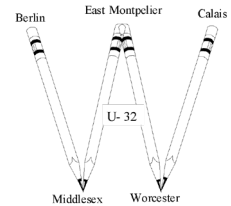


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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 Policy Committee
Minutes
10.10.24
5:15-6:45 PM
Central Office, 1130 Gallison Hill Rd. Montpelier
Via Video Conference**

Present: Chris McVeigh, Natasha Eckart, Amelia Contrada, Superintendent Dellinger-Pate, Rebecca Tatistcheff, Elizabeth Brown

- 1. Call to Order:** Chris McVeigh called the meeting to order at 5:19 p.m. No change to the agenda.
- 2. Approve Minutes of 9.11.24:** Natasha Eckart moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Amelia Contrada. Discussion: Chris McVeigh noted that we had stated that we would like to have student representatives speak at the next WCUUSD Board meeting about their responses to the cell phone policy. **This motion carried unanimously.**
- 3. Policy Work plan:** Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared some of the changes in this updated work plan. Chris McVeigh invited questions or input from committee members. Policies will be assembled on the website and procedures will be posted side-by-side with the corresponding policies. Chris McVeigh asked whether we should wait until this organization is complete before we bring this to the attention of others. Amelia Contrada suggested that it makes sense to wait until the coordination is complete - this might help to avoid confusion. Steven Dellinger-Pate suggested that when we have a substantial amount of them coordinated, it makes sense - it might continue to be a work in progress, and there are not always separate procedures for each policy. Chris McVeigh suggested having a check-in at every-other-committee-meeting, to update the status of the readiness to share this info (re the posting of procedures alongside policies and bring to the attention of others).

4. Policies for Review

4.1. Educational Philosophy Instruction: Natasha Eckart noted that the suggestion had been made to spell out IRIS in this policy; she will do this before sharing this draft with the full board for consideration. Typos: pg. 5: space between “connections and among” and between “essential and to” Very last sentence: Chris McVeigh stated, is this a “present” statement or is this an “aspiration.” Natasha Eckart stated that this comes directly from the core beliefs document. Natasha Eckart indicated that much of the document are “aspirational” statements. Chris McVeigh suggested substituting “must be” for “are.” Amelia Contrada stated that this might be editing the core beliefs, which were created and adopted after a great deal of work and collaboration. She suggested editing the introduction sentence: change “we believe” to “we commit” or “we uphold” or something less redundant. Agreed on “we commit.” Some discussion followed – is this an aspirational statement/philosophy statement or is this a policy? Chris McVeigh expressed unease around lack of clarity around the difference between the two. This policy will go to the WCUUSD Board with changes as discussed.

4.2. Teaching and Learning about Controversial Issues: (the title of this policy was changed.) Steven Dellinger-Pate will check with Melissa Tuller and find an appropriate numbering for this policy within the current system. Natasha had provided an updated draft of this policy. She stated that at the Coalition meeting this week, some discussion followed around the upcoming election and the question of how our schools are preparing students for civil discourse regarding the results of the election. She stated that it would be good to have this policy in place before the election, to guide educators and staff in facilitating conversations, etc. She asked whether there is a way to move this policy quickly enough through board readings to have it in place at the time of the election. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that it is possible; this has been done in the past. Principal Tatistcheff stated that she is working with some staff to create guidance around facilitating discussions and learning even now up to the election. She stated that there is student civic engagement at U-32 (as per usual.) She is not seeing tensions or signs of concern rising to the levels that she has seen in previous positions for previous election cycles. It is not so much about people (candidates) as much about policies and stances - and we want to be sure that these civil debates can take place, across disagreement, in an informed way. She stated that this is happening in classrooms. Natasha Eckart stated that this is why it would be important to “fast track” this policy so that educators have something to “back” them. Elizabeth Brown stated that she believes expediting this policy will be important. The underlying tension right now might not be significant but as the election gets closer tension might become more intense. She asked Principal Tatistcheff to keep the board apprised. She expressed the desire to find ways for students to have conversations that are respectful and focused on the values and overall ideas of each party, versus specific–people-centered. Amelia Contrada stated that she would like to focus on the policy at this time and not get into the weeds of the procedure just yet. She stated that this policy as it has been drafted is excellent and comprehensive. She shared a typo: an upper case “T” versus lower case - Natasha took note of that edit. Principal Tatistcheff spoke about the importance of providing structure and teaching around public discourse with students, to perpetuate healthy dialogue, with a focus on the issues. She asked, for clarification around the statement that “students have the following rights...” Natasha Eckart stated that this language (around “rights”) came directly from the Greater

Schools Partnership framework, and the bulleted list came more from the IRIS framework. She stated that the intent is that students can have agency in bringing these bulleted tenets to the discussion, and teachers too can bring teaching related to them: the expectation that students can be actively engaged in this learning; they are not passive learners with teachers strictly “teaching to...” Amelia Contrada stated that she feels that the introductory sentence makes it clear that it is two-fold, both student driven and teacher driven/ supported. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate suggested eliminating the language “students have the following rights.” Elizabeth Brown agrees with that suggestion; she stated that she believes using the term “rights” creates some confusion. Principal Tatistcheff asked if there is a space to make a more clear connection between the GSP focus on engaging in civil discourse, and the four bullet points. How do those bullet points affect civil discourse? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that he believes that falls under procedure. She stated that she does not see these as controversial topics and she wonders where is the through line in the IRIS document that connects to controversial topics. Elizabeth Brown agreed that the verbiage does not directly speak to controversial topics. Amelia Contrada stated that she believes some of the language in the bulleted items was formed by the work with the Humanities and Justice Coalition. Chris McVeigh asked whether Principal Tatistcheff feels that the bulleted items belong more in the procedure, and do they limit the scope of the policy when included in the body of the policy versus procedure. His interpretation is that this policy does not apply specifically to these four bulleted domains - is broader. Elizabeth Brown asked what else might be added to the bulleted list. Is there a way to bring more into this without creating an extensive list? Chris McVeigh suggested that we make sure it reads as a broad-based policy and is not limited to the four bulleted topics. Amelia Contrada stated that she reads the first two paragraphs as broad and she believes this allows administrators to create procedures as they see fit. She suggested that we discuss this policy later during the meeting when Natasha is able to join. When Natasha returned, the discussion continued around connecting the four bulleted points with controversial topics. Natasha Eckart stated that one of the tenets of the language in the policy was to get away from listing “controversial issues,” as this in itself would become a controversial issue. Principal Taitstcheff suggested moving the third paragraph to the last paragraph. Chris McVeigh suggested adding language about the policy goal - making it broad. He would like to create a closing clause that does not limit to the rights of the state. Natasha Eckart suggested that she and Superintendent Dellinger-Pate edit this policy based on the discussion tonight, and that the committee tweak the document online and the WCUUSD Board will have a first reading at their next meeting. Chris McVeigh suggested some changes to some of the language. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate will try to get this updated version into the next board packet; if needed it will be distributed at the meeting.

- 4.3. **Conflict of Interest – District:** Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that there is a conflict of interest statement for the board, but there is not one for employees of the district. There had been a question of whether we should create a policy related to employees. Chris McVeigh asked whether there would be distinction between conflict of interest related to board members versus employees. Steven Dellinger-Pate will gather materials to consider this policy at a future meeting.
- 4.4. **F45 Fundraising:** Committee members discussed whether this version of the policy reflects the discussion (extensive discussion) which had taken place in the past year, for example, around the purchase of jackets, clothing items, etc. There had also been discussion

about the Booster Club - Steven Dellinger-Pate thinks that this policy is updated to reflect that deliberation. Chris McVeigh asked whether there is a form to complete in order to carry out fundraising. Does the form align with the specifics of this policy? Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that when the board approves this policy, it would be checked against procedure to be sure they align. Amelia Contrada suggested, at this time, with ten minutes left, to move to the Nutrition and Wellness Policy. The committee agreed.

4.5. C20 Student Conduct and Discipline (VSBA updated to C15): tabled

4.6. C9 Nutrition & Wellness: Steven Dellinger-Pate shared that there have been some updates to the language for this policy, in the latest model policy from VT Agency of Education. Amelia Contrada suggested, since this is guided by the AOE, we should bring this model policy to the WCUUSD Board for first reading. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that some of the schools were audited concerning food service, and one of the questions is whether we have a policy in place based on the AOE model policy. He stated that he would find the audit language, which can guide the policy work. This policy will come back to the committee for further consideration before going to the board.

5. Future Agenda Items

5.1. Next Meeting: November 13, 2024

6. Adjourn: The committee adjourned by consensus at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Grace, Committee Recording Secretary