

September 3, 2014

Winooski School District
Office of the Superintendent
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All students will graduate from the Winooski School District (WSD) college and career ready at a cost supported by a majority of the Winooski community. WSD students will lead healthy, productive and successful lives and engage with their local and global community.

Superintendent's Board Report

Action Items: The Winooski administration recommends that the board approve all of the following action items:

- Consent Agenda
 - Minutes of Meetings: August 14 and September 3, 2014
 - Policy Title: 2.3 Financial Condition and Activities: please backup documents attached for all of these items.
 - Approval of Bills
 - Policy Title 2.8 Communication and Support to the Board
 - Superintendent Report

Discussion Items: Please read the attached backup materials to be prepared for the following board discussions:

- Policy Title 2.3 Financial Condition and Activities
 - Discussion: Supt. Monitoring Report
- Policy Title 2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting
 - Discussion: Set Budget Parameters and Budget Building Timetable
- Policy Title: 4.2.2 Create Written Governing Policies
 - Discussion – 1st Reading, Policy #4116, Harassment of Employees
 - Discussion – 1st Reading, Policy #4310, Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace
- Policy Title: 4.5 Agenda Planning
 - Discussion/Possible Action: Board Goals
- Policy Title: 4.8 Government Investment

- Discussion: Board Governance Budget
 - Community Engagement (Policy 4.2.1)
 - Discussion: Recent community activities by board members
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- Introductory Meetings:
 - Mark Redmond, Director Spectrum Youth & Family Svcs.
 - David Cohen & Katarina Lisaius, Education Policy-Office of Senator Bernie Sanders
 - Shevonne Travers, VSBIT Health Promotion Specialist
 - Maggie Lisman, Shelburne Museum Academic Programs Coordinator
- Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment:
 - [Religious Expression in Schools](#)
 - I shared the linked document with WSD staff at the beginning of the school year so everyone is clear about the role of educators related to religious expression in public schools.
 - [VT School & Municipal Leadership Conference on Education Property Tax and Funding Reform](#)
 - This conference was organized by a few local city managers as a first step in educating our communities about the the challenges of our existing system of education funding and its heavy reliance on property taxes.
 - [Letter from VT Secretary of Education on VT's Commitment to Continuous Improvement](#)
 - This memo was included in our notification to parents about our AYP status. Secretary Holcombe does an artful job of disagreeing with federal education policy while rolling out our new Education Quality Standards and broadening the discussion around student growth and school accountability for outcomes.
 - [Chittenden County Community Forum on Opiate Addiction](#)
 - I attended this event that is the regional extension of the Governor's Community Forum on Opiate Addiction. Also, Julian Portilla on behalf of Champlain College with Kate Nugent from the Winooski Coalition for Safe & Peaceful Communities has started a local group which is learning about the impact of opiates on our city.
 - Leadership-WEA Officers Joint Meeting
 - WSD & WEA Leadership met in August to discuss leadership and communication procedures for this school year.
 - Also, we have collaboratively developed a new Grievance Form.
 - United Way Chittenden County

- United Way is a wonderful community partner with Winooski. I have become a member of their Campaign Cabinet. Please check out the [linked video](#) about their work. They support WSD in the following ways:
 - The Foster [Grandparent Program \(FGP\)](#), which is thriving in all of our kindergarten classrooms.
 - \$10K last year to support the Reading Plus program in grades 5-12.
 - United way Executive Director Martha Maksym co-chairs the Partnership for Change Steering Committee.
- Legislative update
 - [Act 166 Pre-kindergarten Draft Rules](#)
 - [VSA Education Final Legislative Report](#)
- Policy work
 - Policy #4116, Harassment of Employees
 - This policy is up this month for a first reading. Please read the WSD current and VSBA model policies for our discussion.
 - Policy #4310, Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace
 - This policy is up this month for a first reading. Please read the WSD current and VSBA model policies for our discussion.
- WSD Enrollment
 - On the first day of school, Wednesday, August 27th we had a total of 782 students enrolled K-12. This does not include Infant/Toddler and Pre-K students. At this time last year we had 753 students K-12. Large Kindergarten (79) and 1st Grade (71) classes account for the ~30 student increase year-to-year. The middle and high school classes have remained relatively flat year-to-year. Next month we will have Infant/Toddler and Pre-K student counts to add to the enrollment report.
- WSD Weekly issues
 - **WSD WEEKLY-Wellness** <http://flip.it/drY3P>
 - **WSD WEEKLY-ELL** <http://flip.it/N8ack>
 - **WSD WEEKLY-PROJECT-BASED LEARNING** <http://flip.it/yDKMa>
 - **WSD WEEKLY-Student Centered Learning** <http://flip.it/Dmtlp>
 - **WSD WEEKLY-Mindfulness** <http://flip.it/sBxcj>
 - **WSD WEEKLY:Great Teaching!** <http://flip.it/ZYNBB>
- Partnership for Change (P4C) updates:
 - **P4C Steering Committee**
 - Co-Chair Sherwood Smith will attend the meeting to introduce himself and request a board member to join the Steering Committee. Board President Mike Decarreau has been serving in this role.
 - **The Winooski Middle/High School Partner Teachers program**
 - This program aims to integrate the project-based, student-driven practices piloted in the Winooski iLab with the teaching and learning that occurs in classrooms throughout the school. To

accomplish this, Partner Teachers have formed collaborative partnerships with an iLab teacher. These teams are working to build personalized, project-driven learning into traditional academic classes by collaboratively planning and co-teaching content area classes. This gives participating teachers the support and flexibility to integrate proficiencies, personalization, problem-based inquiry, and community-based learning into their classrooms. In addition, Partner Teachers support the iLab by working with iLab teachers to advise individual learning plans, pilot the iLab's new problem-based learning course, coordinate and supervise internships, or implement a new option of their own creation. Collaboration between Partner Teachers can include, but is not limited to: planning and organizing internships, field trips, and other community partnerships; co-planning and co-teaching; and covering for periodic professional development, research, and special projects.

- **Youth Leadership Institute:**
 - 4 WMHS and 3 BHS students attended a Youth Leadership Institute put on by Nellie Mae Education Foundation Aug. 21-23 at Babson College. Our team of students worked with other students from around New England to work on student voice in student-centered learning.
- **NMEF Re-Application process:**
 - Given that this will be the final year for the 3.5-year grant, the Partnership has been invited to re-apply to NMEF for another 3 years. The approximate award amount for a 3-year grant would be half of what was awarded for the first grant. The merits of the grant application will be based on its effectiveness and impact regarding student-centered learning and sustainability. NMEF has contracted with Cross & Joftus to consult with the Partnership for a six-month period to help us develop a sustainability plan.
- **Upcoming P4C Events**
 - Cross and Joftus Sustainability planning Meetings - Sept. 15 3:35-6:00 and Sept. 16 9-12
 - Rowland Foundation Conference - Oct. 30 from 8:30-4pm at UVM
 - Nellie Mae Cross- Site Conference - Nov. 5-7 at the Sheraton in Wakefield, NH

WSD Goals

Goal #1: College & Career Readiness

- During pre-service, JFK teachers continued to refine their first project using the Project Based Learning (PBL) concepts. Al Summers, our BIE coach, visited with us on Tuesday, August 19th. He worked with each team to ensure that the components of PBL are incorporated into their projects. Each team has a different launch date. Before the

teams begin the project, they will be working on collaboration in their classrooms. This is the first skill the students will need to be successful. PBL will help kids become ready for middle/ high school as they move into Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) and Student-Centered Learning (SCL).

- JFK Literacy and Math coaches are working hard this year on the pacing and growth of our students. Each teacher has a target of one year's growth. We are pre-assessing all students to gather baseline data and will assess again in January and June. Coaches will be reviewing growth on a monthly basis and setting targets to help kids progress.
- All staff members were given the choice of the following books and members of leadership facilitated book discussion groups during pre-service. There were many positive statements made about the Summer Reading book options. It was a nice way to have staff collaborate and build a PreK-12 professional community.
 - **1) Mindset: The New Psychology of Success** by Carol Dweck, [Click here for summary](#)
 - **2) Creating Innovators: The Making of Young People Who Will Change the World** by Tony Wagner, [Video summary](#)
 - **3) Inevitable: Mass Customized Learning: Learning in the Age of Empowerment** by Chuck Schwahn, Bea McGarvey, [Click here for summary](#)
 - **4) Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die** by Chip & Dan Heath
The book's outline follows the acronym "SUCCES" (with the last s omitted). Each letter refers to a characteristic that can help make an idea "sticky":
 - Simple — find the core of any idea
 - Unexpected — grab people's attention by surprising them
 - Concrete — make sure an idea can be grasped and remembered later
 - Credible — give an idea believability
 - Emotional — help people see the importance of an idea
 - Stories — empower people to use an idea through narrative
 - **5) No Such thing As a Bad Kid** by Charles Appelstein
 - The key to good behavior management is staying cool and responding to situations rather than reacting to them. Responding requires us to acknowledge the fragility of our self-esteem, then take time to look for the message behind distressing behavior, rather than immediately levy consequences. To do this we must first learn to manage our own behavior.
 - **6) The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything** by Ken Robinson
 - The book is rich in anecdote and story (that's clearly Robinson's own element), and explores the real life 'left of centre' creativity of well-known figures such as Gillian Lynne, Matt Groening, Paul Samuelson, Mick Fleetwood, Bart Conner, Albert Einstein, Paul McCartney, Meg Ryan, Debbie Allen and a number of others. Many struggled at school and it was the very place where they struggled that formed the nexus of their talent and ultimate achievement. Good examples of this are Buckminster Fuller, designer of the geodesic dome (a strange feature of my own childhood)

and Albert Einstein. Both Fuller and Einstein found their Element in an unusual ability to fuse different disciplines.

- During pre-service all Instructional Assistants (IAs) participated in a daylong training on the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) in WSD. The IAs learned important details about some of the cultures our ELLs come from during presentations from our home school liaisons: Dalib Bulle, Tul Niroula and Lan Nguyen. They also learned about the challenges language learners face and different strategies educators can use to support ELLs more effectively in their learning.
- Lisa Italiano and an associate from the [Green Mountain Writing Project](#) led training for 6-12 teachers focused on the skill of revision. While writing was the primary content, connections were made to the importance of revision across all disciplines and GXs, and several instructional strategies were introduced and practiced as teachers engaged in a communication project titled “When I was Your Age.” The GMWP will continue to work through the school year with Humanities teachers along with others interested in developing this valuable skill.
- The middle/high school leadership team planned and presented an outline of the collaborative work of the school year embedding two Graduate Expectations (GXs), “effective oral and written communication” and “critical thinking and problem solving” with the middle/high teachers during pre-service. This work culminates late in the school year with our first ever Grades 6-12 Expo Week. During this time, each student will present two projects they’ve done that reflect their growth toward proficiency, one for communication, and one for critical thinking and problem solving. In addition, our seniors will continue the Senior Project presentations. This represents a significant commitment toward proficiency-based graduation requirements and includes all teachers in grades 6-12.

Goal #2: Healthy, Productive & Successful Lives

- We are pleased to announce that the new Head Start Preschool is full! Teachers Thu Borch and Erica DeDell will welcome 17 shiny preschool faces on Monday, September 8th. We are pleased to have our other Head Start teacher, Carrie Mitchell, return to the JFK collaborative. A few highlights of Head Start goals are as follows:
- To promote children’s social competence and school readiness by enhancing the social, cognitive, physical and emotional development of children
- To engage parents in their children’s learning and as the primary nurturers of their children
- To help parents in making progress toward their goals (e.g., educational, literacy and employment), and involve parents in program decisions and development
This year we are looking forward to working more with Head Start around kindergarten readiness and transition to kindergarten!
- As part of our pre-service, all teachers in grades K-5 participated in Mindfulness training. The training was divided into two groups: teachers who had used the website mindfulness program last year and teachers who had not. The teachers who have used the program received additional training in “mindful strategies” to use in the classroom beyond the website. All classrooms at JFK this year will be using mindfulness.

- The Fresh Fruits and Vegetable program (FFVP) will begin on Monday, September 8th. This program provides a daily snack of healthy fruits or vegetables. The kids look forward to this each day. The Abbey Group will be overseeing the grant this year.
- During pre-service, our new Wellness Coordinator, Jaycie Puttlitz, dropped in and provided staff with stretch breaks and mindful activities. Jaycie is going to be in high demand working with classroom teachers around all of our wellness initiatives.
- The middle and high school pre-service included Mindfulness training for all teachers, with 8 teachers receiving licenses to lead mindfulness activities in their classes.
- The Spartans-In-Motion (SIM) advisory group planned revisions to this middle school engagement initiative during the summer, and trained the middle level staff in the updated plan during pre-service.
- WMHS teachers and IAs were trained in [Success Counseling](#) with Barnes Boffey during pre-service. This is an approach to working with students that supports them to develop their internal controls and sense of empowerment.

Goal #3: Local & Global Community Engagement

- Our Welcome Back to School BBQ was a huge success! The picnic tables and canopy outside allowed more families and staff to mingle. We served over a 1000 meals! This barbecue eases some of the first day jitters and is a nice way to build community from the start. This year we engaged many of our community partners to be present at the barbecue to share information with families around the services they offer. These included: Winooski Family Center, Head Start, the Stern Center, Sylvan, Parent for Change, PTO, PACTS and Boosters.
- The [VT Foodbank School Food Pantry To-Go program](#) will be starting up again soon. This is a great opportunity for all members of the Winooski school community to supplement their food supply. Additionally, the elementary students will again be participating in the [BackPack program](#). This program provides small bags of food for students to take home on the weekend.
- Students in the Middle/High School will be working with new WMHS Special Educator Tim Rich this year to begin a Unified Sports team. We believe it is imperative that we have students with and without intellectual disabilities work and play together.
- Costco again generously donated backpacks to the students at JFK. The kids look forward to receiving these each year.
- Kirsten Kollgaard, Rebecca Goulet and our new Wellness Coordinator, Jaycie Puttlitz, recently met with representatives from [Hunger Free Vermont](#) and [Vermont Family Network](#) to discuss ways to make our school cafeteria more accessible to students from our ELL communities, especially those with dietary restrictions. We discussed the signage the cafeteria is already using to identify dishes that include pork and beef and ways to develop new signage to help students understand what ingredients are in the dishes. We also developed a translated letter to tell ELL families about our new [“universal school meals”/Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\)](#) and our commitment to providing their children healthy foods that they can eat.

Finance/Operations:

- Summer Facility Project Update- As expected the summer was busy for the Facilities staff. Our staff supported contractors for some of the larger projects, such as the

renovation of the multi purpose room into a pre-school classroom, replacement of six exhaust fans in the middle/high school, and the installation of air conditioning in the business lab/classroom. Other notable projects include changes to the Library Learning Commons Area, improvements to the lobby bathroom and the renumbering of classrooms. We are fortunate to have a very dedicated and talented staff that take pride their work!

- Projected FY14 fund balance- As projected, the district ended FY14 with a positive fund balance and while we are still awaiting some final numbers, the unaudited balance is estimated to be \$135,000, (about 1%). The fieldwork for the audit has begun and will wrap up the last week in September.
- The Reserve Account had a balance of \$655,274 at the end of FY14. Several of our larger projects funded through the Reserve Account are awaiting final billing. In the October report you will be provided an updated and comprehensive report of the Reserve Account.
- October will also bring the return of the quarterly Financial Management Review (FMR). At the end of August, the district has expended/encumbered 83% of the FY15 budget. There are still several “moving targets” on the expense side, including some support staff positions that need to be filled and several contracts for contracted services to be firmed up.
- FY13 Fund balance is \$115,736. \$100,000 of the FY13 fund balance has been budgeted as revenue for FY 15. The balance of \$15,736 will be transferred the reserve account as directed by the vote in March.
- We are already beginning to work on the Special Education Service Plan for FY16. We work hard to accurately anticipate costs for the upcoming year. However, special education is also a moving target. Thus, the plan includes our best assessment of staff costs, and all services for children with special needs served in preschool through grade 12 at this time. The service plan is the basis of the FY 16 budget.