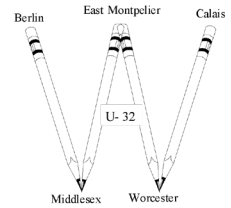


# Washington Central Unified Union School District

*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 Communications Committee

**12.16.25**  
**12:00-1:00 PM**  
**(Virtual Only)**  
**Central Office**  
**1130 Gallison Hill Rd**  
**Montpelier, VT**

### Virtual Meeting Information

<https://tinyurl.com/5n85k97y>

**Meeting ID: 843 4804 7382**

**Password: 086180**

**Dial by Your Location: 1-929-205-6099**

1. Call To Order
2. Communication:
  - 2.1. Communicating Budget and Next Steps
  - 2.2. Communicating Configuration Proposal and School Closures ahead of Vote to Towns (Tentative)
  - 2.3. FAQ's - pg. 3
3. Public Comments
4. Adjourn

NOTE: To ensure the board has time to conduct its business, the board will adhere to a strict 1.5 minute public comment time limit per person. Microphones will be muted when time is up. If there is not enough time on the agenda for all members of the public wishing to comment at the beginning of the meeting, there is additional public comment at the end of the meeting.

**WCUUSD Board Norms - Adopted November 18, 2020**

- **Public input** –Notify the community about public forums and opportunities for public comment at board meetings.
- **Community involvement during regular meetings of the board** – Every meeting will include at least one opportunity for public comment. Public comment is an opportunity for board members to listen and ask clarifying questions. If a board member feels a concern raised in public comment warrants further board discussion, they may request that the issue be added to a future agenda.
- **Community dialogue** – The board may periodically schedule community forums that allow for dialogue, questions and answers from the board or the district leadership team.
- **Stay on time** – Start and end on time. The chair may appoint a time-keeper.
- **All voices will be heard** – Every board member gets a chance to speak. Some topics warrant having each board member speak in turn to ensure full representation.
- **Reflection** –To allow time for reflection, the chair and agenda steering committee will plan time for complex or contentious issues to be discussed at more than one meeting before the board votes, except where a decision is urgent.
- **Announcements in reports** – Announcements from the administration will appear in the reports and not as discussion items.
- **Role of the board** – At the end of each board meeting reflect on whether the board remained focused on its policy-making and oversight role during the meeting, rather than operational details that are the responsibility of leadership team.
- **Respect each other** – Listen, allow others to be heard, share concerns, assume positive intentions, be present, and celebrate successes.

**AGENDA KEY**

Agenda Section	Examples	Role/ Responsibility	Description
Call to Order	n/a	Board Chair or designee	Formal opening to meeting. Superintendent calls to order during annual reorganization
Public Comment			Opportunity for public comment on items not on the agenda. Board will adhere to a strict 1.5 minute public comment time limit per person. Microphones will be muted when time is up. If there is not enough time on the agenda for all members of the public wishing to comment at the beginning of the meeting, there is additional public comment at the end of the meeting.
Executive Session	Personnel Student Matter Negotiations		Only for discussion of items covered in VSA §313. Formal actions not taken in Executive Session
Reports to the Board	Superintendent/ COLT Student Report	Administration	Both regular/recurring reports and one-time reports happen here. One-time reports are determined by the Board workplan or requested by the will of the Board. Generally, reports invite clarifying questions but not formal discussion/action
Committee Reports	Finance Policy Education Quality	Board	Chair of the committee reports on substance of most recent committee meeting. Generally, reports invite clarifying questions; any discussion or action items would be listed in the respective section of the agenda
Discussion Items		Board with input from administration	Items on the agenda specifically for discussion of the Board. Chair can seek input from audience during discussions. Generally not intended for action (although nothing prevents the Board from taking an action)
Action Items	Personnel approvals	Board	Items formally on the agenda for Board action. Discussion can occur after a motion is on the table
Consent Agenda	Board Orders Minutes	Board	Designed for items that need proforma approval and/or are sufficiently routine. Board acts on all items in the Consent agenda and does not discuss any item unless it is pulled out during Agenda Adjustments

Why is the amount of savings projected for closing Doty and Calais in the latest estimate so much higher than the amount estimated in 2024 ( \$881,920 in 2024 has increased to \$1,088,508, a 23.4% increase)?

What are the components of the estimated savings from combining Doty and Rumney and Calais and East Montpelier?

After 2026-7 when the 6th graders would move to U32 would the preK students move to East Montpelier? If so, what would the Calais building be used for?

When would you expect to use Doty for other district purposes? What are possible uses?

What analysis have you done to determine the impact of closing the two elementary schools on the community, including loss of property value and loss of families with young children in Worcester and Calais? If there has been no analysis, how do you propose to address the "community well-being" criterion for evaluating configuration proposals?

Would the District choose to retain the building for its own use, or sell it to the Town of Worcester for \$1?

If the District were to sell it to the Town, what would be the cost of maintaining the building? How would the Town taking on the maintenance and upkeep of the building affect town property taxes, which would not be income-sensitive?

Has the District been in communication with the Worcester Selectboard to assess whether the Town might choose to take on the building, and if so, how it might be used?

Would the District consider retaining the building for an educational use, in order to not add an additional tax burden on Worcester residents? If the District were to retain it, how would it plan to use it?

How might school closure affect property values in Worcester?

What would the District do to mitigate financial and social impacts on the town of Worcester, which has the lowest median income in the District? While one might ask whether it is the Board's responsibility to mitigate, or even consider, potential economic and social impacts of towns with school closures, we would argue that the Board's primary responsibility is to the educational success of its students, and students who live in thriving communities are more likely to thrive themselves.

When the Configuration Committee updated its Configuration Criteria, one of the four criteria categories listed in the table was Community Well-being, which consisted of assessing community viability and well-being, property values, and the impact of configuration changes/closures on towns. As this was a key element to assessing the viability of any reconfiguration model, has an impact study been conducted to assess how the current proposal might affect the towns of Worcester and Calais, and how the District would mitigate any negative outcomes? In his comments to the Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont, Representative Herb Olson of Starksboro proposed a model for conducting such studies, including: (i) evidence-based, and research-supported data and analysis on student educational and social/emotional outcomes in their existing school compared to the school where students are proposed to be moved; (ii) data and analysis concerning whether students from low income households, special education students, and other marginalized students will be harmed by moving to a larger school outside the community; (iii) financial viability information of short- and long-term costs that includes an analysis of direct student teaching, ancillary services, and administrative staffing, and of the condition of facilities; (iv) a thorough investigation of financial alternatives to closing the school; (v) a comparison of student bus times and after-school programming distances, (vi) the disposition of and potential cost to communities of the closed school; (vii) other relevant information (Olson, 2025).

A recent UVM study commissioned by the Vermont legislature explores some of the nuances of the potential economic and social impacts of school closures (Elkort et al, 2024). These are complex questions, and incredibly important ones to answer as best as possible if the residents of Worcester will be asked to vote on this proposal.

### Transition and Combining Schools

Many Worcester residents raised questions about what concrete steps the Board and Administration would take to ensure a smooth and welcoming transition to the combined school:

How would the Worcester and Middlesex cultures be combined? What aspects of Doty culture/traditions would be preserved? How would the new name, colors, mascot, and traditions be determined?

How would kids and families be supported in getting to know each other ahead of time?

How would the principal of a combined school be determined?

How would staffing be integrated so that trusted adults from Doty would be present at a new school?

Since the budget reflects the District's priorities, if Worcester and Calais were to vote yes to this reconfiguration proposal, would the District fund a new position of Transition and Community Engagement Coordinator, or contract with an experienced organization, to help implement such a huge task of closing four schools and creating two new ones, while also supporting students and communities in transition? Would the District commit to retaining the Community Engagement Coordinator as a permanent position to create and sustain connected relationships with communities and families?

Would the District support the creation of a Community Transition Stewardship Group, to ensure kids, parents and community members can work with teachers, other staff and administrators to ensure this transition happens in alignment with our District's Core Beliefs?

Would the district make a formal commitment to allowing community volunteers to be a meaningful part of the educational experience at all of the Districts' schools?

Transportation

A number of questions regarding student transportation were raised at Worcester's listening session:

What would transportation look like at a combined school?

If schools were combined at the Middlesex campus, would there be a group stop at Doty (or other central location in Worcester village), which would then provide an express route straight to a combined school (picking up students along Route 12S along the way) in the morning and an express route back to Worcester in the afternoon?

Would there be a bus to Montpelier after school from a combined school in Middlesex, so that students from a combined school could spend time at the library and/or attend Montpelier after-school offerings?

Would the District consider exploring the pros and cons of switching the timing of the upper and lower school schedules, such that elementary-aged students would arrive to school earlier and be more able to participate in Montpelier after-school offerings, while middle and high school students would arrive to school later, as has been shown to be more developmentally appropriate for that age group?

Would there be bus monitors at the elementary and middle/high school levels to ensure the safety and well-being of our students (including 6th graders riding the bus to U32 with 12th graders), many of whom may not have needed to ride the bus previously on a regular basis?