

# 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  
11.19.25  
6:15-9:15 PM  
(In-Person & Virtual)  
U-32 Middle & High School  
930 Gallison Hill Rd  
Montpelier, VT**

**Present:** Superintendent Dellinger-Pate, Flor Diaz Smith, Daniel Keeney, Chris McVeigh, Patrick Whelley, Ursula Stanley, Kealy Sloan, Mckalyn Leclerc, Elizabeth Brown, Michelle Ksepka, Zach Sullivan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Amelia Contrada, Julia Hewitt, Natasha Eckart, Student Representatives: Elise O'Brien, Kathryn Stauffer, and Lei DeGroot,

**Others:** Jeannie Phillips, Karoline May, Celia Guggemos, Lisa LaPlante, Alicia Lyford, Susanne Gann, Julia Pritchard, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Allison Fayle, Caitlin Howansky, Lila Richardson, Lisa Hanna, Marilyn Martin, Michael Sherwin, Noah Weinstein, Susan DeForge, April Davis, Callie Weller, Ainsley, Allison Mindel, Daizy Scarzello, Deborah Bloom, Denise Downing, Erin Mullaney, Ginger Long, Giuliana Jensen, Hannah Brown, Hans, Holly Weiss, Jamie Bohn, Jen Campbell, Jenna Howard, Jill, Joanne Campisi, Justin Kenney, K Brown, Lauralee Curavoo, Lesley, Madison, Marisa Green, Mark Brown, ORCA Media, P.DGO, Rosie Close, Samantha Jackson, Sonya Rhodes, Stephanie Kaplan, The Mackays, William Wright, Clifton Long, Shannon Miller, Mary Alice Proffitt, Oren Winters, Tennessee Lamb, a group of cross country team members, Felicia Weeks, Barry Bernstein, Kathleen Bookchin, Sophia Wright Emigh

**1. Call to Order: Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 6:23 p.m.**

**2. Welcome**

**2.1. Adjustments to The Agenda**

**2.2. Reception of Guests:** Flor Diaz Smith welcomed those present, spoke about confidentiality, and referred to related policies. She stated that if the board will consider an appeal it would be held in Executive Session. She stated that there would be no public comments allowed, speaking specifically about staff. She spoke about her role as Board Chair and the role of the board. **Chris McVeigh moved to allow those who have come**

**out en masse to hear public comment at the start of our meeting, and at the end.** It does not do well for us to ignore the public effort to participate, to speak to an issue that is dear to them. **Seconded by Diane Nichols-Fleming. A vote was called. Eight in favor; this motion carried.** Flor Diaz Smith stated that this would be fifteen minutes, and she will not allow public comments related to the resignation of a position; she referred to Policy A21. She stated that she would hold the board to the process.

**2.3. Public Comments-Time limit strictly enforced, see note:** Lei De Groot asked, with respect to all parties, would there be a time that allows for a public forum around this issue.

Chris McVeigh asked whether the personnel issue on the agenda tonight refers to the matter.

Clifton Long stated that the ideals of U-32 have not been adhered to. We rely on the board to honor the commitment to the students and ensure that what should be done in a situation like this is done.

Shannon Miller reviewed the policy and noted that parents have followed the policy and as per policy is asking the board to hold a hearing to appeal the decision of the superintendent.

Flor Diaz Smith noted that this request can be made to the board and the board will respond to the appeal as per policy.

A person from the community spoke to the board about garnering trust and honoring the community. He spoke about his frustration with Executive Session.

Clarification was provided for the format for a written appeal: The name of the employee and the concern around the employee, to the board, in writing. Flor Diaz Smith stated that if a hearing is held, legal counsel will be present, the parties will be included, and the discussion will occur in Executive Session.

Someone from the community stated that an appeal has already been provided in writing. If people are not invited, because they are not parties in the appeal, to Executive Session, then the voices are not heard.

Another person from the community asked whether the fifteen minutes would be allowed for public comment, as the board had voted.

Lei DeGroot stated that the board is disregarding the decision that was made to allow for fifteen minutes of comment if it is not related to the personnel issue.

Mary Alice Proffitt stated that the way the board chair has communicated over the past few months is unacceptable and she believes that Flor Diaz Smith should step down as board chair.

A board student representative asked if students are not allowed in the Executive Session, then when is the opportunity for students to have a voice in the process.

Zach Sullivan stated that the board does not know all of the circumstances; this is why a hearing would be held, for the board to hear in Executive Session the information and it would be inappropriate and possibly illegal for the board to share the confidential information with the public.

Rosie Close asked about the traditions from Doty School (e.g. haunted hallways) and whether the board will address this.

Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that in honoring all of the processes, she wanted to be clear that not all of us do not want to hear all of the voices. She believes in the democratic process, which includes hearing voices. She stated that what is heard tonight does not necessarily represent all of the board members.

Oren Winters stated that respecting the process has not gotten us anywhere. He has tried to head the effort to overturn the decision that was made. He felt like voices were not heard; he would like the board to know the experience of students during the most important time in their cross-country track season.

A board student representative asked again - when will the students be given an opportunity to speak to the board.

Flor Diaz Smith stated that public comment would be allowed at the end of the board meeting tonight.

Lei DeGroot stated that he is sorry that he was not able to facilitate what the students desired.

Tennessee Lamb spoke about the board chair not allowing students' voices to be heard at a school board meeting. All of these students have attended this meeting wanting to have their voices heard, and why is the board afraid of this?

Diane Nichols-Fleming asked, could the question be asked of legal counsel, who are the parties? Are students who identify as being impacted considered in the parties?

Students from the cross country team stated that the students experienced hearing one thing from one administrator and another from another administrator and were feeling unheard, which was why they are attending this meeting tonight. Students were told to

“move on” and as a team, they felt neglected by the administration; one student indicated, “As a student, I felt lost, confused, and angry.”

Chris McVeigh asked whether there is a restorative justice process for students to invoke.

**Flor Diaz Smith adjourned for five minutes and will come back together at 7:03 p.m. Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting back to order at 7:05 p.m.**

Steven Dellinger-Pate asked the board whether they would prefer a budget draft discussion or a configuration discussion, first, since they each inform the other. Board members agreed that the budget discussion would be preferred first. Steven Dellinger-Pate would like to share and discuss the Listening Sessions data first.

- 3. Presentations: Configuration Committee Model & Listening Sessions Data:** Jeannie Phillips shared the slide deck: *WCUUSD Data Synthesis*. She invited questions from the board about the data.

Daniel Keeney shared that he facilitated the Calais listening session and he felt that the substantive feedback overshadows a great deal of people who are philosophically opposed to any new configuration. He is not sure that comes through and he would like to be sure that we are all aware of this.

Patrick Whelley asked whether there was any judgement of the questions themselves, e.g. was there any suggestion that the questions were leading in some way?

Elizabeth Brown stated that she did not hear from people that they are not willing to entertain reconfiguration in any way as being beneficial; what she is hearing is that people want more information.

Ursula Stanley stated that there were some sentiments that the questions were leading and that it was already a “done deal.” There was some confusion about whether the community will be able to have a vote in the matter.

Daniel Keeney stated that he had drafted some of the questions and was disappointed to see some of the reframing in the document, departing from the verbiage in the original questions. He stated that communication has been and will be critical. The Communication Committee was not involved in the framing of the document. We have a lot of information already that we can put out, and we have no point person. It will become even more critical to have this. Kealy Sloan expressed agreement about the “point person.” She stated that the Communication Committee met and did in fact do the work to reframe the document.

Elizabeth Brown stated that she feels there was a breakdown in the communication of the intent of the meetings. She stated that community members are chomping at the bit to be able to share their ideas as well. She stated that the questions were correct for the intent of the meeting, but that the community members were not clear about the intent.

Zach Sullivan shared that the East Montpelier went off the intended process and showed a real hunger for more information. Regarding questions about how to reimagine the community, there was some real enthusiasm for making a more combined school and combining traditions, particularly from parents. He stated that staff brought to their attention, the fifth and sixth graders are talking about this. It is important to share information rather than have rumors floating around.

Diane Nichols-Fleming: trust, transparency and the timeline were common themes throughout. She expressed concern that the timeline has been shifting as we move along and she sees the need for trust and transparency around the timeline and the process.

### **3.1. Community Q & A**

**3.2. Board Q & A:** Felicia Weeks: Expressed frustration that this moves forward even though school consolidation does not work, no improvement in outcomes, and financially is not the solution that is purported. She spoke about where money is being spent on all of the schools, and the need to spend it smartly.

Barry Bernstein felt that it was not a listening session; a decision had already been made. He asked about Act 73. He stated that people feel like we are moving excessively fast. He stated that Twinfield and Cabot Board have sent letters that they would like to send their high school students to our schools. He suggested K-4 - Calais, 5-8 East Montpelier. He stated that people do not feel like this is an open discussion. He stated that if the board wants this to pass in any form, then you need to change how you are proceeding. You are going to lose all of the work that you have done if you do not step back.

Rosie Close stated that this is causing students a lot of stress. They do not know where they are going to be next year. Students want to know. You need to make a decision and tell us now. Nobody in Worcester wants this. This feels like a never-ending loop that you are putting us through.

Kathleen Bookchin stated that she would like to hear more of benefits of consolidation - about curriculum and learning. "High quality learning and more robust curriculum" - please explain more. Would like to know how, with increased class sizes, student outcomes will improve. She asked for the identity of the person who had been present facilitating (she was identified Jeannie Phillips). She stated that there had been a request to have a joint community meeting so that the receiving schools can host the other towns. Daniel Keeney stated that he thinks that is a great idea (the joint community meeting).

**4. Presentation: Budget Draft # 1:** Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared a slide deck: *November 19, 2025 FY 27 Budget Presentation*. He and Susanne Gann co-facilitated the presentation. He invited questions and comments.

Chris McVeigh asked, where are the savings coming from, primarily? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that savings are mostly from staffing. Chris McVeigh asked, what is the most significant cost driver? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that the largest cost driver, one of the biggest pieces, is the decrease in weighted average daily student.

Susanne Gann stated that class sizes are causing schools to add teachers, because of the shifts in class sizes among the five elementary schools.

Julia Hewitt stated that at the Configuration meeting, he stated that the district would not sell the buildings (Calais and Doty) at least in the first year. Does this draft include the costs of maintaining these buildings? Susanne Gann stated that the savings do not reflect the effect of not using these buildings as school buildings.

Patrick Whelley asked, are we talking about reductions in force? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that we would be looking for attrition by retirement and moving, as well as the factor of positions that are not currently filled.

Mckalyn Leclerc asked if we have factored in special education services. Where does the percentage split come from? Superintendent Dellinger Pate stated that this was an arbitrary split and he was trying to find a place to put more into the schools and less into centralized services, for the board to consider. Daniel Keeney asked, what do we lose if we shift those services from centralization? Susanne Gann stated that we have been unable to find the way to make it work - to provide all the services that we need and want - and to come in under the excess spending threshold.

Kealy Sloan spoke about the difference between RIF to meet our budget target (below the threshold) versus the RIF related to configuration. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that we would have to reduce force in order to meet a budget target; there is no way around that. Kealy Sloan asked about the \$1 million adjustment. Steven Dellinger Pate stated that fewer positions would reduce overhead over the long term.

Diane Nichols-Fleming asked about moving 6th grade - what is the cost? What is the savings? She also asked about preschool - there is potentially some savings. In addition, when asking what the board needs to see - she would like to have guidance around parameters equitably across positions, with respect to staffing reductions. Steven Dellinger-Pate explained a comparison tool that the board would have, regarding RIF. Susanne Gann clarified the preschool cost and savings. Steven Dellinger-Pate shared that the proposal is to

first move all students, K-6, and the following year, move sixth grade to U-32. He will share more details about that when we discuss configuration.

Chris McVeigh asked how many positions are currently vacant. What types are they? Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that reductions sometimes come from people leaving positions.

Chris McVeigh asked what the savings would be in special education costs, with different service delivery models. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that we do not know this yet; however, he would not count on greater cost savings regarding special education service delivery, at least in the first year. Susanne Gann stated that the conversation has been around how the delivery of services would be an improvement in the proposed configuration model.

Patrick Whelley asked whether the salary increase reflects increase in school nurses. Susanne Gann - yes.

Kealy Sloan asked Susanne Gann to explain the revenue increase in special education in this budget draft. She explained (through the lens of excess spending.)

Daniel Keeney asked whether new capital improvements are anticipated in the first year. Also, is there some expense associated with the transition process? Steven Dellinger-Pate expressed that he cannot imagine not having some capital expenses in the transition process. There has been some discussion of hiring a position to facilitate this. He stated that buildings have plenty of space to accommodate students.

**Questions from the public:** A member of the audience asked about U-32's capacity to provide special education services to all students, depending on their needs. She has heard that this is an area of difficulty this year. Steven Dellinger-Pate and Susanne Gann spoke to this. Susanne Gann stated that this year we added a position through IDEA grant and this is included in the proposed budget for next year as well.

Lauralee Curavoo asked, if Calais was to merge with East Montpelier next year, is there room to house all of those students in one building? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that, there is not - and we will be discussing this during the Configuration presentation.

A member of the audience asked about the space issue, e.g. at East Montpelier under this proposal. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that he would speak more about this in the Configuration discussion.

Someone from the audience stated that they would create a written letter of appeal regarding the issue that was spoken about initially tonight. Flor Diaz Smith thanked her, and thanked all for their participation; she indicated that this would be on the agenda for the next board meeting.

**5. Presentation: Configuration Committee Model & Listening Sessions Data:** Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that the goals from the Strategic Plan have guided this process. He presented a slide deck: *WCUUSD: Actualizing our Strategic Vision*, to guide the discussion. FY27: K-6 at three schools: EMES, Berlin, Rumney. Pre-K at Berlin, Pre-K at Rumney, there would not be sufficient space at EMES next year; how would that program look at Calais? Unclear at this point? Then 6-8 middle school at U-32 in FY28. He stated that this is an attempt to answer systemic challenges within our WCUUSD.

Lauralee Curavoo stated that this proposal does not feel like the model that has been discussed, with respect to the elementary schools. She stated that the process that has gone into configuring the middle school has more thoroughness, the process that has gone into considering combining elementary school buildings does not feel the same, and she does not see this garnering support from the communities.

Holly Weiss stated that she is less worried about her kids' resilience but more concerned about the ongoing discussion about systemic inequities, inferring negativity about the smaller community schools - this is hurtful when you are constantly be told that your kids are not getting what they need and we can't explain how they will get what they need going forward. Steven Dellinger Pate stated that we have excellent staff and teachers across each building and they have been making it work. The vision in this plan is to make it better and easier for them to make it work.

Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that what she has come across from the listening sessions is that this is an iterative process, and each time we glean more and more information. She expressed, though, concerns about the timeline - specifically, the timeline and the ability of communities of Worcester and Calais to come together to engage in a process of what does this actually mean? Doing the dreaming of what this could look like so they are not voting for a building to close but they are voting for a potential. She does not think that we have allowed time for the communities that will feel the most of the effects have had an opportunity to be heard. She wondered whether we could plan for FY28 for the transition for both 6th grade and for the elementary schools. She stated that transportation should be looking at efficiencies regardless of which town and school.

Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that we are not proposing that we are trying to sell the buildings back to their communities immediately. He stated that we are looking at ways to use the buildings for educational use. He spoke about transportation - for example, there are very few students in Berlin that would fit into a criterion where you consider attending a different elementary school from the transportation efficiency standpoint. The overlap in our districts very much favors Doty/ Rumney and Calais/ EMES.

Diane Nichols-Fleming suggested that we engage the towns more in the conversation about what would happen to their buildings. She is not sure how actively we have engaged our communities in the dreaming process.

## **6. Reports**

**6.1. Student Report:** Lei DeGroot, Elise O'Brien and Kathryn Stauffer spoke about some of the U-32 happenings over the past month.

**6.2. Superintendent/Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) Report:** This written report was included in the board packet.

**6.3. Principal Report:** This written report was included in the board packet.

**6.4. Community Schools Report:** This written report was included in the board packet.

**6.5. Central Vermont Career Center Report:** Patrick Whelley stated that the bond vote was unsuccessful and the facilities committee is working to chart a path forward, considering new options - other buildings, another bond vote, and other creative solutions. He also stated that the board approved a new Early Childhood Education program, which could collaborate with schools in WCUUSD (preschool programs).

**6.6. VSBA Report:** Flor Diaz Smith shared the position paper and criteria related to VSBA's proposal to the legislature in the near future.

## **7. Board Operations**

**7.1. Configuration Committee:** Kealy Sloan stated that the board heard the same presentation that Superintendent Dellinger-Pate had provided to the Configuration Committee. She stated that the recommendation of the committee is to continue with this model. Recommendations (1) clear timelines and communication before the vote, (2) very solid transition plan, hopefully with a paid facilitator position and (3) solid financial support for the transition process. She spoke about the vision of a transition process/committee. She noted that the committee had spoken about the need for more conversations with the communities about potential uses of buildings.

Mckalyn Leclerc spoke about Rosie Close's comment earlier. She stated that she is worried about being on this path for a period without having a definite picture of what next year will look like (as soon as possible). She asked, given the discussion about the use of buildings for educational use, she would like to see support for sooner rather than later, that would not hinge upon a vote. Not to circumvent the input of the community, but for peace in the community and peace of mind for the students in moving forward.

Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that the more explicit the information, the more helpful in moving forward. Whatever the timeline ends up being, it needs to be explicitly shared, month by month, and we follow it. She recommends having a point person lead us - someone who has done this before. She is not sure whether this is the expertise of Jeannie Phillips. The more transparent we can be, the more trust we can build.

Chris McVeigh stated that the committee discussed taking into account the impact of the town itself as opposed to the students in the town. There is no doubt that a town losing a school will have a negative impact on the town's economic well-being. He proposed that we offer the building to the town and that we allocate money to support the town's transition to a different use of the building.

Daniel Keeney stated that he sees problems with moving forward without town involvement. He stated that we are falling into the trap of conflating our two timelines. An important precursor to the vote is creating a detailed plan and a persuasive argument to present to the town. We should be creative about thinking separately about the two parts. He likes the idea of taking the time (a full year) to think creatively about moving forward in FY28. He spoke about after school programs being game changers with many families. He stated though that the board has the responsibility to take action very soon to commit to a process.

Patrick Whelley spoke about the discussion to limit the number of transitions that are imposed on children - he would like to hear more about this with respect to the FY27 and FY28 vision of transitioning, e.g. sixth grade students. He asked for details about world language - this has come up in discussion but is not showing in the budget presentation. He is hearing that we cannot afford "more things," we can only afford "these things." Steven Dellinger-Pate spoke about the opportunity for world language for sixth graders. He stated that over the next two years there would be transitions regardless. It is hard to know which timeline is better. He spoke about the desire to get the students together in cohorts so that they are unified and so that they have familiar adults in the transition process.

Elizabeth Brown reiterated what Holly Weiss had stated. Her students receive an excellent education (e.g. at Calais). She noted that she has seen tremendous growth this year in Calais. It makes it hard to justify closure. Test scores at Calais are exceptional. She also spoke about full time counselor, nursing, librarian. She spoke about the need to consider children's' social emotional wellbeing and mental health. There will be a full time counselor, yes, but there will also be more students.

Susanne Gann stated that teachers, leadership team, have all been working diligently on this issue; it is just that a solid model is not yet ready to share. Elizabeth Brown stated that her biggest question is the impact on the budget planning.

Diane Nichols-Fleming stated, there would be expenses, e.g. licensure, are there potential structural changes. These will also need to happen next year - these are budget considerations.

Steven Dellinger-Pate spoke about facilities - e.g., the cafeteria at U-32. This has been considered in longer term planning but having this additional year without sixth graders would be helpful.

Kealy Sloan asked, regarding Draft 1, would the next budget that we see be what meets budgetary constraints?

Chris McVeigh stated that we would need to see 5-6%, for consideration.

Susanne Gann stated that it would need to be less than 5%. This will entail cutting staff. The ask from the board is for more guidance. Are we looking to sacrifice programmatic needs to meet budgetary needs?

Patrick Whelley asked for clarification about what happens if we go beyond the threshold. Susanne Gann explained.

Ursula Stanley asked are we going to ask for the next two weeks for the administration to continue to look at five elementary schools or are we going to give them the direction of thinking creatively regarding configuration to meet the budgetary and programmatic needs? She has a hard time asking the administration to envision and present plans that the board is not expecting to approve.

Lei DeGroot asked for specifics about the education funding system, especially around the spending threshold. Susanne Gann stated that she would have more information at the next board meeting about specifics regarding tax rates.

Elizabeth Brown stated that Ursula's statement leads her to the idea of slowing this process down. There are so many more questions, and not enough answers yet - she is not feeling prepared to vote in either way without more information.

Ursula Stanley stated that we do not have time to wait; we do not have time to slow the budget process down. We are looking at a 2+million-dollar excess that we are looking for a way to decrease. We have been talking about this every year since she has been on the board, and every year we say, "Maybe we need one more year," and at this point, we are truly out of time.

Daniel Keeney stated that Ursula's analysis is spot on - he agrees that we have to take action. He stated though that if we jump the gun, lose community support, and do not have a successful vote, then we are back at square one again. Many of us have been immersed in this for years and have an idea of how it could be a successful configuration, but many out there are not yet seeing it. It is a huge leap of faith to say "yes" we want to move forward asking our towns to support this, at this point in the process of community engagement.

Chris McVeigh stated that we have to have the numbers to show. He does not see the community supporting a huge increase in our budget. He feels that we need to see both budgets, in order to move forward.

Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that we have not yet seen the December 1 letter from the state regarding “yield” - it does not look promising, and this will be a big factor in the budget.

Zach Sullivan stated that we need to look at enrollment numbers. He spoke about having to choose “the least bad option,” whereas if we consider configuration, we have better options.

Kealy Sloan stated too that she believes the only way to show this is to consider a budget with the less than 5% increase as discussed earlier. Right now, we are in a situation where a great deal of programming is going to be cut. The choice is not “status quo” or “configuration.” The reality is “programming cuts” or “configuration.”

Mckalyn Leclerc stated that it is important to look at a 3-school model as well as a 5-school model with enough cuts in the budget to get below the threshold. She clarified that the town vote will be only in the case of closing Pre-K-6 programming.

Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that this would be up to the board to decide (regarding votes to the town re: closure of a school building).

Elizabeth Brown asked whether closure of one or two schools would bring us close to the threshold. Susanne Gann stated that we are not close yet.

Flor Diaz Smith clarified for the next meeting: Two scenarios: Five elementary school budget below the threshold, and budget based on three elementary school model (from configuration, with creative solutions based on parameters that have been set). Susanne Gann stated that we would not have this information by December 3. Steven Dellinger-Pate had suggested a special meeting on December 10.

## **7.2. Budget Draft # 1**

### **7.2.1. Long-Term Weighted Average Daily Membership (LTW ADM) Information:**

Susanne Gann had shared this document for the board’s information.

### **7.2.2. Discuss FY 2026-27 General Fund Budget**

## **7.3. Mailing Ballots:** Flor Diaz Smith had shared a memo for the board’s consideration.

Representatives from each town for select board meetings: Zach Sullivan (EM), Daniel Keeney (Calais), Flor Diaz Smith (Berlin), Ursula Stanley (Middlesex), Natasha or Mckalyn (Worcester). Daniel Keeney asked if we have any data to show the towns that voted against mailing ballots. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that Berlin was emphatic that they are not in favor of this, and at some point, it may be seen as an insult to them to

continue to come back and ask the same question. Flor Diaz Smith stated that she feels we owe it to our voters to try this to pass.

**8. Policy (not this evening, due to the late hour)**

**8.1. First Readings**

**8.1.1. D23 Selection of and Access to Instructional Materials**

**8.2. Second Readings**

**8.2.1. C15 Student Conduct and Discipline**

**8.2.2. C45 Bus Discipline**

**8.2.3. D8 Selection of Library Materials**

**9. Personnel**

**9.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE: Zach Sullivan moved to accept the resignation of Beatrice David - French Teacher-U-32 (Effective January 31, 2026). Seconded by Ursula Stanley, with many thanks. This motion carried unanimously.**

**10. Consent Agenda**

**10.1. Approve Minutes of 10.15.25: Patrick Whelley moved to approve the minutes from 10-15-25. Seconded by Chris McVeigh; this motion carried unanimously.**

**10.2. Board Orders: Zach Sullivan moved to approve the board orders: Dates 10-16-25 to 11-19-25, and 10-8-25 to 10-18-25, total amount: \$1,121,468.19. Seconded by Kealy Sloan, this motion carried unanimously.**

**11. Future Agenda Items:** Patrick Whelley stated that he has made suggestions for agenda items in the past but they do not make it on the agenda. (1) Multiple pathways, early college, CVCC, etc., (2) multi-grades - benefits and other aspects. He would like to see a running list of pending future agenda items. Ursula Stanley stated that Education Quality Committee goes into depth on the conversation of multiple pathways and this will be reflected in their report in the next board-meeting packet. She noted that some of the student assessment data has been placed on the back burner because of these more pressing issues.

Julia Hewitt - Correspondence that the Communications Committee discussed this week.

Mckalyn Leclerc had asked for some report on the schedule change at U-32.

**12. Board Reflections:** Daniel Keeney thanked the board members who moved us through the contentious period at the beginning of the board meeting. When some of the guests did not honor our norms, he felt that many of the board members helped to move through this. He particularly thanked Lei DeGroot for acknowledging both points in the room with respect and integrity.

Zach Sullivan stated that some of the HR issues - we understand the complexities and stakes, but particularly an issue with so many students involved, there would be some value in doing more education about why the board behaves the way we do when we are dealing with an HR issue.

Mckalyn Leclerc stated that she has a lot of anxiety around tying our budget to two other towns' votes. Hence, her suggestion to creating a three-school model that does not hinge on town votes (re: closure of schools).

**13. Public Comments: Time limit strictly enforced, see note:** Flor Diaz Smith reflected that the board has received the written request from the students for an appeal and this will be on the agenda for the next board meeting.

Kevin on behalf of the U-32 cross-country team spoke about the school giving vague and questionable answers to the concerns of the community. Flor Diaz Smith asked him not to continue with specific language around an employee matter. She explained that there is a process that the board will consider. She stated that the board does not hire coaches. He continued that hiding beyond bureaucracy leaves no room for democracy.

Honi Bean Barrett thanked the board for the information that was put together tonight. She stated that she has drafted a letter of support regarding the configuration. What will it look like in our small schools next year if we continue with the current models? E.g., there will be no preschool, and there will be no kindergarten classroom at Doty next year. We will have three classrooms, with a big range in each. She asked about maintaining or allowing preschool in buildings, e.g. at the Doty School building. She sees this is a big benefit of reconfiguration.

Lisa Hanna spoke about the erosion of trust over the past few years. She stated that tonight it took a board member specifically asking about the preschool program at Calais going forward, and Calais residents not having a vote. If you are stating that transparency is a foundation, then you need to offer transparency.

Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that he was indicating affirmatively about a vote being required if the building is not used for student offerings, versus whether preschool would be offered in the building. That decision would be up to the board.

Chris McVeigh brought up the articles of agreement related to a town vote to close a building, as well as the town deciding to purchase the building from the school board as a separate issue.

Lila Richardson asked for clarification around the schedule for various votes on configuration. When will the board vote happen? Flor Diaz Smith clarified, the board agreed: Dec 10 - board vote, special board meeting. If needed we will have a vote from the communities

impacted on January 13. Lila Richardson indicated that there are times when the board stated that they are going to vote on something at a meeting and then they vote at a meeting prior.

Noah Weinstein thanked everyone for the work that has gone into this. He reiterated the need for comparison budgets, to consider “what would we be losing?” With the five elementary schools, in order to make an informed decision. He does not recommend the idea of moving forward without giving towns an opportunity to vote on the future of a school building. He asked for clarification around the proposed Pre-K scenario.

Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that we would want Pre-K programs across the district; we are not looking for an early childhood center, for example, at Calais. There will be more specific information coming forward about configuration of preschool in the different locations.

Kathleen Bookchin spoke about Vermont’s declining performance. She spoke about parents who are paying for private tutors because their children are not learning to read. How can people be saying that students are receiving a quality education? She knows people who have pulled their children from public education to homeschool because they feel that their children need more attention and more quality education. She is in support of the proposed configuration because of the potential for higher-quality education.

Caitlin Howansky stated that as a Worcester taxpayer, she needs further detail about plans for the Doty building, in a 3-elementary model. There was an air of possibility, but no concrete answers.

**14. Proposed Executive Session: Personnel: At 10:18, Diane Nichols-Fleming moved to go into executive session, to include the Superintendent, to discuss personnel matters. Seconded by Mckalyn Leclerc. Motion passed unanimously. At 10:48, Ursula Stanley moved to come out of executive session. Seconded by Patrick Whelley. Diane Nichols-Fleming reported that no action was taken. At 10:50, Diane Nichols-Fleming moved to go into executive session with only board members to discuss a personnel matter. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka. Motion passed unanimously. At 11:02, Mckalyn Leclerc moved to come out of executive session. Seconded by Patrick Whelley. Diane Nichols-Fleming moved that the board chair be authorized to negotiate a 2-year contract with the superintendent. Seconded by Daniel Keeney. Motion passed unanimously.**

**15. Adjourn: Diane Nichols-Fleming moved to adjourn at 11:04. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka. Motion passed unanimously.**

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