kari Bradley, Amelia Contrada, Mckalyn Leclerc, Ursula Stanley, Daniel Keeney, Zach Sullivan, Kealy Sloan, Joshua Sevits, Natasha Eckart, Diane Nichols Fleming, Jonathan Goddard

Others: Superintendent Meagan Roy, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Jen Miller-Arsenault, ORCA Media, Beth Parker, Mindy, David Delcore, Dewese Consulting, Karoline May, Lauren Chabot, Veronica Eldred, Susanne Gann, Jes Wills, Amy Molina, Alycia Lyford, Ben, Brian, Kerra Holden, Honi Bean Barret, Tony Snow, The Family Room, Betsy Parah, Linnea Darrow, Heidi Dimick

- 1. Call to Order: Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.**
- 2. Welcome:** Flor Diaz Smith noted that it is School Board Appreciation Month; she thanked board members for their work, and expressed thanks to the Superintendent who understands the work of the board. She stated that she is proud of the board's work around development and commitment to civil engagement. "Greatness is what we do for others."
 - 2.1. Adjustments to the Agenda:** Flor Diaz Smith would like to add 5.2: update from the Finance Committee to the agenda.
 - 2.2. Reception of Guests:** Flor Diaz Smith thanked Jeanne and Mike Dewese for being present tonight.
 - 2.3. Public Comments:** no public comments tonight
- 3. Presentations:**
 - 3.1. Local Presentation - U-32 Social Emotional Learning (SEL):** Steven Dellinger-Pate prefaced his presentation with an incident that had happened at a sports event last night where someone had written a slur on the dirt on a car's windshield; he stated that investigation is still underway. He stated that these types of incidents underscore the

importance of Social Emotional Learning for all students. He introduced Lisa LaPlante who presented to the board: *SEL at U-32*. Student representative Linnea Darrow spoke about her experience with student mentor relationships.

4. Board Operations

4.1. Superintendent Search Update: Jeanne Collins Deweese and Michael Deweese introduced themselves to the board and shared a slideshow about their work to consult around the superintendent search. Diane Nichols-Fleming: Do you anticipate that interviews will be virtual or in person? Jeanne C Deweese: could be in either form. Kealy Sloan: Can you tell when the Thought Exchange survey to parents and families went out? Flor Diaz Smith stated it was shared with all of our families via email; she had also shared the information with board members via email. There is also a Superintendent Search link on our website. Some discussion followed about the makeup of the Screening and Interview Committee. Flor Diaz Smith asked board members if there is anyone interested in serving on the committee. **Diane Nichols-Fleming moved to approve the charge of the committee. Seconded by Chris McVeigh.**

Superintendent Search Process: Screening and Interview Committee Charge

The WCUUSD Board hereby adopts the following charge: The Board will form a single "Screening and Interview Committee" in service to the Board's interests and needs related to its current superintendent search process. The committee will be comprised of up to eleven members, distributed accordingly:

- *Students: 1*
- *Parents/citizens: 2*
- *Central office: 1*
- *Faculty/staff: 3*
- *Leadership team: 2*
- *Board: 2*

The Board's Steering Committee will name the committee's members on February 14, 2024. The committee will work under the direction of Board consultants Jeanne Collins Deweese and Michael R. Deweese d.b.a. Deweese2Consulting. The committee will commence its work at its first meeting on February 19, 2024 and will conclude its work no later than March 27, 2024. The committee's tasks are to:

- *Recognize it is not a hiring committee, as the Board retains hiring authority;*
- *Appreciate the ambassadorial and representational facets of this committee;*
- *Use the Board's position posting, and other materials supplied by the Board as the foundation of its work;*
- *Screen all complete applications received by the posting deadline;*
- *Identify those applicants (semi-finalists) it wishes to meet who potentially satisfy the board's desired candidate profile;*
- *Create a question set to be posed to those semi-finalists it will interview;*

- *Interview semi-finalists and narrow the candidate pool to a list of finalists;*
- *Forward a list of unranked finalists to the Board for its consideration not later than March 18 2024;*
- *Electively coordinate and manage details for outbound suite visits to finalists' districts; and,*
- *Electively participate in finalists' site visits to WCUUSD.*

The committee is expected to conduct its work in an ethical and lawful fashion, as guided by the consultants.

Discussion: Dan Keeney asked, is the expectation that there will be exactly two finalists coming from the committee? Flor Diaz Smith: we do not know for sure; it depends on the viable candidates. Jeanne Collins Deweese stated that it would depend on the pool of candidates; we will strive to bring as many viable candidates as possible to the board. Chris McVeigh shared an experience from the past, and he indicated that he hopes we will have at least three viable candidates that come to the board. Diane Nichols–Fleming stated that in the past it has been challenging when there have been two candidates, which has turned out, to be only one when a candidate backs out. Ursula Stanley stated that in her recent experience, it helped to not have a specific number of candidates to move forward; we wanted the number to be driven by the number of viable candidates. Chris McVeigh asked, if there were no viable candidates, would you say so? Jeanne and Mike Deweese: yes, we would definitely say so. Natasha Eckart asked, re: the staff spots in the committee (the three spots) will include at least one from the union. Flor Diaz Smith we are assuming that will be criteria. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that in the past that has always been the case. Natasha Eckart stated that she would like to have on record that she would like to require one of the staff to be a union representative. Mckalyn Leclerc stated that if there were more student interest than just one, she would like to have more than one student involved in the process. Natasha Eckart stated that the site visit is an important part of the process; her own children have had input on the candidates based on site visits from candidates in the past. **This motion carried unanimously. Ursula Stanley moved to set the final “gauntlet day” as March 27, 2024. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously.** Linnea Darrow, Student Representative shared that February is Black History month; she shared some of the related activities. She shared about sports events, parent night, and the Student U.N.’s visit to Boston. She spoke about “YES” week, which is when students can choose specific activities. Zach Sullivan thanked Linnea and Willow for arranging for board members to visit the school.

5. Finance

5.1. Berlin Fire Alarm Panel Bid Award: Ursula Stanley moved that the Board approve awarding the Berlin Fire Alarm System Replacement Project contract to Local Electric, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$72,804. Seconded by Zach Sullivan, this motion carried unanimously.

5.2. Act 127 Update: Flor Diaz Smith and Superintendent Roy shared an update from the legislature regarding school budgets in light of Act 127. Superintendent Roy explained the “Cap” that a great majority of proposed school budgets are reaching. She spoke about the fear that school budgets will fail because of a much higher tax impact than was originally expected. Legislation draft includes proposal to eliminate the 5% cap; protection mechanism for districts that have lost re: ADM. She stated that either of these protections would not affect our district. The legislation would give boards a mechanism to re-warn budgets - cancel the warning and choose a different vote date. She shared that this is still draft legislation; still needs to go through the usual steps to become law. Flor Diaz Smith stated that the Finance Committee had agreed that we would like to as aboard decide what to do next rather than spend a great deal of time debating the merits or the evolution or the impact of Act 127. Superintendent Roy stated that the statewide budget will have an impact on our district budget; the “yield. Flor Diaz Smith invited board members to respond to the draft legislation. Kari Bradley suggested that we could paint some scenarios - is there appetite from the board to go back to the drawing board on the budget? The worst-case scenario is that the budget fails and we cannot pull it together to get an updated budget passed and we are required by law to revert to this year’s budget minus 10%. Flor Diaz Smith: will need to think about how changes will affect the system as a whole. She spoke about the dollar amount at the previous board meeting that was decided to increase; that this would be a possible consideration. Mckalyn Leclerc asked what kind of time frame we are talking about. Superintendent Roy: Up until 48 hours before Town Meeting Day, you can consider canceling a warning. She spoke about the challenge of printing a ballot under such a timeframe. Superintendent Roy: we can create our own timeline and cancel the vote, or we can wait, see, and respond to the vote on Town Meeting Day. Zach Sullivan: if we warn another budget, how long before the vote do we have to warn and send out ballots? Superintendent Roy: statute is 30 days, so March 15 would become the deadline. Some discussion of the factors that are not known. Joshua Sevits asked for clarity: what are we asking the board to empower the Finance Committee with? Flor Diaz Smith: to empower the Finance Committee to work together with administration to work on a budget reduction. This is contingent on the legislation. (On creating April 15 as vote date). Superintendent Roy: could signal “intent” Flor Diaz Smith: to come up with a contingency plan. Zach Sullivan asked about what constitutes an invalid mail-in ballot. Mckalyn Leclerc expressed concern with putting this on the Finance Committee; she feels it is important that all five towns be represented (for example she cannot attend the Tuesday morning Finance Committee meeting). Finance Committee is meeting on Tuesday morning as a warned meeting. Flor Diaz Smith suggested the committee decide at that time how to arrange for a committee meeting when all the committee members can attend. Chris McVeigh asked that

any information that is shared with the Finance Committee be shared with the board widely and in a timely matter. Ursula Stanley stated that we set the budget and the administrators get to decide how it is allocated. Chris McVeigh stated that the board could make policy decisions around how to allocate funds. Ursula Stanley stated, “That is out of the fire tower,” regarding the role of the board. Kari Bradley asked whether we should message to the community about the budget issues and the legislation draft as discussed tonight. Flor Diaz Smith suggested that a brief message be shared on Front Porch Forum, a very brief update regarding the legislation draft, as well as information about the Superintendent Search.

6. Personnel

6.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE: Joshua Sevits moved to accept the resignation of Mark Kline. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, with appreciation for the work he has done for WCUUSD. This motion carried unanimously.

7. Consent Agenda

7.1. Approve Minutes of 1.17.24: Joshua Sevits moved to approve the minutes of January 17, 2024. Seconded by Chris McVeigh. Flor Diaz Smith shared that she had provided a list of names to include in the January 17, 2024 attendance list.

8. Future Agenda Items

8.1. 2023-2024 Board Work Plan

9. Board Reflection

10. Executive Session: Student Discipline (this took place earlier in the meeting): Executive Session: At 7:46, Joshua Sevits moved to go into Executive Session to consider multiple student disciplinary matters, residency request, as authorized by 21 V.S.A. Section 313(a) (7) to include Meagan Roy, students, family members and support staff. Seconded by Chris McVeigh. This motion carried unanimously and the board went into Executive Session. At 8:05, the board came out of executive session. Joshua Sevits moved to accept the administrations' recommendation regarding student discipline. Seconded by Natasha Eckart, this motion carried unanimously.

11. Executive Session: Student Discipline (this took place earlier in the meeting): At 8:06, Joshua Sevits moved to enter executive session for a student disciplinary matter, as authorized by 21 V.S.A. Section 313(a) (7), to include Meagan Roy, students, family members and support staff. Seconded by Chris McVeigh. This motion carried unanimously and the board went into Executive Session. At 8:22, the board came out of

Executive Session. **Joshua Sevits moved to accept the administration's recommendation regarding student disciplinary issue as discussed in Executive Session. Seconded by Kealy Sloan, this motion carried unanimously.**

12. Executive Session: Student Residency Request (this was done earlier in the meeting): At 8:38, Joshua Sevits moved to enter Executive Session to consider a student residency request, as authorized by 21 V.S.A. Section 313(a) (7). Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously. At 8:56, the board came out of Executive Session. No action was taken.

13. Executive Session: Superintendent Evaluation, Strategic Plan: No action taken

14. Adjourn: The board adjourned by consensus at 9:00.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary