

Winooski School District  
Office of the Superintendent  
60 Normand Street  
Winooski, Vermont 05404  
(802) 383-6000  
[www.wsdvt.org](http://www.wsdvt.org)



**WINOOSKI SCHOOLS**  
*We are the future.*

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 review backup for the following items and approve all of the following action items:

#### **4. Consent Agenda: (5 Minutes)**

- a. Minutes of Meetings
  - i. Capital Project Executive Committee Meeting: December 16, 2020
  - ii. Special Board Meeting: December 2, 2020
  - iii. Regular Board Meeting: December 9, 2020
  - iv. Special Board Meeting: December 16, 2020
  - v. Special Board Meeting: December 30, 2020
- b. Policy Title: 2.3 Financial Condition and Activities
  - i. Approval of Bills
  - ii. Approval of PFM Financial Services Renewal Agreement for Capital Project Interim Financing
- c. Policy Title: 2.8 Communication and Support to the Board
  - i. Superintendent Report
    - 1. Approval of WHS School Choice Capacities (Act 62)
    - 2. Approve Announced Tuition for 2021-2022

#### **5. Governance Processes (Policy Section IV): (60 Minutes)**

- a. Policy Title: 4.4 Board Linkage with Ownership

- i. Report/Discussion: Steering Committee for Anti Racism Consultancies

**6. Executive Limitations (Policy Section II): (60 Minutes)**

- a. Policy Title: 2.3 Financial Condition and Activities
  - i. Review/Approval: 2nd Quarter Financial Management Report (FMR)
  - ii. Action: Approve FY2020 Audit Report
- b. Policy Title: 2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting
  - i. Action: Adoption of 2021-22 Winooski School District Budget
  - ii. Action: Adoption of 2021-22 Budget Warnings and Articles
  - iii. Discussion: Review Annual Report and Budget Flyer
- c. Policy Title: 2.6 Asset Protection
  - i. Capital Project Update

**7. Community Engagement (Policy 4.2.1): (5 Minutes)**

- a. Discussion: Recent Community Activities by Board
  - i. Newsletter Topics
  - ii. Legislative Meeting update

**Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment:**

● **COVID-19 Updates**

- *Health Update:* The latest update from VDH on January 8, 2021 [can be found here](#) and additional [VDH Dashboard data](#) can be found here. Vermont continues to have some of the most encouraging data relative to the virus.
- *Positive Cases at WSD:* As of today, there have been 66 known positive cases of COVID-19 in our learning community since December 1. 49 of those individuals have finished quarantine and may resume normal activities.
- [VT Agency of Education COVID-19 Information](#)
- [VT Legislative Joint Fiscal Office Updates](#)

● Based on [Act 129](#) (Public School Choice in Grades 9-12 & Other Laws):

- The WSD administration recommends the board set the number of students who can exercise school choice and attend other VT public high schools at 25.
  - Current 2020-21: 11 students out
- The WSD administration recommends the board set the number of students we can receive at 20 based on our demographics, student needs and available space.
  - Current-2020-21: 6 students in

● **Announced Tuition for 2021-2022:** Announced tuition is an estimate of allowable tuition reported by districts receiving tuitioned students. We do not currently have any tuitioned students. The WSD administration recommends the board approve the following Announced Tuition amounts for 2021-22:

- Kindergarten: \$14,427
- Grades 1-6: \$14,427
- Grades 7-12: \$18,750

● [Message to WSD families about the mob violence in the federal Capitol](#)

● **Information Technology Update:** The United States has seen an increase in cyber attacks in 2020. Some 80% of the recent cyber attacks since October 2020 have been focused primarily on US

Businesses and Government agencies. It's believed to be a part of a larger cyber campaign that is only in its infant stages. Several of our current technology vendors have reported being hacked in some form or another in the last several weeks.

US cyber authorities report the hacks appear to be coming from well-known Russian hacker groups mostly. The groups have been linked to posting several fake social media postings on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, among other sites. The postings are attempting to create and spread false information and confusion for the American people.

In some cases attacks have included the creation of secret hidden programs running in the background of legitimate business servers. These "bot-nets" as they call them, mask the attackers true location and boost their malicious effectiveness. In other cases attacks have stolen information and/or locked out people from their own computers. This is known as "ransom-ware". Ransomware has become a real problem and is believed to be responsible for the recent UVM Medical Center attack.

These types of attacks have become much more complex in recent years and often sit dormant for several months on a computer before it is ever even activated. Once they are, users are no longer able to access any of their files, unless you pay the ransom. Even if you do, there is no guarantee that your files will be unlocked, or that the hackers won't do it again later on.

At this time we feel that the two best things we can do to combat this rising threat are:

- Keep our systems updated with the latest program updates possible.
- Provide solid user training. Training on how to spot fake emails, pop ups on websites and how to keep their devices updated -- among other things. Sadly, in many cases investigated, users end up being proven to be the weakest link in network security.

My fear with all of these recent attacks, is that it may only be a matter of time before Winooski is hit. I recommend we work to develop a robust user-training program and establish a formal "data-breach" plan. The plan should include a review of our data-insurance policy.

- **WSD Legislative Priorities**

- School board members Alex Yin and Steven Berbeco will join Finance Manager Nicole Mace and Superintendent Sean McMannon, City Manager Jessie Baker and Mayor Kristine Lott on Monday, January 11th for a joint virtual Winooski-Burlington legislative meeting to discuss the following priorities.
- **Weighting Study Coalition and Resolution**
  - The [Pupils Weighting Factors Report](#) submitted to the legislature in December 2019 will be a focal point across the upcoming legislative session and could bring significant resources to WSD if adopted in its current form. Board member Alex Yin agreed to represent the board in a meeting with other board reps from across the state to develop a coalition and strategy to advocate for adoption of this report. The administration recommends all board members read the report, particularly the Executive Summary pages 2-6 and Appendices C-G on pages 108-137. The school board adopted the following resolution at the December 9, 2020 meeting:
    - Proposed Resolution: *Therefore, be it resolved, the Winooski School District hereby joins with other Vermont school boards to advocate to the Vermont legislature for the adoption of the recommendations of the Vermont Pupil Weighting Factors Report (Act 173 of 2018, Sec. 11).*
- **School Construction Aid**
  - In the summer of 2019 there was a VT School Construction Working Group made up of architects, superintendents, facility directors and State of VT leaders to work on proposed

legislation to bring back school construction aid. This group met up until March 2020 and was unable to continue due to COVID but had brought this important issue to the legislative agenda during the 2020 session and hoped to pick it up again.

- **Education Funding Challenges due to COVID**
  - Advocacy for federal stimulus dollars with flexibility to be used to offset revenue shortfalls due to COVID.
  - Advocacy to delay moving the financial burden of the teacher retirement system into the Education Fund.
- **WSD Winter Transportation Bid**
  - Student Transportation of America (STA)/Mountain Transit provided an update last week that they have been unable to hire any bus drivers for our winter transportation, however, we do have two Winooski residents scheduled for the driver training program which takes six to eight weeks to complete. Also, we have notified STA that we would like to run transportation anytime from now until the end of the school year. This will allow us to continue to generate state-level revenue for transportation. We will continue to utilize our communication modes to promote this need and update the board and community.
- **WSD Capital Project Update:**
  - WSD Admin recommends that the Board approve Contract Change Order # 7 in the amount of \$32,329.40. This amount has already been reconciled with the owner contingency so has no current impact on owner contingency. This change order is some accounting catchup and cleanup with a subcontractor, Dirt Tech from June-October 2020.
  - [Weekly Job Reports](#)
  - [Pics](#)
- **Legislative Work**
  - **2020 Education Legislative Reports:**
    - [Issue #11](#)
    - [Issue #10](#)
    - [Issue #9](#)
    - [Issue #8](#)
    - [Issue #7](#)
    - [Issue #6](#)

## **WSD Goals**

### **Goal #1: College & Career Readiness**

- Michael Eppolito, Sara Raabe, and Stefanie Hamble have begun working with the JFK staff to identify potential math programs for teachers to pilot during the 2021-22 school year.
- The systems that were practiced during the beginning of the school year ensured that the transition to fully remote learning was much smoother this time around for JFK students. We found that many more students were engaging with the JFK adults, and completing their remote work.

### **Goal #2: Healthy, Productive & Successful Live**

- WMHS co-principals and the COVID coordinators offered separate meetings for the Middle and High School students to present on what happens when there is a positive or presumed positive case in the school, why masks are effective, and answer any questions students had about covid and their community.

- JFK Unified Arts teachers have continued to teach the JFK students during our fully remote period. Students have art and music zoom classes, and our PE teachers have developed PE activities that are posted for students to complete each week.

### **Goal #3: Local & Global Community Engagement**

- On December 16th, Winooski students met with Latif Nasser, co-host of the award-winning podcast *Radiolab*, and host and executive producer of the Netflix science documentary series, *Connected*. After connecting and coordinating with Latif via Twitter, Luke Dorfman (HS teacher) organized a time for students to talk with him over Zoom, creating space for students to learn more about his life and journey as a storyteller and reporter as well as an opportunity to ask him questions of their own.
- Mary Carleton, a JFK teacher, has been chosen to be one of the teachers to pilot the Clemmons Family Farm Windows to a Multicultural World K-12 remote learning platform.

### **Finance/Operations**

- We are predicting a favorable balance of \$1,198,820 or 6.19% of the approved budget. \$800,000 of that favorable balance is due to funds that were budgeted to pay for capital project interest and principal payments that we will not need in FY 21 due to the terms of the BAN. However, those funds will need to be held in reserve so that we are able to make the required interest payments in October 2021 when the payment on the MCM BAN is due. Assuming those funds are restricted to capital project debt, then the projected favorable balance is \$398,820, which is 2.06% of the approved budget.
- This favorable balance relies on the WSD receiving full reimbursement for all unbudgeted COVID-19 expenses from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) and the Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief funds (ESSER). The WSD's ESSER allocation is \$844,730, and we have submitted an application to the Agency of Education for CRF reimbursement for \$924,000 of unbudgeted FY 21 COVID-19 related expenses. The WSD's CRF application was approved in December and we received our first payment from the grant to cover FY 20's costs in early January.
- Please keep in mind that assumptions have been made in projecting fiscal year totals because we are dealing with a lot of uncertainty due to COVID and its impact on our ability to offer fields trips, co-curricular activities, athletics, and other educational programming that was planned for this spring but may not be possible due to health restrictions.
- The balance of the Capital Reserve Fund is currently \$320,585. There are no outstanding obligations for this account.
- The budget for Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) for FY21 is \$524,959. We have expended \$103,685, or 20% of the budget.
- The Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) with the People's United Bank was paid off on October 15 with the proceeds of the \$41m BAN through Municipal Capital Markets (MCM). The MCM BAN will ensure we have enough cash on hand to pay for project costs for the next twelve months. At that point, we will take out a final BAN for the last year of the project, which will be taken out by the USDA loan.
- We are recommending the Board authorize the Finance Manager to enter into an agreement with PFM Financial Advisors to continue to support the WSD as we evaluate various financing solutions for our 2021 interim financing BAN. We need to have this loan in place by October of 2021, which will provide the final bridge to full USDA financing for the capital project in 2022. The agreement with PFM proposes a fee of \$25,000, which will cover the following services:
  - Overseeing and managing a request for proposals to identify a preferred underwriter
  - Evaluating business and financial terms of the interim financing package, including pricing analysis
  - Managing rating process with Moody's
  - Ensuring the fairness of the final price during the note sale
  - Commenting on and contributing to any memorandums prior to the offering
  - Providing board meeting support

