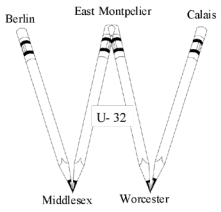
# Washington Central Unified Union School District

***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**
**6.3.26**
**6:15-9:15 PM**
**(Rumney)**

**Present:** Superintendent Dellinger-Pate, Flor Diaz Smith, Daniel Keeney, Chris McVeigh, Patrick Whelley, Ursula Stanley, Elizabeth Brown, Zach Sullivan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Julia Hewitt, Marty McMahon, Michelle Ksepka, Andrew Boye, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Julia Pritchard, Jody Emerson, Anne Decker, Alison Byrnes, Allison Fayle, Anya Farland, Ashley Hansen, David Delcore, Emi Harlow, ORCA, Linda Gray, Teal Church, Natasha, Kristen Freeman, Sarah Rund, Kate Biggam, Kathleen Bookchin.

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

2. **<u>Welcome:</u>**
   - **2.1. Adjustments to The Agenda: Andrew Boye moved to adjust the agenda to put CVCC report on the discussion agenda, as Jody Emerson is here tonight to present to the board. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion to amend the agenda carried.**
   - **2.2. Reception of Guests**
   - **2.3. Public Comments:** Ann Decker spoke to the board to ask to maintain her regular schedule. She asked the administration to involve department leadership in the conversations about creatively addressing staffing issues (she referred to library duty). A parent asked that families have their questions/concerns answered; she indicated that the FAQ document is not sufficient. She asked the board to reconsider the current timeline and pause the movement of students. Alison (East Montpelier) spoke to support Ann Decker's position. She stated that she fears that WCUUSD is becoming unfriendly toward teachers. Linda Gray spoke about the dissension that the consolidation decision has caused. She asked that the board pause and take more time to make such a large decision. She asked the board to please listen to the voters. Ashley, parent of Doty students, expressed her concern that there is no transportation plan for the children. She stated that it is literally impossible for parents to pick up students from both schools. She asked the board to delay this until these considerations are solved. Middlesex parent asked questions about the reconfiguration of Rumney/Doty. She stated that she has continued to attend the listening sessions and to communicate her questions. She asked for details about services/supports for students with IEPs. She noted this is

not fully fleshed out and she asked for a pause. Kate Biggam, Middlesex parent, expressed concerns with this configuration and asked to consider creative solutions. She stated that this has become an incredibly divisive issue. She indicated that there may be some legal recourse. Natasha: requested (1) pause (2) provide documentation to families about transition plan, (3) accountability. She stated that trust is built through a system of consistent follow through.

3. **Reports:**

**3.1. Superintendent Report:** Superintendent Dellinger-Pate had provided a written report. He noted that the Rowland Fellowship is directed to two teachers. He spoke about declining student enrollment/class sizes. He stated that we will have to continue to make reductions in force based on declining student enrollment. Elizabeth Brown asked for specifics around why there is a need for library duty. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared the duties and roles of the two librarians on staff at U32. Patrick Whelley asked for some follow up about the Arts Academy that had been mentioned earlier during public comment. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that he is not sure whether or not this is a program that is sustainable over time. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate emphasized that they will continue discussions with all teachers, including the art department, regarding the need for staff to take on extra duties. Flor Diaz Smith stated that it is her understanding that the music program is not compromised by this plan.

**3.2. Student Report:** Natasha Eckart had shared something in writing that Ursula Stanley read aloud, particularly about her positive experience coaching the middle school track team, and her pride and appreciation regarding the students. She had thanked other track coaches for their support.

**3.3. Humanity and Justice Coalition Recognition:** Steven Dellinger-Pate spoke his appreciation to Shelley Vermilya, for the vision she brought to the district. He stated that he hopes to continue to work together in coming years, in various ways. Flor Diaz Smith also spoke appreciatively about Shelley Vermilya and what she brought to the board and the district. The board presented her with flowers.

**3.4. Central Vermont Career Center Report**

**3.5. VSBA Report:** Flor Diaz Smith provided an update from VSBA. She had shared information via email earlier but she suggested that the board take action to appoint a board member to represent at the merger committee as well as a board member to participate in the CESA group. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that he plans to build in time during the retreat to learn and talk about the latest legislation. Flor Diaz Smith noted that there will be a webinar available and she will inform board members of details to access it. Daniel Keeney asked Flor to share an infographic resource with the board via email. He asked for information about the CESA configuration at this time. Zach Sullivan asked, do we have a role in saying that we have asked other districts, whether there is interest in joining? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate spoke about the role of a facilitator for each work group. Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that this is still a moving target and that we will need to adjust our framework when thinking about CESA and configuration, governance, etc.

4. **Board Operations:**

**4.1. Last Day Memo:** Steven Dellinger-Pate had shared a memo that the last student day will be June 17, early dismissal. Teacher last day will be June 18. **Zach Sullivan moved to approve the last day of school for students Wednesday June 17. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried. Zach Sullivan moved to set the last work day for all staff, Thursday, June 18th. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried.** Jody Emerson, Superintendent and Director, CVCC, presented to the board: *Facilities Workgroup Recommendation, CVCCSD Board, May 2026.* Some discussion followed with board members asking questions of Jody Emerson about possible steps forward, especially regarding some shared use of U-32 campus. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked board members if there is any objection to considering this, going forward (e.g. shared space, consolidation of services/ resources etc). No objections were heard, as far as learning more information and considering further. The board will have more information and discuss further at the next board meeting (June 17). Daniel Keeney stated that we need to understand what a regional high school would look like on the U-32 campus and consider that with the conversations going forward about CVCC.

**4.2. VSBA Resolutions:** Zach Sullivan had shared a draft resolution based on previous board discussion: *Proposed VSBA Resolution Regarding Early College.* Ursula Stanley stated that this does not address any of the other equity indicators. (e.g. gender, disability). She shared some concerns around some language in the document. Flor Diaz Smith suggested taking out the "whereas" statement #3 which references AP classes. Some discussion followed. Edited version:

*WHEREAS: A vibrant community benefits all students in the school;*
*AND WHEREAS: Early college pulls seniors out of the high school community, leaving our upper classes less cohesive;*
*AND WHEREAS: Removal of early college students from their high schools leaves fewer students on campus, threatening both the financial and educational viability of robust class offerings.*
*AND WHEREAS: Access to in-person early college varies significantly depending on where a student lives and their access to transportation;*
*AND WHEREAS: Colleges' ability to charge additional fees to students and their families has undercut the program's economic advantage to the student and further limits in person options to wealthier students*
*AND WHEREAS: An increasing number of colleges, particularly those out of state, no longer accept college credit for classes also taken for high school credit;*
*AND WHEREAS: The need to fund early college increases pressures on the education fund and decreases resources available to all students in our public schools;*
*AND WHEREAS: Expanded dual enrollment can offer advanced course offerings and courses not available locally to students while keeping them as part of the community*
*BE IT RESOLVED: The General Assembly should end or curtail the early college program, and should expand dual enrollment opportunities as a mechanism to continue offering advanced options to students beyond what their local schools can provide without removing those students from their high school communities. The*

*General Assembly should also study additional means of providing advanced and college credit bearing options to students in a way that provides benefits across all demographics, including socioeconomic status, and geographic areas, and that keeps students in their school communities for all four years of high school.*
*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: Any early college expenses should be financed through the general fund and not the education fund.* **Andrew Boye moved to accept this resolution. Seconded by Patrick Whelley, this motion carried unanimously.**

**4.3. Summer Hiring:** none tonight

5. **Finance Committee: none tonight**

6. **Policy Committee:** Chris McVeigh introduced these policies for second readings. Included in the board packet was an Equity Worksheet that will be considered with policies in the future.
   **6.1. Second Reading - Renew C48: Foreign Exchange Students:**
   **6.2. Second Reading - Renew B8: Electronic Communications Between Employees and Students: Patrick Whelley moved to approve policies C48 and B8. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.** Chris McVeigh invited any comments from board members about the Equity Worksheet, for the Policy Committee to consider.

7. **Ed Quality Committee:**
   **7.1. Committee Update:** Ursula Stanley provided a brief update.

8. **Personnel:**
   **8.1. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE: Flor Diaz Smith moved to approve Jackie Batten – U-32 School Counselor. Seconded by Ursula Stanley.** Discussion: Marty McMahon asked what the student ratio is for School Counselors at U-32. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate explained. Elizabeth Brown stated that she is excited to see that a student took part on the hiring committee. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that we include students on the hiring committees in middle and high school. **This motion carried unanimously. Flor Diaz Smith moved to approve hiring of Betsy VanDerlip - U-32 Special Education Teacher. Seconded by Elizabeth Brown; this motion carried unanimously.**

9. **Consent Agenda:**
   **9.1. Approve Minutes of 5.20.26: Chris McVeigh moved to approve the minutes of May 20, 2026. Seconded by Andrew Boye.** Discussion: Marty McMahon clarified: on item 9.1 - a correction was made for clarity. **This motion carried with noted edit.**

10. **Future Agenda Items:** June 17: 2 executive sessions, CIP approval, Career Center vote, H95 actions related to mergers and CESAs

11. **Board Reflections:** Marty McMahon spoke about phone calls and emails he has received about lack of trust and anger. He read a statement and referenced a John Dewey quote. He stated that he hopes we will make a concerted effort to rebuild trust and be transparent. Daniel Keeney stated that all of the elementary graduations are happening at the same time. He encouraged board members to attend. Elizabeth Brown stated that when school districts go through transformation it needs to be transparent to families. She suggested having a "Transition" person at the helm. When there is so much uncertainty, she worries about students. She looks forward to having more information come to fruition as soon as possible so that families can enjoy their summers. Julia Hewitt reiterated what Elizabeth Brown had stated, and emphasized the need for administrators in our district when responding to families' concerns, to respond thoughtfully and not in a "form letter" format, to be more genuine. Steven Dellinger-Pate stated that we are sharing information about staffing and curriculum; we are close to having specifics about transportation, still updating data. He stated that he has heard a need for a clear timeline and plan, and that this will be forthcoming as soon as possible. Elizabeth Brown asked for follow up, and Julia Pritchard shared that there has been significant and ongoing discussion and review about supporting students with disabilities.

12. **Public Comments:** Natasha stated that she heard the board discuss the need for rolling out change in phases (regarding the career center) and yet that is not the case regarding the Doty/ Rumney reconfiguration. She stated that two weeks before the end of school is not enough time. Sarah spoke to the board again about how she feels the process that has been followed to come to this proposed configuration has not been thoughtful and transparent. Kate Biggam asked, did the board read the most recent email that she sent? She would like to hear some response to that. She would like to hear from the elected officials who represent these communities. Diane Nichols-Fleming responded to her concerns and indicated that the board had discussed the administration's memo regarding configuration at the previous meeting. She stated that the pain from the community and the distrust has been made very clear to the board. Kathleen Bookchin stated that the minutes from last week capture board responses, and there have been more than three years of board discussion related to these issues of declining enrollment and financial sustainability. She stated that she sees benefits from this new development. She acknowledged that there is fracturing between the communities and we will need some work to help heal, going forward. She is looking forward to hearing solutions to the transportation issues.

13. **Proposed Executive Session:** Negotiations (this will be at the next board meeting)

14. **Adjourn: Daniel Keeney moved to adjourn at 9:07 p.m. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary