

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 4.02.25 6:15-8:15 PM East Montpelier Elementary School

Present: Board Members: Elizabeth Brown, Zach Sullivan, Daniel Keeney, Ursula Stanley, Chris McVeigh, Patrick Whelley, Natasha Eckart, Julia Hewitt, Kealy Sloan, Flor Diaz Smith, Linnea Darrow, Michelle Ksepka

Others: Superintendent Steven Dellinger-Pate, Susanne Gann, Julia Pritchard, Alicia Lyford, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Gillian Fuqua, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Michael Sherwin, David Lawrence, Karoline May, Marilyn Martin, ORCA Media, Lila Richardson, Becca Tatistcheff, Alison Fayle, Celia Guggemos, Jarrod Weiss, Allen Gilbert

1. **Call to Order:** Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.
2. **Welcome:** Flor Diaz Smith welcomed those present.
 - 2.1. **Adjustments to the Agenda:** The agenda item “Approve New Hire” is not needed tonight.
 - 2.2. **Reception of Guests**
 - 2.3. **Public Comments-Time limit strictly enforced, see note:** none at this time
3. **Presentation:**
 - 3.1. **Math Presentation - EMES:** Alicia Lyford presented a slide deck reflecting East Montpelier Elementary School’s math instruction and data. She invited board feedback. Patrick Whelley: Regarding different assessments, what happens if they disagree? Do you trust one more than others? Alicia: no, we do not trust just one. She spoke about I-Ready as an assessment that indicates when students make their way through the assessment too quickly. Acadiance is done on paper in interview style. She stated that we can re-administer an assessment and we have done that.

Diane Nichols-Fleming asked about logistics on the “data wall”. Alicia creates the data wall; teachers input data - there is PD time for teachers to do this. Diane asked if there is

any concern tech-wise around google sheets. Alicia - she controls who can see what data - the only people who have access beyond classroom teachers are the special educators or interventionists who serve the children. Alicia recalled that Bill Kimball (previous superintendent) had concerns around using google sheets due to ease of sharing (confidentiality).

Chris McVeigh: Do you have an idea of why the 6th grade model works so well? Alicia: It is “the dream team” and we play to the teachers’ strengths.

Zach Sullivan: How much do you consider patterns, for example, economically disadvantaged students - how to see their growth over time? He wonders how much is lost over the summer. Is there something we should be doing as a district to address summer loss?

Ursula Stanley: Further, of that percentage, how many of these students were able to access summer services? Alicia spoke about being able to access such data.

Daniel Keeney asked about ways of integrating math into other subject areas - what is the frequency of this at the grade levels and what is the effectiveness? Alicia: during morning meeting, we do many routines that integrate math; another place is during science instruction. She stated that tech integration is a place where math is incorporated. She noted that we do not have a great deal of data around student outcomes when math is embedded into other parts of the day. She stated that this is a teacher-dependent practice. Alicia Lyford invited board members to review some of the work of 5th-grade students during Tech Integration.

3.2. Community Feedback: Configuration - Programs: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared a slide deck: *Configuration - Programs, March 2025*. He stated that we begin planning around programs for our students, and think about structures because of the program priorities.

Diane Nichols-Fleming asked if we have a sense as to when the Berlin housing project will be complete. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that he does not think this is going to have a big impact on the student enrollment trend. Diane Nichols-Fleming spoke about the language and implied bias around 1:1 versus small group; this should be clarified in the slide.

Zach Sullivan asked for information about multi-age classrooms and how teaching of specific subject matter is structured. Gillian Fuqua described how both Doty School and Rumney School address multi-grade classrooms and break classrooms into groups so that students get grade level instruction, for example, using Foundations. Alicia Lyford stated that teaching multi-age math is often more difficult than literacy. Steven Dellinger-Pate spoke briefly about the Community School Program concept.

Patrick Whelley asked, the presentation seems to be answering some problem - some deficit that we have. What is wrong? What is the problem that we have to solve? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate: the desires of our community (we have heard in budget discussions and

outside those discussions) are for services (e.g. more access to school nurses, before and after school care); also conveyed from administration that the MTSS is important in order for us to do our jobs well. Which of these “wants” are going to take priority? The problem seems to be that we tend to want everything, but we cannot if we are to create a sustainable system.

Natasha Eckart spoke about the allocation of minutes for grades K-6. 150 minutes for literacy is now the average, this is very high, at the expense of other subject areas. We have 25 minutes daily for EITHER science or global citizenship. It would be great if we could integrate global citizenship and science into other areas of the curriculum. When are we going to tackle this, to be sure that our students are getting more time on some of these other subjects and making time to integrate into other subjects?

Superintendent Dellinger-Pate: How can we stabilize our classroom configuration so that we can do this work and have it carry through? He spoke about the challenge when teachers move from grade to grade. He stated that he would talk with Jen Miller-Arsenault and come back to the board to continue this discussion around integrating/ allotting time for, e.g., science and global citizenship.

Chris McVeigh asked how the allocations of time decided are. By whom? Jen Miller-Arsenault stated that it has been at least two or three years since we made those parameters, and we continue to consider how to integrate into other subject areas in the school day.

Alicia Lyford spoke about the challenge in the course of the school day, that time is a resource that we never have enough of; we have to continue to make hard decisions around this. Natasha Eckart stated that teaching math for 90 minutes and then 90 minutes for literacy allows time during the day for other subject matter. She spoke about the importance, especially in these times, of incorporating teaching of science and global citizenship. Both of these are under attack in the current climate, and it is critical that we make the time during the school day to provide education for our students. Flor Diaz Smith stated that the minutes that are allotted are meant to be the “bare minimum” to begin the work.

Daniel Keeney stated that the whole project of “configuration discussion” is an exercise in unifying the district. This is a very important conversation. He spoke about integrating subjects into others - it is important, but how do we measure this?

Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that one important consideration is what does embedded professional development look like? How do we allocate our time, at the elementary level and the high school level? What we continue to hear from the community and from the schools and the board: there are some things that are very important to us that we are not allocating time to. Time is a limited resource, which creates a constraint. Are we matching what the board and the community want, with respect to use of the time during a school day?

4. Reports

4.1. Superintendent Update – Legislative: U-32 Scheduling: Principal Becca Tatistcheff spoke about “vision” - the things she thinks about from the WCUUSD vision statement: passion, creativity, contributing to global/ local communities. This helps to frame work toward student outcomes. The question that is on her mind all the time is are we living up to this vision, and how do we know. Where can we see evidence of passion, creativity, and contribution? The other is humanity, justice, community, and inclusion - how do we know that we are working toward this? She spoke about teaming with students. It makes sense to establish strong ninth and tenth grade teams. She spoke to the question of “what is the problem?” that Patrick Whelley had alluded to. One of the problems is that staff are spread too thin to try to do too much, so a decision is made to do some “truncating” and focus on strong teaming. One of the outcomes is that it is important to look at our program of studies. How do we think about fitting/integrating into the curriculum? She spoke about the change in the schedule in response to this teaming effort. She stated that the board has outlined outcomes; how do we measure progress toward the outcomes? How do we create sustainable opportunities over time?

Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that she did not know anything about this schedule change as a board member. Communication/ transparency/ community engagement is a priority. It surprised her when a community member asked her about it; there was nothing in the COLT report that hinted of it. Some discussion followed around how to communicate change.

Natasha Eckart asked about student voice in this matter. She had heard from students who are not pleased with the change, mainly because they do not have options for electives. How can we hear from students at the end of next year, to hear how this worked for them? What worked/ what didn't work? Students focus on AP courses and focus on credit for graduation; she stated that the idea of passion is not honored when students are very focused on credits for graduation, creating a college application portfolio, etc.

Principal Tatistcheff spoke about transferable skills and flexible pathways. She noted that transferable skills are included in graduation requirements. Balance between content area proficiencies, transferable skills, how to measure, etc., continues to be a consideration.

Daniel Keeney stated that this seems like an iterative process over the years, offering some coursework on alternate years.

Some discussion ensued around senior class and equity indicators. In regards to early college and tech center. Forty-nine seniors on campus out of 120 total. Principal Tatistcheff stated that when considering economic disadvantage, 77% of students who remain on campus fall into that category.

Steven Dellinger-Pate suggested that this is an important conversation to have and to prepare solid data to show and discuss, at a future board meeting, rather than trying to answer these on the spot. Chris McVeigh asked, what are the barriers?

Patrick Whelley asked, what was the expectation when we started to explore options for early college and tech center education?

Daniel Keeney stated, he is curious about what was the intent of the legislature when they created the early college option.

Ursula Stanley shared that Ed Quality had explored some of this data and some of these issues.

Michelle Ksepka asked for projected numbers around next year regarding early college and the tech center.

Becca Tatistcheff shared that a Community Schools coordinator has been hired, and the funding is becoming more of a reality.

Superintendent Dellinger-Pate provided a brief update from the legislature. Bill H-454 - change to school districts, has called for a study group to determine where lines should be drawn, class sizes, state school board configuration. He spoke about the governor's quote about his intentions to resolve many of these issues before the legislative session closes. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that we are at the place where "the rubber hits the road."

4.2. Policy Committee Update: Chris McVeigh stated that the committee met today, and there will be policies on the agenda for the next meeting.

5. Board Operations

5.1. 2025-2026 School Calendar: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that this is a regional school calendar aligned with the tech center and schools around us. This is not ready for the board's approval yet; it is a preview and has not been discussed with the Labor Committee yet. Daniel Keeney asked whether we have a projected last day of school for this year, given snow days. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that we usually announce this date closer to April break.

5.2. Superintendent Evaluation - Goal Setting: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared a goals document (goals are unchanged from the previous iteration); he noted that he has included the climate survey into this document. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that the thinking behind the climate survey was to get a baseline; it was not a result of concerns around the current superintendence, to be clear. Daniel Keeney stated that climate surveying is part of the strategic plan as well and a climate survey will be serving "double duty."

Superintendent Dellinger-Pate expressed that he appreciates the feedback from the board around the Superintendent Evaluation.

5.3. Board Evaluation: Flor Diaz Smith had provided some guiding questions for the board's consideration. She had drafted some goals/ suggested areas for growth. She invited feedback from the board.

(1) Enhance Board-Superintendent Collaboration

(2) Improve Communication and Board Norms

Patrick Whelley stated that the suggestion of additional training is good, and he would ask the board chair to “keep us honest” when the conversation goes awry of “solutions focused discussions.” Flor Diaz Smith stated that she will do her best as chair, and asked board members to help keep each other accountable. The board will review board norms at their retreat.

(3) Increase Board Learning and Development

Ursula Stanley stated that this is an important goal - it is important for the board members to continue an effort to learn and grow.

Daniel Keeney stated that he would like to see a bullet in this goal that speaks to board members creating opportunities to see each of the schools in action.

Flor Diaz Smith spoke about the importance of the visit to the schools being intentional, constructive, and not disruptive.

(4) Strengthen Data-Driven Decision-Making

The Ed Quality Committee has a large part in this goal by carefully considering and reporting to the board as a whole.

Flor Diaz Smith spoke about the importance, for all of the goals, to find ways to measure. She also noted the importance of “onboarding” for new board members.

6. Personnel

6.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE: None

7. Consent Agenda

7.1. Approve Minutes of 3.19.25: Patrick Whelley moved to approve the minutes from March 19, 2025. Seconded by Zach Sullivan. Discussion: Diane Nichols-Fleming added to the attendees. This motion carried with noted edit.

8. Future Agenda Items

8.1. Advocating as a Board: (Daniel Keeney asked for more detail on this)

Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether the COLT report could provide information about impacts of changes to DOE; keeping the board abreast. Natasha Eckart stated that this goes beyond advocating through VSBA. How can we as a board advocate if there are some areas that do not align with VSBA’s stance? She feels it is imperative that we as a board be part of the conversation, now, with what is happening at the legislature. This future agenda item needs to be a current/ ongoing agenda item.

Daniel Keeney stated that this should be built into the board calendar, and that the Steering Committee can begin to flesh out plans more specifically. He is also curious to hear from the administrators in our schools - what issues from the government level are they most concerned with.

Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that the configuration conversation continues with the ever-changing discussion at the state and national government level.

Zach Sullivan stated that while this is critical, he could see it being a very long discussion item so we will need to put some parameters around.

Chris McVeigh spoke about the board's ability to advocate.

9. **Board Reflections:** Steven Dellinger-Pate thanked the board for its attention to a lot of detail and information. Board members thanked EMES for dinner. Good questions/ discussion were appreciated and noted. Patrick Whelley stated that he appreciated the opportunity to review student work.
10. **Public Comments, Time limit strictly enforced, see note 15 minutes:** None at this time
11. **Adjourn: Diane Nichols-Fleming moved; Michelle Ksepka seconded; the board adjourned by consensus at 9:01 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary