

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
8.20.25
6:15-9:15 PM
(In-Person & Virtual)
U-32 Middle & High School
930 Gallison Hill Rd
Montpelier, VT**

Present: Daniel Keeney, Ursula Stanley, Patrick Whelley, Natasha Eckart, Kealy Sloan, Flor Diaz Smith, Mckalyn Leclerc, Amelia Contrada, Julia Hewitt, Zach Sullivan, Chris McVeigh, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Superintendent Steven Dellinger-Pate, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Becca Tatistcheff, Julia Pritchard

Others: Allen Gilbert, Lila Richardson, David Delcore, Lisa Hanna, ORCA Media, D Hann

- 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 and spoke about the spirit of beginning a new school year.
 - 2.1. Adjustments to The Agenda:** Flor Diaz Smith stated that she would like to change the agenda to add an opportunity to welcome Tracy Wrend to speak to the board, as well as tabling an item under Finance, item 6.1
 - 2.2. Reception of Guests**
 - 2.3. Public Comments-Time limit strictly enforced, see note:** Flor Diaz Smith invited public comment at this time. Tracy Wrend provided an overview of the report: *An Informal Study Report on Governance Considerations for a Merger between Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools and Washington Central Unified Union School District, June 2025*. This report will be available on both Montpelier School District's and WCUUSD website, once both boards have had this preview opportunity. She noted that she had met with Montpelier earlier today and she intends to meet with both boards following their review of the report. Chris McVeigh asked whether there would be a possibility of both boards meeting together to discuss next steps. She indicated that this is a possibility that

is up to both boards. Daniel Keeney asked how the administration sees next steps and how to engage Tracy Wrend in future work. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that to date her role has been to develop and present this report. Her proposed role going forward will be up for discussion. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate and Flor Diaz Smith thanked Tracy Wrend for her presence tonight and for her work thus far.

3. Presentations:

3.1. Board Learning: School Board Member Orientation and Handbook: Flor Diaz Smith and Superintendent Dellinger-Pate presented the slide deck: *WCUUSD Board Orientation: The Role of the Board.*

4. Reports

4.1. Superintendent/Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) Report: Julia Pritchard provided an overview of special educators' work at WCUUSD for the coming school year, during pre-service days. Jen Miller Arsenault provided an overview of curriculum camp during this summer. She invited questions. Dan Keeney asked whether the PD this year considers increasing the number of faculty who might need middle school licensure. She stated that she is aware that there are teachers who are interested in this, but it was not the focus of curriculum camp.

4.1.1. Early Education Task Force Update: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate had shared a written update. He stated that the task force has met since this written report; families were surveyed with 60+ responses. He stated that a written report would be shared at a future board meeting. He previewed through some of the survey responses. He stated that the survey indicated that families need full day early education options, every day during the school year.

4.2. Configuration Committee Update: Flor Diaz Smith stated that there would be a combined Configuration Committee and Board meeting on September 3. The agenda will provide more information about this joint effort.

4.3. Community Schools Report: A written report had been provided.

4.4. Central Vermont Career Center Report: Patrick Whelley shared that the Career Center has been busy working on the new building in Graniteville. A bond vote is expected this fall. (\$140- \$150 million dollar bond). Mckalyn Leclerc asked Superintendent Dellinger-Pate to explain the impact that offering full day programming at the career center will have on U-32 students. Some discussion followed around the career center being one of the multiple pathways that are offered to students and around student participation / enrollment from U-32. Daniel Keeney wondered if a resolution from this board would be helpful to Patrick Whelley as a member of the CVCC board. He indicated that it would be helpful. Dan Keeney moved that this board resolve to support a full day program at the CVCC. Seconded by Zach Sullivan. Ursula Stanley

stated that this would be appropriate to have on the September 3 agenda, as an action item. Dan Keeney withdrew his motion; Zach Sullivan agreed to this.

- 4.5. VSBA Report:** Flor Diaz Smith provided a brief update. She asked volunteers to attend the fall conference. Ursula Stanley and Zach Sullivan indicated that they would like to attend. Steven Dellinger-Pate shared that information is shared in the COLT report, about Act 73 updates. Flor Diaz Smith shared that the task force met yesterday; she shared some updates around state and federal activity related to public education. Chris McVeigh stated that he would like to allow time to discuss as a board the two options of school district or supervisory union; he suggested having this on the next board agenda. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that as a board we have not had an opportunity to discuss this. Flor Diaz Smith stated that this has been intended to be included on the September 3 agenda. Daniel Keeney suggested that it would be helpful to have some expert attend the board meeting to facilitate discussion and understanding of Act 73.

5. Board Operations

- 5.1. VSBIT Proxy: Patrick Whelley moved to authorize Superintendent Dellinger-Pate to act as board proxy for the VSBIT member meetings for the coming year. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously.**

- 5.2. Review and Adopt Board Norms:** Flor Diaz Smith reviewed the board norms as had been discussed at the board retreat. Zach Sullivan had offered verbiage for “accountability” and for “commitment to truth” - he read these aloud. Chris McVeigh stated that he does not agree with this language. Some discussion followed around fact checking when public comments are made at board meetings. Some discussion around choice of language, for example, Natasha Eckart stated that the term “cherry pick” has a negative racial connotation. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that board members should have credit and faith in their own critical thinking and true intentions. Discussion followed; several board members agreed with this statement and expressed discomfort with the negative tone of some of the suggested verbiage and the underlying tone that board members are not being truthful in their representation or are not using critical thinking skills. Amelia Contrada stated that having some language around “fact checking” could be helpful to all. Flor Diaz Smith suggested some language to incorporate much of the discussion around this topic. She will provide an updated draft for the next board meeting. Daniel Keeney asked whether board members could provide suggested language to consider at the next board meeting, so that all of the suggestions can be considered in written form. Patrick Whelley had provided suggested language at the board retreat and he reviewed this; it will be included in the next board packet for board consideration. Zach Sullivan stated that it is important to have substantive discussion (not personal attack); however, he does not feel directly addressing “tone” is appropriate. The board will continue to discuss and consider this at the next meeting, with updated language.

5.3. Review & Affirm 25-26 Board Goals and Work plan: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate had shared draft 2025-26 Board Goals and Work plan. He reiterated that this is a working document. Ursula Stanley suggested creating measurable goals that are aligned with the Strategic Plan. **Ursula Stanley moved to approve the focus areas and the workplan, as presented, understanding that this is a working document. Seconded by Zach Sullivan.** Some discussion followed around the calendar in the workplan. Daniel Keeney stated that the Configuration Committee is not included explicitly in this calendar. Flor Diaz Smith stated that the September 3 meeting will be combined with the Configuration Committee but we have not yet had an opportunity to plan with them. Daniel Keeney asked whether the school locations would be indicated on the calendar. Ursula Stanley made some corrections to the calendar from the Ed Quality Committee work. Daniel Keeney asked whether this document is shared on the website; yes, it is, and is updated on the website as the document is updated. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that there are many unknowns in this document at this point and she is not comfortable voting at this time; she will abstain from the vote. **This motion carried, with one abstention.**

5.4. Review & Affirm 25-26 Superintendent Evaluation Process & Timeline:

Superintendent Dellinger-Pate presented an updated timeline showing the superintendent evaluation process. Flor Diaz Smith spoke about developing an updated climate survey. Daniel Keeney stated that there is value in using an identical survey from year to year, to have longitudinal data. He spoke about the idea of alternating year to year, having an identical survey every other year, and in the off years to have some sort of reflection on the previous. Diane Nichols-Fleming suggested using the same climate survey in order to have longitudinal data. Ursula Stanley expressed support for Daniel Keeney's idea of having the every-other-year opportunity for reflection. **Chris McVeigh moved to approve the Superintendent Evaluation Process as discussed. Seconded by Mckalyn Leclerc, this motion carried unanimously.**

6. Finance Committee: Tabled

6.1. Approve Multi-Year Capital Improvement Project Scope & Budget

7. Personnel

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

Daniel Keeney moved to approve the following new teacher hires: Surayah Pierce-Speight - U-32 World Languages Teacher .20 FTE; Elizabeth Lawson - U-32 Special Education Teacher; William Poderzay - U-32 Special Education Teacher; Ruthanne Peterson - Speech and Language Pathologist. Seconded by Chris McVeigh. Discussion: Chris McVeigh asked that the candidate's name be listed at the top of the nomination form and that salary be included in the document. Board members agreed to this formatting change to the document. **This motion carried unanimously.**

Daniel Keeney moved to hire long-term substitute for 2025-26 school year: Phelps Griffin, U-32 Middle School Math and Science. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.

8. Consent Agenda

8.1. Approve Minutes of 6.25.25, 8.6.25: Julia Hewitt moved to approve the minutes of June 25, 2025, with the following edit: (p 46): “cautioned against assuming that those with the loudest voices in the room don’t have ideas that we should take seriously.” Seconded by Zach Sullivan. This motion carried, with noted edit.

Ursula Stanley moved to approve the minutes of August 6, 2025. Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming. This motion carried unanimously.

8.2. Board Orders: Daniel Keeney moved to approve the board orders 6-22-25 through 8-20-25 in the total amount of \$4,770,241.46. Seconded by Mckalyn Leclerc, this motion carried unanimously.

9. Future Agenda Items: (September 3)

9.1. Action item re: CVCC resolution

9.2. Act 73 update/ information/ discussion: Daniel Keeney suggested considering implications for our district - what we do well and what we want.

9.3. Presentation by Tracy Wrend

9.4. Review and adopt board norms

9.5. Multi-Year Capital Improvement Project Scope & Budget

10. Board Reflections: Daniel Keeney celebrated the Community Events calendar - he would love to see this as a living document, all year long. Amelia Contrada thanked Jen Miller Arsenault and Julia Hewitt for their presentations and for the work that they do.

11. Public Comments: Time limit strictly enforced, see note: None

12. Adjourn: Amelia Contrada moved to adjourn at 8:46. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary