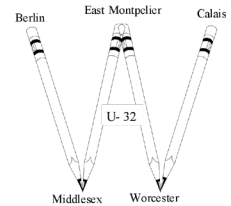


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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 District Configuration Committee Meeting

May 21, 2025

U-32

930 Gallison Hill Rd

Montpelier, VT

5:00-6:00 PM

Present: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate, Flor Diaz Smith, Kealy Sloan, Shannon Miller, Daisy Scarzello, Julia Hewitt, Daniel Keeney, Lila Richardson, Allen Gilbert, Noah Weinstein, Chris McVeigh, Gillian Fuqua, Lisa Hanna, Kathleen, Andy Shapiro, Deborah Bloom, Jeannie Phillips, Marilyn Martin, Becca Tatistcheff, Caitlin Howansky, Jen Miller-Arsenault

1. Call to Order: Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. Andy Shapiro asked for clarification about the agenda - will there be time on the agenda for committee members to provide feedback and input? He has a statement that he would like to read. Flor Diaz Smith responded that there is time on the agenda for “questions and feedback.”

2. Configuration Committee Meeting

2.1. Agenda

2.1.1. Opening

2.1.2. Middle School Model Presentation: Becca Tatistcheff provided a slide deck: *The Possibilities of Middle School.*

2.2. Questions and Feedback: Jeannie Phillips invited questions about this presentation.

Daniel Keeney asked, if you were to name a weakness with our middle level program at this time, what would it be? She answered enough choice for students, and how to build leadership with students (having them for a longer period affects this opportunity.)

Chris McVeigh asked, in terms of configuration, what would the criteria be for making that determination? Principal Tatistcheff shared that the configurations that she has experienced have been K-8 or 6-12. She stated that 600- 700 students is a good range of students for, e.g., a 6-12 grade configuration.

Kealy Sloan asked, if you have grades 6-12, do you maintain some sort of “middle school” grade span within grades 6-12? She spoke about various models. Shannon Miller stated that this is an exciting topic. She stated that her experience teaching is that having sixth graders in an elementary school with preschool students is a challenge, as sixth graders are ready to move on at this point. She also spoke about equity and access to sports, and about time to adjust, about growing executive functioning skills. She stated that if the conversation continues about fifth graders moving to Rumney, she thinks this is a very big ask for these students, to move twice, fifth grade to Rumney and then sixth grade to U-32.

2.3. Updated Equitable student outcomes and opportunities: Jen Miller-Arsenault provided an update/ continuation to the previous discussion around equitable student outcomes and opportunities. Shannon Miller asked for clarification around math curriculum and literacy curriculum, WCUUSD-wide. Jen Miller-Arsenault spoke briefly in response.

2.4. Updated configuration proposal process:

2.4.1. Configuration proposal process: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared a slide deck outlining the Configuration process. He created this within the larger timeline that the committee has created to date. He updated this based on feedback from the previous meeting. He restated that he would like to make sure from this committee, what are the programming priorities.

2.4.2. Updated timeline: Jeannie Phillips stated that the updated timeline reflects that Superintendent Dellinger-Pate had just shared; there is no Configuration Committee meeting planned in July.

Deborah Bloom stated the importance of being particularly attuned to how we are moving middle school-aged students around. She referred to some of the discussion earlier about the needs of middle school students. She spoke about the importance of communication.

Daniel Keeney stated that, regarding the timeline, he worries that we are waiting for too fully-formed a proposal before we get “in the mud” with the public. He stated that he would like a “messier” model of working through dialogue and feedback to create a proposal, so that we are exposed to more than the educational experts, and that we hear from community. He would like to clarify what this looks like.

Flor Diaz Smith stated that we want to be sure that we have community input along every step of the way. She stated that we would not be voting on the configuration until September. She stated that we are a preK-12 system with a variety of campuses. She noted that we do have a communications sub-committee within this committee.

Andy Shapiro read a statement about the impact of the proposal to Doty. Unclear about the benefits of moving students to Rumney; it does not seem to be critical to do this in order to allow shared space with Turtle Island. Does not seem wise to alienate Worcester at this time; we are facing such uncertainty in the legislature. There are some unknowns in the future (e.g. merging with Montpelier). Moving forward at this time would be hasty with possible yet unknown consequences. He suggests postponing any changes until after the state process plays out, and postpone the lease until all of the details are worked out. Suggests more closely working together with the Worcester residents.

Caitlin Howansky thanked the committee members for all of the work that they are doing and have done and she asked to be purposeful in moving forward.

Noah Weinstein echoed Caitlin's gratitude and reiterated Shannon Miller's comments about developmental appropriateness for middle school children. He noted again, regarding Daniel Keeney's comment about inviting the community into a messy process, he would like to model the configuration process like the budget development process, with opportunities for input. He made the analogy to the previous process, which felt like the community was being offered a fully baked cake with no input into the ingredients or the creation along the way.

Sophia - appreciates the timeline and process around the middle school configuration; she would appreciate very much the same process for the Doty students. She stated that the community is willing to do a great deal of work, research, and input - we have a lot of eyes and when we are on board and engaged, we can produce a great deal toward a successful process and outcome.

Lila Richardson reiterated the concern that had been expressed about current fourth-grade Doty students having to make a large number of transitions. She stated that these are the same children who went through the COVID-19 pandemic; they have faced a great deal of transitions and upheaval already. She stated, regarding the topic of Doty/ Rumney, we have been told all along that, somehow this would make Doty more viable; she stated that the proposal makes a small school even smaller and more vulnerable. She stated that this should have been brought to the Configuration Committee.

Sophia asked about minutes regarding Superintendent Dellinger-Pate's memo alluding to the discussion that has taken place in committee around middle school configuration. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that this had been discussed in the previous iteration of Configuration Committee, and he can refer her to the minutes.

Kealy Sloan stated that the process that we followed with the previous iteration of the Configuration Committee was powerful and she would like to replicate that process. Some discussion followed around the Communications sub-Committee/ Steering Committee and next steps.

2.5. Update on Turtle Island: (this was not discussed at tonight's meeting.)

2.6. Public comment

3. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned by consensus at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Grace, Committee Recording Secretary