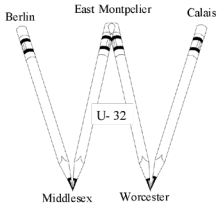
Washington Central Unified Union School District

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
9.16.26
6:15-9:15 PM
(In-Person & Virtual)
U-32
1130 Gallison Hill Rd
Montpelier, VT

Present: Flor Diaz Smith, Patrick Whelley, Ursula Stanley, Elizabeth Brown, Zach Sullivan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Heidi Dimick, Marty McMahon, Julia Hewitt, Andrew Boye, Daniel Keeney, Michelle Ksepka, Judy Buchanan, Natasha Eckart, Jen Miller-Arsenault, Alicia Lyford, Susanne Gann, Karoline May, Heidi Dimick, Linda Gray, Kalita Lindig, Maia Stone, Karoline May, KRBrown, Lila Richardson, Matthew Thomas, Michael Sherwin, ORCA, Phoebe Stone, Veronica Fair, Alison Byrnes, Allison Fayle, David Delcore, Ellen Knoedler, Matthew Thomas, Bloom

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

2. **Welcome**
   - **2.1. Adjustments to The Agenda:** Ursula Stanley noted that 5.2 is stricken and 5.1 will be "receive report" (as opposed to "review"). **Ursula Stanley moved to approve this adjustment. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.**
   - **2.2. Reception of Guests:**
   - 2.3. **Public Comments: Time strictly enforced; see note:** Linda Gray shared that the information on the agenda from Ed Quality is great information, and she hopes that the board will share this information widely with the community.

3. **Presentation: Board Budget Training:** Jen Miller-Arsenault and Susanne Gann provided a budget training slide deck: *WCUUSD Board Budget Training FY 2027-28 Budget Journey, September 16, 2026.* Jen Miller Arsenault shared that they have decided to provide this training in parts this year, as there is much information to process. They

invited questions or comments from the board. Ursula requested a PDF of the slideshow Daniel asked if we are anticipating any shift in CLA based on reappraisals. She is not aware but can follow up.

4. **Reports**

4.1. Superintendent/Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) Report: Jen Miller-Arsenault and Alicia Lyford had provided a written report. Diane invited questions or comments from board members. Natasha: If concerns about transportation are coming to board members, do you want us to send to you? Alicia: They should start at the building level and if there is not resolution then they can bring it to the superintendent. Natasha stated that she had heard from some that they would like for the superintendents to be aware of the transportation issues. Alicia said then to encourage them to send along.

Technology replacement plan: Daniel Keeney stated that as a board we may want to revisit the Technology policy through the lens of equity and with more intention. Natasha asked for information about the screens that have been put up around the school; she would like to know information about how this decision/ plan was made. Jen Miller Arsenault will follow up at a future meeting. Alicia Lyford spoke about the My Ride app. She explained what "live" means through the perspective of this app. "Live" does not mean that one can see where the bus is at any given moment; much of this is due to not having reliable cell service throughout WCUUSD. This feature is not turned on.

4.2. CESA (Cooperative Educational Service Area) Report

4.3. Act 170 Update

4.4. Student Report: Jen Miller-Arsenault stated that Elijah Hawkes is working with the student council to have a junior to join the board. The hope is that this will be onboard for the October board meeting.

4.5. Central Vermont Career Center Report: Diane Nichols-Fleming stated that there is a press release coming out tomorrow regarding the upcoming vote for career center sharing U-32 space. She believes there will be a lease to review at the October board meeting. Alicia Lyford shared that the Times Argus had reached out to Elijah Hawkes to ask for a public forum meeting at U-32 around the bond vote for CVCC.

4.6. Community School Report: Jen Miller-Arsenault stated that a report will be available next month. The leadership team has been meeting with the Community School Coordinator, working on developing the pillars.

4.7. VSBA Report: Flor Diaz Smith encouraged board meetings to attend the VSBA Annual Conference at the end of October. She suggested that the board make time at the October board meeting to consider the Governance Standards. There are rubrics available for the board to review last year's governance rubric and update based on the updated rubric. Flor Diaz Smith shared that there is a new draft policy for Hazing Harassment and Bullying and the board will need to have this in place by December

15th. She stated that in October VSBA meets to vote on resolutions. Natasha would like to add "Humanity Justice Coalition report" to the board agenda going forward.

5. **Ed Quality Committee**
   - **5.1. Receive Draft Student Monitoring Report Fall & Winter Data:** Ursula Stanley reviewed this report which had been provided as part of the board packet.
     - What stands out to you?
     - What questions do you have?
     - What do you see that connects to other reports about student outcomes?
     - What implications do you see for the full board?

     Flor Diaz Smith shared that we would like to use the summary sentence from the Ed Quality report as a parameter for the Finance Committee. Daniel Keeney asked whether there is a variable in the testing regarding consistency in test administration. What support do we give new teachers to orient them with this? Jen Miller-Arsenault stated that all teachers have mentors and the orientation for this testing depends on the grade level. She shared some examples of training. **Patrick Whelley moved to accept the Ed Quality report as presented. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka.** Discussion: Ursula had noted a few edits (e.g. MLSS: multi-layer systems of support, as well as adding Humanity Justice Coalition language into the report. **This motion carried unanimously.**
   - **5.2.** ~~Student Monitoring Report Spring 2026 Part 1 pg. 43~~

6. **Policy Committee:** Ursula Stanley shared that there is a policy review underway as contracted through VSBA; we will be using this to guide the work of the policy committee. Daniel Keeney asked what the timeline for this work is. Is this something that is renewed on a regular basis? Flor Diaz Smith stated that the idea is this is something you do once. Natasha Eckart asked whether this was discussed at any time with the Policy Committee. (The contract with VSBA.) Flor Diaz Smith stated that at the June meeting a small group was designated to work with Steven Dellinger-Pate on policy, including curriculum policy work. This contract with VSBA was discussed as a support to the committee's work.

7. **Finance Committee**
   - **7.1. Discuss FY 28 Budget Timeline:** Flor Diaz Smith shared that the Finance Committee met last week and presents this timeline. **Daniel Keeney moved to accept this FY28 Budget Timeline as presented. Seconded by Patrick Whelley.** Discussion: Patrick Whelley stated that in the past few years it feels like we are very rushed in January; he wonders if there is anything that can be moved up in the schedule so that we can have less of a rush in January. Susanne Gann stated that there is not a way to move the work up more quickly based on many outside factors. Zach Sullivan stated that there is an intention that the Finance Committee focus more explicitly on community engagement. Daniel Keeney suggested that we make the Finance Committee work plan

public. Flor Diaz Smith stated that once the board has approved the budget timeline then we will do so. Daniel Keeney reiterated Zach's statement about the Finance Committee wanting to engage the public as early as possible, and with transparency. Susanne Gann stated that the budget is not developed in a vacuum - it requires all of the administrators at the table; and she stated that at this time we do not have an interim superintendent. **This motion carried unanimously.**

8. **Board Operations**
   - **8.1. Approve Budget Development Timeline**: (please see action above)
   - **8.2. Affirm Policy Work Plan**: (tabled)
   - **8.3. Appoint Board Member Proxy for VSBA Annual Meeting**: Diane Nichols-Fleming asked if other board members are interested in this position. Ursula Stanley has done a great job in the past and is willing. **Michelle Ksepka moved to appoint Ursula Stanley as board member proxy for VSBA Annual Meeting. Seconded by Judy Buchanan, this motion carried unanimously.**
   - **8.4. VSBA Resolutions:** Ursula Stanley had provided a memo to the board to explain VSBA Resolutions. The board went through each resolution. Proposed Resolution:
     - **Flor Diaz Smith moved to approve Early College Resolution: Early College and its Impact on our Schools. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.**
     - Resolution Regarding the Equitable Treatment of Capital Debt in Calculations of Excess Spending. **Daniel Keeney moved that our position be to vote "yes" on this. Seconded by Zach Sullivan. This motion carried unanimously.**
     - Resolution Regarding Adequate Resources and Technical Assistance for ESSA School Improvement Designations. **Flor Diaz Smith moved to pass this resolution. Seconded by Ursula Stanley, this motion carried unanimously.**
     - Resolution Regarding AOE Data Accuracy in Federal Accountability Designations. **Ursula Stanley moved to pass this resolution. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. Michelle Ksepka abstained from this vote. A roll call vote was held. This motion carried.**
     - Resolution Regarding PreK Finance Reform and Funding Alignment. **Michelle Ksepka moved to pass this resolution. Seconded by Judy Buchanan, this motion carried unanimously.**
     - Resolution Regarding Teacher Workforce Development. **Flor Diaz Smith moved to pass this resolution. Seconded by Patrick Whelley, this motion carried unanimously.**
     - Resolution Supporting Adequate Funding for High-Needs Students. **Michelle Ksepka moved to pass this resolution. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.**

- Resolution Regarding High School Tuition Payments Made to Independent Schools. **Flor Diaz Smith moved to pass this resolution. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka.** Discussion: Some discussion followed around the responsibility to educate a student versus the responsibility to pay private school tuition for a student. Judy Buchanan wonders what will happen with school choice with all of the changes in public education legislation at this time. **This motion carried unanimously.**
- Resolution to Support Economic Diversity in Public School Redistricting Advancing Economic Equity and Opportunity. Flor Diaz Smith explained that there was discussion that this resolution came later in the process, referring to parameters and criteria that were already in place. Daniel Keeney asked how Act 170 deals with issues of economic diversity and population density. Marty McMahon feels that this is an important statement to make. **Ursula Stanley moved to pass the resolution. Seconded by Natasha Eckart. A role call was had: This motion carried with 4 votes of "nay" and 1 abstention.**
- Resolution to Support More Equitable Funding for Public Schools in Vermont: Advancing Fairness and Opportunity in Vermont's Education System. **Patrick Whelley moved to pass this resolution. Seconded by Natasha Eckart.** Discussion: Natasha Eckart asked why the VSBA Committee would recommend to not pass. Flor Diaz Smith stated that the feeling was that this was redundant. **A role call was had: This motion carried with two votes of "nay."**
- Resolution to Ensure an Adequate and Equitable Education Funding System. **Flor Diaz Smith moved to pass this resolution. Seconded by Judy Buchanan.** Discussion: Daniel Keeney asked why this would not also be considered redundant. What is this recommended to pass by the VSBA Committee? Flor Diaz Smith spoke about the committee's discussion of this resolution. **This motion carried unanimously. Flor Diaz Smith moved to pass the current resolutions/ continuing resolutions and bylaws (pages 61-70 of the board packet). Seconded by Ursula Stanley.** Discussion: Ursula Stanley explained these briefly. **This motion carried unanimously.**

8.5. Interview Berlin Candidate: Kalita Lindig introduced herself to the board and expressed her interest in representing Berlin to fill the board vacancy until Town Meeting Day 2027. Elizabeth Brown asked a question of Kalita related to curiosity and objectivity.

8.5.1. Proposed Executive Session: Candidate Selection: At 7:54, Daniel Keeney moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing employment of a public official. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously. At 7:57 the board came out of Executive Session by consensus. Flor Diaz Smith moved to appoint Kalita Lindig as board member. Seconded by Daniel Keeney, this motion carried unanimously.

9. **Personnel**
   - **9.1. Vacancy Updates:** Jen Miller Arsenault shared some of the position vacancies. There are no hirings, resignations, leave of absence. She noted that we have a current vacancy for School Psychologist and for Special Educator, and Superintendent.
   - **9.2. Approve New Teachers, Resignations, Leave of Absence, and Changes in FTE**: (none tonight)

     Point of order: Marty McMahon pointed out that when the board went into Executive Session, those who are online did not hear anything or see anything or participate in the discussion/ vote. **At 8:09 p.m. Daniel Keeney moved to go into Executive Session for reconsideration of the appointment of a public official. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka, this motion carried unanimously. At 8:14, the board came out of Executive Session by consensus. Flor Diaz Smith moved to affirm the former motion made to appoint Kalita Lindig to the school board. Seconded by Daniel Keeney. This motion carried, with two abstentions.**

10. **Consent Agenda**
    - **10.1. Approve Minutes of 8.19.26, 9.2.26: Ursula Stanley moved to approve the minutes of August 19 and September 2, 2026. Seconded by Judy Buchanan, this motion carried unanimously.**
    - **10.2. Board Orders: Zach Sullivan moved to approve the board orders in the total amount of $3,572,916.07. Seconded by Judy Buchanan, this motion carried unanimously.**

11. **Future Agenda Items:** Diane Nichols Fleming reviewed this ongoing list.

12. **Board Reflections:** Flor Diaz Smith thanked Jen Miller-Arsenault and Alicia Lyford for their work as acting Superintendents. Natasha Eckart appreciated keeping the board meetings concise and would like to continue through the school year.

13. **Public Comments: Time limit strictly enforced, see note**: Linda Gray expressed appreciation for the concise board meeting; she noted that the board got a lot of work done

14. **Proposed Executive Session: Personnel: Daniel Keeney moved that the Board find that premature public discussion of the details and terms of employment for superintendents puts the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka, this motion carried unanimously. At 8:23, Daniel Keeney moved that the board enter into Executive Session, to include Heidi Dimick, Jen Miller Arsenault, Alicia Lyford, and Kalita Lindig, for the consideration of employment of a public official. Seconded by Michelle Ksepka, this motion carried unanimously. At 8:52, the board came out of Executive Session. Daniel Keeney moved that the Board move forward with the employment of John Alberghini and Jo Ann Canning, and to authorize the chair to begin development of employment**

contracts with all deliberate speed. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously. He further moved that the Board approve amendments to the letters of employment, as described in executive session, with our acting superintendents to extend until the signing of contracts with interim superintendents or September 30, 2026--whichever is sooner. Seconded by Judy Buchanan, this motion carried unanimously.

15. Adjourn: The board adjourned by consensus at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Board Recording Secretary