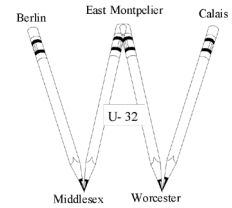


# Washington Central Unified Union School District

*WCUUSD exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.*

---

1130 Gallison Hill Road  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
Phone (802) 229-0553  
Fax (802) 229-2761



## Washington Central Unified Union School District School Board Meeting 10.1.24 6:15-9:15 PM Calais Elementary 321 Lightning Ridge Rd. Plainfield, VT

**Present:** Superintendent Dellinger-Pate, Flor Diaz Smith, Ursula Stanley, Natasha Eckart, Chris McVeigh, Julia Hewitt, Elizabeth Brown, Daniel Keeney, Zach Sullivan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Patrick Whelley, Amelia Contrada, Michelle Ksepka, Mckalyn Leclerc, Jonathan Goddard, Susanne Gann, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Alicia Lyford, Gillian Fuqua, Julia Pritchard, Celia Guggemos, Karoline May, Becca Taitischeff, Jarrod Weiss

Chani Waterhouse, Rachel S, Alex Wheeler, Ainsley, Alena Berube, Amy, Andrea Tucker, Austin Cate, Bekah Mandell, Buffy Langlois, Carrie Fitz, Chelsea, David Delcore, David Lawrence, Ellen Knoedler, Emilia Harlow, Emily A, Felicia Weeks, Hillary Paquet, Isla Stalburg, Jeff Dean, K Joy, Laura Giammusso, Dell Waterhouse, Caitlin Howansky, Lila Richardson, Lisa Hanna, M McLane, M Purchase, Robert M, Trina, Adrian Wade-Keeney, Noah Weinstein, Robert M, Honi Bean Barrett, Deborah Bloom, Michael Sherwin, Leigh Garrity, Bekah Mandel, Rachel, Lauralea Curavoo, Allen Gilbert, Andrea Tucker, April Davis, Arlyn Brucculi, Blakely Gilmore, Carter Stowell, Daisy Scarzello, Lauren Chaveau, Callie Weller, Dorinda, Ellen Knoedler, Hannah Brown, Hans Melhus, Holly Weiss, Jenna Howard, John Riley, Marc Mihaly, Maria Melekos, Marianne Miller, Mark Brown, Michael Duane, Michele Hill, Will Baker, Veronica Eldred, Susan DeForge, Justin Kenney, Steve Coteus, Sonya Rhodes, Samantha Jackson, Ralph, Catherine McCauley-Flippin, J Franz, Jane Dudley, Jamie Bohn, Jaiel Pulskamp, Megan McLane, Christine Pollard, Lauren Chabot, Cynthia & Mack Gardner-Morse, John Kaeding, Toni Kaeding, Rosemary Leach, Anya Skibbie, Dell Waterhouse, Chani Waterhouse, Bodo Carey, Rachel, Alan Erdossy, Alice, Alison Novak, Allison Fayle, Andy A, Auntie Nnany, Avram Patt, Beth Parker, Barbara, Brian Bailey, Carly Humpke, Cathay Donohue, Claudia Welch, Dena Brown, Dena Cox, Denise Roy, Diane Mackay, Erin Mullaney, Ginny Callan, Holly Taylor, Jamie Moorby, Janet Chambers, Jen Campbell, Jill Koger, Jill, JL, Jordan Nobler, Kate McCann, Kathryn Biggam, Kerri Zurowski, K Brown, Laura Giammusso, Laura Lafaille, Laura Maciera, Lei, Linda Gray, Lucretia Bruce-Guajardo, Margaret Thompson, Mark Powell, Mary Carpenter, Melanie Kehne, Mimi Hill, Maggie McGlynn, Patrick, M Richardson, Nancy G, Pelk, Rachel Bliss, Rachel Hernandez, Reenie DeGeus, Rolf, Sarah Davis, Scott Hess, Scott Starr, Shelby Quinn, Sonja Andrews, Sonya Rhodes, Stephanie Kaplan, Steve Coteus, Tom Hamlin, Tony Kaeding, Victor Ehly, Melanie Webster, Meredith Cowart, Ashley Moore, Beth Stern, Chelsea, Elizabeth Copeland, Emilia Harlow, Erica Zimmerman, Faith, Jade Walker, Jennifer Taylor, Joanne Campisi, J Shore, Kayla Becker, Kerri Zurowski, Lindsay Wilson, Martha Lange, Meredith Crandall, Neha Shukla, Nora Blaine, Rachael Bliss, Richard Maizell, Ross Lieblappin, Sam, Tyler Smith, Margaret MacLean, Rory McLane, Katie Spring, Sabra Fairbank,

Felicia Weeks, Paul Bliss, Charlotte Hanna Bassage, Scott Bassage, Rose Pelchuck, Hanna Howard, Mack Gardner-Morse, Andy Seaman, Deb Bogart, John Brabant, Pam DeAndrea, Sara Bell, Craig Lyon, Mary Alice Proffitt, Bob Martin, Sharon, Kathleen, Rachel Seelig, Tom Frazier, Ross, Fred Jones, (many community members in person)

**1. Call to Order: Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m.**

**2. Welcome**

**2.1. Adjustments to the Agenda**

**2.2. Reception of Guests:** Flor Diaz Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting, she spoke about the duty of the board, and the purpose of tonight is meeting.

**2.3. Public Comments-Time limit strictly enforced, see note:** A member from the public stated that item 4.1 on the agenda should be restated/ rewritten, as it indicates that we are going to vote to close Calais and Doty schools as if it is a foregone conclusion. Katy Spring: stated that she does not believe the board and administration have made a case that closing Doty is in the best interest of the town, the families, the children and WCUUSD as a whole. She read from a statement indicating that the board and the superintendent had not fairly considered Doty School in this deliberation. Sabra Fairbank: asked how many representatives there are from the towns that will be taking the students of Calais and Worcester. She does not see fair representation across the board. Caitlin Howansky asked whether the board has shown that the three elementary school model will improve student outcomes, and she read from the criteria that the board had stated regarding creating this configuration. Naomi H: expressed deep concerns about the equity in the recommendations that the board presents, especially around low-income families and equity. She spoke about per pupil costs and how Doty has addressed small school issues and has operated with a comparatively favorable per pupil cost.

**3. Configuration Presentation:** Flor Diaz Smith introduced Jess DeCarolis, who shared a slide deck regarding *Community Schools in Vermont*. Craig Lyon: A member of the public interrupted the presentation and stated that they are here to talk about the board's proposal to close Doty School and Calais School. Ms. DeCarolis completed the presentation and thanked the board and the audience. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared a slide deck: *WCUUSD FY 26 Configuration Updates and Other Information*. He invited some questions for clarification from the board. Amelia Contrada asked for some clarification around preschool funding and around transportation. Daniel Keeney stated that the transportation information did not answer questions that he had asked specifically, for example, would the bus routes be longer. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that according to estimates at this time, travel times would not be longer than present. Chris McVeigh asked whether there is an idea of when a bus driver might be available. He asked what the cost of a bus is - Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that the cost is approximately \$400+ per day for an additional bus. Chris McVeigh asked for clarification around Pre-K classroom space with 6th grade classroom space (without 6th grade moving to U32). Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether there is the ability to take a closer look at bus routes and possibly consolidate. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that we started this year with two fewer buses already so we have done some consolidation; he restated the bus driver shortage at this time. Some discussion followed around bus routes at Doty. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that we continue to address this. Julia Hewitt asked for some clarification around 6th grade students going to U-32. Will teachers at U-32 be prepared to teach these students and provide the same level of universal attention to students as they receive at their elementary schools?

Superintendent Dellinger-Pate explained some of the changes in enrollment and configuration at U-32 that allow for accommodation of 6th grade students. Julia Hewitt asked for the data to support this assertion. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate explained that this had been provided in a previous presentation.

**3.1. Public Comment:** Mimi Hill expressed concern about the community of Worcester. She stated that Doty is part of the immediate downtown community; closing the school would be like pulling a front tooth. She stated that no one has spoken about what happens to a building after it closes. She stated that Worcester could not afford the upkeep of the building or the renovation of the building. She stated that this is a case where the poorest community gets the hardest hit. Felicia Weeks asked how closing of a rural school would save money for the district. She cited research that showed there is no savings. She stated that families often leave the town; she expressed nervousness about changing the school environment for her child and she indicated that all of the parents present want what is best for their children. Allen Gilbert shared an article about school closures and the impact that became known in the aftermath. He asked board members to consider how they vote tonight - it is such an event and it will become part of the feelings of the board members about how children are educated. He stated that the board is not thinking in big enough terms for budgets going forward. Commit toward merging with Montpelier, specifically at the high school level. Do not waste time closing schools that serve their communities well. Cole Bliss spoke about his family having sought a home in Calais, and compared with his experiences of his children attending other schools. There is no evidence of people from merged districts who are happy with the outcome. He asked the board to please not close the small town schools. Richard Kehne stated that he does not support this proposal. He stated that a single configuration of a larger school might have a larger impact. He does not think it is worth the impact that it will have on the communities. Lisa Hanna stated that the presentation around Community Schools was poorly timed and indicates that the board is not prepared to make this decision tonight. She asked, if Doty were to keep its school open - if you send 6th graders to U32, will this impact the configuration at Doty, with Pre-K through 5. Charlotte Hanna Bassage expressed concern about the very limited search or solutions around declining enrollment. She asked for creative solutions; she stated that she has not been provided financial information to consider these creative solutions. If you want to save money, bring the high school students from the flood plain (Montpelier) up to the top of the hill. That would save money and make sense. She stated that this was a limited consideration of alternatives; not a good job. Sonja Andrews spoke about when Calais Elementary School first opened. She noted that the tax savings from the proposed configuration is miniscule. She asked the board to come up with more solutions that are creative to what is a crisis. Hanna Howard spoke about the challenges to the Worcester residents (for example, taking on the upkeep of the school building.) She stated that some people see this proposal as systemic classism. She noted the anxiety to the community, families, children, and teachers. She asked what the consequences from dragging out these debates are. She asked the board to acknowledge that the case has not been made, and to move on to a more creative solution. A member in the community asked at what time the board expects to deliberate. Flor Diaz Smith stated that in approximately 15 minutes. She is trying to honor all of the community members that are present and who want to provide community input. (time now 7:35 p.m.) Mack Gardner-Morse asked why we are considering closing Calais and Doty when Rumney is the school with the largest decline in enrollment; he stated that this is not fair. Andy Seaman spoke about the value of Doty as it is, as a

community school. He stated that the board is moving too fast; this is a mistake we need to slow down. Deb Bogart spoke about the value of students connecting with their community. She does not agree with sending sixth graders to U32; this is not protecting the innocence of childhood. The world is filled with too much information; we need to “nest” with our young children. Pam DeAndrea asked the board to consider thinking outside of the box. She spoke about Act46 when we were discussing consolidation; we heard about all of the benefits that would come from the consolidation (e.g. a gifted program). She stated that closing the small schools would have a great negative impact on young children. Catherine Coteus spoke as a mother of a Pre-K student. She shared the negative impact of moving her preschool child to Calais school - this has not been a good change; she shared that there are several children who wear noise canceling headphones because it is so overwhelming. Sara Bell stated that Doty School already has a Community School experience. She shared that she had spoken with Flor Diaz Smith about change, and she felt that there was not room to hear other voices. She has felt that many of the meetings have not felt open to really hearing the community input. She stated that taking resources from the neediest communities is not equitable. She asked the board to consider what is really driving this decision because it does not seem to be money. Craig Lyon apologized for his outburst earlier. He stated that we are proud to be members of the small towns. He expressed gratitude for the crowd that is present tonight, expressing love for their communities and schools. A Doty student spoke about the likely impact of the closure of Doty. She stated that Doty is a small school in a small town, in Vermont, a small state. Flor Diaz Smith read aloud a comment from a community member from a neighboring community. He spoke about the challenge of smaller classes. He wondered if we were making a decision based on what is best for children versus what is best for the community. He stated that there is potential in joining resources; he asked the board to consider all perspectives. Scott Bassage stated that young children need to be educated close to home. Older students might benefit from being in a larger class size; but younger children need to be close to home. He stated that he believes affordable housing will be coming in the near future and this will affect enrollment. Mary Alice Profitt stated that the state of Vermont has a viability issue. We are one of the whitest and oldest states in America. We are not having this discussion in a vacuum. We are at a place where we need leaders who will be direct. Vermonters will step up to the plate and do what is needed. What is the real issue? The community is ready to solve the problem. We need more housing, more diverse communities. She stated that we are ready to do what is needed. We need less “value talk” and more direct talk about what is needed. The only constant in life is change, and we are willing to change as long as we have information. Allison stated that data is what we need to rely on, and we do not have good data. She stated that it is progressive to offer sports opportunities to children and offer transportation. She asked people to consider what is best for students, for taxpayers, for the convenience of parents/ families. Marilyn stated that Worcester may be a poor town but we are a rich community. Lucretia Bruce-Guajardo stated that she moved from Texas to Calais for the school systems. She stated that one of the largest barriers is attracting people to move to Vermont and raise their families here. She stated that closing a small school has an impact on that. Bob Martin - asked how much it would cost taxpayers to maintain the Doty School building. He stated, if the town takes the building over, how much it is going to cost the town to pay the school for money that has been invested into the building. He asked whether there is a capital plan. Sharon (East Montpelier) spoke about her experience at a small school. She asked the board to take more time and think about solutions that are more creative. Kathleen stated that the current experiment that is taking place (Pre-K and kindergarten configuration at Middlesex and Worcester) is creating a hard experience for the

youngest children. She asked the board to put a lot of thought and creativity into the solution. John Brabant reiterated the previous comment about seventh grade at U-32 (Regarding the proposal to send sixth graders to U-32). He spoke about exposure to marijuana at U-32. He asked the board to slow the decision making down and think creatively. Chani Waterhouse spoke about Doty's lowest per pupil spending, despite being the smallest school. Our own data shows that in the past, our larger elementary school have spent more per pupil. Michele Hill stated that, according to our own informal count of projected Doty enrollment, the draft that is shared seems low. She stated that economies of scales rarely happen with school closures. She asked to gather the best possible information about per pupil spending at each school, both now and projected into the future. She asked the board to bring in an independent reviewer to provide confidence that we have the most reliable data. Rachel Seelig stated that moving forward to close these schools is an act of fear. She stated that the people present tonight are acting with courage. This process does not encourage trust; she expressed disappointment in the process. She asked that the board vote no on closing the schools. Dell Waterhouse shared some of the ideas that have been suggested throughout this process. She suggested reviewing class sizes at U32; she suggested income-generating ideas such as childcare or early childhood services at U32. She suggested considering merging with Montpelier. Tom Frazier (from Roxbury) suggested that the towns of Calais and Worcester take advantage of their right to vote against closure of their schools. He shared the experience in Roxbury following the school closure. He stated that the friendships of students and parents that are formed, last forever. He stated that Roxbury is going to have to spend at least \$60K per year to maintain the school building until a decision is made about what to do with it. Ross shared that his kindergartener has had to attend three different schools thus far in his schooling because of the changes in configuration. He thanked the board for the opportunity to share voices tonight. He stated that all of the statements tonight about the value of small schools are true of all of the schools. He asked the board to respond to what has been heard tonight. Fred Jones asked the board, do you have enough information? It seems not from his perspective. Have you been creative about processing all of the ideas that have been shared? If not, it is not time to make such a decision.

#### 4. Board Operations

**4.1. Configuration Vote to Close Worcester Memorial and Calais Elementary: Ursula Stanley moved to close Calais Elementary School and cease operation of the building for providing direct instruction to students, effective June 30, 2025. Seconded by Zach Sullivan.** Discussion: Diane Nichols-Fleming asked for clarification. Flor Diaz Smith shared that legal counsel has provided guidance - the board should take action regarding closing each of the two schools, and then vote for verbiage on the ballot. Chris McVeigh proposed to change the language to move to put a ballot to the community. It is not the authority of the board to close a school. It is the town's vote. Zach Sullivan clarified that this board action reflects what is in the articles of agreement- this is step one in the process; step two is to put it to the voters of the town. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that, as a board we have not decided which configuration we are in support of, so she does not understand why we are voting to take action. Flor Diaz Smith stated that we had agreed that tonight is the last possible time to take action in time for a vote as planned. This motion would allow

the board to discuss and then vote in favor or not. Natasha Eckart stated that she has felt that this has been a rushed timeline and she has expressed this all along. Dan Keeney suggested that the motion be rescinded and that the board take action on a singular configuration. Ursula Stanley expressed that the intention is to take action and then to allow the towns to vote as per town ballots. Patrick Whelley reiterated that we created this timeline because it was the last possible date to have this on the ballot for Election Day. He advocated that we have taken a great deal of time to gather information from our community. If we reflect on the core values of rigorous instruction, a sense of belonging, and equity, along with all of the input from the communities, he recommends that the board not suggest closing a school and to not suggest a configuration that moves from five elementary schools to three. **Ursula Stanley respectfully rescinded her motion; Zach Sullivan agreed with this revocation. Dan Keeney moved that the WCUUSD formally adopt the configuration model of closure of Calais Elementary School and Doty Memorial School, and moving 6th grade to U32. Seconded by Zach Sullivan.** Julia Hewitt stated that the configuration model is what the members of administration have presented, and that she is strongly against this configuration. Mckalyn Leclerc expressed concerns about equity with this proposed configuration. She expressed frustration that she has not received specific numbers around tax dollars/ implications, except for what the community members of Doty came forward with tonight by their own calculations. Natasha Eckart expressed that she is not in support of this motion. She has been asking for a long time to consider other, creative models. She has been frustrated with the process and she does not feel that we have been presented with enough accurate data to deliberate. Chris McVeigh asked whether there has been any discussion about whether the configuration that is recommended will be imposed regardless of the vote, maintaining one class at each school. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that the administration has had no formal discussion about this. Chris McVeigh stated that there is a symbiotic relationship between students, their school, and the community. It matters to students and to the environment in which they live. He stated that he appreciates the comment from tonight indicating that there is hard work ahead, but we (the communities) are up for it. He does not think the current proposed configuration is in the best interest of the WCUUSD as a whole, or in the best interest of the students in his town of Calais. Michelle Ksepka stated that this has been a difficult process; she stated that every student has a unique experience. She stated that she would rather give the towns a chance to vote. Amelia Contrada stated that she is in strong support of the proposed configuration. She stated that the board has heard the plea for more time; she agrees that more time is needed. However, we cannot ignore what is going on at the state level; she spoke about the failure of school budgets across the state last year. She asked the board to consider this financially responsible proposed configuration. She spoke about the issue of equity and classism. She stated that the configuration as proposed lowers education spending for everyone in the school district. Safeguarding the resources that we have, we can and will meet high standards. She expressed trust in our School Board Chair, our Superintendent, our school board members, and our communities to work together in the best interest of our students. Elizabeth Brown stated that we are in unprecedented times regarding budgets, financial pressure and the impacts on families. She stated that at this time she still has many questions and does not feel prepared to vote in support of this configuration. She wants the board to walk away knowing (1) we made the best decision for all of the children in our communities, and (2) that the decision is intentional. She is excited to come up with a solution that minimizes the negative impact and maximizes the benefit, for all students at WCUUSD. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that she is not in support of the proposed configuration. She spoke about our core values. The reason that she does not support this

configuration is because we have asked for specific financials and have not been provided clear information. We also have not received information about expanded opportunities. She is not clear how we came to the decision to propose closing these two particular schools. She stated that, while we do need to make some changes, we do not have enough information yet to decide how to move forward with what changes. Daniel Keeney stated that he came into this process in favor of the configuration; he truly feels that it is the best approach. He stated that he continues to be disappointed in the articulation of the benefits. He would like to imagine three new school communities coming out of this process. He does not think it is fair to ask the voters to vote without specific information about benefits from the proposed configuration. Patrick Whelley would like to consider the true concept of equity, celebrating the things that might be different from one building to the next, identifying and removing barriers. He stated that we have not fully fleshed out the benefits and he would like to focus on this over the next months or years. He suggested keeping the configuration that we have and focus on celebrating the resources that we have and how to lift up each student. Jonathan Goddard stated that doing things too quickly could lead to worse outcomes. His viewpoint is that this current configuration proposal is premature. There is much that we do not know - one being, what is the legislature going to do? He is against closing any school right now. Ursula Stanley stated that she is in support of this configuration. She spoke about the experience of students with special needs in the smaller schools who are provided 1:1 services when small group might be the least restrictive option. She spoke about before and after school care being understaffed. She stated that our staff is spread thin. She stated that we have heard from our administrators that the opportunities for all students will be strong. She stated that this is a difficult conversation and she has heard all of the feelings and emotions, and she would like us all to be brave for our children and assure them that change can be good. Zach Sullivan shared that it is difficult to attract and keep good staff when the school configuration from year to year is unstable. The administration is not able to be intentional in class configuration in the smallest of schools. He spoke about the value of a larger peer group. He stated that we need to be cognizant of the reality - keeping things, as they are not a choice. Do we keep five elementary schools that are forced to hollow out? Alternatively, do we want to intentionally and proactively create a configuration? He spoke about the idea to merge with Montpelier. He stated that he believes the proposed configuration puts us in a better position to negotiate this proposed merge. A vote was called. Yay: Five nay: Eight **this motion failed**. Flor Diaz Smith stated that, unless there is another motion on the table, the board would move forward in the agenda for tonight. Julia Hewitt asked whether we could move public comment to now so that the public can speak and leave earlier in the evening. Flor Dias Smith stated that the board has some business to take care of, that will be brief, and she would like to honor everyone's time.

**4.2. Ed Quality Update:** Ursula Stanley provided an update from the Ed Quality Committee. She shared with someone from the community who asked where to access resources from this committee.

#### **4.3. Board Reflection**

### **5. Policy Committee**

**5.1. First Reading for Policy Educational Philosophy:** Natasha Eckart introduced this draft of this policy, which brings together overarching student learning outcomes statement, humanity and justice coalition vision statement, and core beliefs, strategic plan, framed from

the standpoint of implementing education quality standards. Chris McVeigh asked for input from the board members. Michelle Ksepka asked whether this is required by the VSBA. Flor Diaz Smith stated that this is an outcome of our work with Greater Schools Coalition. This policy will come to the board at the next meeting for adoption.

## **6. Personnel**

**6.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE: Ursula Stanley moved to approve long-term substitute: John Dube – LTS U-32 Social Studies (.6 FTE). Seconded by Natasha Eckart, this motion carried unanimously.**

## **7. Consent Agenda**

**7.1. Approve Minutes of 9.18.24, 9.25.24: Patrick Whelley moved to approve these minutes as presented. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.**

## **8. Future Agenda Items**

**8.1. Board Resolution Discussion**

**9. Board Reflection:** Daniel Keeney stated that he has concerns about capacity issues as a board and as an administration, while trying to develop a budget. He suggested considering enlisting an outside agency to help with this work. He spoke about, for example, information about after school care and early childhood care. He stated that he does not want the board to drop the ball. Ursula Stanley stated that she is disappointed in us as a board. We could have put this out to the communities to vote. Mckalyn Leclerc expressed that needs to be creativity and coming together around this. She asked whether there is a way to invite community input in a larger way; there are many people who are engaged and wanting to help with the problem solving. She stated that the presentation on Community Schools was ill timed; she realizes that people have been asking about Community Schools and she is excited about this but feels that it was ill timed. Patrick Whelley appreciates the thoughtfulness that the board has brought to this process; this has been very difficult and we have all lost sleep over it, and the discourse among the board has been thoughtful and civil. Elizabeth Brown echoed what Patrick had said. She stated that we do have to have change, and the clock is ticking. She wants to be sure that our constituents have clear data and information so that when they are voting, they are doing so from data driven information. She is eager to get to work and she believes there is a lot of good energy, and if we find a way to harness that energy, we will get there more quickly. Zach Sullivan echoed Ursula Stanley's sentiment about disappointment. He stated that we have been having school merger discussions for ten years. He stated that the writing has been on the wall for a long time and he worries that we are running out of runway. Flor Diaz Smith expressed appreciation to the community.

**10. Public Comment:** Community member spoke about Friends of Calais as a creative, forward thinking group. She challenged board members to not leave the meeting downtrodden; she asked the board to take some time to think more entrepreneurially about pitching the vision. She spoke about the effort on the Calais board to engage 1:1 with their constituents. She suggested that the board address public relations challenges. Noah Weinstein expressed gratitude to board members, regardless of how each voted. He stated - re: process, he does not want to "buy what you are selling." He wants the board to come to the communities and ask, "What is it you want." He invited the board and administration to a community forum in Worcester, hosted by the community. Find out from the community what they want, what they are willing to let go of,



what number are they willing to accept? He asked, at community forums, have food (even potluck). More people will come. He would like the administration to track per pupil cost per School every year. He expressed support for the idea of having an independent auditor or outside facilitator to help with the process, especially through the lens of equity. Community member stated that it sounded like the board was not “sold” as a whole. It was concerning to hear that there is a lack of information shared amongst the board. He asked the board to listen to the message that was sent; embrace the opportunity to think outside the box, come up with another solution, and move forward. Dell Waterhouse thanked the board for the hard work. She stated that she would like to hear more from Jess regarding Community School. Callie Weller stated that she loved the original idea about an early education/ childcare center. It is what we need, what Vermont needs, what our families need. Caitlin Howansky thanked the board and indicated that the community is ready and eager to work together with the board going forward. She asked the board to consider what messaging should go to our young students - stability is important, going forward. She asked the board to please provide specific data. Another community member thanked the board and expressed support for the idea of external resources. Is this something that needs to be elevated? We need more resources as a school board, as administration, to figure this out. She stated that the board has a pivotal responsibility and she encouraged the board to work with the state legislature. Another community member expressed appreciation and stated that it is the responsibility of the community to remain engaged in the process and not simply show up on the night of an important vote.

**11. Adjourn: Michelle Ksepka moved; Daniel Keeney seconded, to adjourn at 10:05 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary