

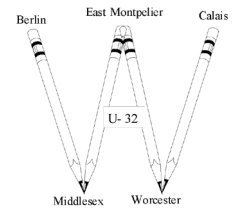
# Washington Central Unified Union School District

*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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## Washington Central Unified Union SD School Board Meeting 5.22.24 6:15-8:15 PM U-32 High School



**Board Members Present:** Flor Diaz Smith, Ursula Stanley, Jonathan Goddard, Mckalyn Leclerc, Chris McVeigh, Zach Sullivan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Kealy Sloan, Daniel Keeney, Natasha Eckart, Michelle Ksepka, Amelia Contrada

**Others Present:** Superintendent Meagan Roy, Susanne Gann, Debbie Goodwin, Dell Waterhouse, Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate, ORCA Media, Gillian Fuqua, Shelley Vermilya, Celia Guggemos, Karoline May, Edie, Kerra Holden, Patrick Whelley, Kathryn Biggam, Lauralee Curavoo, Lisa Hanna, Robert M, Vaughn O’Hanlon, Mayla Landis-Marinello, Meg Allison, Ace LaFountain, Ainsley, Allen Gilbert Allison Fayle, Amelia Garland, Anya Skibbie, Chani Waterhouse, Yolanda Bansah, Cat Fair, Larraby Fellows, Alicia Lyford, Sarah Bell, Elizabeth Brown, Laren Chabot, Rebecca Tatistcheff

**1. Call to Order: Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 6:17.**

**2. Welcome:** Flor Diaz Smith welcomed that present and expressed gratitude for supporting the budget; she spoke about the hard work going forward and expressed faith in the board and the administration to come together and work creatively and collaboratively to create opportunities that will benefit all students.

**2.1. Adjustments to the Agenda:** (no adjustments noted)

**2.2. Reception of Guests**

**2.3. Public Comments-Time limit strictly enforced, see note:** Flor Diaz Smith invited public comments. Lisa Hanna had sent a letter to the board. She asked for clear information about tax implications of proposed budgets. Please provide direct information about opportunities/benefits to students. She stated that the decision to close a school is huge. Chani Waterhouse asked for robust community discussion; she stated that the communities really need information - e.g. tax rate information - how pupil spending decrease? What does data from other schools/ towns show? How significant are savings? Educational opportunities - what, specifically, are these? She asked to consider data - e.g., how are Doty students faring compared to the other schools. We need to consider carefully the data that is driving the decision making. Lauralee Curavoo stated that in all three scenarios, Doty and Calais are “consumed” by other neighboring schools. She stated that there is a feeling of unsettledness within the Calais school building. She asked, when considering financial impact, to be sensitive to how these scenarios are communicated - for two separate communities to come together to create one, united communities. We are not just merging buildings - we are merging communities - is there a plan to create unity and respect diversity and the culture of each town? Lauren Chabot: stated a need for specific information about cost savings and

opportunities for students. It is very important to have a full picture of what people are voting on. She spoke about opportunities that exist for Doty students, for example, planning and serving a meal in the community; although this does not fit into “EQS,” it is very valuable. She asked that a draft schedule be created that includes these opportunities that are spoken of - the school day is only so long - how will this be fit into the students’ days? Sara Bell stated that she moved to Worcester specifically to be close to the elementary school. She stated that living close to the school in the community has been magical and they have felt so supported. She stated that she loves the community involvement, and that the multi-grade opportunities are very valuable. She would like to always consider, and weigh, that these are human beings. Young students are just coming out of COVID-19; and do not have a history of a consistent school experience. It feels like one school will be consuming a smaller school; we cannot really expect them to merge. What tangibles will be implemented to ensure that our students are feeling safe? Will there be some sense of familiarity? She likes the idea of creating a new mascot. That being said, if there is a way to avoid merging schools she would love to be able to do so. She thanked the board for the hard work they do.

### 3. Board Operations

- 3.1. **Flag Request:** Students, represented by Mayla Landis-Marinello and Vaughn O’Hanlon presented a request to raise the Progress Pride flag on June 5, 2024. Yolanda Bansah, member of BLAM, presented a request to raise Black Lives Matter flag, February 2025. Students reviewed the applications that had been submitted, speaking about the rationale and demonstrating student support. **Ursula Stanley moved to approve the raising of the Progress Pride Flag and the Black Lives Matter, in an act of expressing board support for the issues and related matters. Seconded by Amelia Contrada.** Discussion: The board thanked the students for their advocacy. Diane Nichols-Fleming noted that some of the derogatory comments that were shared, from survey feedback - the board intends to address. Ursula Stanley followed up on the request and asked Chris McVeigh if the Policy Committee is willing to hear from students and consider policy work around these issues. **This motion carried unanimously.**
- 3.2. **Board Vacancies Interviews:** Elizabeth Brown and Patrick Whelley, two community members who had expressed interest in serving on the board, spoke to the board.
  - 3.2.1. **Executive Session: Board Vacancies:** The board felt that an Executive Session was not needed as part of this process. **Diane Nichols-Fleming moved to appoint Elizabeth Brown and Patrick Whelley to the WCUUSD Board. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously.**
- 3.3. **Appoint Central Vermont Career Center Representative:** Flor Diaz Smith asked Patrick Whelley, with his background experience, if he would be willing to serve as the CVCC representative. He indicated that he would. **Ursula Stanley moved to appoint Patrick Whelley as CVCC representative. Seconded by Amelia Contrada, this motion carried unanimously.**

**4. Presentation: Equity Indicators:** Administrators, led by Superintendent Roy, presented a slide deck: *WCUUSD Equity Indicators, May 22, 2024*. Much discussion followed around attendance, suspension, and AP offerings (including through the lens of equity.) Some discussion followed around barriers to AP courses. Willow Mashkuri suggested that tutoring and academic support would be very helpful to students taking AP courses. Michelle Ksepka stated that another barrier is scheduling conflicts. Discussion: What do you see? Diane Nichols-Fleming - the need to have this embedded into our work plan and review it - this is not a “one and done” consideration; need time to process and revisit. Kealy Sloan thanked administrators for this information. She stated that the graphs within the document would need further explanation when shared with the public. What questions does this presentation raise for you? / What strikes you as significant? Zach Sullivan - how accurate is “free and reduced lunch” as a metric. Daniel Keeney - who drives this process? Superintendent Roy - the superintendent ultimately holds it but she believes it is guided and driven by the entire admin team. It does not sit with one certain person; this is why it is embedded into our Strategic Plan, and it will be embedded into the teacher evaluation system. Patrick Whelley- it would be helpful to know specific data/ numbers around “significance.” What are the implications for our work? Ursula Stanley - we have started to talk in the Education Quality Committee about whether and how we add this topic: Equity, into the cycle of information we consider and report on. Daniel Keeney - anxious to hear next steps about how we are going to affect these outcomes.

## **5. Reports to the Board**

**5.1. Student Report:** Willow Mashkuri and Linnea Darrow provided an update. Prom was held this past weekend - it was a great time, and Willow expressed gratitude for everyone’s safety! Linnea reported on the sports season. The 8th grade DC trip is upcoming, a new U-32 principal has been hired, and a trip to Peru is planned for next year. AP Exams are underway. Willow Mashkuri shared that a lockdown occurred last week; she stated that a positive was that students knew exactly what to do. In the same vein, it can be seen as negative that students need to know what to do in a lockdown situation. She stated that the senior prank is upcoming and that the senior trip to Boston is upcoming. She stated that everyone is ready for the year to end. Willow Mashkuri thanked the board for the opportunity to work with them. Board members thanked and applauded Willow for her dedication.

**5.2. Principal Report:** Board members were invited to ask questions or comment on this written report.

**5.3. Superintendent/Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) Report:** Susanne Gann explained that the Business Office is now fully staffed and she feels very confident about the strength of this team.

**5.4. Central Vermont Career Center (CVCC) Report:** Flor Diaz Smith had provided a written report.

## **6. Finance Committee**

**6.1. Award Berlin Walk-in Cooler and Freezer Replacement Project Bid:** Ursula Stanley moved to approve awarding the Berlin Walk-in Cooler and Freezer Replacement Project contract to VHV Company in an amount not to exceed \$57,056. Seconded by Kealy Sloan; this motion carried unanimously.

**6.2. Accept Annual Fiscal Management Questionnaire:** Daniel Keeney moved to accept this document as presented. Seconded by Zach Sullivan; this motion carried unanimously.

- 6.3. Authorize Superintendent to Sign Contracts and Accept Grants for WCUUSD:** Michelle Ksepka moved to authorize the appointed Superintendent to sign all contracts and accept grants on behalf of Washington Central Unified Union School District effective throughout FY 2024 - 2025. Seconded by Amelia Contrada; this motion carried unanimously.
- 6.4. Blanket Authorization for Board Warrants/Check Orders:** Zach Sullivan moved to authorize the Blanket Authorization for Board Warrants (included in packet) effective throughout FY 2024-25. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka; this motion carried unanimously.
- 6.5. Approve Capital Improvement Project Plan and Multi-year Budget:** Daniel Keeney moved to approve the revised Five-year Capital Improvement Plan, Budget and Timeline and authorize the use of capital reserve funds, not to exceed \$50,000, to develop the necessary scope and budget for the FY 2025-26 approved capital improvement projects. Seconded by Ursula Stanley; this motion carried unanimously. Flor Diaz Smith thanked everyone involved in this work, specifically, Susanne Gann.
- 6.6. Update from Configuration Committee:** Flor Diaz Smith shared that the committee met earlier this evening. She shared with the board that the committee planned for the months going forward to work through a communication plan and prepare for a possible vote in November. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that it would be important for board members to have a central and articulated place to go for related information. Superintendent Roy stated that there would be a link on the front page of the website to house all of this information. Patrick Whelley stated that it will be important to engage members of the community from all corners - some have not attended previous forums and board meetings, and we will have to think creatively about how to reach out to all stakeholders and hear all voices, and engage with all.

## 7. Policy Committee

- 7.1. First Reading/ Revision F45 Fundraising Policy:** Superintendent Roy shared this revised policy. She explained that the focus on this update was to align current practice with policy, especially related to Boosters Club.

## 8. Personnel

- 8.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE:** Daniel Keeney asked whether we are receiving contracts in a timely manner as expected and are there any updates. Ursula Stanley moved to accept new hires as presented: Rebecca Tatistcheff, Julia Pritchard, Jennifer Pelletier, Liza Semler, Scott Benerofe, Nicole Mintken, Cathie Ely, Lydia Faesy. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka, this motion carried unanimously. Board members welcomed Principal Tatistcheff and Julia Pritchard (Student Services Director). Ursula Stanley moved to accept resignations as presented Steven Dellinger-Pate, Christine McGrath, Samantha Mishkin, Bethany Parker, Christina Pollard, Amy Jo Young, and Benton Larrow. Seconded by Daniel Keeney. Discussion: Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether exit interviews are scheduled for these employees. Superintendent Roy stated that this is not a regular practice but can be offered. This motion carried unanimously. Ursula Stanley moved to approve a change in position for Tyler Smith, and to accept his request for leave of absence. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka, this motion carried.

**9. Consent Agenda**

**9.1. Approve Minutes of 4.18.24, 5.1.24: Chris McVeigh moved to approve the minutes from April 18 and May 1, 2024. Seconded by Zach Sullivan; this motion carried unanimously.**

**9.2. Approve Board Orders: Ursula Stanley moved to approve the board orders dated 4-18-24 through 5-15-24 for a total of \$959,254.58; seconded by Zach Sullivan, this motion carried unanimously.**

**10. Future Agenda Items:** Flor Diaz Smith reminded board members to sign up for graduation, and a reminder that there is a board meeting tomorrow as well. Chris McVeigh suggested that we change our public comment procedures so that we can have more of a dialogue like the one we had at our May meeting. He would like to at least try it; he thinks there is much to be gained by having more back-and-forth dialogue. Flor Diaz Smith stated that we can address this at a future meeting, for instance at a board retreat. She noted that the first meeting of each month is intended for more community dialogue. Chris McVeigh asked for follow-up about data that Mckalyn Leclerc had requested based on the Equity presentation. Superintendent Roy stated that she had not heard a specific request for information immediately but that she had heard a desire for more specific, disaggregated data for consideration, related to each school, and this would require some further investigation and more time to generate.

**11. Executive Session: Student Residency Request: At 9:05, Kealy Sloan moved to go into Executive Session for a Student Residency Request, and to include Superintendent Roy. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously. At 9:15, Mckalyn Leclerc moved to come out Executive Session. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously. Ursula Stanley moved to accept the student residency request. Seconded by Amelia Contrada, this motion carried unanimously.**

**12. Adjourn: The board adjourned by a motion by Ursula Stanley and unanimous consent at 9:18 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary