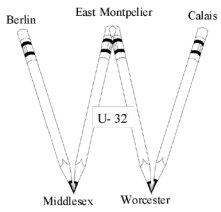
Washington Central Unified Union School District

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
8.19.26
6:15-9:15 PM
(In-Person & Virtual)

Present: Flor Diaz Smith, Chris McVeigh, Patrick Whelley, Ursula Stanley, Elizabeth Brown, Zach Sullivan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Heidi Dimick, Marty McMahon, Julia Hewitt, Andrew Boye, Dan Keeney, Michelle Ksepka, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Alicia Lyford, Susanne Gann, Linda Gray, Chris O'Brien, Lila Richardson, Alison Fayle, David Delcore, David Lawrence, Denise Wheeler, Dave Rodgers, Jennifer Chambers, Jessica Maurais, Lisa Hanna, ORCA, Cam Featherstonhaugh

1. **Call to Order: Diane Nichols-Fleming called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m.**

2. **Welcome:** Diane Nichols-Fleming welcomed those present.
   - **2.1. Adjustments to the Agenda:** Diane Nichols-Fleming noted that we will need to add Executive Session tonight to include discussion of the Superintendent hiring, and to add this after public comment. **Chris McVeigh moved/ Patrick Whelley seconded to add this to the agenda; this motion carried unanimously.**
   - **2.2. Reception of Guests**
   - **2.3. Public Comments: Time limit strictly enforced; see note:** Linda Gray, from Calais, indicated that she was delighted with the recent vote and very much pleased with the turnout from Calais and Worcester voters. Those two towns comprised a third of the votes that day.

     At 6:20 p.m., Flor Diaz Smith moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent hiring process/ update, and invited Heidi Dimick, as Human Resources Director. Seconded by Patrick Whelley, this motion carried unanimously. 6:57 p.m. Diane Nichols-Fleming thanked the Screening Committee for the superintendent search. For now, their work is complete. She stated that a candidate removed herself from the process. **Dan Keeney moved that the board authorize the steering committee to work with the acting superintendents to explore and hire an interim superintendent. Seconded by Patrick Whelley, this motion carried unanimously.**

3. **Presentation:**
   - **3.1. Superintendent Transition Updates:** (Superintendent hiring process discussed above)
   - **3.2. CESA Update:** Alicia Lyford shared that the CESA Board had met earlier this month and formed a small group to work on forming bylaws. She noted that if you go to the WCUUSD website and go to "School Board," you can link into all of the information regarding the CESA Board. Next meeting will be held in October.
   - **3.3. In-service Day and Start of School Plans**: Jen Miller Arsenault shared some of the in-service happenings. She noted that a report will be shared with the board on September 2nd.

4. **Board Operations**
   - **4.1. Central Vermont Career Center Building Project:** Alicia Lyford had shared an email today to answer some of the questions/ concerns from the previous meeting. She invited questions or comments from board members.

Some discussion followed around the possibility of building further on the U-32 grounds in future days, and how this proposed plan might impact that possibility.
Dan Keeney asked some specifics about wetland specification in the plan. Some discussion followed around parking under this proposal, and the number of potential drivers. Jody Emerson stated that driving for students is a privilege, not a right, and that under this plan, most students will be expected to take bus transportation. Chris McVeigh asked about the noise factor during construction. Dan Keeney stated that he is not sure it is appropriate to the board's scope to go through the lease, line by line. Jody Emerson stated that the warning for the vote does not go into specifics of the lease agreement - it leaves it to the board to approve. She read the verbiage of the warning. Jody Emerson asked whether the board is in approval of the location of the plan which has been shared, and whether the board provides general support to move forward with the vote to further the planning. Chris O'Brien stated that he and Dave had reviewed the plans and that they feel that Option 4 asked for some clarification regarding location and wetlands. He spoke to some of the specifics of the plan to date. **Flor Diaz Smith moved to authorize CVCC U-32 site option 4 location at U-32. Seconded by Michelle Kspeka, this motion carried, with one vote of "nay."** Alicia Lyford stated that she would engage a real estate agent to help establish rent. Regarding parking, the board discussed whether this would be included in the lease or whether this would be covered under a Memorandum of Understanding. Diane Nichols-Fleming noted that an MOU will be created around "shared spaces" and the parking lot on U-32 campus would be considered shared space. Cam Featherstonhaugh joined the meeting virtually and answered some questions about field/ equipment use and wetlands.

4.1.1. CVCC WCUUSD Lease Agreement: Chris McVeigh moved to support moving this project forward and support a vote on Election Day, November 3, 2026. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka. This motion carried, with one vote of "nay." Chris McVeigh moved to authorize the acting/ interim superintendents to work together with Diane Nichols-Fleming to engage with Sean Toohey in the work of drafting this lease agreement. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka. This motion carried, with one abstention.

5. Finance:

5.1. Public Comment Opportunity - Partial Corrective Action Plan: **Proposed Renovation Area at U-32:** Susanne Gann had shared this plan. Stone Environmental had prepared a 50 page document regarding PCBs in June 2026. Diane Nichols-Fleming invited questions or comments from the community regarding this plan. Dan Keeney asked for cost estimates for this corrective action plan, in the broader context of kitchen renovations. Rob Farley noted that a 30 day period for public comment is required before the plan is approved; 18 days still remain. Public comment was invited tonight and none was heard regarding this topic,

5.2. Award Bid for U-32 Replacement One-ton Dump Truck with Plow: Zach Sullivan moved to authorize the acting Superintendent to purchase a 2027 Chevrolet Silverado with Plow from Cody Chevrolet in Montpelier for an amount not to exceed $72,533. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka, this motion carried unanimously.

5.3. FY 28 Capital Improvement Projects: Flor Diaz Smith moved to authorize the completion of the recommended projects as identified above for an amount not to exceed $967,205 and approve the District moving forward with bid document preparation and bidding as necessary and seconded by Patrick Whelley. Chris McVeigh suggested that we put a hold on Capital Improvements until we know what our budget situation is for the coming year. Flor Diaz Smith noted that these are projects that have an impact on students, and we have a commitment as a district to not take money from capital improvements. Dan Keeney asked when the kitchen renovation was determined as a priority. Susanne Gann stated that the kitchen project has been discussed since before she came on board five years ago. The plan has been underway for two years. Some discussion followed around prioritizing capital improvement and balancing budget development for the coming year(s). Dan Keeney made a friendly amendment to remove the language that states the amount. This friendly amendment was not accepted. **Two nays, one abstention; this motion carried.**

6. Personnel

6.1. Vacancy Updates: Jen Miller-Arsenault stated that we are in good shape in hiring; we shared some of the vacancies that exist.

6.2. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE: Zach Sullivan moved to approve new hires: Alaina Smith – 1.00 FTE Literacy Interventionist, U-32; Jasmine Nakhleh- .80 FTE School Counselor, Calais Elementary School; Caitlin Zaino - .90 FTE PE/Health, Berlin Elementary School/Calais Elementary School; Teal Church - .40 FTE School Nurse, U-32. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously. Flor Diaz Smith moved to accept the resignations of Ruth

Frisenda, .80 FTE School Counselor, Calais Elementary; Anthony Snow, 1.00 FTE Dean of Students, U-32, with thanks and appreciation. Seconded by Zach Sullivan. Jen Miller Arsenault spoke about the changes in the staffing at U-32 re: behavior support.

7. **Consent Agenda**
   - 7.1. **Approve Minutes of 8.5.26: Elizabeth Brown moved to approve the minutes of August 5, 2026. Seconded by Patrick Whelley; this motion carried unanimously.**

8. **Future Agenda Items**
   - 8.1. **Merger Study Updates**: (include election of representative to Merger Study Committee) Dan Keeney asked whether the board will consider moving ahead with a board retreat even as a Superintendent has not yet been hired.

9. **Reflections: None**

10. **Public Comments: Time limit strictly enforced, see note:** Lila Richardson expressed concern again about the Steering Committee meeting without the formality of a public meeting and without minutes. She asked the board to make Steering Committee meetings public. She also noted that open meeting law indicates that when not all board members are present in person, when it is not a unanimous vote, a roll call vote should be held.
    Denise Wheeler expressed concern for the Tech Center. She stated that we have heard about how much space we have in our schools - why are we not considering one of the school buildings as the CVCC? She also expressed concern about transportation; long bus rides for students.

11. **Potential Executive Session: Negotiation Update: At 8:31, Flor Diaz Smith moved to go into Executive Session for the discussion of negotiations, and to include Susanne Gann and Heidi Dimick. Seconded by Chris McVeigh, this motion carried unanimously. Two board members recused themselves.** At 9:01 the board came out of Executive Session. **Flor Diaz Smith moved to approve ESP collective agreement and salary schedule. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka. A roll call vote was called. This motion carried unanimously.**

12. **Adjourn: Flor Diaz Smith moved to adjourn at 9:02 p.m. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka. This motion carried and the board adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary