

Washington Central

UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Vision for Excellence and Equity through Configuration

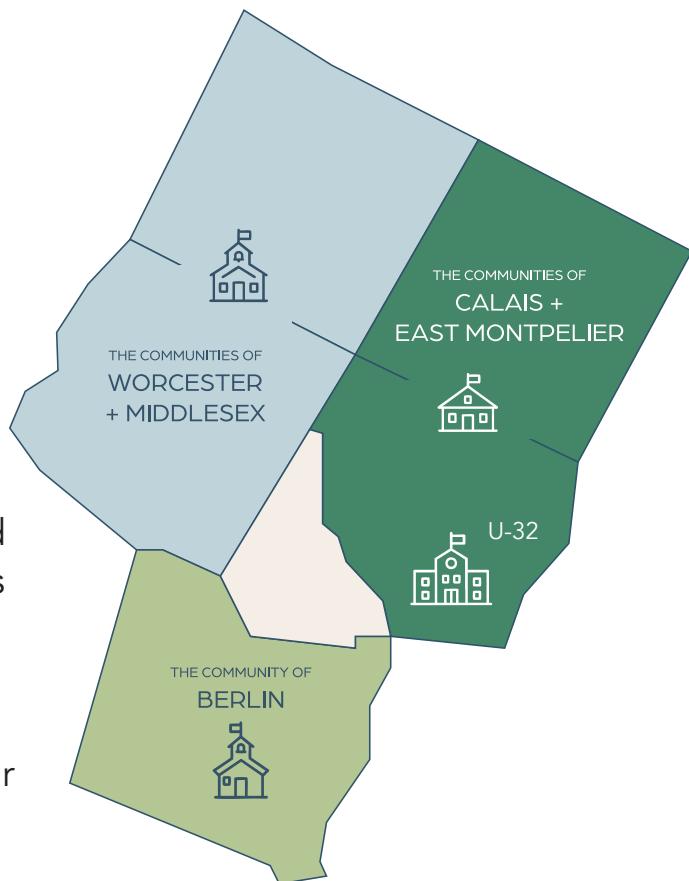
The Washington Central Unified Union School District (WCUUSD) exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity, and power to contribute to their local and global communities. Our commitment is defined in our Strategic Plan, which focuses on building a culture of well-being, challenging and empowering students through evidence-based instruction, and ensuring responsive and transparent leadership.

On February 10, the towns of Worcester and Calais will be asked to vote on closing their elementary schools and creating new learning communities with Middlesex and East Montpelier.

This vote comes on the recommendation of the WCUUSD Configuration Committee, the School Board, and District Leadership, for the reasons that will be outlined in this brochure.

To learn more, join us at one of our two informational meetings:

Feb 4 - Doty Elementary: 5:00-6:30 pm
Feb 7 - Calais Elementary: 2:00-3:30 pm



Our Current Realities

Over the last decade, our district's enrollment has declined by 14 percent. Projections indicate an additional decline of approximately 16 percent over the next ten years. Even if enrollment were to stabilize sooner than expected, the reality is that we are fundamentally a smaller district than we were a decade ago. Despite this shift, we have continued to resource our schools and design our programs as though enrollment levels remained unchanged. This misalignment is no longer affordable or sustainable.

A shift in how we are configured will allow us to address current inconsistencies in programming, staffing, and facility utilization, particularly in light of declining enrollment and Vermont's new foundation funding model (Act 73).

Our budgeting process allocates resources to schools based on the number of students they serve and the specific needs of those students, including poverty, academic intervention, and language learning needs. As enrollment declines and students are spread across multiple buildings, our ability to provide consistent, affordable, and robust layers of support is diminished.

A strong multi-layered system of support—one that includes academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and wellness services—requires sufficient staffing, coordination, and flexibility. When resources are stretched across several small sites, it limits what we are able to do well for students. Maintaining five small elementary schools under current conditions has already begun to impact our ability in each of those schools—and at U-32—to deliver the high-quality education our community expects and our students deserve.

Reconfiguration is not about loss; it is about ensuring that our limited resources are used in ways that strengthen programs, maintain supports, best serve our students, and create sustainable schools for the future. What's more, our district has done this successfully before. The creation of U-32 was a collective decision by our towns to come together in order to offer stronger programs and opportunities than any single community could provide alone. In making this change, we do not anticipate any facility-related costs associated with transitioning to a multi-town school model. A transition coordinator will oversee logistics, support the development of new school identities, and serve as a liaison to the community.

Creating new school communities, defined by consistency, stability, and optimal capacity will result in deeper student learning.

Our Future Possibilities

A Vision for Our Children's Future: Excellence and Equity for Every Student

Our school district exists to nurture and inspire every student, ensuring they have the passion and creativity to contribute to their communities. To meet this mission, our leadership has developed a plan to move from five elementary schools to three sustainable campuses in the 2026-2027 school year. We believe that programming must drive our structural decisions, and this change is necessary to ensure every child—regardless of which town they live in—receives the same high-quality education and support.

What This Means for Our Students

By bringing our students together into larger, more stable groups, we can move away from "reactive" planning caused by low or shifting enrollment. The benefits include:

- **Stable Class Sizes:** We are committed to classrooms that are "just right"—neither too small nor too large—so that students have enough peers for deep discussions and diverse ideas.
- **Full-Time Support Staff:** Every school will have a full-time school nurse, school counselor and librarian. This ensures that children's physical and emotional needs are met on-site. The potential addition of staff to address student functional skills is also possible.
- **Art, Music, and PE teachers:** Art, Music, and PE teachers will no longer have to travel between multiple small buildings and programs such as band and chorus can continue.
- **Stronger Teaching Teams:** Teachers will have more opportunities to work together at their specific grade level, sharing best practices to help every student succeed.

Connecting to Our Core Values

This plan is not just about buildings; it is about living out the goals in our Strategic Plan::

- **Well-Being and Inclusivity:** We want every student to feel safe, valued, and "at home" in their school. Our new configuration will embrace the Community Schools model, working to make the schools more open to the community, including increased volunteer opportunities.
- **Excellence in Learning:** We hold high expectations for all students. A consolidated structure allows us to provide intensive support and specialized instruction for students who need extra help, all while keeping them with their peers.
- **Transparent Leadership:** We are committed to a process that is clear and predictable. We will provide bi-weekly updates and help families through every step of this change.

Practical Logistics

- **Busing:** We are keeping travel times manageable and aiming for 45 minutes for elementary students.
- **Timeline:** We will finalize all staff assignments by late March / early April 2026 to provide certainty and continuity for our students, families and staff before the new school year begins.
- **Schools:** Towns will not be responsible for maintaining the school buildings until and unless they decide to buy them

Please Vote. Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2026

Calais Town Hall, 1662 Kent Hill Rd. in Calais, 7:00 AM-7:00 PM
Worcester Town Hall #12 Worcester Village Road in Worcester, 10:00 AM-7:00 PM

Our Future Possibilities, cont'd

Honoring Our Traditions

We know that our small schools have a special "magic" and deep relationships. As we create these new unified school identities, we will intentionally integrate the traditions of the merging schools. We plan to hold "celebration and closure" events to honor the history of our buildings while looking forward to a vibrant future. We hope you will join us at those celebrations.

This shift is a bold step toward ensuring that we are not just maintaining buildings, but investing in the people and programs that help our children thrive.

We encourage you to vote on February 10.



Additional Information Here

Student Enrollment

Current Enrollment

Berlin	153
Calais	89
Doty	57
EMES	174
Rumney	102

Projected 2026-27

Berlin	158
Calais/EMES ..	262
Doty/Rumney ..	151

Projected 2027-28*

Berlin	135
Calais/EMES ..	200
Doty/Rumney ..	118

*27-28 Enrollment numbers reflect the transition of 6th grade to U-32 Middle/High School