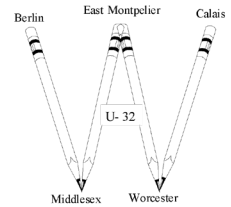


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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

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**Washington Central Unified Union
School 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, Julia Hewitt

- 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 12th 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