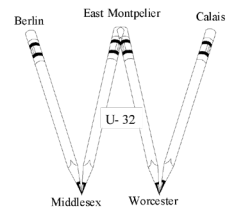


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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
2.19.25
6:15-9:15 PM
(Virtual and In-Person)
U-32 Middle & High School
930 Gallison Hill Rd
Montpelier, VT**

Present: Flor Diaz Smith, Elizabeth Brown, Zach Sullivan, Daniel Keeney, Ursula Stanley, Chris McVeigh, Mckalyn Leclerc, Patrick Whelley, Natasha Eckart, Julia Hewitt, Kealy Sloan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Linnea Darrow, Michelle Ksepka, Amelia Contrada

Superintendent Steven Dellinger-Pate, Principal Becca Tatistcheff, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Julia Pritchard, Lisa LaPlante, Principal Alicia Lyford, Principal Celia Guggemos, Principal Jarrod Weiss, Principal Karoline May, Susanne Gann, Heidi Dimick, Principal Gillian Fuqua, Amy Molina

Others: Honi Bean Barrett, Lila Richardson, Allison Fayle, ORCA Media, David Lawrence, Jen Campbell, Marilyn Martin, Noah Weinstein, Sonya Rhodes

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: Patrick Whelley would like to discuss communication about the budget to the general community. Flor Diaz Smith explained that this is encompassed in the agenda tonight under “Annual Meeting Board Roles.”

2.2. Reception of Guests:

2.3. Public Comments-Time limit strictly enforced, see note: None at this time

3. Presentation: Math Presentation (Doty/U-32): Gillian Fuqua presented a slide deck: *Focus on Mathematics 2024-25* from the perspective of Doty School.

Mckalyn Leclerc asked to clarify when you state that there is no difference in disaggregated data between students with free and reduced lunch and others. Gillian Fuqua stated that with a 40% poverty population in the Doty community, she would have expected to see similar data trends

and in this data, it is not evident. Ursula Stanley noted that Ed Quality Committee had also noticed that fourth grade seems to be a place where math performance lags, overall.

Elizabeth Brown stated that it would be interesting to see Social/ Emotional data next to academic data, to see if there is any correlation. She would also be interested to see how instruction varies depending on the class size.

Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that, even though in this group, the data is not disaggregated, within the school when considering data, it is, so they are able to dive deeper into specific trends.

Zach Sullivan stated that it would be good to look at data overall, regarding poverty level, and IEP without disaggregating at a more micro level.

Principal Becca Tatistcheff presented a slide deck: *Focus on Mathematics 2024-2025*, from the perspective of U-32.

Diane Nichols-Fleming wondered if it would be helpful to see actual numbers as opposed to, for example, 49% of students. If it were a small group of students (8), we could look at it and decide how to provide supports and interventions.

Elizabeth Brown stated, when considering the group of students who receive special education services, she would be more interested in seeing their rate of growth rather than their comparison to grade level peers.

Jen Miller-Arsenault stated that, in general, the data trends have been consistent over the past several years.

Natasha Eckart stated that she appreciates considering “street data” as she does not value the use of standardized testing results; she appreciates more of the “real life” data.

3.1. Community Q & A: Flor Diaz Smith invited community input. None was heard at this time.

4. Reports

4.1. Superintendent/ Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) Report: Steven Dellinger-Pate had provided a written report. Jen Miller-Arsenault shared some information about student performance in social emotional learning. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked, what is the response or what is the responsibility based on results of social emotional learning. How can the board support this? Jen Miller-Arsenault stated that, for one, a commitment to ongoing professional learning is important. She stated that as the results from the social emotional assessments are analyzed, the board would be kept apprised.

4.2. Principal Report: Jarrod Weiss shared the work around Humanities and Justice Coalition at Calais Elementary. Alicia Lyford shared the recent work around curriculum and data at East Montpelier Elementary. Celia Guggemos from Berlin shared the work around PBIS.

- 4.3. **Student Report:** Linnea Darrow shared student happenings, including sporting events and the Winooski Valley Jazz Festival. The board thanked Linnea for the student report and for joining the board discussions.
- 4.4. **Central VT Career Center Report:** Patrick Whelley reminded board members to request an absentee ballot if they intend to vote via absentee. He spoke about some of the seats that are open. He noted that Lyman Castle of Montpelier is hoping for a write in vote. He noted that a Washington Central seat is open. Daniel Keeney asked for a snippet of news from CVCC to include in Front Porch Forum post.
- 4.5. **VSBA Report:** Flor Diaz Smith provided a brief update from VSBA.

5. Board Operations

- 5.1. **Update on the Context of State Education:** Steven Dellinger-Pate invited board members to send him an email or ask him directly, questions they might have around the legislation around education, including federal funding. He stated that, recently, it seems that “Title funds” will not go away; they tend to have bipartisan support.

Flor Diaz Smith spoke about the Vermont Superintendents Association’s proposal. Patrick Whelley asked whether there is a realistic timeline at this time.

Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that he believes the first bill to come will likely be related to education funding. He stated that the AOE’s weekly field memos are the best source of updated information.

Flor Diaz Smith stated that she would continue to update the board as the VSBA responds to the legislation. Zach Sullivan stated that it would be helpful to understand more of the detail that will be affected by this. For example, weighted student numbers.

- 5.2. **Configuration Committee Update:** Daniel Keeney shared that the group made progress-reaching consensus on a definition for “configuration.” We are focused on an emphasis for program-based modeling; focusing on program goals and any evaluation of configuration proposals will be evaluated through that lens. We are creating a table of criteria (thank you to Kealy Sloan for this work). This will be the measuring stick that we use to consider models. The committee discussed the need for community input sessions, beginning in April, on a monthly basis.
- 5.3. **Annual Meeting Board Roles:** Flor Diaz Smith provided an update of communication around the budget and town meeting day. A trifold was mailed; posts are being made on Front Porch Forum.

Patrick Whelley stated that we need to simplify the message and we need to have a positive message about the budget that will enable an education for our students and our community. He stated that the messages are very focused on numbers, taxes, enrollment, etc. and he realizes that we need to inform, but now is not the time to hand-wring and rehash the difficulty. We need to celebrate the good things that will come from passing this budget. Board members invited him to speak at the annual informational meeting!

Diane Nichols-Fleming suggested there be three messages. (1) A blast of excitement, (2) The impact on taxes, (3) Some of the other information. Therefore, they are shorter and more manageable, but leading with excitement.

Some discussion followed around whether board members are allowed to say, "Vote for our budget." Is it acceptable to say, "I appreciate your support for this budget?" Flor Diaz Smith stated that the most important thing is to get people to vote! Elizabeth Brown stated that one thing that would be helpful is the idea that, with the support of the budget, we can do this.... share some of the things that are happening at our schools at the micro level. For example, one from each school to make it more connected to the people that it affects.

6. Finance Committee:

6.1. Review and Approve Project Manager Contract: Ursula Stanley moved to authorize the superintendent to sign the contract with WF Project Inspections for his services as Owner Project Manager and Clerk of the Works through 2/9/26, not to exceed \$57,287. Seconded by Elizabeth Brown. Discussion: Michelle Ksepka asked, is this the last year for this contract? (yes) She recalled during budget discussion that this position is under consideration for reduction. **This motion carried unanimously.**

7. Policy Committee

7.1. First Readings

7.1.1. Sanctuary School Policy: Natasha Eckart introduced this policy, to make sure that the procedures that have already been put into place by our district are put into the form of policy, as a commitment to the safety of our students and families.

Flor Diaz Smith stated that this draft policy has been shared with legal counsel, but we have not heard back yet. She would like to have a first reading and wait to hear back. Natasha Eckart stated that the language from this is very similar to the policy that was passed in Winooski and a number of organizations have vetted it.

Diane Nichols-Fleming asked, should we get a call from ICE, wanting to enter our building, do we have a procedure to address this. Steven Dellinger-Pate answered that yes we do have a process in place, but not to share in public forum.

Patrick Whelley asked could we vote on this policy with the agreement that we will consider legal counsel later.

Ursula Stanley asked, with the procedures we have in place and other policies, is there any chance of contradicting any others? She would like to see the same references to previous policies and legal precedents in the policy as per usual.

Mckalyn Leclerc stated that she feels that we should pass this policy tonight with the agreement that we will come back to this as needed after legal vetting. She feels it is important to express this support to families at this time, as the next time we meet is three weeks away and much can happen in three weeks.

Elizabeth Brown asked how does the procedure that is in place interact with this draft policy. Are we currently providing resources to our families in this domain? Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that we provide resources to families in many different domains and the procedures that we have in place align with this policy draft.

Chris McVeigh asked the board to consider passing this policy now and then coming back later as needed after legal vetting, as we are currently facing an unprecedented circumstance. Adopt the policy as it is; if we need to amend it in the future, we will do that to address any legal concerns that counsel may have.

Daniel Keeney suggested that we adopt, and also solicit feedback and not assume that we will amend it to include the matrix of affected procedures/ references to legal statute etc. as per usual in policy format.

Chris McVeigh moved to adopt the policy to ensure and put it on our agenda for our next meeting for additional consideration. Seconded by Mckalyn Leclerc, this motion carried unanimously.

- 7.2. C71 Emergency Medication (this is a new policy that replaces a previous):** Patrick Whelley asked about designation for administering epinephrine. Is the nurse required to do the training or does the nurse certify that the person is trained? Will follow up before the second reading. Elizabeth Brown stated that preschool teachers are required to be trained to administer this medication.

For the second reading, will reference what the policy is that this replaces. Will also work out the language around administering epinephrine.

Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that the procedures would be critical as well, especially in light of reducing the full time status of school nurses. Discussion followed around offering training widely. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared that it is common practice to train widely when, for example, a teacher has a student in the class who might require epinephrine. The board would like to check language in the policy around “emergency” versus “non-emergency.”

- 7.3. Board of Education Resolution:** Chris McVeigh suggested that this be tabled until the next meeting. Natasha Eckart would like to address this tonight. **Chris McVeigh read aloud the resolution. He moved to approve this resolution. Seconded by Julia Hewitt, this motion carried unanimously.**

- 8. Negotiations Committee Update:** Diane Nichols-Fleming noted that the group met on Monday to begin the work.
- 9. Transportation Committee Update:** Michelle Ksepka shared that the committee met recently. She shared that we have less than 500 students riding our buses, over a three-week average and 1000 who have signed up for bus transportation. It costs approximately \$80K per bus.

Diane Nichols-Fleming asked if the committee is looking into what the barriers are for the ones who are not riding as she would like to have a better understanding of why. Michelle Ksepka stated that, based on her previous position, she realizes that parents sign up their children for transportation but only some of them actually use transportation. Mckalyn Leclerc stated that it would be helpful to be able to designate if students ride some days of the week, but not all. Michelle Ksepka stated that the bigger issue is the families who sign up for use of transportation but do not use it. Some discussion followed around bus ridership and the desire to provide an equitable opportunity to families. Patrick Whelley stated that some of the discussion also related to length of bus ride, possible ways to cluster bus stops, etc. Natasha Eckart stated that bus transportation is a critical option to some families regardless of whether they use the bus a few days a week or all five, morning and afternoon.

10. Personnel

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

Natasha Eckart moved to approve Jennifer Stanworth – U-32 School Nurse. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka, this motion carried unanimously. Natasha Eckart moved to approve the resignation of Lydia Faesy – East Montpelier Nurse, with appreciation. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka, this motion carried unanimously. Natasha Eckart moved to approve the extended leave of absence for Annalissa Kirby – requesting extended leave of absence through end of the 24-25 School year. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka. Discussion: This position is a special educator at Berlin School. This motion carried unanimously.

10.2. Job description for Community School Coordinator: Ursula Stanley moved to approve the job description for WCUUSD Community School Coordinator as presented. Seconded by Amelia Contrada. Discussion: Natasha Eckart asked why is this position non-bargaining. Becca Tatistcheff shared that this is a grant-funded position and has potential for supervision for after school staff. Clarification: should not indicate “ESP.” Patrick Whelley noted that the job description indicates that it does not have supervisory responsibilities. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that this job description would come back after a year if the position were no longer grant funded and if supervision is to be included. Communities Schools Foundation grant is the funding source. Natasha Eckart expressed concern that this position does not have the benefit of being under the negotiated agreement. Patrick Whelley asked if it is possible to move a position under the bargaining agreement after it have been filled. The answer was yes. This motion carried with one abstention (Natasha Eckart).

11. Consent Agenda:

11.1. Approve Minutes of 2.5.25: Mckalyn Leclerc moved to approve the minutes of February 5, 2025. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.

11.2. Approve Board Orders: Daniel Keeney moved to approve the board orders, totaling \$846,464.82.

1-23-25 to 2-19-25: \$789,864.40

1-23-25 to 2-19-25 \$9,496.29

1-23-25 to 2-19-25 \$4,7104.13

Total: \$846,464.82

Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming, this motion carried unanimously.

12. Future Agenda Items

- 12.1.** Board Evaluation
- 12.2.** Advocating as a Board
- 12.3.** Superintendent Evaluation

13. Board Reflection: This was not done due in part to the late hour and the need for two Executive Sessions.

14. Public Comment: Lila Richardson asked is there a Coffee and Conversation meeting tomorrow at Doty? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate will reschedule since he is testifying in Montpelier tomorrow.

Bekah Mandel stated, regarding the budget and being sure that all students get what they need, the governor's proposals do not address cost drivers, the "cliffs," inequities. Publicschoolsvt.org has a great deal of information and data. She shared that there is an event on Tuesday Feb 25, a rally and sledding party to keep the focus on kids. She stated that the conversation has been derailed (all about taxpayers) - forgetting about the kids.

15. Executive Session: Superintendent Evaluation: At 9:09 p.m., Diane Nichols-Fleming moved to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the evaluation of the Superintendent under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(3) of Vermont Statutes (Evaluation of a public officer or employee)" and to include Steven Dellinger-Pate. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka, this motion carried unanimously. The board left Executive Session at 10:00 PM. Moved by Ursula Stanley and Seconded by Elizabeth Brown. The motion carried unanimously. No Action was taken.

16. Executive Session: Personnel: At 10:00 PM Diane Nichols-Fleming moved to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel issue and to include Steven Dellinger-Pate. Seconded by Patrick Whelley. The motion carried unanimously. The Board left Executive Session at 10:10 PM moved by Ursula Stanley and seconded by Natasha Eckart. The motion carried unanimously. No action was taken.

17. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM. Moved by Julia Hewitt and seconded by Mckalyn Leclerc. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary
and Diane Nichols-Fleming, Board Clerk