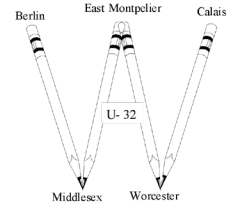


# Washington Central Unified Union School District

*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  
December 17, 2025  
U-32  
930 Gallison Hill Rd  
Montpelier, VT  
In-Person/Virtual  
5:00-6:00 PM**

**Present:** Superintendent Dellinger-Pate, Flor Diaz Smith, Shannon Miller, Chris McVeigh, Jeannie Phillips, Deborah Bloom, Ursula Stanley, Kealy Sloan, Zach Sullivan, Daisy Scarzello, Anna Matheson, Andy Shapiro, Daniel Keeney, Mckalyn Leclerc

**Others:** Allison Fayle, Lisa Hanna, Lila Richardson, Marilyn Martin, Noah Weinstein, Lauren Chabot, Kathleen White, John Brabant, Barry Bernstein

**1. Call to Order: Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.**

**2. Configuration Committee Meeting**

**2.1. [Agenda](#)**

**2.2. Opening Welcome:** Update on current model, projections, and transition timeline  
Superintendent Dellinger-Pate provided an overview of the documents for this meeting, including an updated transition timeline. He noted that we will discuss later what a transition committee will look like. He stated that the work of this Configuration Committee is winding down. Chris McVeigh asked whether there is anything in the timeline that includes reaching out to other school districts for configuration planning, forward. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that this transition plan does not address that; it is considered an internal document and it includes the scenario should we have a school closure - how to move forward.

**2.3. Reflect on the work of the configuration committee:** Jeannie Phillips led a discussion:  
What went well?  
Gillian Fuqua: The focus on student programming and student needs.

Kealy Sloan: setting criteria at the beginning was helpful for all of the work ahead; this streamlined the process in a helpful way.

Anna Matheson: Struggled with not receiving information early enough or earlier in the process (specifically a communication strategy). She stated that we have not done a great job setting up everyone to understand all of the information. She felt that we were under prepared for the listening sessions.

Daniel Keeney: Perspective of others, non-board members, has broadened perspective and also lends credibility to the process of deliberation.

### **What could we have done better as a committee?**

Deborah Bloom came into the process mid-stream; did not feel there was a great deal of onboarding. She feels that the communication could have been better, and more timely. Could have been more transparent with the community if the communication strategy fell behind schedule. She stated that an hour a month to do the amount of work this committee needed to do, was not enough. She suggested, for Transition Committee: some form of onboarding, some sort of retreat, some place to house and share all of the supporting documents.

Becca Tatistcheff appreciates the focus on programming, continues to hear “What does this look like? What will this look like?” This envisioning might have been part of the process for the community.

Chris McVeigh: Does not feel that we included the community early enough in the process. The Listening Sessions were not effective as “dialogue” - it is helpful to have dialogue with the community so they can participate in a discussion.

Andy Shapiro found it frustrating to come to meetings and have PowerPoint presentations shared that had already been shared with us in committee documents. There was very little time for discussion, with just one presentation after another. Does not feel that he has been asked for his thoughts.

Deborah Bloom noted that this conversation has been going on for years. Perhaps part of the “level setting” is to make sure the committee and the community is on the same page re: all the work that has been done in the past - to “get in front” of the conversation that this is all brand new - it is not.

Daniel Keeney: Wonders if the board had more responsibility to give us a clearer charge. To some degree, we created our own agenda, coming from a place where we were prioritizing programs. However, in terms of process, the structural challenges of developing a configuration plan in public were a little challenging due to Robert's Rules of Order and formalities. Regular dialogue that was more bilateral with the board than what had happened might have been more productive and may have directed the committee down a different path. Jeannie Phillips thanked the committee for taking the time to reflect.

**Form a transition committee - Use the transition timeline to inform this process.**

Flor Diaz Smith stated that we will need to think about the composition of this committee.

Gillian Fuqua asked whether the Transition Committee's work needs to be done in a public meeting forum. She stated that if the board votes to put a vote to the towns of Calais and Worcester, then we will have some work to do as a board. Transition Committee will want parents from each community, will want teachers, and will want varied perspectives. As we construct the box of the transition plan, how do we establish the parameters for bringing student voice into it?

Mckalyn Leclerc - The committee should be both the school community and the town community, and bring in students as early as possible. She advocates for as little as possible of board representation because she does not see this as within the scope of the board.

Kealy Sloan indicated that as soon as we can get out of the format of "board meeting," then we might be able to get more work done in a different way, as a Transition Committee. She also stated that there should be a dedicated subcommittee for Communication that follows up on each meeting with communication. This should be very community-based and should be mostly the towns that are involved - for example, does Berlin need to be part of it?

Becca Tatistcheff: referred to the part of the Transition Plan that refers to this. She asked, what is the purpose of this discussion? If there already an idea in place?

Flor Diaz Smith - to provide insight to the Transition Committee. Steven Dellinger-Pate: what he has heard from this discussion tonight: need for: retreat/ onboarding, website/ place to house all information and share widely, communication plan.

Steven Dellinger-Pate and Flor Diaz Smith stated that they believe it is important to have representation from all five of the communities.

Daniel Keeney spoke about an email from Erika Zimmerman (on Strategic Planning Committee) - much of it has to do with the district's necessary work around visioning - what does this look like "on the ground"?

Deborah Bloom suggested that we have a process laid out in federal statute - don't duplicate this process - so that we as a district aren't doing the same work in multiple places. There is a framework for this.

**Andy Shapiro suggested putting forth a motion from this committee to the board: if a town decides to keep its school open, we recommend to the board that they not take students out of those schools without the community's vote. Chris McVeigh seconded.**

Discussion: Daniel Keeney asked why a second vote would take place - it seems it is implicit in the first vote that the desire is not have students removed.

Mckalyn Leclerc - if the five schools were to stay open, we do not have enough students to not have to move students around to some degree. She asked for clarification. Andy Shapiro stated that the conversation would take place with the community.

Anna Matheson - Worcester is already being told that there are not enough students to have kindergarten, and that these students are moving to Rumney. There is no community discussion/ input.

Deborah Bloom - for example, looking at the budgets and seeing that Doty does not have a math teacher, that is a programmatic problem. Within the insane confines of a budget, granted. She stated that the motion does not actually take into consideration the educational needs of students.

Chris McVeigh asked what decisions had already been made. Steven Dellinger-Pate: Doty Pre-K and K go to Rumney and Calais K for FY27, going to East Montpelier.

Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that having the community vote on these matters every year would be very impractical from an administrative/ planning standpoint. He also noted that there is legislature in place around class sizes.

Chris McVeigh - if a town votes no, and we intend to move students anyway, we do it with transparency, and we do not give towns an opportunity to vote if we are going to disregard the vote. With respect to the towns, if we are asking them to participate in the process only to ignore it - we should not do this - it fractures trust and will damage the district.

Gillian Fuqua - concerns around roles and responsibilities in this discussion. What is our lane as a Configuration Committee? What is the role of the board, what is the role of administrators/ educational leaders? Feels like it is getting messy.

Mckalyn Leclerc - disagrees with Chris McVeigh - giving towns a vote re: what happens to the school as a whole gives them a voice. Taking away the power of the administration to make decisions that are in the best interest of students and education is not the right direction and is in fact disrespectful to our towns.

Daisy Scarzello agreed with McKalyn's statement and noted that all of the populations in all of the schools are declining, and decisions that are made will effect all of the communities/ all of the towns.

Andy Shapiro - if a community votes to keep their school open, then the board needs to communicate to the community why it is not in the best interest of students and allow the community to hear this.

Anna Matheson - much of this is centered around the budget that was supposed to be shared last week (but not due to weather) - we are all in this same boat of trying to wait and see so that we can react to the matter that we do not have enough money, period.

**A vote was called for the motion. This motion did not carry.**

Meeting dates? We need to meet on a day other than Wednesday. Who else should be at the table? Do we need to form committees? Next steps - Three takeaways to report to the board

### **3. Public Comments**

Barry Bernstein - The reason you are having problems with the communities is that the information that has been presented has been inadequate and untimely. When you call meetings "Listening Meetings," and you have already made your decision, then you are not listening. There are very small differences between the budgets that have been shared - the problem is that you are talking about taking a vote tonight when you have not even digested the information. If you go forward too fast, you will be failing yourselves and the community.

Richard Kehne - you represent the towns; these are important decisions to the townspeople, you answer to us, and should be getting information to us in a timely manner. Hates the idea that - we went into the articles of agreement thinking we would have a town vote and block something that we didn't want to happen. Even if the board is going to override the vote, the town should have a vote. Please do not treat the public like they don't matter. You have to engage the community.

Lila Richardson - some of the materials have not been posted, can't refer to some of the documents that are referenced in the discussion. Re: the right of the administration/ school board to move certain grades regardless of the town votes - if Calais votes "no," then all of the grades except Pre-K will be moved to East Montpelier. This is far from the spirit of the Articles of Agreement. She stated that the committee has not considered the well-being of the community as noted in the criteria.

John Brabant - When a board or a regulatory agency decides to head in a new direction, the way you include the public needs to be transparent, honest, open - not decided from the beginning. If Worcester and Calais are going to be more affected, then you need to have hearings and forums. The townspeople can learn about it and questions and dialogue can be had. This is what happens when you rush to a decision. Please represent all of the committees - public hearings, presentations, invite community, allow for dialogue.

Flor Diaz Smith thanked the Configuration Committee for their hard work. She stated that we will not know until after tonight's board meeting, whether this committee will meet again - will send a doodle poll as needed.

### **4. Adjourn: The committee adjourned by consensus at 5:58 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Grace, Committee Recording Secretary