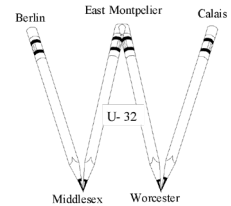


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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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WCUUSD Finance Committee Meeting 9.3.24 5:00-6:00 PM U-32 930 Gallison Hill Rd Montpelier, VT In-Person /Virtual

Present: Flor Diaz Smith, Zach Sullivan, Ursula Stanley, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Chris McVeigh, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Alicia Lyford, Natasha Eckart, Allison Fayle, Patrick Whelley, Susanne Gann, Allen Gilbert, Jarrod Weiss, Lisa Hanna, Elizabeth Brown, Jeanie Phillips, Caitlin Howansky, Julia Pritchard, Mckalyn Leclerc, Alicia Lyford, Chani Waterhouse, David Delcore, Ellen Knoedler, Daniel Keeney, Jen Miller-Arsenault, John Riley, Michelle Ksepka, Jaiel Pulskamp, Becca Tatistcheff

1. Call to Order: Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Discussion/Action

2.1. Configuration Study Information Research and Data about Programs: The committee reviewed the document *Norms for Equitable Data Analysis*.

2.2. Data/Information

2.2.1. Draft Presentation: Stephen Dellinger Pate shared the slide deck: *Configuration Study: Data and Research Presentations, August - September 2024*. In the presentation, he reviewed the definitions of EQUITY and INCLUSION. The presentation included data around current staffing. Jen Miller-Arsenault reviewed the slide regarding Curriculum at WCUUSD. Julia Pritchard reviewed the slide regarding Special Education Service Delivery. Chris McVeigh asked for some clarification about para educator support and the concept of “increased investment in highly skilled staff.” Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that it would be helpful to know what it might look like more specifically to reconfigure special education staffing. Alicia Lyford spoke about “small group” in IEP services in a small school that might in fact be provided 1:1 because of student population, and how this relates to efficiency. Daniel Keeney asked about the worry that has been expressed that behavioral concerns will

increase as student population increases. Julia Pritchard spoke about incoming middle schoolers at U-32 who find a larger peer group and flourish with more kids who are “like minded.” Jen Miller-Arsenault spoke about the importance of Social Emotional Curriculum, as well as academic curriculum. Elizabeth Brown spoke about how Act 76 will affect the 4-year-old preschool population. Patrick Whelley asked whether the state provides guidelines around appropriate length of bus ride. Michelle Ksepka stated that there are no guidelines but that Washington Central had created a transportation policy indicating no longer than two hours, combined. Stephen Dellinger-Pate stated that the bus company is currently working on estimates about what transportation routes would look like under new configuration (but not ready for tonight’s meeting.) Some discussion followed about middle school configuration with grades 6-9. (Especially related to the downstairs being separate from upstairs at U-32.) A slide had been provided: Nursing Time Allocation, with minutes per student as well as EQS: Education Quality Standards.

2.2.2. Previous presentation - 8/19/24

2.2.3. Resources

2.2.3.1. FAQ

2.2.3.2. Class Size

2.2.3.3. School Size

2.2.3.4. Education Quality Standards (EQS) - Current, Updated (to take effect July 1, 2025)

2.2.4. Criteria: Jeanie Phillips asked whether there is more information needed for tomorrow’s board meeting when considering the criteria document that had been established. Daniel Keeney asked for more detail about preschool staffing patterns, including after-school programs. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked for clarification about curriculum and mixed grades. Daniel Keeney stated that it would be helpful to have a slide that returns to the concept of “Does configuration increase our ability to retain existing opportunities or does configuration suggest that we might be able to expand opportunities, or does configuration pose a threat to opportunities?...” Chris McVeigh spoke about the need to sustain over time; there is a never-ending increase in cost over time - how will expanded opportunities be maintained?

3. Future Agenda Items

3.1. Next meeting: 9/16/24 - Budget Information

The WCUUSD Board meets tomorrow (9-4-24), and some of the information from tonight will be updated as discussed. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that budget information related to reconfiguration would be provided at the 9/16/24 committee meeting. Natasha Eckart stated that we are still only operating based on the options that were brought forward in April. We had stated that we are going to get feedback from our communities to consider other options. Are we only going to consider these options? Flor Diaz Smith stated that at the last board meeting, we agreed on criteria and the models that are presented are based on the criteria. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that the model of Berlin as an early education center is problematic with relation to criteria around transportation, so that is realistically off the table. He stated that if other options are suggested, he could provide some models/ responses to those. Natasha Eckart stated, though, that we continue to consider only the model with three elementary schools. If this is, the route we are taking then it is important to say that. If we are considering other options, then we are running out

of time while we continue to dive deeper into this model under discussion. Daniel Keeney reminded of some of the other options that had been brought up, e.g. Community Schools. Ursula Stanley suggested that we bring some of the other ideas - e.g. magnet school, community school, K-8, Berlin as early Ed center - put them into a table and compare them with the criteria that has been established. Natasha Eckart suggested, if three elementary schools are brought forward, and Worcester votes to not close the school (which seems likely), we need to be thinking about what that might look like. (E.g. operating a fourth school.)

4. **Public Comment:** Chani Waterhouse: appreciates the information shared tonight. She asked about some gaps: special education - what does the data show about whether students receiving special education services in a slightly larger school are performing better? How much more efficiency and opportunities for specialization can we expect? She shared some anecdotal observations about multi-age classrooms at Doty. Regarding opportunities gained/ opportunities lost - small schools offer many opportunities - volunteerism, and all-school play. She stated that access to sports by bus does not necessarily increase participation. Jaiel Pulskamp: re: class sizes, has there been any modeling around class sizes for the coming years? How will we address fluctuations in class sizes? At one point, will the classrooms become too small? Would like to see long-term planning regarding population growth. Caitlin Howansky spoke about her personal experience in a small cohort of students in elementary school, and how losing that when she moved to high school was a struggle. She asked about a 3-year-old preschool - would this be offered? If so, will this be a full-day program in combination with Community Connections? This affects families (including family planning). Chris McVeigh suggested that we get information from the Town of Berlin about their work related to housing construction.
5. **Adjourn:** Ursula Stanley moved to adjourn at 6:31 p.m. Seconded by Zach Sullivan, this motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Committee Recording Secretary