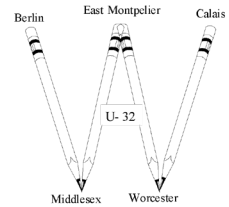


# Washington Central Unified Union School District

*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  
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**Washington Central Unified Union  
School Board Meeting  
11.6.24 6:15-9:15 PM  
Doty Memorial School  
24 Calais Road  
Worcester, VT 05682**

## **Virtual Meeting Information**

**<https://tinyurl.com/bduhp355>**

**Meeting ID: 849 3594 9997**

**Password: 297072**

**Dial by Your Location: 1-929-205-6099**

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1. Call to Order  | 6:15 PM    |
| 2. Welcome  | 15 minutes |
| 2.1. Adjustments to the Agenda  |            |
| 2.2. Reception of Guests  |            |
| 2.3. Public Comments-Time limit strictly enforced, see note                         |            |
| 3. Presentation: Math Program   | 20 minutes |
| 4. Presentation: Instructional and Administrative Frameworks for Budget Development | 40 minutes |
| 5. Community Input/Dialogue   | 30 minutes |
| 6. Board Operations (Discussion/Action)   | 15 minutes |
| 6.1. Board Learning: Improving School Board Effectiveness (Read Chapter 1) – pg. 4  |            |
| 6.2. Communication & Engagement Plan  |            |
| 7. Consent Agenda(Discussion/Action)  | 5 minutes  |
| 7.1. Approve Minutes of 10.16.24 – pg. 26   |            |

- |                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| 8. Future Agenda Items           | 5 minutes  |
| 8.1. Board Resolution Discussion |            |
| 9. Board Reflection              | 10 minutes |
| 10. Public Comment               | 15 minutes |
| 11. Adjourn                      |            |

NOTE: To ensure the board has time to conduct its business, the board will adhere to a strict 1.5 minute public comment time limit per person. Microphones will be muted when time is up. If there is not enough time on the agenda for all members of the public wishing to comment at the beginning of the meeting, there is additional public comment at the end of the meeting.

**WCUUSD Board Norms - Adopted November 18, 2020**

- **Public input** – Notify the community about public forums and opportunities for public comment at board meetings.
- **Community involvement during regular meetings of the board** – Every meeting will include at least one opportunity for public comment. Public comment is an opportunity for board members to listen and ask clarifying questions. If a board member feels a concern raised in public comment warrants further board discussion, they may request that the issue be added to a future agenda.
- **Community dialogue** – The board may periodically schedule community forums that allow for dialogue, questions and answers from the board or the district leadership team.
- **Stay on time** – Start and end on time. The chair may appoint a time-keeper.
- **All voices will be heard** – Every board member gets a chance to speak. Some topics warrant having each board member speak in turn to ensure full representation.
- **Reflection** – To allow time for reflection, the chair and agenda steering committee will plan time for complex or contentious issues to be discussed at more than one meeting before the board votes, except where a decision is urgent.
- **Announcements in reports** – Announcements from the administration will appear in the reports and not as discussion items.
- **Role of the board** – At the end of each board meeting reflect on whether the board remained focused on its policy-making and oversight role during the meeting, rather than operational details that are the responsibility of leadership team.
- **Respect each other** – Listen, allow others to be heard, share concerns, assume positive intentions, be present, and celebrate successes.

**AGENDA KEY**

| Agenda Section       | Examples                                    | Role/ Responsibility                 | Description  |
|----------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Call to Order        | n/a   | Board Chair or designee              | Formal opening to meeting. Superintendent calls to order during annual reorganization  |
| Public Comment       |   |                                      | Opportunity for public comment on items not on the agenda. Board will adhere to a strict 1.5 minute public comment time limit per person. Microphones will be muted when time is up. If there is not enough time on the agenda for all members of the public wishing to comment at the beginning of the meeting, there is additional public comment at the end of the meeting. |
| Executive Session    | Personnel<br>Student Matter<br>Negotiations |                                      | Only for discussion of items covered in VSA §313.<br>Formal actions not taken in Executive Session   |
| Reports to the Board | Superintendent/<br>COLT<br>Student Report   | Administration                       | Both regular/recurring reports and one-time reports happen here. One-time reports are determined by the Board workplan or requested by the will of the Board. Generally, reports invite clarifying questions but not formal discussion/action  |
| Committee Reports    | Finance<br>Policy<br>Education Quality      | Board                                | Chair of the committee reports on substance of most recent committee meeting. Generally, reports invite clarifying questions; any discussion or action items would be listed in the respective section of the agenda   |
| Discussion Items     |   | Board with input from administration | Items on the agenda specifically for discussion of the Board. Chair can seek input from audience during discussions. Generally not intended for action (although nothing prevents the Board from taking an action)   |
| Action Items         | Personnel<br>approvals                      | Board                                | Items formally on the agenda for Board action. Discussion can occur after a motion is on the table   |
| Consent Agenda       | Board Orders<br>Minutes                     | Board                                | Designed for items that need proforma approval and/or are sufficiently routine. Board acts on all items in the Consent agenda and does not discuss any item unless it is pulled out during Agenda Adjustments  |

# Board Leadership That Matters Most

## Lessons Learned from the Lighthouse Studies

*Mary L. Delagardelle*

### INTRODUCTION

Until recently, school boards have not typically sought or been encouraged to play an active role in instructional reform efforts leading to improved student achievement. Generally, boards and superintendents feel more comfortable leaving instructional matters solely in the hands of the professional staff. However, the increasing public demand for accountability for student learning places emphasis on the responsibility of the board, as a governing body, to participate more fully in the creation of the vision and direction for student learning. It also requires that the board monitor results of student achievement initiatives, in addition to setting policy and providing resources for improvement efforts.<sup>1</sup>

School boards are charged with approving policy decisions that affect what students learn, how students are taught, how learning is measured, how teachers are supported with professional development, how funds are focused on district priorities, and how effectively the community is engaged around student learning. While by their nature school boards are removed from the day-to-day work of teaching and learning, their policy, personnel, and budgetary decisions control the conditions that support successful teaching and learning throughout the system.

The public cry for improved achievement and accountability in public schools and the traditional lack of board involvement in issues related to student achievement create an urgent need to clearly understand and balance the leadership role of the board as it relates to improving student learning. A better understanding of how board members establish effective district priorities, how the attitudes and beliefs of the board members influence priorities, and which board actions will most likely result in a shared commitment to priorities for student learning is critical for systemic change and student achievement.<sup>2</sup>

The Lighthouse research, funded and supported by the Iowa Association of School Boards, the Iowa School Boards Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education, was a multiphase, multiyear, and multimethod study to develop understanding about the leadership role of the school board in public education.<sup>3</sup> The series of studies spanning thirteen years asked several important questions, including:

- Are school boards in high achieving districts different from boards in low achieving districts in how they approach their responsibilities?
- What are the specific actions of boards that positively affect district efforts to improve student achievement?
- What are the best practices of board-superintendent team leadership that can be learned by others?

The emerging answers to these questions, resulting from the Lighthouse studies, provide insights into the role of local school boards that matter most for improving student learning.

### ***The Concept of Proximity***

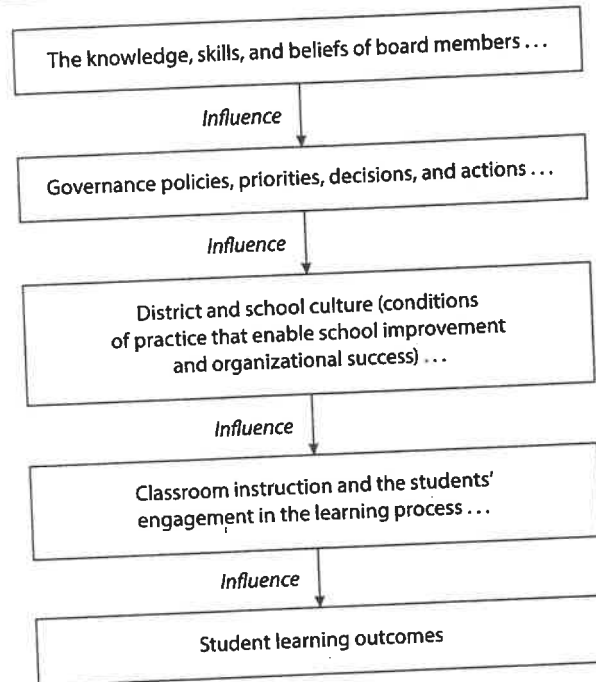
In an effort to understand how the Lighthouse study results lead to the improvement of practice embodied in these questions, it is important to introduce the concept of proximity. For many years, researchers have tried to determine the aspects of the school experience that are most likely to make a difference in student learning outcomes. For the sake of this discussion, conditions surrounding teaching and learning are placed on a continuum ranging from those closest to the students and teachers (called *proximal* conditions) and those that are farther away (called *distal* conditions).

As we think about a school system and the conditions most likely to affect student learning, we consider the elements of the school district that most directly influence the student (i.e., that are most proximal). Proximal conditions include the interaction between the student and the teacher around the instructional content, instructional strategies, and the learning environment created in the classroom. It is evident that proximal conditions are likely to have the most influence on improving student learning. Governance processes, including school board policy decisions, are much farther away (distal) from the student. However, studies now are finding that distal conditions can also have a significant effect on student learning when they directly affect proximal conditions, that is, when they influence the conditions of practice within the district or affect the learning environment within the schools and classrooms.

Although the board-superintendent team operate "at a distance" from the learner, their goal must always be to strengthen districtwide conditions of practice that affect the learning environment within the schools and classrooms. The Lighthouse studies demonstrate that board-superintendent teams are not too far removed from the work of teaching and learning to have an influence on student learning. Indeed, the importance of recognizing the influence of distal as well as proximal conditions leads to a realistic consideration of the importance of school board decisions and actions and how they can be more effective. Figure 1.1 illustrates the linkages showing the potential influence of the school board on student learning.

While only 35 percent of school board members are professional educators,<sup>4</sup> the Lighthouse research provides convincing evidence that board members can have significant influence on teaching and learning, curriculum and instruction, and the learning environment. A Balanced Governance approach, exemplified by the Lighthouse governance process, does not support the notion that board members need to become educational experts. Indeed, recent findings by Shober and Hartney<sup>5</sup> confirm that school boards composed of a majority of educators are not linked to improved student achievement. The Lighthouse studies do suggest that school board members need to develop sufficient understanding, knowledge, and beliefs in order to create the conditions within the system that will ensure that professional educators can grow in their educational expertise and generate productive change. School board members can enhance their leadership role in

Figure 1.1 Important linkages



the school renewal process without digressing into micromanaging the system. This chapter shares key findings from the Lighthouse research that shed light on important board behaviors, within a balanced approach to governance, that positively affect district efforts to improve student learning.

## BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT TEAM LEADERSHIP

### *Key Board Actions That Generate Conditions for Productive Change*

The conditions within a school district that have been shown to enable productive change in student learning are relatively consistent across studies even though the labels to describe them may be slightly different. Consistently high achieving

districts, or districts that have significantly improved achievement, often attribute their success to the following:

- Clear goals and measurable targets for improving student learning
- Extensive use of data to inform and monitor improvement efforts
- An infrastructure within the school and district that supports collaboration, innovation, and research
- Support for ongoing professional learning that is focused on collaborative inquiry into teaching and learning
- High levels of engagement with parents and the community
- Strong leadership at all levels of the system to guide and protect the work

These conditions of practice are well researched, and there appears to be agreement about the importance of these conditions for producing positive change in student learning outcomes. However, the large-scale presence of these conditions in districts and schools is still lacking. The Lighthouse research supports the possibility that the missing piece in many efforts to improve achievement may be a lack of focus by the leadership at the school board and superintendent level. Specifically, the study results point to the negative effects of a lack of school board and superintendent focus on generating the conditions for student improvement listed above. The conditions described above are system conditions and cannot be adequately managed at a building level without the support of the entire system. Efforts to improve achievement that assume the building is the unit of change and the principal is the most important change leader are not wrong, they just neglect to include the system-level leadership necessary to ensure that the principal's work at the building level can generate the desired results and be sustained over time.

The Lighthouse studies identified seven areas of board action and the specific knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary for effective performance in each of those areas (see table 1.1). When boards worked together to build their knowledge and take specific actions, grounded in elevating beliefs about what was possible to accomplish, the culture of the schools improved, the beliefs of the adults became more elevating, and the achievement of students improved.<sup>6</sup>



**Table 1.1** Key actions of the board using the Lighthouse approach: An example of a Balanced Governance model

| Key areas of board action   | Knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary for positive impact  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Developing awareness of the student learning needs, and building commitment to systematically address the needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarifying the current status of student learning and the student learning needs</li> <li>Increasing a sense of urgency</li> <li>Using data to focus efforts on the area of greatest learning need</li> <li>Improving the interactions between the teacher and the student around content (instruction) as the key means to improve learning</li> <li>Expecting more</li> <li>Believing it's possible</li> </ul> | <p><b>Know</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand what's at stake if nothing changes (in relation to student learning)</li> <li>Understand that improving teaching is the most important factor for improving student learning</li> <li>Understand the importance of improving teaching in the content area of greatest student learning need</li> <li>Confront their beliefs about what is possible to expect in terms of student learning; understand what is possible to expect (learn from schools that have beat the odds)</li> <li>Understand the current status of student learning in their district, based on analysis of data</li> <li>Understand the learning gaps that exist among subgroups of students and how they could be addressed</li> <li>Understand that boards make a difference (board leadership is critical for improving learning for all students)</li> </ul> <p><b>Do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate the urgency for improving student learning</li> <li>Consistently communicate high expectations</li> <li>Use data and research to identify the highest priorities for change, define a clear and narrow focus for improvement, and identify specific short-term targets for monitoring progress</li> <li>Communicate the focus for improvement and model adherence to the focus through board actions and conversations</li> </ul> <p><b>Believe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current level of student achievement is not what we can expect—we can expect much more</li> <li>How well students learn in school depends primarily upon what the adults in the school do</li> <li>Improving the quality of teaching is the most important strategy for improving student learning</li> <li>Virtually all children can meet grade-level expectations</li> <li>We have become complacent about the achievement of our students</li> </ul> |

| areas of board action  | Knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary for positive impact  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Applying pressure for accountability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using data extensively</li> <li>Setting high expectations for improvement</li> <li>Defining acceptable evidence</li> <li>Monitoring progress constantly</li> </ul> | <p><b>Know</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the important role of pressure and support (accountability and reciprocal responsibility)</li> <li>Understand key data analysis concepts</li> <li>Understand the importance of monitoring both implementation and impact</li> <li>Understand the school culture necessary for improving student learning and key indicators of that culture</li> <li>Understand the current status of achievement in the district and what needs to change</li> <li>Understand what are reasonable targets for improvement given the current achievement status</li> </ul> <p><b>Do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set improvement goals and targets that appropriately “stretch” the district improvement effort</li> </ul> |

| <i>Key areas of board action</i>            | <i>Knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary for positive impact</i>  |
|---|--|
| <b>Applying pressure for accountability</b> | <p><b>Know</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the important role of pressure and support (accountability and reciprocal responsibility)</li> <li>• Understand key data analysis concepts</li> <li>• Understand the importance of monitoring both implementation and impact</li> <li>• Understand the school culture necessary for improving student learning and key indicators of that culture</li> <li>• Understand the current status of achievement in the district and what needs to change</li> <li>• Understand what are reasonable targets for improvement given the current achievement status</li> </ul> <p><b>Do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set improvement goals and targets that appropriately “stretch” the district improvement efforts</li> <li>• Identify the indicators the board will accept as evidence of progress toward the goal and/or targets</li> <li>• Regularly monitor progress toward specific annual targets</li> <li>• Ensure that conditions necessary for continuous improvement are present in the culture of the school and regularly monitor evidence of progress toward a learning culture for adults and students</li> <li>• Expect and support corrective action when progress is not evident (in the culture, in the implementation of improvement efforts, and in the impact on student learning)</li> <li>• Discuss the implications of data reports and references data in decision making and problem solving</li> <li>• Support decisions with good data and information (internal and external—cost and impact)</li> </ul> <p><b>Believe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent monitoring of student learning is critical to improving teaching and learning</li> <li>• Both formative and summative assessments of student learning are critical for monitoring progress</li> </ul> |

*continued*

Table 1.1 continued

| Key areas of board action  | Knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary for positive impact  |
|--|---|
| <b>Demonstrating commitment</b>  | <b>Know</b>   |
| Creating board learning time   | • The role of the board for improving achievement   |
| Spending time learning together as a board team  | • The public/governing role of the board in relation to democratic principles   |
| Modeling a willingness to learn and innovate   | • Key principles of balanced governance   |
| Focusing board conversations around what matters most—student learning   | <b>Do</b>   |
| Staying the course   | • Focus board meetings on the improvement area  |
| Demonstrating commitment to the focus area for improvement through board actions and decisions (resource allocation, time provision, calendar, negotiations, etc.) | • Use an agreed-upon framework for conversations among board members and with the staff that helps maintain the focus for the conversations/discussions |
|  | • Commit extra board time for work sessions to focus on the area the district is trying to improve and board learning in relation to the focus area     |
|  | • Demonstrate commitment through  |
|  | – Negotiations  |
|  | – Calendar development  |
|  | – Budget setting  |
|  | – Policy development and approval   |
|  | – Superintendent selection  |
|  | – Superintendent evaluation   |
|  | • Evaluate the performance of the board based on the collective effort to monitor, support, and ensure that the district improvement goals are met      |
|  | <b>Believe</b>  |
|  | • In order for student learning to improve, schools must be organized and structured differently  |
|  | • Schools cannot continue to do what they have always done and expect to get different results  |
|  | • Doing more of what we are currently doing will not result in significantly improved learning  |

| Key areas of board action                                  | Knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary for positive impact  |
|--|---|
| <b>Providing support for ongoing professional learning</b> | <b>Know</b>   |
| Setting clear expectations (what, when, how, and process)  | • Standards for professional learning (what it takes to change practice at the classroom level in ways that will have a positive impact on student learning)        |
| Allocating time  | • The board's role in relation to selecting improvement initiatives and providing the system of professional learning that is necessary to support them             |
| Providing financial support                                | • The criteria to consider when approving and supporting initiatives to improve achievement   |
| Measuring success  | • The implications of fully implementing potential initiatives to improve achievement (includes general understanding of what it will take for full implementation) |
|  | <b>Do</b>   |
|  | • Analyze the current professional learning system in relation to what it takes to change practice  |
|  | • Consider initiatives to improve achievement from a framework of key criteria  |

| <i>areas of board action</i>   | <i>Knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary for positive impact</i>   |
|--|---|
| <b>Providing support for ongoing professional learning</b><br>Setting clear expectations (outcomes and process)<br>Creating time<br>Providing financial support<br>Celebrating success | <p><b>Know</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards for professional learning (what it takes to change practice at the classroom level in ways that will have a positive impact on student learning)</li> <li>The board's role in relation to selecting improvement initiatives and providing the system of professional learning that is necessary to support them</li> <li>The criteria to consider when approving and supporting initiatives to improve achievement</li> <li>The implications of fully implementing potential initiatives to improve achievement (includes general understanding of what it will take for full implementation)</li> </ul> <p><b>Do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze the current professional learning system in relation to what it takes to change practice</li> <li>Consider initiatives to improve achievement from a framework of key criteria</li> <li>Analyze the cost effectiveness of current and potential initiatives to improve achievement</li> <li>Set clear/measurable expectations for the outcomes of professional learning (student learning improves as the primary outcome)</li> <li>Allocate resources to ensure that a district infrastructure exists to support quality professional learning</li> <li>Allocate resources to ensure the success of approved initiatives to improve achievement</li> <li>Monitor progress/success of professional learning in relation to the implementation of initiatives and the established outcomes</li> </ul> <p><b>Believe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In order to change outcomes for students, we must continuously invest in building the capacity of the educators</li> <li>School districts must focus major attention on building cultures of collaborative inquiry to continuously build the capacity of the educators</li> <li>Collaboration among adults is necessary for substantially improving student learning</li> <li>Student achievement barriers, such as poverty and lack of family support, can be overcome by the most effective instructional practices</li> </ul> |

*continued*

**Table 1.1** *continued*

| <i>Key areas of board action</i>                              | <i>Knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary for positive impact</i>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Supporting and connecting with districtwide leadership</b> | <p><b>Know</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The leadership role of the board</li> <li>• The importance of distributed leadership</li> <li>• The difference between leadership and management</li> <li>• The instructional leadership role of school administrators</li> <li>• The characteristics of the leadership needed for improving student achievement</li> <li>• The importance of a narrow focus for improvement</li> <li>• A framework for receiving and responding to reports from staff regarding student learning during board meetings and work sessions</li> </ul> <p><b>Do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish clarity, systemwide, about the most important focus for improving student learning</li> <li>• Communicate consistently about the focus for improvement, the specific expectations/targets, and what the district is doing to improve achievement</li> <li>• Protect the work from fragmentation and distraction</li> <li>• Stay the course</li> <li>• Monitor progress regularly and ensure that corrective action is taken and supported when needed</li> </ul> <p><b>Believe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership is either everywhere or it is nowhere</li> <li>• Leadership for improving teaching and learning is critical to school district success</li> </ul> |

| <i>Key areas of board action</i>                      | <i>Knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary for positive impact</i>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Engaging in a deliberative development process</b> | <p><b>Know</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The difference between discussion and deliberation</li> <li>• The importance of whole-board deliberation throughout the policy development process (for policies directly impacting teaching and learning)</li> <li>• The role of policy for guiding and sustaining district work</li> </ul> <p><b>Do</b></p> |

| <i>areas of board action</i>                                      | <i>Knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary for positive impact</i>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Participating in a deliberative policy development process</b> | <p><b>Know</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The difference between discussion and deliberation</li> <li>• The importance of whole-board deliberation throughout the policy development process (for policies directly impacting teaching and learning)</li> <li>• The role of policy for guiding and sustaining district work</li> </ul> <p><b>Do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study background information related to the policy area</li> <li>• Identify greatest hopes</li> <li>• Prioritize expectations</li> <li>• Determine measures of progress/success for each expectation</li> <li>• Identify support needs for each expectation</li> <li>• Finalize priority expectations based on what can be monitored and supported</li> <li>• Regularly monitor policy implementation</li> </ul> <p><b>Believe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local school governance is critical for ensuring the success of all students</li> <li>• Local school boards can positively impact teaching and learning</li> <li>• The actions and beliefs of board members is critical to district success</li> </ul> |

*continued*

Table 1.1 continued

| Key areas of board action   | Knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary for positive impact  |
|---|---|
| Connecting with the community and building the public will to improve achievement | <p><b>Know</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The importance of the school connecting with the community and the community connecting with the school</li><li>• The different levels of community connection<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Informed</li><li>– Input</li><li>– Involvement</li><li>– Engagement</li></ul></li><li>• What must change, and why, in order to establish a productive school/community relationship</li><li>• Key talking points for<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– what must change in terms of learning and the learning environment</li><li>– the compelling reasons for making the change</li><li>– what the community should expect to see in terms of progress</li><li>– how the community can help</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Value the important role of the community in helping the district meet its goals</li><li>• Value the role of the school within the larger community (other child-serving organizations) and understand the specific contribution of each organization</li><li>• Consistently communicate the reason for change and the vision for the future</li><li>• Consistently communicate what the district is trying to improve, specific expectations, what the district is doing to reach the expectations, and how the community can help</li></ul> <p><b>Believe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The community must be a partner with the school district in order for the school to improve learning for all students</li></ul> |

BOARD  
KEY BOARD ACTION  
STUDENT IMPROVEMENT

Nested in the board actions described in the following table are the starting points for boards wanting to influence on district efforts to improve student achievement. Boards need to be willing to create urgency, understand the role of pressure and support in continuous improvement.

Creating Urgency

In order to create urgency for improving student achievement, Lighthouse districts had to first be clear about the status of achievement in their districts. This was much more than reports about the status of achievement as they were telling them and worked with other districts to complete reflection protocols related to the status of achievement. About what the data were telling them and generate additional questions they would like to ask their staff about the implications and needs.

However, this deeper data study about student achievement was not enough to create a shared sense of urgency. Leaders indicate they are doing about as well as they can, but they are not convinced that the underlying belief that factors outside the school are the primary predictors of student success. It was not until the district began to understand student performance outcomes in a more holistic way, that a sense of urgency began to surface. After being confronted with the data about student achievement, the district began to understand the role of pressure and support in continuous improvement.

## KEY BOARD ACTIONS THAT PROMOTE STUDENT IMPROVEMENT

Nested in the board actions described in table 1.1 are three areas that were consistent starting points for boards wanting to strengthen their leadership and their influence on district efforts to improve student learning. Before anything else, boards need to be willing to create urgency for improving achievement within their district and their community, collectively commit to high expectations, and understand the role of pressure and support in relation to governance and continuous improvement.

### *Creating Urgency*

In order to create urgency for improving achievement, board members in the Lighthouse districts had to first be clear about the current status of achievement in their districts. This was much more than just looking at the data and hearing reports about the status of achievement as most boards do already.<sup>7</sup> They rolled up their sleeves and worked with other district leaders to deeply study the data, complete reflection protocols related to the data study, engage in deep discussions about what the data were telling them and what the data were *not* telling them, generate additional questions they would like to be able to answer, and talk with their staff about the implications and needs that surfaced from the data study.

However, this deeper data study about the current status of student achievement was not enough to create a shared sense of urgency. Board members also had to believe that more was possible to expect of student performance. Many district leaders indicate they are doing about as well as can be expected given the backgrounds of the students they serve.<sup>8</sup> These leaders appear to be communicating an underlying belief that factors outside the school are *determiners* of student success rather than *predictors* of student success. It was not until board members studied outstanding student performance outcomes from districts with students that are hardest to teach, and became convinced that more is possible in their district as well, that a sense of urgency began to surface.

After being confronted with the data about their current status and the data from other places showing what is possible to accomplish, board members had to make it personal in terms of the students and families they served. This included



the need for the school board to wrestle with deepening their understanding of what is at stake for students if nothing changes, and to confront their own willingness to do whatever it takes to ensure excellence for all students. These changes in belief were necessary before school boards were willing to talk about the urgent need to improve achievement with their staff and their community. Board members are much more practiced at being "cheerleaders" for their schools and sharing pride in their school and district than they are at sharing what needs to improve, what they are doing to improve it, and why that is so important. In the Lighthouse training, school board members learn to create stories that both present the data and tug at the heartstrings to be able to communicate effectively what must improve as well as why people should be proud of their system. Interestingly, when done well and communicated without blame or shame, the staff and community seem to embrace the honest assessment of the needs and are more willing to engage in the hard work of change.

As the sense of urgency and the resulting increase in focus and action emerged, so did an increased passion for excellence. As one board member said, "We were very satisfied being good, but now we want to be great!" As board members and staff learned to work together more constructively, failure was no longer an option for any child. They were on a journey to excellence and a relentless pursuit of the best practices that would help them get there.

### ***Commitment to High Expectations***

School boards in the successful Lighthouse districts made an obvious commitment to high expectations for improving student learning. They had a strong, shared belief that improved outcomes were possible to expect and that the district had the capacity to create positive change for all students. They did not make excuses for student learning even though their districts were experiencing the same challenges and changing demographics as other districts. They knew that the central core of what schooling is all about—the interaction between the student and the teacher around content—had to be the focus of the district's work, and that everything else was peripheral to the core. They spent time together establishing improvement goals and targets, learning about the district's efforts to improve achievement, and ensuring that they could all consistently communicate

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the student learning needs the district was trying to improve. In addition, board members became adept at communicating what the district was doing to improve student achievement, why they believed they would get the results they wanted, and how they were monitoring progress.

Goal setting in the Lighthouse districts became an interactive process between the board-superintendent team and the districtwide leadership team. Typically, district administration and staff establish the goals for improvement and the board approves them.<sup>9</sup> However, the boards in the Lighthouse districts soon realized that without more involvement in the establishment of the goals, they did not have the sense of ownership and commitment that was necessary to make the difficult decisions and provide necessary support. The boards realized that they had fallen into a pattern of approving the goals, hearing annual reports about progress, and then congratulating the district for all the hard work in failing to reach the goals. To break this cycle, the following framework (see table 1.2), defining various components of a districtwide school improvement goal, was useful for helping school boards become meaningful participants in the goal setting and monitoring process without micromanaging the process or engaging in the process in isolation of their district administrators and staff.

### ***Pressure and Support***

Elmore,<sup>10</sup> in his landmark piece on school leadership, discusses the concept of reciprocity of accountability. Essentially, he makes the case that anyone in a position of leadership with the authority to hold someone accountable for accomplishing something, has a reciprocal responsibility to make sure they have everything they need to accomplish it. In the context of the Lighthouse work, boards realized they have the authority to hold the superintendent responsible for accomplishing the improvement goals of the district and, therefore, have the reciprocal responsibility to make sure that the superintendent has everything he or she needs to accomplish them. Boards also realized that the best measure of their effectiveness was the degree to which they created the conditions, provided the support, and enabled the superintendent to do what they had asked of him or her. This created a need for a different type of relationship between the board and the superintendent. In order to provide this type of reciprocal support, the board-superintendent team

**Table 1.2** Components of districtwide improvement goals

| Component                                      | Characteristics  | Example(s)  | Sample board questions  |
|--|--|---|---|
| Districtwide improvement goal                  | <p>Clear statement about what we are trying to collectively improve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focused on student learning in a content area</li><li>• Related to the greatest student learning need at this time</li><li>• Short term</li><li>• Includes each of the components described below</li></ul> | <p>Increase the number of students demonstrating proficiency in reading comprehension by 10% while maintaining or increasing the number of students performing above grade level as indicated by multiple measures of reading comprehension by May, 20XX. (Measures include but are not limited to: Series assessments, Jamestown Reader, BRI, MAP tests, Iowa Tests)</p> | <p>See questions related to each component of the goal statement.</p>   |
| Content area of greatest student learning need | <p>The content area where data indicate the most students are non-proficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multiple data sources confirm the need</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase the number of students demonstrating proficiency in reading.</li><li>• Increase the number of students demonstrating proficiency in mathematics.</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What must we improve right now? What area must we put our collective energy into improving (evidence of need across levels)?</li><li>• As we study our students' achievement data, which content area appears to be our lowest area across the most levels? Are we confident that is our area of greatest need? Do we have multiple sources of evidence that this is our greatest need?</li></ul>   |
| Strands for improvement                        | <p>A specific strand within the broad content area that focuses improvement efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Broad enough that all levels can contribute</li><li>• Narrow enough so the efforts aren't fragmented or disjointed</li><li>• Based on greatest student learning need</li></ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase the number of students demonstrating proficiency in reading comprehension.</li><li>• Increase the number of students demonstrating proficiency in complex mathematical problem solving.</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More specifically, what are we trying to improve?</li><li>• What strand within the content area needs the most attention? How do we know?</li><li>• Is there clear evidence of need in relation to this strand?</li><li>• Is this an area that spans all grade levels? Are the needs similar at different levels across the system?</li><li>• How will different levels be able to contribute to improvement in this strand? Will the focus need to be different at different levels?</li></ul> |

| Component  | Characteristics   | Example(s)  | Sample board questions  |
|--|---|---|---|
| Districtwide improvement targets for measurement | <p>Specific indicators of progress so it is clear when we are making progress toward the goal and when the goal has been reached.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focused on results</li><li>• Should include measures that allow for ongoing monitoring of progress (will need to identify measures/types of assessments and define a schedule for monitoring progress)</li><li>• Describes sufficient stretch—ambitious but realistic improvement</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase the number of students proficient in reading comprehension by 10% as evidenced by performance on districtwide measures of reading comprehension such as BRI, MAP, Jamestown Reader, and Iowa Tests (using the measure of grade level proficiency defined by each assessment).</li><li>• May also want to include how often this will be monitored: Progress will be reviewed by staff during their study teams each week and</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What level of improvement do we want to see? What's the performance we hope to see in our data?</li><li>• Is the improvement target ambitious enough to produce worthwhile change in student performance?</li><li>• Is the improvement target realistic—with collective effort is it reasonable to assume we could succeed?</li><li>• What districtwide measures are available for us to monitor progress? How frequently do they allow us to monitor progress? Do we have enough regular/ongoing assessments across levels that are valid and reliable to provide us with good information on a regular basis?</li></ul> |

| <i>Component</i>                           | <i>Characteristics</i>  | <i>Example(s)</i>   | <i>Sample board questions</i>  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Specific measures: targets for improvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific indicators of progress so it is clear when we are making progress toward the goal and when the goal has been reached.</li> <li>Focused on results</li> <li>Should include measures that allow for ongoing monitoring of progress (will need to identify measures/types of assessments and define a schedule for monitoring progress)</li> <li>Describes sufficient stretch—ambitious but realistic improvement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of students proficient in reading comprehension by 10% as evidenced by performance on districtwide measures of reading comprehension such as BRI, MAP, Jamestown Reader, and Iowa Tests (using the measure of grade level proficiency defined by each assessment).</li> <li><i>May also want to include how often this will be monitored:</i> Progress will be reviewed by staff during their study teams each week and reviewed by the board at least once each quarter.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What level of improvement do we want to see? What's the performance we hope to see in our data?</li> <li>Is the improvement target ambitious enough to produce worthwhile change in student performance?</li> <li>Is the improvement target realistic—with collective effort is it reasonable to assume we could succeed?</li> <li>What districtwide measures are available for us to monitor progress? How frequently do they allow us to monitor progress? Do we have enough regular/ongoing assessments across levels that are valid and reliable to provide us with good information on a regular basis?</li> <li>Will we need different indicators of progress for different levels?</li> <li>What do we know about student growth (over time) in this area as well as their current level of attainment?</li> <li>Are there subgroups of students (who perform less well in this area) that we need to be monitoring while we monitor overall districtwide progress?</li> </ul> |
| Timeline for improvement                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defines the deadline for completion</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10% increase by May, 2011</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How soon do we hope to see change in performance?</li> <li>Is the timeline reasonable in relation to the target? How do we know?</li> <li>What will it take? Are we willing to provide the necessary support to ensure success?</li> <li>Are we clear about the actions it will take to meet the goal? Can they be taken effectively within this time frame?</li> </ul>   |

needed to be convinced of the importance and reasonableness of the improvement goals. In addition, they needed to trust each other in ways they had not previously pursued, communicate in ways that had not previously been necessary, and be willing to let each other provide strong leadership from their respective roles. This concept of reciprocity of accountability helped the boards understand a key role of the board for providing "pressure and support." Pressure comes from the clear expectations laid out in the improvement goals and targets for the district and the unwavering expectation from the board that the district will be successful in accomplishing those goals. Support comes from the willingness of the board to make sure the superintendent has everything needed to accomplish the goals. Pressure and support as an ongoing interaction includes collaboratively setting goals, determining what it will take to accomplish the goals, negotiating the expectations based on the support needed, providing the support, monitoring progress, and adjusting actions to ensure success. This act of finding the right balance of both pressure and support becomes a significant role of the board relating to improving student achievement.

### SUMMARY

A great deal is already known about what it takes to improve the achievement of all students in classrooms and schools. Numerous studies and books have been written describing the characteristics of more effective learning environments. Numerous examples of schools that beat the odds and produce high levels of learning for all students exist. However, less is known about what it takes to lead an entire district to high levels of learning and sustain a culture focused on excellence and equity. Until recently, school boards have been excluded from the school reform literature and excluded from consideration as a unit of change or a key lever in the change process. The Lighthouse studies and the tools, processes, and studies described in this book open the door to understanding how to help local school governance play a role that positively impacts the learning of students in their schools. Each exemplar of the Balanced Governance approach encourages school board members to act not as managers of the school but as governors of the system and important leaders of systemic change in concert with their administrators, teachers, and community.

**WASHINGTON CENTRAL UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**BUDGET DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE - DRAFT**  
**FY 2025 - 2026**

**August – Preliminary Budget Preparation**

- Business Administrator to prepare budget documents and materials for Leadership Team and Finance Committee review in August.
  - Business Administrator and Superintendent review proposed Budget Development Timeline.
  - 6<sup>th</sup> - WCLT reviews proposed Budget Development Timeline.
  - 6<sup>th</sup> - WCLT discusses the FY 26 food service staffing plan, goals, and grant-funded positions that will impact the budget development in preparation for baseline budget.
  - 9<sup>th</sup> – Packet materials finalized for the WCUUSD Finance Committee.
  - 13<sup>th</sup> - Finance Committee reviews draft Budget Development Timeline
- 

**September - Baseline Budget Preparation, Budget Training, Baseline Budget, Configuration Modeling**

- COLT reviews staff funded by grants and begins to plan for the impact on the baseline budget.
- Building Administrators review current special education staffing needs and begin planning for FY 26 service requirements.
- 6<sup>th</sup> – Packet materials finalized for the WCUUSD Finance Committee.
- 10<sup>th</sup> - Finance Committee reviews and recommends to the Board the Budget Development Timeline and guidance to the Leadership Team on what the budget needs to include in order to be approved and what would cause the board to not approve it.
- Budget Meetings with Principals. Early discussions with individual buildings on any new or reduced services and staffing requests for FY 26 Budget Draft #1.
- 18<sup>th</sup> - WCUUSD Board receives the Multi-year Capital Improvement Project Budget and approves the transfer to the capital reserve fund in FY 2025-26.
- 18<sup>th</sup> - WCUUSD Board Budget Training.
- 18<sup>th</sup> - WCUUSD Board reviews and approves the Budget Development Timeline and provides guidance to the Leadership Team on what the budget needs to include in order to be approved and what would cause the board to not approve it.
- 18<sup>th</sup> - WCUUSD Board receives the Baseline Budget to inform draft discussions.
- 19<sup>th</sup> - WCLT develops a plan for faculty and staff communication and engagement for FY 26 budget.

- 19<sup>th</sup> - WCLT discusses the collection of staff recommendations and feedback to advise the budget development.
  - 19<sup>th</sup> - WCLT develops the FY 26 Budget Draft #1 budget proposal
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### **October – Develop and Present WCUUSD FY 26 Budget Draft #1.**

- 4<sup>th</sup> - Packet materials finalized for the WCCUSD Finance Committee/Board.
  - 8<sup>th</sup> - Finance Committee reviews and recommends to the Board the FY 26 Dental premiums.
  - 8<sup>th</sup> - Finance Committee reviews and recommends to the Board the FY 26 budget assumptions for fund transfers for the HRA, Food Service, Community Connections.
  - 16<sup>th</sup> - WCUUSD Annual Title I Meeting.
  - 16<sup>th</sup> - WCUUSD Board reviews and approves FY 26 Dental Premiums.
  - 16<sup>th</sup> - WCUUSD Board reviews FY 26 Budget Draft #1 and provides guidance to the Leadership Team.
  - 24<sup>th</sup> – WCLT finalizes Special Ed staffing levels.
  - 24<sup>th</sup> – WCLT receives the seniority list from HR to advise any potential RIF notifications.
  - 24<sup>th</sup> – WCLT budget planning meeting. Review the Board’s guidance, the Strategic Plan, Equity Indicators, Continuous Improvement Plan, Enrollment data and class size, resource sharing opportunities, staff recommendations and feedback, and baseline budget estimates. District-level discussions on new or reduced services and staffing requests to finalize for FY 26 Budget Draft #2.
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### **November – Develop and Present WCUUSD FY 26 Budget Draft #2.**

- 6<sup>th</sup> – Community Engagement Meeting – This is a budget input session to inform the community and provide an opportunity for input.
  - TBD - Meeting with Budget Ambassadors.
  - 8<sup>th</sup> - Packet materials finalized for the WCUUSD Finance Committee/Board.
  - 12<sup>th</sup> - Finance Committee reviews FY 26 Budget Draft #2.
  - 14<sup>th</sup> – WCLT budget planning meeting to debrief Finance Committee discussion and consider any adjustments prior to the Board meeting.
  - 20<sup>th</sup> - WCUUSD Board reviews FY 26 Budget Draft #2 and provides guidance to the Leadership Team.
  - Administrators have conversations with any people that *may* be affected by a reduction in force.
- 

### **December – Develop and Present WCUUSD FY 26 Budget Draft #3.**

**\*\*\*NOTE: Revenue information for budgets becomes available between December 1-15.**

- 6th - Packet materials finalized for the WCUUSD Finance Committee/Board.
  - 10th - Finance Committee budget discussion.
  - 12th - WCLT budget planning meeting. Final changes, if any, made to the FY 26 Budget.
  - 18th - Community Presentation and Board Budget Discussion of FY 26 Budget Draft #3.
  - TBD – **Grand List and Common Level of Appraisal information available from Agency of Education**
- 

### **January – Budget Meetings to Finalize Warning, Budget and Town Meeting Materials**

- 8th – WCUUSD Board reviews school board vacancies, language for the warning and annual report format.
  - 8th - Community Presentation. WCCUSD Board discusses FY 26 Budget, finalizes and approves.
  - 10th - Packet materials finalized for the WCUUSD Finance Committee.
  - 14th - Finance Committee Budget Discussion.
  - **15th - Final FY 26 Budget warned and other materials to the printers and Town Clerks.**
  - 22nd - WCUUSD Board reviews FY 24 audit.
- 

### **February**

- Administrators work with the Director of Facilities to complete Capital Project Request Forms.
  - Business Administrator begins Five-year Capital Improvement budget conversations with the Director of Facilities and Superintendent.
  - Administrators have conversations with any people that *are* affected by reduction in force.
  - 7th - Packet materials finalized for the WCUUSD Finance Committee.
  - 11th - Finance Committee develops WCUUSD Board Communication and Outreach Plan.
  - 19th - WCUUSD Board reviews and approves Board Communication and Outreach Plan.
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### **March**



- WCLT prepares for hiring season and reviews para and new staffing requests.
  - 3rd - Informational Meeting at U-32.
  - 4th - Town Meeting Day Budget Vote Via Australian Ballot.
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## **April**

- 4th - Packet materials finalized for the WCUUSD Finance Committee/Board.
  - 8th - WCUUSD Finance Committee reviews FY 25 Financial Report.
  - 16th – WCUUSD Board reviews FY 25 Financial Report.
- 

## **May**

- WCUUSD Board reviews and approves Capital Improvement Project Plan and Multi-year Capital Improvement Budget.
  - 9th - Finance Committee reflects on FY 26 Budget Development Process.
  - 13th - WCUUSD Board reflects on FY 26 Budget Development Process.
  - CFP and IDEA B grant budget developed.
- 

## **June**

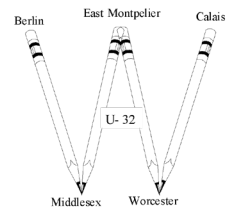
- TBD - School Board Retreat
- TBD - Leadership Team Retreat
- COLT administrators complete CFP and IDEA B grant applications in the GMS program and submit end of year reimbursement requests.

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



### Washington Central Unified Union School Board Meeting 10.16.24 6:15-9:15 PM U-32 1130 Gallison Hill Rd. Montpelier, VT

**Present:** Flor Diaz Smith, Elizabeth Brown, Zach Sullivan, Daniel Keeney, Ursula Stanley, Michelle Ksepka, Chris McVeigh, Kealy Sloan, Mckalyn Leclerc, Amelia Contrada, Patrick Whelley, Jonathan Goddard, Natasha Eckart, Linnea Darrow, Lei DeGroot Superintendent Steven Dellinger-Pate, Principal Becca Taitistcheff, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Julia Pritchard, Susanne Gann, Celia Guggemos, Honi Bean Barrett, Allison, Robert M, Lila Richardson, Noah Weinstein, David Delcore, ORCA Media, Chani Waterhouse, Erika Zimmerman, Caitlin Howansky, Anya, April Davis, Hannah Brown, J Campbell, Jodi Parker, Julie McKinstry, Rachel Sabrina Bador, Sam Duquette, Tom, Allen Gilbert, Shelley Vermilya, April Bergeron, Dena Cox, David Lawrence, Anne Finnegan, Ellen Knoedler, Shelby Quinn, Susan Deforge, Melissa Purchase, Derek Dunning, Leigh Garrity

1. **Call to Order:** Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.
2. **Welcome**
  - 2.1. **Adjustments to the Agenda:** No adjustments
  - 2.2. **Reception of Guests:** Flor Diaz Smith welcomed those present.
  - 2.3. **Public Comments-Time limit strictly enforced, see note:** None at this time
3. **Annual Title I Presentation:** Jen Miller-Arsenault presented a slide deck: *Annual Title I Meeting, 2024-25, WCUUSD, October 16, 2024*. This presentation is an annual requirement. Patrick Whelley asked whether there is a consistent response rate in the Free & Reduced Lunch (FRL) applications. Jen Miller Arsenault stated that she engages in a broader process called "ranking and serving" and that FRL is not the only metric used, but a concerted effort is made to ensure response to the FRL applications. Daniel Keeney asked for clarification around requirements for "highly qualified paraeducators." Some discussion followed around accurate data around family income. Some discussion followed around homelessness.
4. **State Budget Update**

## 5. Reports

- 5.1. Superintendent/COLT Report:** Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared that he and Susanne Gann had attended training around education funding; he would like the budget presentation to be able to show clearly how education funding is tied to student programming. He stated that the leadership team has met over the past couple of weeks and is working to bring the first draft of the budget to the board. He noted that we are not proposing moving any 6th grades to U-32 next year; however, we are looking out two years and beyond, to plan. He stated that, at this time, we have no idea what the tax implications are for any of the budgets. The December 1 tax letter is when we first get specific information about tax implications. In December, the grand list and CLA are available as well. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that the programs will likely look different because of this budgeting process. Again, he intends to show a clear thread between how the money is spent and its impact on student programming. Some highlights from the COLT report: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate noted that an audit is underway at this time and he thanked Susanne Gann and her staff for their hard work. Dan Keeney asked, regarding food service, is it possible to get from other school district business administrators some comparable numbers around foodservice internal spending per pupil versus food service who contract (per pupil) - and has anyone recently transitioned from one to another? What are the motivations behind that? What has been the outcome? Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that the budget intends to show the service delivery model for each service so that the board can consider such things as the mentioned regarding food service. Chris McVeigh asked if there is a way to research schools that have a farm-to-school program. Daniel Keeney stated that he and others had looked into this last year and intend to do more; however, he sees this as a process of incremental change.
- 5.2. Principal Report:** Principal Tatistcheff shared that a diverse range of 8th through 12<sup>th</sup> graders have planned this spirit week; thinking about opportunities to support the community while also honoring students' voices. She spoke about "third space" time during callback, which includes affinity groups. A fair is upcoming and will provide information about co-curricular activities, which are an important aspect of the community/ culture at U-32. She invited board members to the bonfire and expressed excitement over upcoming homecoming activities.
- 5.3. Student Report:** Linnea Darrow and Lei DeGroot provided a student report. Linnea stated that there is a lot of sickness going around at this time; report cards are expected soon. Lei reported that homecoming is this weekend. The Pep Rally is this Friday. Linnea and Lei shared student feedback about the cell phone policy. There was some discussion about the spring musical being coordinated between U-32 and Montpelier High School. Board members stated that they would like to hear a report back about how this collaboration goes.
- 5.4. Central VT Career Center Report:** Patrick Whelley shared information about the CVCC searching for a new space as well as the ramifications if a new space is found. He stated that the CVCC is grappling with the potential of moving students from one school to another. A bond is expected in 2025 with a building finished in 2029. He shared that the Superintendent had attended a board meeting at Twinfield to talk about this, as well as potential for a regional high school. Some discussion included U-

32 campus as part of a broader solution. He suggests that we invite CVCC Superintendent to our board or in light of the bandwidth at this time regarding budget, etc., create a sub group or subcommittee to begin this discussion.

**5.5. VSBA Report:** Flor Diaz Smith stated that she, Superintendent Dellinger-Pate and Ursula Stanley are planning to attend the VSBA Conference. She shared some of the work around EQS: Education Quality Standards. She asked board members to review recent emails from VSBA and review recommendations from the task report. A topic of discussion has been better collaboration and communication between the state Agency of Education and the Vermont Department of Education.

## **6. Board Operations**

### **6.1. Budget Discussion**

**6.1.1. Board [Parameters](#) & Criteria:** Flor Diaz Smith asked board members to consider the documents' Parameters and *Criteria*. She asked board members whether these two documents still stand for our leadership to use to guide the budget development. She invited questions or concerns from board members; none were heard.

**6.2. Ed Quality Student Monitoring Report:** Ursula Stanley reviewed the written report, which had been included in the packet. The data was from spring 2024, Math and Reading. She invited feedback from the board. Daniel Keeney asked for a follow-up to the indication in the report about the challenge of grant funding coming to an end. Jen Miller-Arsenault spoke about this. Elizabeth Brown spoke about the dramatic difference between the performances of students on IEPs versus those who are not. She stated that this is a complex issue but this stood out to her and she would like to look more closely at this. Michelle Ksepka asked for clarification around cross-sectional analysis versus longitudinal cohort analysis. Elizabeth Brown asked whether there is a plan to follow a certain grade level of students from year to year, over time. Jen Miller Arsenault stated that, for example, our current fifth-grade cohort seems to be making slower progress and performing lower than hoped. She spoke about the impact of COVID-19 on students. Chris McVeigh asked whether there are programs in place to address the performance gap related to FRL students. Ursula Stanley stated that MTSS addresses this and that each school on its own looks more closely at their data through the lens of MTSS.

**6.3. Configuration Next Steps:** Flor Diaz Smith shared highlights from the Configuration Committee's work today: looked at agreed upon reality - agreed to continue to stand by the criteria, which had been established; also agreed that the budget situation is dire and we will need to work together with the administration; follow the strategic plan and communicate and engage with the communities. She read from the strategic plan. She stated that there is a desire to be very clear about what is the charge of the Configuration Committee. She shared some of the other discussion from the committee earlier. She invited feedback from board members. She asked for agreement from board members that we are guided by the strategic plan. Jonathan Goddard asked about composition of the Configuration Committee - this committee includes some board members as well as administrators: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate and Principals Lyford and Tatistcheff. Jonathan Goddard suggested recruiting members of the larger district community to the committee, given our last experience

with the proposal. Elizabeth Brown agreed with the idea of having community voice as part of the committee. **Chris McVeigh moved to add two community members to the Configuration/ Finance Committee and to invite interested people to provide letters of interest and we can select them. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.** Kealy Sloan asked whether we should have one member from each community. If we get more than two people who are interested, how will we choose? She suggested that it is going to be political, and it will be challenging. Flor Diaz Smith suggested creating criteria and sharing as soon as possible. She suggested that the Steering Committee consider the criteria. She noted that it might be challenging to have a larger committee - e.g. more than two community members. Some discussion followed around each town's representation on the committee. Daniel Keeney suggested that when this committee is reorganized there will be, on paper, some type of inequity in representation, so it will be important to be explicit, going into the process, that everyone on the committee represents WCUUSD as a whole. Patrick Whelley wondered if the communities as "closing schools" have understood the configuration discussion and if should we name it something different going forward - to better describe the committee's work, and that it is district-wide.

**6.4. VSBA Resolutions & Bylaws:** Flor Diaz Smith reviewed the resolutions for VSBA - some are continuous and some are yearly. She read the resolutions to the board and asked for a straw poll regarding each. Natasha Eckart spoke regarding the cell phone resolution. She stated that the Policy Committee had discussed that we do not feel the need for a policy around cell phones because we trust our administration to carry out procedures that are in place, and it has been going well. She wonders why there is a push to make this a requirement. Amelia Contrada agreed that if this becomes a required policy, then we should and can discuss it at the Policy Committee - we may opt to create a policy that leaves it up to the administration to create procedures, etc. Ursula Stanley reviewed the proposed bylaws change.

**7. Policy Committee:** Chris McVeigh thanked Natasha Eckart for the work she put into the first two policies below.

**7.1. Second Reading for Policy to be Adopted 10.16.24: Educational Philosophy:** Patrick Whelley moved to adopt this Educational Philosophy statement as presented. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.

**7.2. First Reading: Creating Learning Environments to Engage in Civil Discourse:** Chris McVeigh invited comments or questions from board members. Zach Sullivan asked for clarification around the anti-discrimination statement - he asked why the list is shorter than what we typically see. Natasha Eckart stated that this language was taken from the Greater School Partnership. She will replace this part with the language from the EQS. Elizabeth Brown suggested substituting "topic" for "subject/ issue" and "understanding" for "concept." Natasha Eckart asked whether there is a way to "fast track" this policy, with the election coming soon. **Ursula Stanley moved to approve the changes that were presented to this policy draft. Seconded by Amelia Contrada, this motion carried unanimously. Patrick Whelley moved to adopt this policy as presented. Seconded by Mckalyn Leclerc, this motion carried unanimously.**

**7.3. First Reading : F45 Fundraising:** This is tabled

**8. Personnel**

**8.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE:**

Ursula Stanley moved to accept the resignation of Brian Fischer, Food service Director at U-32. Seconded by Natasha Eckart, this motion carried unanimously.

**9. Consent Agenda**

**9.1. Approve Minutes of 10.1.24:** Ursula Stanley moved to approve the minutes of October 1, 2024. Seconded by Mckalyn Leclerc. Discussion: Julia Hewitt pointed out an error; Daniel Keeney pointed out an error. Board members agreed with these changes in name spellings and towns. This motion carried with noted changes.

**9.2. Approve Board Orders:** Chris McVeigh moved to approve board orders in the amounts of \$758,783.58, \$378,515.69, \$7,491.49, for a total of \$1,144,790.76 Daniel Keeney; this motion carried unanimously.

**10. Future Agenda Items**

**10.1. Board Resolution Discussion**

**10.2. Budget**

**10.3. CVCC** (Jodi is on our agenda for Dec 15)

**11. Board Reflection:** Natasha Eckart thanked the Policy Committee and the Humanity and Justice Coalition for their work on the policy: Creating Learning Environments to Engage in Civil Discourse. She stated that it is a great affirmation for our staff that we believe in what they are doing in the classrooms and that we are willing to support them. Elizabeth Brown asked for clarification about adding community members to the Configuration Committee and creating criteria, etc. Flor Diaz Smith stated that she and Daniel Keeney are going to work on the charge for the Configuration Committee as well as the criteria for community members. Daniel Keeney stated that he is interested in learning more about early college and reflections/ experiences from all stakeholders.

**12. Public Comment:** Jodi Parker asked if there is an opportunity for members of the Booster Club to ask questions or make comments about the fundraising policy before it comes to the board. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that she could send it to him or the committee chair: Chris McVeigh. Noah Weinstein stated that he approves of the idea of separating the Finance Committee from the Configuration Committee, and he recommends having a board member from each town and a community member from each town on the Configuration Committee. It would allow for the board and community member to hold public forums in their communities, as the two-minute limit during public comment does not allow for a lot of engagement.

**13. Adjourn:** The board adjourned by consensus at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary