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
4.15.26
6:15-9:15 PM
(In-Person & Virtual)

Virtual Meeting Information
https://tinyurl.com/5x6jshvy
Meeting ID: 814 4689 7166
Password: 672065
Dial by Your Location: 1-929-205-6099

1. Call To Order

2. Welcome 5 Minutes
   2.1. Adjustments to The Agenda
   2.2. Reception of Guests
   2.3. Public Comments-Time limit strictly enforced, see note 15 Minutes

3. Reports: 20 Minutes
   3.1. Superintendent Report/Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) Report – pg. 5
   3.2. Principal Report – pg. 9
   3.3. Student Report
   3.4. Community Schools Report - pg. 14
   3.5. Humanity and Justice Coalition Report
   3.6. Central Vermont Career Center Report
   3.7. VSBA Report

4. Board Operations (Discussion/Action): 45 minutes
   4.1. 2026 - 2027 School Calendar - pg. 16
   4.2. Board Evaluation - pg. 17

5. Personnel (Discussion/Action): 5 minutes
   5.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE - pg. 26

6. Consent Agenda (Discussion/Action): 5 minutes
   6.1. Approve Minutes of 3.18.26 (pg. 29) and 4.8.26 (pg. 36)
   6.2. Board Orders
7. Future Agenda Items: 5 minutes
8. Board Reflections: 10 minutes
9. Public Comments: Time limit strictly enforced, see note 15 minutes
10. Proposed Executive Session: Student Residency Requests 5 Minutes
11. Proposed Executive Session: Superintendent Evaluation 10 Minutes
12. 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 9.17.25

- **Public input** –Notify the community about public forums and opportunities for public comment at board meetings, and the ability to always submit written input.

- **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. If a board member feels a concern raised in public comment warrants further board discussion, they may request that the steering committee discuss and decide how the issue should be added to a future agenda.

- **Community dialogue** – The board will 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.
- **Inclusive time for thoughtful decisions** - 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.
- **Prepare for meetings and Receive materials in advance**-Board members come prepared, having reviewed the agenda and materials in advance
- **Announcements in reports** – Announcements from the administration will appear in the reports and not as discussion items.
- **Respect each other** – Listen, allow others to be heard, share concerns, assume positive intentions, be present, focus on shared solutions and celebrate successes.
- **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. Board members will address the topics up for debate and not the person.
- **Governance Reflection** - At the end of each board meeting, reflect on whether the board adhered to agreed protocols, processes, and policies.
- **Reflection** –At the end of each board meeting, board members will be allowed time to share their general reflections on the meeting.

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

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Superintendent

Legislative Update: Education Reform & Funding

As we look toward the 2026-2027 school year, several key pieces of legislation currently pending in Montpelier will have a significant impact on our long-term fiscal planning and district structure.

Act 73 Implementation & Governance: The state continues to move forward with the structural reforms mandated by Act 73. While the primary goal remains increasing operational efficiency through district consolidation, the current session involves a critical debate regarding the "voluntary vs. mandatory" nature of these mergers. Additionally, we are preparing for the **new class size minimums** (15 for middle school and 18 for high school) set to take effect in the coming academic year. As we build our master schedule for next year at U-32, we will be taking these minimums into account.

The Foundation Formula Transition: Currently, Vermont is transitioning away from the current funding model to a **"foundation formula."** This model establishes a base per-pupil amount which is then adjusted using new student weights for poverty, ELL status, and special education needs (which is currently problematic). Current legislative discussions are considering a phased implementation, with the full formula likely becoming effective between **July 2029 and July 2030**.

S.220 and Spending Controls: To address concerns over rising property taxes, **S.220** proposes new allowable growth caps on district budgets for the next two fiscal years. Most notably for our district, the bill seeks to lower the **"excess spending threshold"** to **112% from its current 118%**. However, it includes a vital provision that excludes voter-approved debt service (for bonds passed before July 2024) from being penalized under these spending caps, protecting our ability to maintain our facilities without additional tax penalties. This could have the most significant impact on our budgeting for next year.

Finance

At the end of each quarter the unemployment tax wage report is due to the Department of Labor and the Health Care Employer Assessment is due to the Tax Department. The Federal 941 report and the State of Vermont's Payroll Quarterly Reports are all due. Quarterly reports are also due to the Municipal and Teacher's Retirement Systems (VMERS and VSTRS). A big shout out goes to Patricia and Holly for completing this reporting for the third quarter of the fiscal year. Tom Hamlin, Financial Accountant, completed the grant reimbursement reports to the

Vermont Agency of Education and Vermont Department of Health to receive funds for expenditures through March 31, 2026.

The quarterly Special Education Expenditure Report (SEER) for the period ending March 31 is due to the AOE on April 15th. The District reports expenditures for the first three quarters of the year for all students that reach the extraordinary cost threshold (over $67,638) and for the special education expenses of any state-placed students in the District. Lynnea Timpone, Executive Assistant to Student Support Services tracks special education expenses by students in both of these categories. This quarterly report is what the AOE uses to make district special education reimbursement payments for extraordinary costs and state-placed students. A huge thank you to Lynnea for staying on top of this information, which allowed us to submit the report early.

Administrators and admin assistants received the annual memo that details the action steps they must complete before April 30, 2026 in order to prepare for the closing of the FY 26 financial system. This process is key to the efficient and accurate closing of the fiscal year, as well as projecting the year-end position for the District. Thank you to everyone in advance for their efforts completing these tasks timely.

Technology

The District is dealing with a significant shift in the technology market driven by the global AI boom, which has placed a tight squeeze on the supply of device memory (RAM). This has directly impacted our standard procurement in two ways:

- Cost Escalation: The unit price for our standard 14" Chromebooks has increased by 29.24% compared to last year's pricing.
- Performance Requirements: Modern operating systems now require higher RAM specifications to remain functional, driving costs even higher for standard Windows and Chrome devices.

Strategic Response & Total Cost of Ownership (TCO): The IT Director is currently evaluating a shift in our device mix to mitigate these costs. While extending the life of current devices is an option, it carries risks of hardware failure and increased support tickets.

Alternatively, a pilot analysis of the MacBook Neo suggests a potential 31.35% savings ($17,650 over 50 units) in Total Cost of Ownership compared to traditional Windows setups. This is due to:

- Hardware Efficiency: Apple's architecture allows 8 GB of memory to outperform 8 GB on competing Windows machines, keeping the entry price lower.
- Longevity: Aluminum chassis and fanless chips offer better physical durability than plastic-chassis alternatives.
- Residual Value: Unlike standard PCs, which are often e-waste by year five, these devices typically retain 15-20% of their value for future trade-ins.

Next Steps: The IT Director will work with the Leadership Team to develop a comprehensive transition plan, incorporating feedback from stakeholders to ensure pedagogical and operational needs are met before any district-wide changes are implemented. The Board will receive updates as necessary.

Facilities

Bill Ford, the District's long-time Project Manager and Clerk of the Works for capital projects, has decided that it is the right time for him to retire from his project management work with Washington Central, in order to focus on his winery. Bill has been incredible in spear-heading multiple projects in all District buildings since 2012, including the East Montpelier building renovation, U-32 parking lot and HVAC projects, upgrades and replacements to multiple boiler systems and several others across the district. Bill was a part of the team that developed the initial capital plan and multi-year budget, which was first approved by the Board five years ago! Bill has always kept the District's best interests in mind through all of the work on capital projects, ensuring that specs and timelines were being followed by contractors and that projects finished on time. Bill's last day working with the District will be April 22, 2026. We are so grateful for all of Bill's contributions, and know that he will be missed, but we wish him the best with his winery and hope he is able to continue his world travels.

Andrew LaRosa was selected as the District's new Owner's Project Manager to replace Bill Ford, and has begun transitioning the responsibilities from Bill Ford. Chris O'Brien and Bill Ford will be wrapping up the close out of capital improvement projects for FY 26 in the next few weeks. The District has signed the construction contract with EF Wall for the capital projects for the summer of 2026. Chris and Andrew will begin construction meetings with Black River Design Architects and EF Wall this month in preparation for the summer work.

Chris, Andrew and I have been preparing the updates to the Multi-year Capital Improvement Budget to bring to the Board for review in May. This involves reviewing previously identified projects and any newly requested projects to determine the recommended timing for completion based on the prioritization detailed in the Capital Improvement Project Plan. Rough

cost estimates are determined before presentation to the Leadership Team in April and the Finance Committee and Board in May.

Human Resources

The District sent reduction in force and reassignment notices to affected employees on March 20, 2026. Heidi Dimick, the Director of HR, prepared letters of intent for FY 2026-27 for contract employees, which were distributed at the schools on April 2, 2026. The contractual deadline for teacher contracts and reduction in force notices is April 15th and on or before May 1st for employees covered by the ESP agreement. Thank you to Heidi for her hard work on this project.

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2025-2026 Priorities (Strategic Plan Goals):

- ➔ Build and nurture a culture of well-being and inclusivity.
- ➔ Challenge, empower, and engage each student through evidence-based instructional strategies and curriculum and varied educational opportunities.
- ➔ Foster and commit to responsible leadership that engages the community and communicates transparently.

Update on Strategic Plan goals:
Well-being and inclusivity (HJC school and School Safety Team committee report out?)

Berlin: Our All School Meetings are continuing to showcase our students and their commitment to teaching and sharing. Mrs. Armstrong's homeroom class just presented on Empathy and Mindfulness. The students wrote and performed skits that encouraged students to think about ways to respond with empathy across many different settings in and out of the school building.

As a whole school we are working on flushing out our "Circus Hypothesis" by taking a deeper look at behaviors that create Connection and Belonging for our students. Our staff mapped what we are already doing well in all areas of the school day. Then a larger group of teacher leaders from across the staff got together and synthesized the things we're already doing well. We landed on three buckets: Recognition Culture, Universal Welcoming and Intentional Groupings. From here we reported back out to the whole staff and we are now engaging in designing and moving forward with two actionable next steps. Once we implement the steps we will watch the outcome of chronic absenteeism to determine the efficacy of the implementation.

Calais: On Wednesday, March 18th we hosted "Reading to End Racism". This was my first time as Principal having this group in our building and I was inspired not only by the purpose of this group, but the power the stories held for our students. I heard students engaged with the stories, questions being asked, and general desire to learn more. We are also gearing up for another PBIS "Boost" next week as we focus on "Here to Learn". The week before a break can be challenging for students to focus, so we are working to engage the practice of "Here to Learn", being focused and ready to learn in school. At the end of the week, just before break there will be a special "prize" for a handful of students - which usually means something crazy will happen to Mr. Weiss.

Doty: Doty hosted Reading to End Racism on April 7th. Students were all engaged in wonderful conversations with the volunteers, asking good questions and being thoughtful and reflective in the process. The readings were geared for the different age groups and students were welcoming and thoughtful hosts to their readers.

EMES: We are gearing up for our first practice of "Run" after the April break. Staff have worked to identify "rally points" to take students to in the event of an emergency that necessitates leaving campus. We have been slowly leading up to this drill - up until now, our practice of options-based drills has all involved staying in place. There will be a teaching component around this, as well as an opportunity to practice as individual classrooms before we experience the drill all together as a school.

Rumney: Volunteers came to Rumney for "Reading to End Racism." We kicked off the event with a whole school *Morning Meeting*. The goal is for students to get a baseline understanding that racism is not ever acceptable, while recognizing that it does occur. Students were given suggestions of how to stand up and call it out when it's observed. Staff and volunteers alike were impressed with students' ability to participate in thoughtful conversations.

U-32: HJC met with student representatives and a student leader presented her collaborative work with a teacher to help to make curriculum more relevant and reflective of students identities. The Equity Team met in a retreat to use a protocol to help to build alignment to our Design Principles. That team will be wrapping up their work by June 15th.

Update on Strategic Plan goals:
Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Berlin: Our K-2 team has partnered with Vermont Institute of Nature (VINS) for three weeks of collaborative education with an outreach provider, Corey. We are thankful to our 1/2 team and their commitment to improving our outdoor education classroom and promotion of place based education. As a teaching staff we are working on identifying the outcomes that we are hoping to move and are backwards planning what we need to learn in order to make a change. We are always striving to ask "what needs our attention" and "what learning do we need to make that happen?"

Calais: Last week, we started VTCAP and students have been focused on doing the best they can on the tests. While the tests are never a favorite for students it is good practice in patience and resilience, and we have been working on those skills during this time. Next week, the North Country Animal League will be visiting and bring a few furry friends to spend some time with our students. This is a large part of a project-based learning experience that our 2nd and 3rd graders were engaged in a few weeks back making dog biscuits and we are going to connect that learning with the work of the NCAL. Recently, the Central Vermont Humane Society came to visit and we are excited for this visit!

Doty: In our professional learning we have been focussing on completing our Act 139 mandatory training and the Science of Writing. Doing these two trainings concurrently is generating deep and thoughtful conversations linking early literacy with later writing skills. It's a wonderful opportunity for us all to step back and use a wide lens looking at our instruction across grade levels.

EMES: Our teachers are working together to plan a school-wide, common learning experience focused on the town of East Montpelier. This looks different at each grade level, and the culmination of this work will be shared at our Celebration of Learning on June 2nd. Our teachers are also digging deeper into using Educlimber as our data wall. This week, we began entering our end-of-year student summary narratives into a newly created form. This summary is intended to provide a more qualitative picture of each child in our building and is passed on from year to year, beginning in Pre-K 4 through Grade 6.

Rumney: Our staff continues to dive into professional learning on the Science of Writing. Our discussions have been filled with teachers sharing their current practices, which helps us solidify the practices from kindergarten through 6th grade, as well as knowing the expectations when students enter 7th grade.

U-32: Teams are continuing to learn about Universal Design for Learning and look for ways to apply this in their classrooms.

Update on Strategic Plan goals:
Community Engagement and Communication

Berlin: Our wonderful PTNA group hosted our 4th Annual Bingo night in March. We had a lovely turn out. We want to thank our community partners for ensuring that we had fun prizes to give away. This is always a fun and laidback event. I want to share an enormous thank you to our PTNA. The work that this small but mighty group holds is large and I am thankful for their enduring support and care for our community.

Calais: On Saturday, April 4th the Calais Advisory Team (Parent/Community group) hosted our first annual Spring Carnival. Volunteers hosted games and craft tables, there was an east egg hunt (note - more eggs!) and kids were able to partake in the best spring dessert - dirt cups! This event saw almost 70 of our students (and some visiting families) enjoy the afternoon and was supported, planned, and executed by the CAT. We are continuing to grow this group and are excited for what they will be able to do in the future.

Doty: Friends of Doty have been actively working to reorganize and support Doty students. We have had a growth in interest in various clubs. Our garden club is revived after a 10 or so year lapse and the office space is gradually being taken over seedlings! Steven Dellinger-Pate has also been spending time at Doty meeting with both staff and families to gather input regarding hopes and dreams for Doty's leadership transition.

EMES: I am excited to share that I recently met with a group of parents who want to re-energize the PTNO at EMES. For the last several years, our PTNO has been quite dormant, which is common as parents move on as their children grow older, with no one to take over. We have an amazing group of parents at EMES and appreciate their interest in bringing this group back into our school.

Rumney: We had a successful Community Boil on Saturday, April 4. The weather was perfect and there was plenty of sap. We also offered a 2nd boil on Wednesday from 1-3 so all students can see the way the pan moves sap through as the sugar content increases. We took advantage of the fluffy snowfall by boiling our syrup down even further to create sugar on snow.

U-32: Student Designers are planning for the first cohort of Youth Community Educators who will be on-boarded after April Break. The Stage 16 Play, Mean Girls, is this week and we welcomed Up For Learning to help facilitate a student dialogue on Graduation Requirements state-wide.

Celebrations & Upcoming Events

Berlin: I'd like to celebrate that BES received a grant from the CLiF Foundation called The Year of the Book. This is a grant that awards our school with up to 25,000 to increase literary experiences for our students. CLiF has a large network of Vermont Authors and resources that we can utilize to energize the love of reading and writing in our community. This grant will support Ms. Dall's already robust community offerings. In addition to experiences and increased access each student will receive 10 books to choose and keep in the 26-27 school year. We are looking forward to more creative ways to celebrate reading and writing in the following year!

- April 7th-16th—VTCAP Testing
- April 16—Reading to End Racism
- April 28th—District Music Concert
- May 8th— 6th Grade Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser
- May 28th-30th– Book Fair

Calais:

- April 6-16th - VTCAP Testing
- April 15th - NCAL Visit
- April 28th - Elementary Music Day
- May 1st - GreenUp Day
- May 21st - Shelburne Museum Trip

Doty:

- April 8-16 - VTCAP testing
- April 8 - Teen Jazz performance
- April 28 - Elementary Music Day
- May 1 - Green Up Day at Doty

EMES:

- April 7 - 16: VTCAP Testing Grades 3-6
- April 10: Teen Jazz performance
- April 28: District music day and concert at U-32 (4:30)
- May 1: Blood Drive at EMES

- June 2: Celebration of Learning, BBQ, and Art Show

Rumney:

- April 9: Teen Jazz performance
- April 28th: District music concert @4:30

U-32:
April 9-11: Mean Girls Performance
See Tandem for updated calendar

Supervision & Evaluation Updates (EQS 2121.3; 2121.4)

Berlin:

Calais: As a staff we are starting to work on our reflections for the year. We will look at individual goals and reflect on how growth towards those goals worked and what support we can be providing to help staff reach those goals.

Doty: Staff has been in a deeply reflective state as they work with Steven Dellinger-Pate around the upcoming leadership transition. This has been a time for them to think about their values related to education. Staff growth starts with with a solid understanding of our values; these are the foundation of all of our work.

EMES: ESP evaluations are due at the end of March each year. After gathering input from teachers, I meet with each member of our ESP staff to review their annual goals and provide feedback on their performance. Collaborating with our teaching staff to provide specific feedback to our ESP is a pleasure for me. It's an opportunity for me to share in their successes, hear them reflect on their year, and help them set goals for the following year. This cycle happens every other year, and this year EMES has six ESP on the evaluation cycle.

Rumney: April is a time that we send reminders to teachers about their end of year reflection. They look at the progress they made toward the goals they set in Fall. Once their reflection is complete, they meet with their supervisor to talk about successes and next steps.

U-32: We are meeting to wrap up end of year reflections.

Community Schools Board Report
April 9, 2026

The community schools framework offers a way-of-doing for schools to actualize the district's vision and core beliefs. Aligned to the Vermont framework for community schools through Act 67, our community schools work is situated in three buckets:

1. **Promoting equitable outcomes for students through rigorous, relevant, and inclusive curriculum and instruction**

2. **Acting as a hub for community wellness to bridge the barriers to access and learning for families and community members**

3. **Engaging in comprehensive Third-space programming that is multi-age and intergenerational, transforming our building into a center of community activity**

As we enter into the second year of this work, the Community Schools Steering Committee is meeting (on Tuesday, 4/14) to define year two goals and desired outcomes, while monitoring and reflecting on the work to date. The Catamount Community Schools Collaborative at UVM will visit U-32 and Berlin in May as part of their annual site visit and grant review. As we reflect on the work of the last year, we also sit in the possibility of continuing to integrate the approach of community schools to ensure that all students and families, across all of our schools are seen, connected, and successful.

This past month at U-32, Student Leader Designers, high school students who applied to create the training curriculum for the new Youth Community Educator program, worked with adult partners to envision and define the skills and activities for the first training cycle. This youth-adult partnership of curriculum design and program development has been extraordinary in leveraging the expertise of educators and young people in imagining a program that is responsive to the learning styles and needs of high school students, while considering the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in the YCE placements at the Extended Day Center. Beyond the actual production of the training program curriculum and program materials, this experience of bringing young people and adult experts together to imagine, define, and build a program that is truly reflective of the needs of young people is a way-of-doing that builds on our core beliefs and vision for community schools in our district. Simply put, the imagination, mutual respect and appreciation for each other's experiences and expertise, and shared vision of a program that is responsive and also meaningfully and intentionally designed for engagement, was powerful to all participants. This process will hopefully be used and replicated in future program design across the district.

This next month, applicants for the Youth Community Educator program will be enrolled in the first training cycle, preparing for their role leading middle school workshops, and internship

placements at summer camps. Middle school will end the year with afterschool workshop offerings, learning from their near-peers in high school. We are stronger when we are connected to each other, and the places where that is happening in school are growing.

In Community,
Bec

—
Rebecca Dezan
Community Schools Coordinator, WCUUSD

Washington Central Unified Union School District

Berlin, Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex (Rumney), Worcester (Doty) and U-32

2026 - 2027 SCHOOL CALENDAR

JULY

M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

AUGUST

M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

4 Student days 8 Teacher Days

8/18-19 New Faculty Orientation

8/21 Flex

8/20, 24, 25 In-Service

8/26 First Day of School

SEPTEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
*	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

21 Student Days , 21 Teacher Days

9/7 Labor Day Holiday

OCTOBER

M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
*	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

21 Student Days , 21 Teacher Days

Half Day Dismissal Inservice

10/12 Indigenous People's Day (Holiday)

NOVEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	*	*	*
30				

17 Student Days , 18 Teacher Days

11/6 In-Service (Conferences)

11/25-27 Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	

16 Student Days , 16 Teacher Days

12/23-31 Holiday Break

JANUARY

M	T	W	T	F
				*
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
*	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

19 Student Days , 19 Teacher Days

1/1 New Year's Day/Holiday Break

1/15 Half Day Grading

1/18 MLK Day /Holiday

FEBRUARY

M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
*	*	*	*	*

15 Student Days, 15 Teacher Days

Half Day Dismissal Inservice

2/22-28 Winter Break

MARCH

M	T	W	T	F
*	*	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

20 Student Days , 21 Teacher Days

3/1-3/2 Winter break Cont'd

3/26 Conferences

APRIL

M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
*	*	*	*	*
26	27	28	29	30

17 Student Days, 17 Teacher Days

4/19-23 Spring Break

MAY

M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
*				

20 Student Days, 20 Teacher Days

5/31 Memorial Day Holiday

JUNE

M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14*	15*	16*	17*	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

8 Student Days, 9 Teacher Days

6/10 Last Day Half-Day (snow days will extend this date)

6/11 In-Service

* Potential Snow makeup days

Holidays /Vacations

Early Release Wednesday

Total Student Days =178

Total Teacher Days = 185

Semester Schedule

1st Marking Period Ends Oct. 30

2nd Marking Period Ends Jan. 15

3rd marking Period Ends April 2

4th Marking Period Ends June 10

WCUUSD School Board Self Evaluation

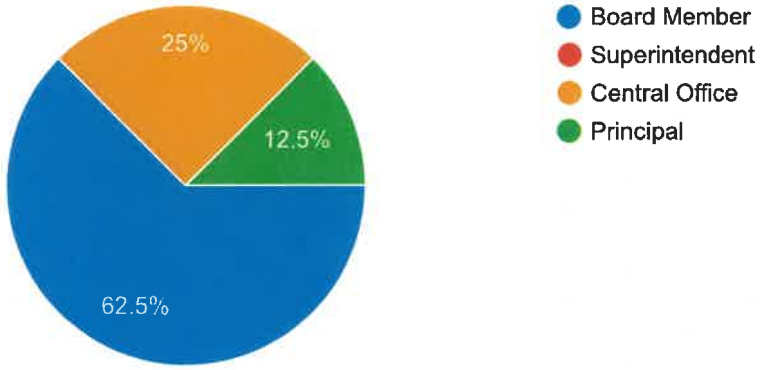
16 responses

Publish analytics

Please choose the role that best applies to you.

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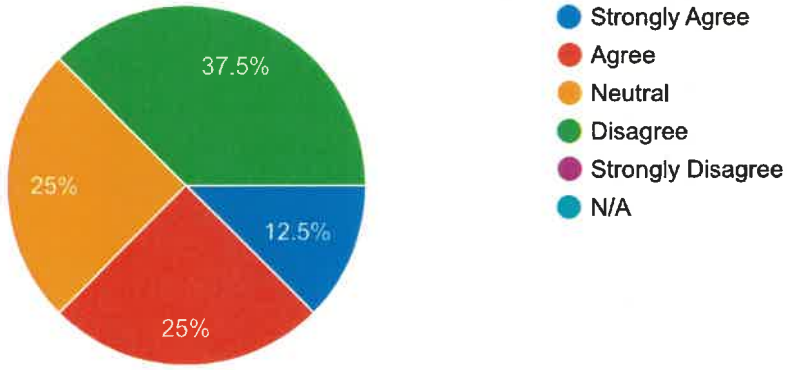
16 responses



The board understands the roles and responsibilities of the board chair , the full board, and the superintendent

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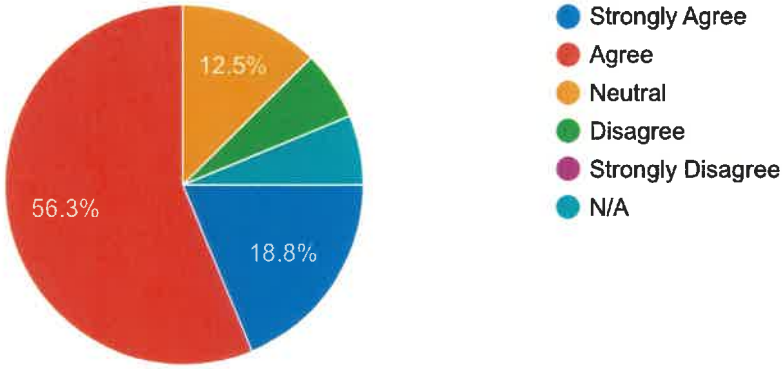
16 responses



The Board understands the legal and regulatory requirements for the evaluation of the superintendent and has a clear process to ensure its completion

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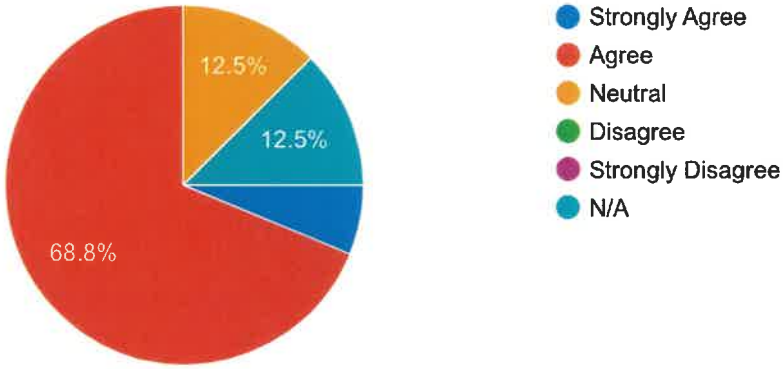
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The Board ensures that expectations are clear: the superintendent's contract includes specific details about the annual evaluation, including the timeline, method, measures, and intended outcome.

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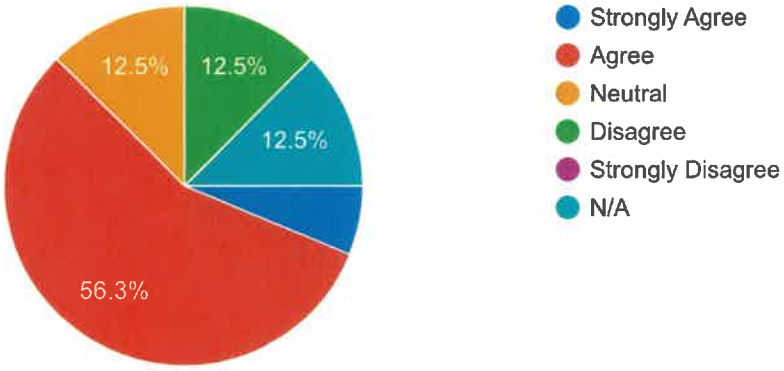
16 responses



The Board enters into the superintendent evaluation process with positive intent and the goal of building a stronger relationship with the superintendent .

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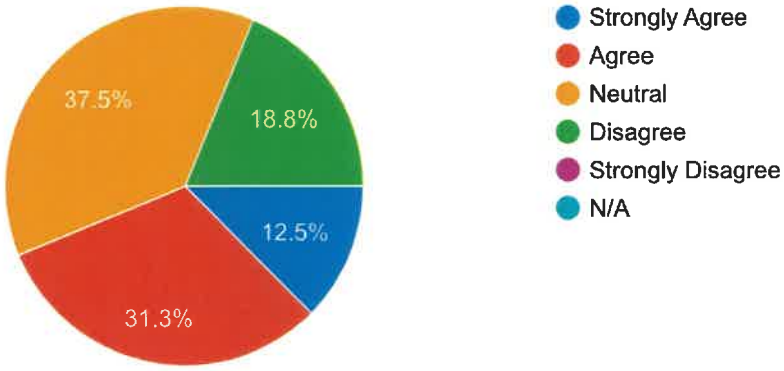
16 responses



The Board practices positive communication strategies that foster mutual respect, trust, and collaboration with the superintendent. The board is open to constructive feedback.

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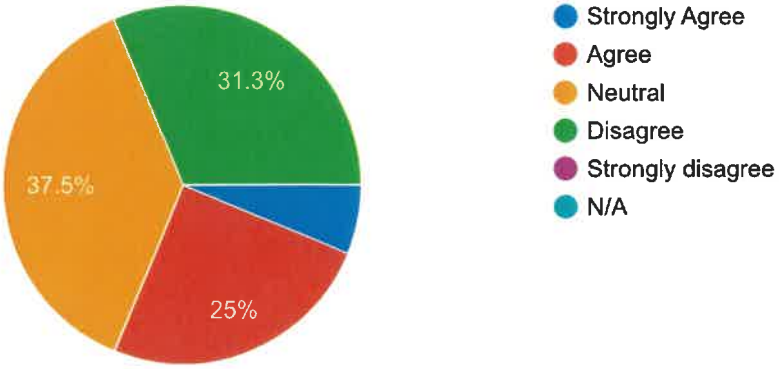
16 responses



The Board utilizes group norms and has a well understood chain of communication when issues arise.

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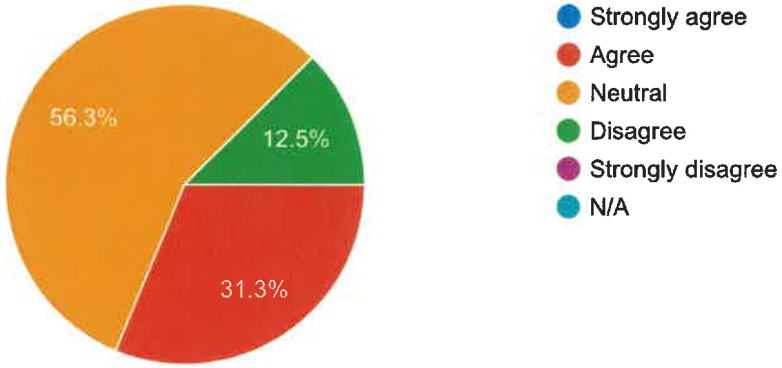
16 responses



Communication is fair, transparent, and focused on finding solutions. Disagreements are addressed as they arise rather than waiting for the annual formal evaluation.

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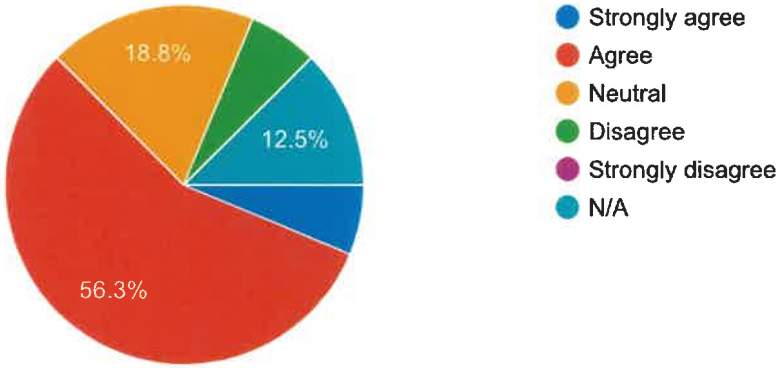
16 responses



The Board actively partners with the superintendent to adopt performance goals for the district that align with the vision, mission, and strategic plan for the school district; the board monitors progress toward those goals throughout the year and provides a summative evaluation annually.

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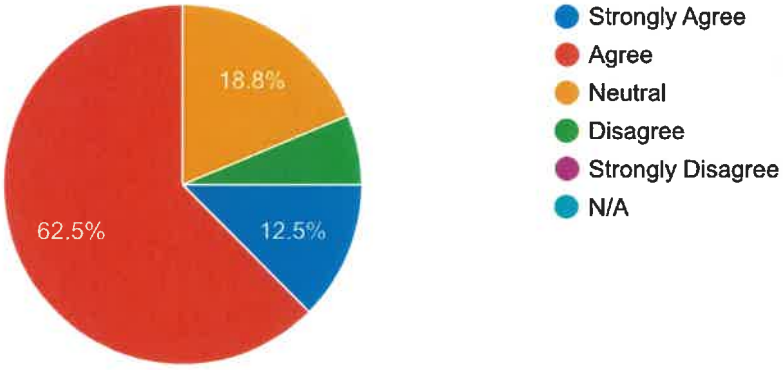
16 responses



The Board approves school continuous improvement plans and reviews data through regular performance reports as provided by the superintendent. The evaluation is focused on what the data shows/doesn't show in order to focus on student learning/outcomes.

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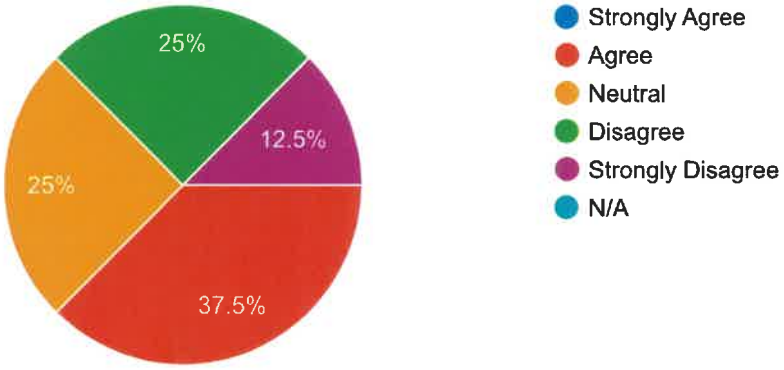
16 responses



The Board holds the superintendent accountable for developing a strategy and education work plan to achieve District goals, while refraining from involvement in daily operations/micromanagement.

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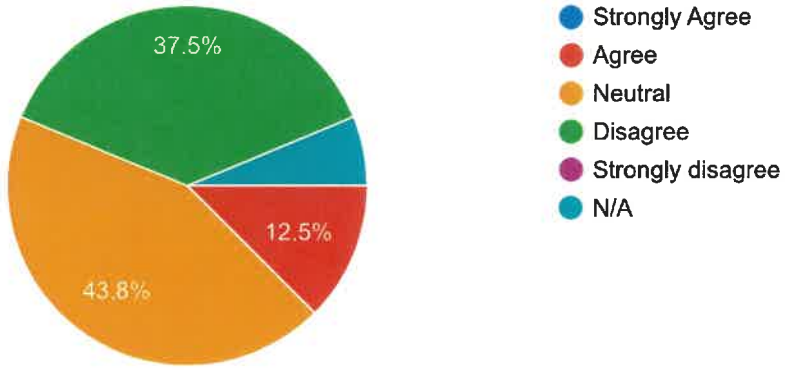
16 responses



The Board seeks ongoing learning opportunities to promote the most successful board-superintendent relationship.

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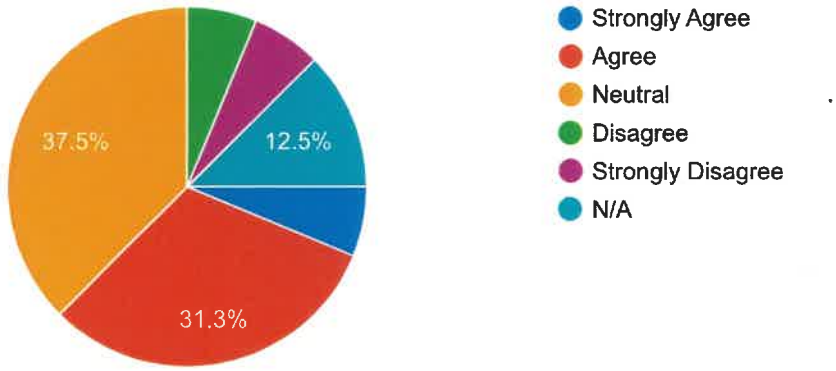
16 responses



The Board provides orientation of new board members which includes an overview of the superintendent evaluation cycle.

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16 responses



Please share any additional comments, reflections, or feedback on any of the questions above. If there is anything we may have missed or anything else you would like to share, we welcome your thoughts

7 responses

This is really a survey of how the board works with the superintendent. We also need to evaluate how the board works internally (how well board members work with each other, whether board members honor their obligations to represent all citizens and work towards the interests of all kids, etc). I see significant issues there, but that wasn't touched on at all.

I am not sure that we are all on the same page as to what is the purview of the board vs. admin/superintendent. While daily operations are not in our scope, it is our role to ensure quality education at all of our schools, so we need to hold admin accountable for the decisions they make if they result in lack of quality at any one of our schools. And if, budgetarily, it becomes impossible to ensure quality education for ALL of our students, we need to encourage reconfiguration or staff changes as needed to meet the needs of our children - even if it means challenging decisions of the admin or going against popular town opinions. I don't think we have good oversight of the elementary schools, even in ed quality committee. I don't recall being presented with or approving continuous improvement plans for the individual schools.

Additionally, I think we need to do a better job orienting new board members, and doing meaningful board trainings.

We need to improve clarity of roles and processes, and we need to truly dedicate ourselves to increased transparency.

To ensure the District's continued progress, it is vital that we focus on strengthening the partnership between the Board and the Superintendent. Currently, misalignments regarding operational boundaries and a lack of unified confidence are creating hurdles in our collective work. By recommitting to a culture of mutual trust and high-level strategic oversight, we can better provide the stable leadership our students and faculty deserve.

As a board member, I am actively working to expand my knowledge about the board roles and responsibilities. At one of the recent board meetings, an administrator shared that they weren't sure when or what they could share with the board and appreciated being asked to share. I feel that in order for our board members to do their job to the best of their ability we must be more connected with our administrators. I appreciated the retreat we had last year and think we should be doing that at least 3 times a year.. at the beginning of the year, during budget time and at the end. It is so important to be able to understand the whys behind our administrators decisions, choices and perspectives, not to challenge them but rather to be able to more actively support their positions. This is really important and will be important as we work to find a more sustainable future and work to heal our relationship with our communities.

I believe the Board understands roles and responsibilities. Some members do not honor them. I understand and appreciate the desire of the Board to not simply rubber stamp recommendations. Yet, I find the Board to be repeatedly swayed by a few strong voices, voices that lack the full perspective and understanding of the issues at hand. It is the Board's role to hire and evaluate the superintendent. It is the superintendent's role to hire, supervise, evaluate, and leverage a strong professional team. When the Board takes actions that directly oppose the recommendations of the leadership team, they, at best, undermine the ability of the leadership team to do its work. There have been occasions when the Board sets parameters, the leadership team does work that adheres to the parameters, the Board makes decisions that do not align to its parameters, and then the Board blames the superintendent and/or leadership team for its work. How can we work better together? The Board and the leadership team have a huge responsibility to the students in our district. How can the leadership team and the Board provide information to each other, communicate with each other, and establish and maintain trust so that we can work more effectively with each other and within our respective roles and responsibilities?

This fall the Board chose to spend hours focused on a personnel issue (athletic coach) which was absolutely not in their purview. Worse, the hours that the Board spent on the issue resulted in hours that the Board did not spend on its budget or configuration, the two most critical bodies of work it was facing this fall.

There is a difference between local engagement and local control. One thing that I love and appreciate about our school community is its commitment to our schools, and I appreciate the Board's desire to engage our local community. And, this year especially the Board has erred on the side of extending public comment at the expense of engaging in its important work. Receiving Education Quality Committee reports at 9:00 p.m., engaging in superficial and cursory first readings of policies, etc. are not conducive to effective board work. Are there other structures that would better serve the Board's commitment to public engagement and need to effectively and thoroughly do its work? And, how can the Board engage more members of the community? There are many folks who, for many reasons, will not or cannot access board meetings. Some board members have made a concerted effort to visit schools, attend community events, etc. where they are able to engage with a broader cohort of school community members. I believe these experiences have been mutually beneficial.

I have appreciated the Board's efforts to engage with each other more civilly when there are differences of opinion among members. I remember last year one of the student representatives encouraged board members to take a deep breath and treat each other more kindly, and I have seen evidence of improvement in this regard. I am so grateful. Please continue to support the broader community to do the same. I can think of two recent examples of behavior from community members that I would characterize as deplorable and unacceptable (the public criticism and characterization of the board chair as unfit and despicable during the athletic coach debacle and the beating of an actual drum during a board meeting about budget and configuration). In instances such as these, and in much less egregious moments as well, it is vital that members of the board take a stand for civility and public decorum. Thank you for the times you have done so. I hope you collectively make this part of your routine practice when necessary (which I hope is less and less often).

By and large, I believe the committee structure is working well. I appreciate the work that is

accomplished in committee meetings. I believe that one change that might make the work even more effective is establishing a way to ensure that each committee is routinely considering the ways in which its work might impact other committees and the board's work overall. In this way, I think there is the potential to create more synergy and coherence in the system.

Thank you for your service on the board. Serving as a school board member is a huge responsibility, requires a significant time commitment, and can be utterly thankless at times. Thank you, too, for the opportunity to provide feedback.

One of the challenges we face as a board is that we do not always stay in our lane, even when we understand our role. We are a strong board with dedicated members, but at times we struggle to consistently follow the leadership structures we have in place.
The board generally understands its responsibilities and governance role; however, when there is pressure from the community or from teachers, we do not always follow through in the way we should. In those moments, decisions can become influenced by the immediate "temperature" of the room rather than by the data, the long-term goals, and the expertise of the professionals and school leaders present.
Strengthening our discipline around governance, trusting the data, relying on expert guidance, and maintaining clarity about our role, will help ensure we make decisions that best serve the district over the long term.

The Board has maintained systems for monitoring continuous improvement plans and student achievement, and it has a five-year capital improvement plan that addresses building needs and prevents deferred maintenance. The Board has also demonstrated the ability to hold civil discussions on contentious issues.
At the same time, the Board has at times engaged in operational decision-making rather than remaining in its governance role. This has contributed to trust issues between the Board and the Superintendent, and between the Board and the administrative leadership team. There are gaps in understanding related to open meeting laws, the respective roles of Board members and the Superintendent, and expectations for functioning as a unified governing body, even when members disagree with the outcome of a vote.
The focus on configuration has required significant time and attention, and Board development work has not progressed. Clear and transparent communication remains a concern frequently raised by the public, and the Board may wish to consider engaging a consultant to support public relations and communication efforts.

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WCUUSD School Board

Superintendent Personnel Summary and Recommendations

1. **New Hire Nominations (for 26-27 school year)**

   Jaycee Coyle – EMES, SLP, .50 FTE

2. **Retirement**

3. **Re-Hires**

4. **Resignations**

5. **Change in FTE:**

6. **Long-Term Substitutes (25-26 School Year)**

   Eric Kapner, U-32, Classroom Teacher (Math)

7. **Change in Position**

8. **Extended Leave of Absence**

   Kimberly Knapp, BES, request under Article 12.6 of the Teachers Agreement. A request for an unpaid leave of absence not to exceed one academic year.

TEACHER NOMINATION

POSITION: Speech Language Pathologist	**FTE:** 0.5
REASON FOR VACANCY: **X** Retirement/Resignation __ New Position __ Leave of Absence	
SCHOOL BUILDING: East Montpelier Elementary School	
SEARCH COMMITTEE COMPOSITION: *(numbers and groups represented)*	__2_ Administrators __6_ Teachers _1__ Support Staff ___ Parents/Community Members __ Other:
EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION: *(College, degree, date obtained)*	West Coast University - Master of Arts in Speech, Language Pathology; University of Vermont and Columbia College BA
PROCESS OVERVIEW AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION: *(objective, not subjective, narrative of skills and experience of the recommended candidate & summary of reference check results)*	Conducted first round interviews with Julia Pritchard on two applicants. One applicant withdrew their application, stating they needed full-time work. Conducted a second round interview with Jaycee, six teachers, and one ESP. Unanimous decision to recommend moving Jaycee forward based on her skillset, interest in the position, and related experience. Reference checks were conducted, and all references were glowing, especially given that Jaycee has not served in the role as an SLP before. Jaycee has three years of elementary experience in both public and Montessori schools.
CANDIDATE RECOMMENDED TO SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD: *(resume and cover letter attached)*	**NAME: Jaycee Coyle** M00-M14 - Step 0 - $31,178

(If the board has additional questions about the candidate or other applicants, this should be discussed in executive session due to privacy rights and should not include information that would not be asked as a part of an interview process such as marital status, where candidate lives, etc.)

NOMINATED BY_ Alicia Lyford, Julia Pritchard — *Principal/Administrator* — April 6, 2026 *Date*

RECOMMENDED BY_____ *Superintendent* — 4/13/26 *Date*

BOARD APPROVAL DATE: _____

Washington Central Unified Union School District

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1130 Gallison Hill Road
Montpelier, VT 05602
Phone (802) 229-0553
Fax (802) 229-2761

TEACHER NOMINATION

POSITION: Long-term Substitute Math	**FTE:** 1.0
REASON FOR VACANCY: __ Retirement/Resignation __ New Position X Leave of Absence	
SCHOOL BUILDING: U-32 Middle and High School	
SEARCH COMMITTEE COMPOSITION: *(numbers and groups represented)*	___ Administrators ___ Teachers ___ Support Staff ___ Parents/Community Members X Other: U-32 Principal
EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION: *(College, degree, date obtained)*	Bachelor's Degree from Middlebury College Master's Degree in Progress from UVM
PROCESS OVERVIEW AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION: *(objective, not subjective, narrative of skills and experience of the recommended candidate & summary of reference check results)*	Eric is currently student teaching at U-32. Eric will be covering a leave for more than 30 days. Long term sub need.
CANDIDATE RECOMMENDED TO SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD: *(resume and cover letter attached)*	**NAME: Eric Kapner** B00-B14 $54,224 ($39.08/hr $293.10 per diem)

(If the board has additional questions about the candidate or other applicants, this should be discussed in executive session due to privacy rights and should not include information that would not be asked as a part of an interview process such as marital status, where candidate lives, etc.)

NOMINATED BY _____ 4/7/26
Principal/Administrator *Date*

RECOMMENDED BY _____ 4/13/26
Superintendent *Date*

BOARD APPROVAL DATE: _____

Washington Central Unified Union School District

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WCUUSD
School Board Meeting
3.18.26
6:15-9:15 PM
(Virtual and In-Person)
U-32 Middle & High School Cafeteria
930 Gallison Hill Rd Montpelier, VT

Present: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate, Flor Diaz Smith, Daniel Keeney, Chris McVeigh, Patrick Whelley, Ursula Stanley, Elizabeth Brown, Zach Sullivan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Julia Hewitt, Natasha Eckart, Dave Lowther, Marty McMahon, Andrew Boye, Karoline May, Michale Sherwin, Barry Bernstein, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Susanne Gann, Lisa Hanna, Allison Fayle, Alicia Lyford, Dell Waterhouse, Lisa Hanna, Marilyn Martin, Michael Sherwin, Anthony Hauser, Sonja Andrews, Danielle Mackay, April Davis, Maia Jones, Gillian Fuqua, Ainsley Burroughs, Lila Anderson, Jarrod Weiss, Marilyn Martin, Jillian, JP, Sonya Rhodes, Kathryn Saunders, Celia Guggemos, J Bohn, ORCA Media, Jenna Howard, Heidi Dimick, Honi Bean Barrett, Student Representatives: Elise O'Brien, Kathryn Saunders, Lei DeGroot

1. Call To Order:Diane Nichols-Fleming called the meeting to order at 6:19 p.m.
Diane Nichols-Fleming made a statement about the work of the board and the commitment to transparency and demonstrating the core values that have been created.

2. Welcome:

2.1. Adjustments to the Agenda: none

2.2. Reception of Guests

2.3. Public Comments: Diane Nichols-Fleming invited public comments. Kari Bradley thanked the board for its work and he encouraged the board to engage in discussion with our neighbors about the possibilities around a regional high school. He stated that only a board can lead that discussion. He offered his assistance in this work. Anthony Hauser spoke in support of keeping preschool at Calais. He spoke about the value of the younger students sharing the school space with students through grade six. He stated that Calais preschool has larger enrollment than East Montpelier preschool at this time. Natasha Eckart read a statement from seventh grade students at U32 in support of religious leave for staff.

3. Board Overview:

3.1. Board Orientation Handbook: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate had shared this resource with board members in advance. He presented a slide deck: *WCUUSD Board Orientation: Overview and Leadership Structures, March 2026.* He invited questions. Chris McVeigh asked, when the superintendent refers to the "Leadership Team" meetings, is he referring to COLT, as outlined here? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that, generally, yes; however there are times for example when only the elementary school principals are gathered.

4. Reports:

4.1. Superintendent Report: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate had provided a written report. He reviewed the principal hiring updates and noted that Gillian Fuqua is retiring at the end of this year, and that the plan is for hiring a Teaching Principal position at Doty. Patrick Whelley asked how a teaching principal position would work with respect to the negotiated contract. That is unknown at this time. Chris McVeigh suggested - can the position be split into two positions and therefore two positions offered. He asked, if a math teaching principal were not available, would it be considered to hire a part time principal and a part time math interventionist position. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that he has considered all of these scenarios. Daniel Keeney asked what are the weekly hour needs for both math instruction and for principal as it seems like these two together are more than a full time position. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that it is still early to say exactly what we want; he is talking with Gillian Fuqua about this and considering what staff and students need, and what format will work best. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that she believed Doty used to have a teaching principal position; she wondered whether Roxbury School had a teaching principal position (they did not). Some discussion followed about student enrollment, including preschool enrollment. Ursula Stanley asked about some of the forms/ requirements for enrollment. Jen Arsenault-Miller spoke about enrollment, including projected Community Connections enrollment. Daniel Keeney asked if it is feasible to have a teacher teach preschool at East Montpelier for half a day and then Calais for half a day, with support from Community Connections. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that the hours that are required for this (e.g. travel and duty free lunch break) are beyond those in the teaching contract. He also spoke about the challenges with staffing Community Connections with such a creative configuration. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that the transportation information in his report is very preliminary at this time.

4.2. Principal Report: This report had been provided in advance. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate invited questions or comments. Flor Diaz Smith asked whether something can be shared about how we are addressing absenteeism. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate spoke briefly about chronic absenteeism and how we are trying to address this with Community Schools work. He stated that this will be something that the leadership team will be focusing on, and reporting more regularly to the board, e.g., reducing barriers to access - moving from compliance to connection, to address barriers. Flor Diaz Smith asked for more information on the use of Educlimber. Alicia Lyford shared the work that East Montpelier is doing to integrate student data with Educlimber. She shared that Ellen Dorsey is working with the staff on this initiative. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether there is a comparison with Educlimber to what had been used in the past. Alicia Lyford stated that Educlimber allows us to create forms within the platform. Marty McMahon asked whether absenteeism is increasing/decreasing over the past years. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that it is fairly stable at this time but that it is still high. There was a big increase upon returning to school after

COVID19. Daniel Keeney asked how we engage parents regarding chronic absenteeism. He asked whether this is something that the Climate Survey addresses. Patrick Whelley asked whether the definition of "chronic absenteeism" has changed. He stated that he believes there are some changes in practice about going to work "sick" or sending children to school "sick" and maybe it is time to redefine chronic absenteeism. Dave Lowther asked whether student learning outcomes are affected by chronic absenteeism. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that yes they are. He stated that we continue to explore barriers - and this is a larger conversation for a future board meeting; he noted that he would like to address this as part of his goal setting as well.

4.3. Student Report: The three student representatives shared student happenings, including sports events and Winooski Valley Music Festival.

4.4. Community Schools Report: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared some grant information that had recently been received; he will share with the board as planning gets underway. Marty McMahon asked what the amounts of the grants ($140K and $750K) and how are they managed/supervised. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that the Community Schools Coordinator, among others, will be involved in the grant management. Some discussion followed around staffing for after school programs. The grants will allow funding for site coordinators and other adults for staffing the programs, and supporting U32 students who also staff the afterschool programs. U32 will be the recipient of the first grant; Berlin the recipient of the second grant. Chris McVeigh asked about sustainability for these grant funded initiatives. Lei DeGroot also asked about the sustainability of grant funded programs. Some discussion followed around the opportunity that this grant funding provides. Daniel Keeney spoke about the value of "Pilot Programs" such as this. He would like as a future agenda item, considering how the board can be more responsible in, and for, "enterprises" such as Community Connections. He spoke about his wish for a possible partnership with early childcare within the schools.

4.5. Humanity and Justice Coalition Report: Natasha Eckart shared that the coalition recently has considered positive feedback from professional development, and heard from teachers that they would like more resources. Some discussion about engaging student voice in the work of the coalition, e.g, creating student co-chairs.

4.6. Central Vermont Career Center Report: Andrew Boye stated that the next meeting is next Tuesday, and he will report to the board after. Flor Diaz Smith reported that the career center is continuing to explore solutions to space limitations, following the failed bond vote.

4.7. VSBA Report: Flor Diaz Smith had shared an update with the board. She shared some information about Act 73. She noted that the Vermont Superintendents Association had presented a proposal that is very thorough. She brought attention to the fact that PCB testing in Vermont has been halted. She also spoke about limiting education spending growth. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that the bill related to spending threshold could have a huge effect on our budgeting.

5. Board Operations:

5.1. Budget Process Reflection: Steven Dellinger-Pate thanked Susanne Gann. He stated that this year we essentially created six budgets. He feels that we funded the schools in a way that was equitable to the needs of the students. Patrick Whelley shared feedback that it was difficult to know which budget draft was the most recent. He stated that it would be helpful when sharing information on the website, to make it very clear which is the most recent. Steven Dellinger-Pate asked, how can we inform and educate members of our

communities who want to understand at a deeper level. Marty McMahon stated that there were a lot of community members who worked very hard to make sure that the budget passed, especially in the towns that were facing a possible school closure. Zach Sullivan asked why we wouldn't put out a budget that showed how we would fund five schools in a way that we were really proud of. It felt like we had to choose. He wonders if it was the right decision to make it a priority to stay below the excess spending threshold. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that she would like to help the community and the board better understand the work that has been put in since the budget passed as a five school model and to have a better understanding of what it looks like with multi-grade classrooms. That way we can be better informed when asking what are the needs going forward, have a better understanding of the instruction that is occurring now, and also understand the areas that are challenging because of our fiscal constraints. Flor Diaz Smith suggested using this opportunity to, this year more than ever, do a year round budget development and spend time with the community and with the board, defining our role as a board - what we do and what we don't do. At certain points in our budget planning we don't tend to listen to the experts in the room. How do we help everybody better understand our role? It would be great to spend some time in celebration of what we already do in our schools.

5.2. Communication and Community Engagement: Chris McVeigh spoke about public comment. He would like to discuss how we would like to see this structured and would like to set aside a good portion of time and engage in dialogue. He spoke about the difference between being spoken "at" and being spoken "with". He would like to see this as a future agenda item. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that her hope is that opening dialogue at the first board meeting of the month will help to address this. Daniel Keeney suggested creating a one-page document: "ways the board might address your grievance…" So people can understand that what they are expecting might not be possible for us to deliver in that moment. Ursula Stanley would like to build in reflection on communication and community engagement to have an understanding of who we are hearing from, and who we are not hearing from, and what are the barriers. Dave Lowther suggested allowing for public comment during the meeting when the topic is addressed on the agenda. Flor Diaz Smith suggested considering more central office support related to board communication. Marty McMahon asked for clarification about Front Porch Forum postings. Diane Nichols-Fleming shared that the Steering Committee has one person from each town that posts to Front Porch Forum.

5.3. Board Learning: Diane Nichols-Fleming shared some board learning that she and Superintendent Dellinger-Pate have been planning. The May 6th board meeting will have some time set aside for that.

5.4. New board Mentors: Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether board members have had an opportunity to reach out to a mentor; she reminded them to do so.

5.5. Board Self-Evaluations: Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether board members had any questions or comments from the board self-evaluations that were shared. Ursula Stanley pointed out that the raw data shows 20 responses and there are only 15 board members. Diane Nichols-Fleming will follow up with Sashly.

5.6. PCB Class Action Lawsuit: Chris McVeigh suggested that we discuss this in Executive Session to discuss the details of the contract. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate explained this grievance briefly. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked for insight from the previous board chair as to how to address this. Flor Diaz Smith stated that because this is an action item on the

agenda it is appropriate to enter Executive Session if needed. Flor Diaz Smith noted that for this issue, if we discuss in public we put the board in harm's way**. For this reason, at 8:40, Flor Diaz Smith moved to into Executive Session and to include the Superintendent to discuss a contract issue. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously. Upon exiting Executive Session, Flor Diaz Smith moved to authorize the superintendent to sign the contract, after clarification from legal counsel. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously.**

6. Finance:

6.1. Award 2026 Combined Construction Project Contract: Ursula Stanley moved that the Board authorize a transfer of $573,821 from the general fund balance to the capital reserve fund for the completion of the 2026 Combined Construction Project. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. Ursula Stanley asked whether this cost increase is in line with others. Susanne Gann stated that the cost of things are going up exponentially at this time. Chris McVeigh stated that he has difficulty approving this if we are not considering a similar solution for math intervention at Doty. He stated that if we are not able to hire a math teaching principal at Doty then he will expect to come to the board and suggest a similar transfer of money to support math intervention at Doty. Lei DeGroot asked for some clarification about the possibility of putting off some of these projects. Susanne Gann responded to this issue. Flor Diaz Smith stated that this is good use of fund balance, and there is already some investment into this as part of the facilities plan; she noted that this does affect students directly. Ursula Stanley warned against the trend of putting things off/ deferring maintenance. Susanne Gann spoke about the capital improvement plan; she stated that we are going to have to carefully consider this, given the increases in costs. **This motion carried unanimously. Ursula Stanley moved that the Board award the contract for the project to E.F. Wall & Assoc. Inc. in an amount not to exceed $1,191,540. Seconded by Natasha Eckart. This motion carried with one abstention.**

7. Policy - Second Readings:

Chris McVeigh shared these policies, for second readings.

7.1. E20 Community Use of School Facilities: Zach Sullivan asked for clarification around "top priority" versus "first" in this policy in E20. He moved to amend the policy so Category 1 is first priority, category 2 is second priority, following with the numbers. Patrick Whelley seconded this amendment. This motion to amend carried unanimously. Chris McVeigh moved to adopt E20 as amended. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.

7.2. E21 Distribution of Non-School-Sponsored Literature in Schools: Zach Sullivan moved to adopt this policy as presented. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. (This motion was not voted upon). Dave Lowther proposed amending the policy to include alignment with the H&JC. Natasha Eckart suggested verbiage that indicates "does not violate current policies." **Ursula Stanley moved to amend C8: to "that violates any of our district policies and resolutions." Seconded by Dave Lowther. (This motion was not voted upon)** Some discussion followed. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate reminded that this is non-school sponsored literature. He spoke about the requirement for equal access. Discussion followed around discriminating based on a person's viewpoint. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate suggested tabling this policy and checking with legal counsel. **Ursula Stanley moved to**

table this to a future meeting, pending legal counsel and bringing back to the Policy Committee. Seconded by Dave Lowther, this motion to table carried unanimously.

7.3. Cell Phone Policy: Chris McVeigh moved to adopt the Cell Phone Policy. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. Lei DeGroot asked whether this is aligned with the state requirements. It is. Ursula Stanley noted that if we don't adopt this, it becomes de facto on July 1st. She noted that the student counsel is currently working on procedure for this policy. **This motion carried unanimously.**

8. Negotiations:

Diane Nichols-Fleming reported that for teachers, we continued discussion about donated sick leave and began discussion about co-curricular salary schedule and stipends. For the joint meeting between teachers and ESP, we had a shared session and worked on shared issues around religious leave and safety.

9. Personnel:

9.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE: Flor Diaz Smith moved to approve the hiring of Emily Smith for U32 World Language Teacher. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously. Flor Diaz Smith moved to accept the resignation of Gillian Fuqua, with acknowledgement for all that Gillian has done especially over the past two years, Chris McVeigh seconded, and noted the grace she has shown under the task of managing a very difficult and trying situation, with openness and with students at the forefront. Superintendent Dellinger Pate expressed his appreciation for the great amount of joy that she brings to her role; she will be missed greatly**. This motion carried unanimously. Flor Diaz Smith moved to approve the hiring of Ann Chapman, long term substitute, U32 World Languages teacher. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.**

10. Consent Agenda:

10.1. Approve Minutes of 2.18.26 and 3.11.26: Patrick Whelley moved to approve the minutes from February 18 and March 11, 2026. Seconded by Natasha Eckart, this motion carried unanimously.

10.2. Board Orders: Ursula Stanley moved to approve the board orders dated February 13 2026 through March 18 2026, in the amount of $776,044.19. Seconded by Zach Sullivan, this motion carried unanimously.

11. Future Agenda Items:

- Superintendent Evaluation
- Voluntary Merger Possibilities and Conversations
- Exploring with community connections
- Revisiting public comments parameters
- Maximize resources across the district and extending to the district as a whole to meet student need, suggestion of a committee (Chris)
- Board self-evaluation

12. Board Reflections:

Zach Sullivan commended the seventh grade students for their advocacy and for how well they handled communication with the board. Flor Diaz Smith recognized the contributions that Kealy Sloan has made to the board. Marty McMahon appreciated the student representatives' participation tonight.

13. Public Comments: Time limit strictly enforced, see note
Julia Hewitt had received a request to read a letter from some Calais instructors, expressing concerns around preschool for Calais students and classroom configuration. She read this letter aloud.

14. Proposed Executive Session: Student Residency Requests:

At 9:38, Flor Diaz Smith moved to go into Executive Session, and to invite the superintendent, to discuss student residency requests. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously. At 9:53, David Lowther moved to come out of Executive Session. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka, this motion carried. Flor Diaz Smith moved to accept the recommendation of the superintendent for the residency request. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.

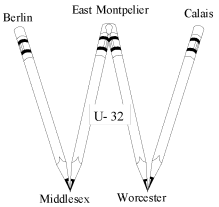
15. Adjourn:At 9:54, the board adjourned: motion by Chris McVeigh; seconded by Michelle Ksepka.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary

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.

1130 Gallison Hill Road
Montpelier, VT 05602
Phone (802) 229-0553
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Washington Central Unified Union
School Board Meeting
4.8.26
6:15-9:15 PM
East Montpelier Elementary School
665 Vincent Flats Road
East Montpelier, VT 05651
(In-Person & Virtual)

Present: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate, Daniel Keeney, Chris McVeigh, Patrick Whelley, Ursula Stanley, Elizabeth Brown, Zach Sullivan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Julia Hewitt, Natasha Eckart, Dave Lowther, Marty McMahon, Andrew Boye, Karoline May, Michael Sherwin, Julia Pritchard, Barry Bernstein, Alicia Lyford, Susanne Gann, Lisa Hanna, Allison Fayle, Dell Waterhouse, Sonja Andrews, Gillian Fuqua, Ainsley Burroughs, Jarrod Weiss, Celia Guggemos, ORCA Media, Alison, Ari Preston, Blakely Gilmore, Cadence Burgess, C Ecklund, Danielle Mackay, David Lawrence, Dawn Dumas, David Delcore, Dena Brown, Denise Wheeler, Ellen Knoedler, Emi Harlow, Hannah Fair, Hannah Brown, Holly Weiss, Honi Bean Barrett, Jamie Bohn, Jenna Howard, Jennifer Chambers, Joanie Smith, Kathleen, Laura Giammusso, Lauralea Curavoo, Lisa Richardson, Lisa Hanna, Liz Bevins, Liza Ziering, Marilyn Martin, Mark Brown, Megan McLane, Michael Duane, Michelle Lynch, Noah Weinstein, Samantha Johnson, Veronica Fair, Will, Anna Matheson, Emily Connor, Heather Clark Warner, Elizabeth Hall, Griffin, Jillian Zeilenga. **Student Representatives:** Elise O'Brien, Kathryn Saunders, Lei DeGroot

1. **<u>Call To Order:</u> Diane Nichols-Fleming called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.**

2. **Welcome**

2.1. Adjustments to The Agenda: Chris McVeigh moved; Daniel Keeney seconded to accept the agenda. This motion carried.

2.2. Reception of Guests: Diane Nichols-Fleming shared the hope for creating this meeting/forum to enter into dialogue - the topic tonight being preschool programming since this is a topic that she has heard there are concerns and questions and confusion around. She explained the forum - a presentation first from the administration and the time for questions from the public and online, as well as questions that had been received via google document.

3. Presentation: PreK Programming: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared a slide deck describing PreK programming.

3.1. Q&A: Diane Nichols-Fleming invited public comment/questions. Griffin, East Montpelier parent: Are we explaining a decision that has already been made? Or is there still room to make a different decision? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that the preschool programming has been structured for the coming year, as shared in the slidedeck. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that the decision has been made, and there have been questions about what is the role of the board. Our role is supervising the superintendent; the superintendent oversees leadership and programming. However the board is tasked with being sure that we are responsible and attuned to how our students are being educated. She stated that the board is struggling, understanding our role, while being respectful to the leadership. Steven Dellinger-Pate explained the planned configuration: AM and PM PreK program EM (Calais and East Montpelier), AM program Rumney (Middlesex and Worcester), AM and PM PreK program Berlin (Berlin). If there are available spots at any of those programs, they will be offered to students outside of those communities. He shared that Community Connections will support all of these programs for full day child care offerings. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared plans for transportation. Question from document: Please explain why benefits outweigh the costs for Calais families sending PreK students to East Montpelier. Karoline May explained that an advantage is the ability to educate preschoolers at their developmental level (e.g., 3 year old, 4 year old, 5 year old). Financially, she indicated that sustainability is a factor. Gillian Fuqua stated that we are balancing not only what we do next year but what we will be doing five and ten years from now. We are looking at the information we have in front of us right now (re population, enrollment projections). Celia Guggemos stated that we are trying to provide as much full day care as we can in the district and we are using the three schools as hubs. Zach Sullivan asked, if we were to split preschool between East Montpelier and Calais, would we be able to provide full day care for families? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that we are not confident that we would be able to do this - staffing is a barrier. Sonja Andrews asked the board to answer the question of disadvantages to students regarding attending a school outside of their community. Karoline May explained her experience of full day child care for preschool children. Steven Dellinger-Pate acknowledged that the enrollment for East Montpelier and Calais is equal this year; however the full day program is in place at East Montpelier, and we have heard the desire from families to have a full day program. Sonja Andrews stated that she does not believe child care is the responsibility of the school and should not be a deciding factor. Marty McMahon suggested that we make sure to hear all of the questions from the public. Chris McVeigh asked whether it is a possibility or a consideration to transport East Montpelier students to Calais and have the full day program at Calais. Steven Dellinger-Pate spoke briefly about the impetus to continue full day preschool at East Montpelier. Alicia Lyford spoke about the desire of the school administrators to not move staff, if not necessary. She stated that East Montpelier is

larger and has more staff and the schools take seriously not uprooting staff when not necessary. Elizabeth Hall, East Montpelier spoke about the difficulty finding daycare in the area. She thanked the board for supporting before and after school care options. Zach Sullivan spoke about his experience considering preschool for his children and the importance of full day offering. Barry Bernstein suggested honoring the Calais vote and keeping preschool at Calais, even if it is a half day program. Emily, East Montpelier, stated that Calais families had a vote with regards to their school and they voted, knowing the preschool plan. She noted that East Montpelier families did not have a vote. Elizabeth Brown asked how many preschool classrooms are planned for East Montpelier. Alicia Lyford stated that preschool registration ended in March and if there are spaces remaining, additional families get the available slots. Currently there are 18 students enrolled. Elizabeth Brown asked why we are not considering offering preschool programming for all families who are interested. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that increasing programming is costly. Kathleen asked whether there is a Community Connections program at Rumney. Steven Dellinger-Pate clarified. Kathleen stated that when Principal Lyford stated that she takes seriously not causing staff to move, it doesn't sit well when we are asking Calais families to move their preschool children. Ursula Stanley read questions that had been received in writing. Some responses were provided. Karoline May stated that this was a very difficult budget season for board, administration and staff. She stated that we have reflected on how we can move forward in a better way next year. She stated that she hopes this meeting is the first of budget discussions for FY28. Elizabeth Brown spoke about nurse to student ratio and equity in access to nurse services for students at all of the schools. She expressed, regarding Calais, this is a huge change for a community who worked so hard to preserve their school. She also asked for data supporting the idea that combining preK with kindergarten does not work for students. Julia Hewitt stated that as a board we voted to affirm the vote from the towns. She asked how the decision to remove approximately 20% of Calais student body was in keeping with the spirit of that vote. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that we are not looking at that number of students (20% from Calais) at East Montpelier past this year - the number reflects preschool students. Some discussion followed. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that she and Superintendent Dellinger-Pate will work to answer all of the questions on the google doc that were not addressed tonight. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that this is not a quality-of-staffing issue. He knows that our staff is going to take care of all of the children no matter what school they attend. Marty McMahon asked about the dollar amount - if students do not attend the preschool program, then what is the loss in revenue. Susanne Gann indicated that preschool students bring $4K.

4. **Personnel:**

4.1. **Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE: Daniel Keeney moved to approve new hire: Ruairi Hutchison – U-32, Special Education Teacher, 1.00 FTE, and Hayden Roberge – U-32, PE/Health Teacher, 1.00 FTE. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously. Daniel Keeney moved to accept resignations for the following, with great appreciation: Ronald (Randy) Brown, U-32 Science - resigning .20 FTE of their position (6/30/26), Sharon Spector, Rumney School Counselor - resigning .20 FTE of their position (6/30/26), Amy Molina, U-32 Assistant Principal resigning effective 6/30/2026,Scott Benerofe, U32 MS Science, resigning effective 6/30/2026,Amy Young, Doty School Librarian, resigning effective 6/30/2026, Makenna Lund, EMES/Rumney Music, resigning effective 6/30/2026. Seconded by Chris McVeigh.** Daniel Keeney asked whether these resignations are indirectly or directly related to budget cuts. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared that the first two are changing FTE. He also noted that Amy Molina has been with us for a very long time; she is taking on a Principal position at Hartford High School. He noted that Hartford High is very lucky to have her and we will miss her at WCUUSD. Natasha Eckart expressed disappointment in the loss of female administrators. She indicated that she fears there is a "good ol' boy" network at play. **This motion carried unanimously. Daniel Keeney moved to approve the following changes in FTE: Ronald (Randy) Brown, U-32 Science- will be .80 FTE in the 26-27 school year, Sharon Spector, Rumney School Counselor – will be .60 FTE in the 26-27 school year, Heather Clark-Warner, EMES – will be 1.00 FTE in the 26-27 school year, Katie Walczak, BES – will be 1.00 FTE in the 26-27 school year. Seconded by Zach Sullivan, this motion carried unanimously.**

4.2. **Approve Job Descriptions:** Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that we have been awarded grants through Community Schools; these job descriptions are connected to these grants programs. **Chris McVeigh moved to approve the job description: Project Director (Youth Community Educator Work-Based Learning Afterschool). Seconded by Patrick Whelley; this motion carried unanimously. Chris McVeigh moved to accept as a slate the remaining job descriptions included in the board packet tonight: Site Director (Youth Community Educator Work-Based Learning Afterschool), Workshop Facilitator, Student Leader Designer, Youth Community Educator Trainee, Youth Community Educator Intern. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka. This motion carried unanimously.**

5. **<u>Future Agenda Items:</u>** Funding for PreK/equity in programming, transfer of students from one location to another - short term vs long term and Criteria to move students between schools.

6. **<u>Board Reflections:</u>** Chris McVeigh stated that he enjoyed this format; having enough time to have interactive discussion. Marty McMahon reiterated Chris's sentiment. He also noted that Calais voted by ⅔ to keep their school open and he is hearing a lack of trust, and we need to

work on rebuilding trust. Daniel Keeney expressed that the public can focus on their own perspective; the contrast of the board is to balance all perspectives and to hear also from the people who are not in the room. Chris McVeigh stated that it is important to explain our decision making process and our rationale.

7. **Public Comments: Time limit strictly enforced, see note:** Heather Clark Warner, preschool teacher at East Montpelier, invited those present to take a look at the preschool and community connections space. She stated that this has been a difficult year and we would like to move forward, back together as a district, knowing that we all want what is best for our children. Emily Connor, East Montpelier parent, stated that there has never been a proposal to move students from East Montpelier to Calais for preschool. The board has worked very hard to work within the funding boundaries, to create what is best for all of the students. She spoke about towns becoming very isolationist and pitting "us" against "them." Lauralea Curavoo read a letter from Calais teachers. Anna Matheson, Calais resident, spoke about roles and responsibilities of the board. She stated that stewardship and health of the school district as a whole is one of the roles - thinking about the future as well as the present. Has there been any consideration of putting together a document - charter perhaps - stating the roles and responsibilities of the board and how they work with the role and responsibility of the superintendent.

8. **Adjourn: Michelle Ksepka moved to adjourn at 8:27. Seconded by Natasha Eckart, this motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary