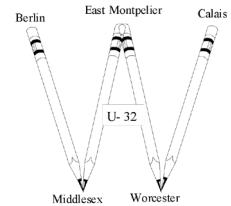


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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 School District School Board Retreat 8.8.24 12:00 - 6:00 PM Trapp Family Lodge

Board Members Present: Flor Diaz Smith, Ursula Stanley, Chris McVeigh, Zach Sullivan, Kealy Sloan, Daniel Keeney, Amelia Contrada, Elizabeth Brown, Patrick Whelley, Michelle Ksepka, Diane Nichols-Fleming

Others Present: Superintendent Steven Dellinger-Pate, Scott Cameron (legal counsel)

Welcome & Opener (Icebreaker)

If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

Lunch

Agenda Review/ Retreat Outcome

Board Learning - Open Meeting Law changes (Scott Cameron)

Open Meeting Law

- advisory versus non-advisory body (an advisory body does not make decisions whereas a non-advisory body does)
- “general rule” does not apply to advisory group
- some discussion about when a group comes together to consider bids - e.g., opening bids and creating a summary for the board to consider
- Scott Cameron advises, when in doubt, warn the meeting.
- some discussion about board members coming together, e.g. at a coffee shop - when a quorum is present, the talking about board matters should end
- definition of “hybrid” meeting
- some discussion of the concept of “hardship” re: electronic access/ platform
- Idea: should we call our committees “advisory committees”
- Negotiation Committee - Scott Cameron indicates that this is the committee that comes closest to not being an advisory body. (he would treat this as a public body)

- Scott spoke about one of the trickiest concepts: the use of email (even the use of private email). You should not advocate or discuss or have any sort of back and forth discussion via email.
- How to share information?
- How to respond to an email from a community member. Scott Cameron - if a community member emails a board member directly, you are free to respond to that person directly.
- Training: there is a requirement that the chair of the body participates in training. Scott Cameron believes there will be online training modules that all board members could access.
- Daniel Keeney asked - does the law indicate what the appropriate time is during a meeting to have a public comment? Scott Cameron does not think there are any changes to this.

Review information from June Retreat/ Connecting the work

What did we learn from our June time together with administrators? How does this affect our work for this coming year? Flor Diaz Smith reviewed the outcomes from the June retreat: communication plan, aligning goals with the strategic plan, and governance standards. The board work plan is under development; is there a need for a communications committee? Goals - long-term planning, community engagement. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that the budget development process was a topic of discussion at the retreat in June, as well. The group discussed strategic plan goals and board goals. Steven Dellinger-Pate shared that the leadership team had met earlier this week; he invited board members to review the document that outlines three goals action steps and indicators of progress from their work.

- build and nurture a culture of well-being and inclusivity
- challenge, empower, and engage each student through evidence-based instructional strategies and curriculum and varied educational opportunities
- foster and commit to responsible leadership that engages the community and communicates transparently

What do you notice? What are the implications for the board?

Chris: a lot of “will,” but not a lot of “way.”

Elizabeth: where is the “if/ then” piece?

Kealy: the indicators are more a list of tools at this point (could use some qualifying language)

Zach: a lot of emphasis on what is existing - how to think “beyond”

Diane: some of the steps are missing (e.g. around the audit) (some need for “reverse engineering”)

Dan: struggles with the language - what it means on paper to a layperson versus what it means to a professional - how accessible is the document to the public? Make the language explicit. Living document (to 2030) but there is a need for intermediate goals.

Elizabeth: the difference between emotional wellbeing and social emotional learning. Mental health could be a goal in and of itself.

Chris: is there a mechanism for having staff align with, e.g., Goal #2 (what training is required?

What experience is required?)

Diane: how do we know whether we are meeting benchmarks? What are we looking for?

Discussion of goals and indicators followed.

Accountability: expect district’s professionals to put this together. Discussion of a “process model.”

What are the roles of teaching staff?

To have a global understanding (board members’ understanding) of the roles/ work of teaching staff.

Some discussion of the work WCUUSD did around math curriculum - how to keep a finger on the pulse in an ongoing way.

Reports to the board

Current information regarding evidenced based instruction

The board's role in monitoring (e.g. Ed Quality Committee)

How does the work of the board dovetail with the work of Ed Quality Committee?

Strategic plan, pillars, vision/ beliefs, etc. - how to report in a consistent way that is not overwhelming.

Focus groups regarding data consideration: are you seeing what we think we are seeing?

Some discussion of "staff morale" - the impact of configuration discussions as well as the universal morale in education as a whole. What is the process for revising this document?

2:15 - 2:30 Break

Strategic Plan Presentation (Goals and Action Steps)

Affirm Board Goals

Goal #1: Educational and Academic Outcomes

Goal #2: Broadening communication with the community

Goal #3: Long Term Planning

Board Work Plan Elements (work plan to be approved at the first regular meeting of the year)

Diane: how are the board goals directly connected to the board work plan elements?

Natasha: could a column be added to the table to indicate which goal is addressed? (Flor Diaz

Smith: or color code) Discussion: Are they goals? Are they priorities? Are they areas of focus?

"Board Focus Area"

- Board Learning Presentation Cycle
- Monitoring Cycle
- Reports to the Board
- Meeting Logistics (continue to rotate board meetings)
- Communication and Engagement Plan

Diane: Can we get info regarding the percentages of taxpayers that pay at what rate?

Steven Dellinger-Pate shared that the following requests for information (from the previous meeting) are being answered/ prepared for consideration:

- info on class size
- support service delivery
- how are staff utilized
- middle level program info/ criteria
- cost/ financial comparisons (property yield and income yield) (how does the district allocate money)
- well-being/ cost benefit analysis
- community health & identity
- sustainability/ fiscal responsibility
- How does this affect the potential for future mergers?
- Potential impacts on towns?
- transportation

- educational benefits
- how to define educational equity
- demographics of the district and how are we utilizing our staff
- EQS: ratio; class size and configuration of grades (e.g. multi grade classes)

Elizabeth: there was an ask for ideal class size, including with the consideration of combined grades
 Kealy: the question of the effect of closing schools in the most vulnerable towns - do we bring this to the conversation?

Ursula: can we pull from towns that have experienced this? E.g. Duxbury, Vermont

Chris: people are looking for more specifics around an increase in offerings/ available programs

Zach: What are programs going to look like? (E.g. a band with 30 students versus a band with eight students)

Chris: we should not be making representations that we are going to provide something if we are not prepared to provide it

Patrick: enrollment numbers and projections for the future

Ursula: service delivery, e.g. for students with disabilities

Chris: Ultimately, this will be a town question/ decision - the best that we can do is provide information.

Amelia: Could the three upcoming meetings be through the lens of cost/ benefit analysis?

Amelia: transportation, after-school programs, what other options might be offered that take into consideration the most vulnerable population?

Diane: Given the three upcoming meetings (Aug 21, Sept 4, Sept 18), it will be important to communicate to people (FPF?) what information/ data will be available at which meeting.

Daniel: Why not plan a Configuration Committee meeting on the off Wednesdays?

Patrick: on the other hand, a different night of the week might accommodate other people who might not be available on Wednesdays

Steven D-P suggested - the Monday before a Wednesday board meeting

Natasha - at this time there is no one available to represent Worcester; she asked the board to hold off on scheduling the first meeting date until Mckalyn is available; at least be sure we have a Worcester representative. Natasha indicated that we might not be ready for a vote on the original proposed date. It is important to give due diligence to the discussion with representation and thoughtful consideration. A doodle poll will be sent.

Flor: The Worcester candidates will be available on the August 21 meeting.

Daniel: It would be helpful to hear from each school what work is being done to build community
 Some discussion about what the focus for each local school presentation will be this year (e.g. in 23-24 it was Social Emotional Learning)

Elizabeth: It will be so critical to examine communication in the coming year. Semantics will be important. We need to be sure our content is clear. Flor thinks that will fall to the Steering Committee.

Steven: We started on a Communication and Engagement plan a couple of years ago; he is working on resurrecting that.

Daniel: is there a way to create a district digest for all five of the towns?

Some discussion of consulting around communicating.

Board Committees - review assignments and charge of each committee?

Ed Quality: 1st Wed, before the board meeting (does not meet in January or March)

Policy: 2nd Wed of the month

Negotiations: will get underway this year (currently Chris and Diane)

Finance Committee: meets one morning per month as well as one monthly meeting before a board meeting.

Configuration Timeline: the next three board community forums will include sharing data related to the ongoing configuration conversation. Not all data will be ready by the first meeting; will roll out in chunks.

Regular Meeting Logistics • Continue Food (Y/N). (The board agreed - yes, as long as it is not a hardship to staff) • Continue to rotate locations for the first meeting/month. (The board agreed - yes; this is a valuable practice) • Others?

Closing Activity: Summary and Next Steps

Flor spoke about new board member orientation training.

Discussion about communication: If someone emails a board member directly, then a response to the person (“Is this something you would like me to share with the board?”) and in response, copy the board chair and superintendent - Steven is going to work out a way with Melissa Tuller to compile a public repository of board correspondence that lives in the WCUUSD webpage with other board resources. Some discussion followed around public records.

Diane spoke about sharing responsibility - a rotation of board representatives on correspondence.

Natasha asked for clarification about the dates for the next community forum. September 4th? Will we have the information that has been asked? Natasha cautioned against using the term “fast track;” she stated that she believes we need to push back the vote date; we cannot push the process.

Amelia - would it be wise to have a September 4 community forum but explain how much data will be shared/ available at that time, and to have small focus groups examine and preview the data before the meeting to be prepared to discuss? Ursula suggested having public comments after each “data dump” at each community forum. Daniel K: Can we look at the questions/ criteria for new board members? Flor will share. Kealy Sloane felt that the retreat was a great opportunity to talk openly; she stated that board meetings can sometimes feel stifling. She thanked Steven for his leadership, and she thanked Natasha for her representation of Worcester.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary