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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WCUUSD
School Board Meeting
3.11.26
6:15-9:15 PM
(Virtual and In-Person)
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, Mckalyn Leclerc, Elizabeth Brown, Zach Sullivan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Julia Hewitt, Natasha Eckart, Kealy Sloan, Dave Lowther, Marty McMahon, Andrew Boye, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Julia Pritchard, Barry Bernstein, Denise Wheeler, Allison Fayle, Alicia Lyford, Anna Matheson, Mack and Cynthia Gardner-Morse, Christine, Dell Waterhouse, Giuliana Jensen, Hannah, Jim Nichols-Fleming, Kathryn Saunders, Lisa Hanna, Marilyn Martin, Michael Sherwin, Sonja Andrews

1. **Call to Order: Superintendent Dellinger Pate called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.**

2. **Board Operation, see informational memo attached**
   - **2.1. Board Reorganization**
   - **2.2. Election of Officers**
     - **2.2.1. Board Chair:** Superintendent Dellinger Pate invited nominations for Board Chair. **Patrick Whelley nominated Diane Nichols-Fleming for Board Chair. Seconded by Julia Hewitt. Flor Diaz Smith nominated Ursula Stanley for Board Chair. She made a statement in support of Ursula. Seconded by Kealy Sloan**. No other nominations were heard. Superintendent Dellinger Pate invited both nominees to speak to the board before a ballot vote was held. Diane Nichols-Fleming and Ursula Stanley spoke to the board. **An anonymous vote was held by ballot. Diane Nichols-Fleming was elected as Board Chair in a vote of 10 - 4. At this time Diane Nichols-Fleming chaired the meeting.**
     - **2.2.2. Vice Chair: Chris McVeigh nominated Patrick Whelley for Vice Chair. Seconded by Elizabeth Brown. Natasha Eckart nominated Ursula Stanley for Vice Chair. Seconded by Daniel Keeney. An anonymous vote was held by ballot. Ursula Stanley was elected as Vice Chair in a vote of 8-6.**
     - **2.2.3. Clerk: Flor Diaz Smith nominated Daniel Keeney as Clerk. Seconded by Chris McVeigh. This motion carried unanimously.**

2.3. Committee Appointments

2.3.1. Steering Committee: One representative to be appointed from each town. Flor Diaz Smith - East Montpelier, Natasha Eckart – Worcester, Chris McVeigh if they could have an understanding of the role of the Steering Committee because in his understanding it has become a sort of Executive Committee. Diane Nichols-Fleming explained her understanding of the Committee, which is to plan the agenda/workplan, and to typically carry out other tasks that the board assigns. It used to be the superintendent and the board chair, and the impetus for the Steering Committee was to have more board members taking part in the planning of the agenda. Daniel Keeney asked whether we will have the Communications Committee as part of this list. This will be added. **Chris McVeigh moved to appoint Natasha Eckart, Flor Diaz Smith, Ursula Stanley, Diane Nichol-Fleming, Daniel Keeney, to the Steering Committee. Seconded by Patrick Whelley, this motion carried unanimously.**

2.3.2. Policy Committee: Chris McVeigh explained the workings of this committee. **Patrick Whelley moved to appoint the following to the Policy Committee: Chris McVeigh, Ursula Stanley, Natasha Eckart, Flor Diaz Smith, Julia Hewitt. Seconded by Ursula Stanley; this motion carried unanimously.** Diane Nichols-Fleming explained that the Negotiations Committee is currently underway and the membership is herself, Chris McVeigh, Patrick Whelley, Michelle Ksepka. **Flor Diaz Smith moved to appoint the Negotiations Committee as currently comprised. Seconded by Chris McVeigh; this motion carried unanimously.**

2.3.3. Education Quality Committee: Ursula Stanley explained this committee is currently comprised of Ursula Stanley, Zach Sullivan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Flor Diaz Smith, Daniel Keeney. Elizabeth Brown stated that she would be interested, but she would not be able to make the meeting times. Diane Nichols-Fleming suggested that the current chairs will reach out to members and work out meeting times and affirm the chair position. Daniel Keeney explained that in his experience, this committee's meetings are a great way to get familiar with board workings. Marty McMahon expressed interest in this committee, as well as Dave Lowther, and Andrew Boye. **Natasha Eckart moved to appoint these members to the committee: Ursula Stanley, Zach Sullivan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Daniel Keeney, Marty McMahon, Andrew Boye, Dave Lowther. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously.**

2.3.4. Finance Committee: Flor Diaz Smith explained this committee is currently comprised of Flor Diaz Smith, Daniel Keeney, Ursula Stanley, Chris McVeigh, Zach Sullivan. Diane Nichols-Fleming reminded board members that these meetings are video recorded and held for 30 days, and board members can reach out to the Executive Assistant to watch the recordings. **Chris McVeigh moved to appoint the following to the Finance Committee: Flor Diaz Smith, Daniel Keeney, Ursula Stanley, Chris McVeigh, Zach Sullivan. Natasha Eckart moved to appoint these members to the committee. This motion carried unanimously.**

2.3.5. Transportation Committee: Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that this committee has not met often; it is a sort of ad hoc committee; however, he expects that the committee will meet a few times before this school year ends. **Daniel Keeney moved to appoint the following to the Transportation Committee: Andrew Boye, Chris McVeigh, Natasha Eckart, Michelle Ksepka, and Patrick Whelley. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. This motion carried unanimously.**

2.3.6. **Communications Committee:** Some discussion about this committee. **Flor Diaz Smith moved to appoint the following: Elizabeth Brown, Julia Hewitt, Andrew Boye, Patrick Whelley, and Diane Nichols-Fleming. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.**

Diane Nichols-Fleming asked members of the Steering Committee to stay after the meeting to discuss when the next committee meeting can occur. She charged committee chairs to reach out to committee members to establish meeting times and establish committee chairmanship. Board members introduced themselves.

2.4. **Appoint Career Center Representative:** Patrick Whelley explained the role of this representative role. Andrew Boye agreed to accept this role. **Chris McVeigh moved to appoint Andrew Boye as Career Center Representative. Seconded by Patrick Whelley; this motion carried unanimously.**

3. **Set School Board Meeting Schedule:** Diane Nichols-Fleming shared the board meeting schedule. **Chris McVeigh moved to approve the board meeting schedule as presented. Seconded by Patrick Whelley.** Discussion: Flor Diaz Smith thanked Sashly for the work on this. Kealy Sloan suggested that the calendar should read "Indigenous Peoples Day" (as opposed to "indigenous day"). **This motion carried unanimously.**

4. **Operational Decisions**
   - 4.1. **Truancy Officers: Flor Diaz Smith moved to appoint: Berlin: Celia Guggemos; Calais: Jarrod Weiss; Worcester: Gillian Fuqua; Middlesex: Karoline May; East Montpelier: Alicia Lyford; U-32: JB Hilferty. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.**
   - 4.2. **Use of Roberts Rules: Patrick Whelley moved to use Roberts Rules for the Board Operations Seconded by Chris McVeigh. This motion carried unanimously.** Chris McVeigh suggested that we purchase a copy of Roberts Rules to have at the board meetings. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that at the next board meeting he will provide a packet of information to each board member.
   - 4.3. **Identify Communication Practices:** Board members reviewed the Board Norms which were adopted in September 2025. Chris McVeigh would like to have time at a future board meeting to discuss the aspect of "community involvement during regular meetings of the board." He stated that he feels people come away dissatisfied with our current practice. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that this is appropriate to go to the Steering Committee. Marty McMahon asked if there will be an opportunity down the road to review and discuss these norms. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that she believes this will be an appropriate thing to bring up at the board orientation. Daniel Keeney suggested that we at least hold off until the August retreat to take this on. He reminded the board that this was an ongoing, long process of development. Diane Nichols-Fleming reviewed the practice of one person communicating "out" and if there are emails, to copy the superintendent and the board chair. Julia Hewitt stated that it is very important that we all abide by that. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that this pertains to written communication. Flor Diaz Smith reminded that the Board Chair is the spokesman for the board, and the superintendent is the spokesman for the district. Some discussion followed.

5. **Reminders for the Board:** Annual Board Work Session/ Retreat - typically August 5, 6 (will determine by poll of board members). Designate locations for posting meeting agendas and minutes: **Chris McVeigh moved to designate the following, seconded by Daniel Keeney: Locations for posting agendas: Each School, WCUUSD website, Town Clerk Office. Posting of Minutes: WCUUSD Website. This motion carried unanimously.** Designate Times Argus as newspaper of record: **Flor Diaz Smith moved to designate Times Argus as newspaper of record. Seconded by Patrick Whelley; this motion carried unanimously.** Diane Nichols-Fleming and Flor Diaz Smith asked new board members to establish mentorship with another board member. Diane Nichols-Fleming will reach out to new board members this week to follow up on this. Diane Nichols-Fleming invited comments from the board about how this meeting tonight went.

6. **Public Comments - Time limit strictly enforced, see note:**

   Denise Wheeler asked the board why you would wait until August to have a discussion about the issue of public comment; this seems like a more urgent topic to address.

   Barry Bernstein has put some effort into making sure that the budget passes, and the conversations he has had with people is that they support keeping the school open, but they do not support the budget. He stated that there is a feeling among a lot of people that the central office expenses were not subject to the same reductions that were implemented at the schools.

   Maia from East Montpelier thanked the board for its hard work and offered congratulations on the budget passing. She is looking forward to the work that the board accomplishes, going forward.

7. **Future Agenda Items**
   - Report out from chair and superintendent re: merger conversations with other districts
   - Discussion about added capacity for board communication and from central office
   - Board self-evaluation

8. **Adjourn: At 7:52, Chris McVeigh moved to adjourn. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary