

Winooski School District
Office of the Superintendent
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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 action items in the Consent Agenda:

4. Consent Agenda: (5 Minutes)

- a. Minutes of Meetings
 - i. Regular Board Meeting: December 8, 2021
 - ii. Special Board Meetings: December 1, 2021, December 15, 2021, December 22, 2021 and January 5, 2022
- b. Policy Title: 2.3 Financial Condition and Activities
 - i. Approval of Bills
- c. Policy Title: 2.8 Communication and Support to the Board
 - i. Superintendent Report
 1. Approve WHS School Choice Capacities (Act 62)
 2. Approve Announced Tuition for 2022-2023

5. Governance Processes (Policy Section IV): (45 Minutes)

- a. Policy Title: 4.4 Board Linkage with Ownership
 - i. Discussion: Youth-Adult Partnership
- b. Policy Title: 4.9 Board Committee Principles
 - i. Action: Approve Board Committees Membership, Purpose, Reporting and Limitation on Authority

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)
 - b. Policy Title: 2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting
 - i. Action: Adoption of 2022-23 Winooski School District Budget
 - ii. Action: Adoption of 2022-23 Budget Warnings and Articles
 - iii. Discussion: Review Annual Report and Budget Flyer

7. **Community Engagement (Policy 4.2.1):** (5 Minutes)
 - a. Discussion: Recent Community Activities by Board
 - i. Newsletter Topics

8. **Governance Processes (Policy Section IV):**
 - a. Policy Title: 4.1 Governing Style
 - i. Discussion: Board Self-Assessment

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment:

- **COVID-19 Updates**
 - **WSD Closure:** As you are aware we made the decision to close school from Thursday, January 6th through Wednesday, January 12th. This decision was made based on the high number of positive cases and close contacts, and the resulting inability to safely staff our academic programming. The Secretary of Education has been very clear that schools are either open or closed and because we are not in an official State of Emergency, we cannot be open though offering a remote learning model. In December we selected a low number of days by individual school and district to provide remote learning but this was a stop gap effort with no guarantees that these days will be included in the statutorily-required 175 student days. We are balancing changing guidance from the state, statutory requirements and local bargaining agreements to achieve the maximum number of in-person student days for WSD students and families.
 - *Meals:* Three days of breakfast and lunch will be offered to families on Monday, January 10th for pickup at 87 Elm Street and on the WSD campus.
 - *Testing Kits:* We continue to provide antigen test kits to students and staff as determined by our COVID Coordinators contact tracing and will be getting kits to staff on Tuesday, January 11th in preparation for our return to in-person learning on Thursday, January 12th.
 - **Vax Clinics:** WSD will be hosting weekly vaccination clinics starting on Friday, January 21st for WSD students and staff. This will include 1st shot, 2nd shot and boosters. We are in the process of developing and offering educational sessions for students and families about vaccination prior to our school-based clinics.
 - **Vax Rates:** We continue to have a very high vaccination rate, over 95%, for WSD staff and are currently collecting booster rates. Our student rates are: JFK=57%, WMS=67%, WHS=68%
 - **Recent AOE Preview of Imminent Policy Shifts:** This memo was sent out the evening of Friday, January 7th. The highlights are that contact tracing and PCR surveillance testing are no longer effective strategies and will be discontinued by schools, and will be replaced by a new testing program that will be announced in the upcoming days. We will be waiting for the written guidance before operationalizing any of these policy changes. [The VT-NEA has responded to this policy shift](#) and is mobilizing a communication campaign aimed at the AOE to voice their displeasure with these policy shifts. I would expect that boards and board members may hear from their local associations as well. I would ask that you funnel any communication that I have not been included in to the board chair, Tori Cleiland.

- *Health Update:*
 - [VDH COVID-19 Current Activity Dashboard data](#)
 - [Vaccine Dashboard can be found here.](#)
- [VT Agency of Education COVID-19 Information](#)
- [VT Legislative Joint Fiscal Office Updates](#)
- **Policies:** 2nd Reading Policy # 5111 Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students
 - The questions that arose at the December meeting during the 1st reading of this policy were sent to VSBA for support, however, VSBA responded that we should consult our own legal counsel. The following questions were sent to legal counsel but we have not received a response yet so the 2nd reading of this policy will need to be tabled until the February board meeting. The questions are:
 - Should "ethnicity" and/or "age" be included in the following statement?: *It is the policy of the District to prohibit the unlawful harassment of students based on race, color, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.* (page 1 of policy)
 - Should "Co-Curricular", e.g. Band be included in the following statement? *“Organization” means a fraternity, sorority, athletic team, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or other similar group, whose members primarily are students at an educational institution, and which is affiliated with the educational institution.* (page 4 of policy)
 - Should we add language about providing the policy and procedures in home languages to: *Disseminating Information. Annually, prior to the commencement of curricular and co-curricular activities, the District shall provide notice of this policy and procedures to students, custodial parents or guardians of students, and staff members, including references to the consequences of misbehavior contained in the plan required by 16 V.S.A. 1161a. Notice to students shall be in age-appropriate language and include examples of hazing, harassment and bullying. At a minimum, this notice shall appear in any publication of the District that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for the District.* (page 9 of procedures)
- **Consent Agenda**
 - Policy Title: 2.8 Communication and Support to the Board
 - Superintendent Report
 - **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 2021-22: 8 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-2021-22: 5 students in
 - **Announced Tuition for 2022-2023:** 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 2022-23 which are lower than usual in order to become more attractive for potential tuition students:
 - Kindergarten: \$11,700
 - Grades 1-6: \$11,700

- Grades 7-12: \$13,900

- **Governance Process**

- Policy Title: 4.9 Board Committee Principles
 - Action: Approve Board Committees Membership, Purpose, Reporting and Limitation on Authority
 - Board members Steven Berbeco and Allison Burlock and superintendent Sean McMannon worked on the draft for the board's consideration. Sean consulted with VSBA to procure board committee description examples from Vermont and other states to consider.

- **Executive Limitations**

- Policy Title: 2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting
 - Action: Adoption of 2022-23 Budget Warnings and Articles
 - Please note that a ballot item to enter into a rental agreement with the Winooski Housing Authority (WHA) is included in the warning. We were supposed to have this on the ballot in March 2021 but it got overlooked. I have spoken to WHA's Executive Director Deac Decarreau and consulted with our legal counsel to land on this language. All other ballot items reflect the statutorily-required language with the budget amounts as discussed at the January 5, 2022 board budget meeting.
- Policy Title: 2.7 Compensation and Benefits
 - Discussion/Action: Interim Superintendent Employment Agreement
 - I began the process of finding candidates for the short-term, interim superintendent role in August 2021. I consulted with the Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA) Executive Director and requested potential candidates from all members. In September 2021 it became apparent that there were not many qualified candidates, particularly those with some school construction experience. I officially notified Board Chair Tori Cleiland of my leave on October 15th and that I had found three retired superintendents that I believe would be suitable to replace me as an interim superintendent during my four-month leave and had begun developing a plan for some members of the District Leadership Team to pick up additional duties. On October 28th I notified Tori that I felt Dr. Kevin Dirth would be the best candidate and furnished a proposed employment agreement. On November 3rd I sent Tori a copy of Dr. Dirth's resume and scheduled a time for them to meet on November 22nd. On November 29th I notified Secretary of Education Dan French of my leave and asked if there was anything that needed to be done. He replied that the Board or Board Chair needed to request permission from him to hire the interim superintendent. I drafted a letter of request on Tori's behalf and it was approved by Secretary French. The employment agreement with Dr. Dirth was completed on December 3, 2021.

It had been my thinking throughout this process that because of the short-term duration (four months), amount of compensation (less than \$40K), the specific needs of the role (school construction experience) and early indications that the candidate pool was small that I could do all the leg work for the board and collaborate with Board Chair Tori Cleiland on this hire. While I still believe we were well within laws and policies, in retrospect, we could have been more transparent with the board earlier in the process and received formal delegation to

the superintendent and board chair. I have enclosed backup documents related to Dr. Dirth and the AOE for your review.

- **Pupil Weighting Task Force Testimony:** [The Task Force published their Final Report December 17, 2021](#). On Tuesday, January 4th, the legislature convened for the last half of the 2021-22 biennium. They are fully remote for at least the next two weeks. It appears unlikely, unless case counts get drastically worse, that they have the votes to remain remote much past the next two weeks. Lawmakers from all parties are anxious to get back to the building. Legislative leadership is working to figure out where weighting work will begin: House or Senate, Finance or Education committees. It's likely that this will begin in the Senate, but it's also possible that it's taken up simultaneously by multiple committees, with tax committees taking certain pieces and education committees taking others. Stay tuned as this issue, specifically the funding of ELL may start to move quickly and we will need to mobilize board and community advocacy.
- **Legislative Work**
 - **2021 Education Legislative Reports:**
 - [VT School Boards Association \(VSABA\) Legislative Blog](#)
[VSBA Email Archive](#)

WSD Goals:

*Unfortunately due to our current COVID emergency we did not have time to complete this section of the report.

Finance/Operations

At the end of December, we are predicting a favorable balance of \$521,648 or 2.63% of the approved budget. \$350,500 of this surplus is due to debt expenses for the Capital Project being lower than was budgeted for, per the Board's five year phase-in plan for debt service.

- The balance of the Capital Reserve Fund is currently \$320,791. There are no outstanding obligations for this account.
- The budget for Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) for FY22 is \$508,015. We have expended \$144,772, or 28% of the budget
- We have received a draft of the FY 21 audit. It was a "clean" audit with no deficiencies noted. Here are the financial highlights from the draft audit:
 - The General Fund reported excess revenues over expenditures this year of \$749,807 which was \$799,807 better than the budget.
 - The fund balance for the General Fund was \$2,951,953 as of June 30, 2021. This amount represents \$12,365 of prepaids and \$2,939,588 available for future budgets.
 - The Grants Fund ended the year with a fund balance of \$22,263. This amount represents restricted funds of \$17,664 and assigned funds of \$4,599.
 - The Food Service Fund ended the year with a fund balance of \$303,882.
 - The Capital Projects Fund ended the year with a fund balance of \$12,343,378. This amount represents \$12,022,667 of restricted funds and \$320,711 committed for future construction projects.