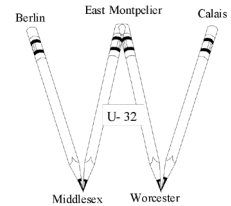


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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 Configuration Committee Minutes 1.22.25 5:00-6:00 PM U-32

Present: Chris McVeigh, Superintendent Dellinger-Pate, Flor Diaz Smith, Rebecca Tatistcheff, Gillian Fuqua, Daniel Keeney, Kealy Sloan, Shannon Miller, Anna Matheson, Andy Shapiro, Matthew DeGroot, Daisy Scarzello, Julia Hewitt

1. **Call to Order: Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.** She shared that Jeanie Phillips is sick tonight. She had intended to facilitate tonight's meeting, but Flor will facilitate in her absence. She stated that she had taken part in creating the agenda.
2. **Configuration Committee Initial Meeting:** Flor Diaz Smith shared the Core Beliefs, as developed by the board under Superintendent of Meagan Roy. She shared the Strategic Plan's goals and asked for the committee's agreement that this is a guiding document. The strategic Plan's goals include action steps, one of which is creating a Configuration Committee. She shared and reviewed the document: *Criteria to guide our Leadership team and School Board in creating configuration models*. The committee reviewed each point in the criteria

Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that what we want for programming should drive our structures. What is the programming that we want for our students? What are the resources that we want for our students? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate reminded that group that there are some balances between decisions the committee can suggest, actions the board can take, and votes that go to the communities (for example, reconfiguring sixth grade to U-32 would not require a community vote.)

Daniel Keeney stated that the 6th grade issue is not necessarily one of the criteria. Some discussion followed. The group agreed that developmentally appropriate learning opportunities is a criterion; however the 6th grade issue is a consideration, not a criterion.

Chris McVeigh stated that we should begin conversations with the Montpelier district as soon as possible, before we go on our own down that road.

Flor Diaz Smith stated that as a committee we need to keep the two processes separate. Those discussions will inform the committee, but will not be part of the committee's role.

Gillian Fuqua spoke about a recent Vermont Digger article - there is a need to be able to change - e.g., is there elasticity? "demographic" or external forces - both.

Becca Tatistcheff asked whether we have a working definition of "configuration" - there are many ways of thinking about educational configuration that are not limited to brick and mortar considerations. Flor Diaz Smith stated that, as we begin this work, everything is on the table. Maybe when we look at the timeline, we can talk about what data would be needed to make determinations.

Matt DeGroot asked if merging with Montpelier is not on the table for this committee? Flor Diaz Smith stated that at this time that is not the work of/ the charge of this committee. How do we get ourselves to the next step of being more sustainable? Shannon Miller stated it would be helpful to share a general long term bigger picture of, for example, a Montpelier merger - it would help the work of this committee. Flor Diaz Smith stated that a meeting is scheduled with the Montpelier superintendent and board chair, especially after the press conference today from the governor.

Dan Keeney stated that we are applying a process of inquiry to a lot of different questions that are before us as a district. The merger of multiple districts is not within our power; on the other end of the spectrum are there are action steps that principals and superintendents can take that would not be within the scope of this committee - it's a good time to be having these conversations. He stated that he agrees with Principal Tatistcheff's statement that it would be helpful to define what is meant by "reconfiguration." Andy Shapiro stated that avoiding the conversation does not provide the broader context for the work of this committee.

Matt DeGroot stated that the governor's team had shared updates about education finance and governance for the state which will change things greatly (e.g. five school districts within the state of Vermont). There are dynamic changes afoot in the landscape that are completely outside of our control. It would make sense to discuss what our values are, what we want students to achieve, and what different ways of providing that education could look like, but also keep in mind that there are things that are very much out of our control and perhaps would make sense to spend less time discussing.

Chris McVeigh stated that it is important to keep the Montpelier discussion going and to continue to inform the committee. Knowing what everyone's interests are before coming to some conclusion as a committee would be helpful (knowing what the "non-starters are" e.g.)

Daisy Scarzello stated that "the ability to retain appropriately licensed staff" is an important consideration.

Flor Diaz Smith stated that an edited criteria table would be provided for the committee in advance of the next meeting. She shared the proposed timeline for the work of the committee. This timeline shows that the work of the committee will be complete in August to present to the board in September.

Gillian Fuqua asked, looking at the timeline, if there could be an opportunity to reflect on the process from last year and what are some of the unanswered questions that remain? Were there missed opportunities? Are there things that we could do differently? The Montpelier merger is a question that kept coming up - and it is massive, and outside the scope of the committee. She suggested that if the committee does not have answers or responses to questions that continue to come up, it will impact how the community receives our work. What are the “leftovers” that we need to address?

Flor Diaz Smith stated that coming up with a definition for “configuration,” how we communicate, these are all considerations. She stated that this committee does not intend to be a “do over” from the previous committee. Learn from and be informed by the previous work, but how do we move the work forward?

Daniel Keeney asked whether we are going to talk more about “structure teams” e.g. community school or middle school, etc. Flor Diaz Smith clarified that these teams will not be subcommittees of this committee. Matthew DeGroot asked is the role of this committee to review the work of these teams. Discussion followed around the work of these team discussions informing the work of this committee.

Superintendent Dellinger-Pate suggested focusing on this committee first. What programs do we want for our students? What sort of structure do we need to provide this?

Gillian Fuqua asked, e.g., considering community school, as we get information about this, we could say as a committee that this is something that we would want to support some sort of constellation for our students (K-12) that allows this model.

Matt DeGroot asked why the board felt it was essential to create this committee. He also asked what is meant by “our schools can’t wait”? Why can’t they wait and what can’t they wait for? Flor Diaz Smith stated that we keep hearing from our community that we want more for our students, we want our libraries to be the centers of our communities. The more we keep going in the direction that we are going of decreasing program options, the further we get away from this desire our communities have expressed. For example, we are not able to provide before-school and after-school programming for all of our schools. We need to actualize our Strategic Plan now. For her, she always feels that our kids can’t wait.

Daisy Scarzello stated, too, that our budget failed last year and part of the conversation was that we need to begin these conversations and this work immediately. Flor Diaz Smith reviewed the district Equity Policy. She asked whether there is anything within the document that the group does not agree with or has questions about. She suggested creating a small subgroup that will take on communication on behalf of this committee. Shannon Miller had offered to work on this task. Daniel Keeney stated that as a committee we should acknowledge that “configuration” is a

broad array of things and “as a committee we are prioritizing how we configure our facilities. He stated that he will put particular verbiage together for the committee to consider at the next meeting. He stated that it may be that our programming driving the structuring might be a more controversial statement than we are aware.

Flor Diaz Smith stated that we as a committee will do more of the fleshing out of details to better inform our communities. This was something we heard from the previous iteration of configuration consideration. Regarding the next meeting - she stated that the next meeting needs to be at least 1.5 hours. She suggested that the committee might meet on a day that we do not have a board meeting. She will send another doodle poll to committee members to plan for a consistent meeting date. She stated that if we are going to meet more than once a month it might make sense to have some virtual meetings. Shannon Miller asked, if there will there be opportunities for committee members to add to the agenda. Flor Diaz Smith stated that at the end of each meeting we will agree on what will be added to the next agenda. We will also refer to the timeline for planning agendas. This will be a living document, though. She noted that Jeanie will be with us for facilitation.

From this meeting, two agenda items:

- Configuration definition
- Add to criteria table/ reconsider

Flor Diaz Smith stated that this is an equal committee; there is no hierarchy. Kealy Sloan suggested 4:30 - 6 p.m. on Wednesdays before board meetings.

3. Adjourn: This meeting ended at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Grace, Committee Recording Secretary