



SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

To: WSD Board President and Board of Trustees
From: Wilmer Chavarria, WSD Superintendent
Re: **Superintendent's Report for October 2023**
Date: 10/11/2023

Dear Members of The Board,

Below please find my report for **October 2023** and refer any questions about a given item directly to me during the regularly scheduled board meeting or to the Board President and me if your inquiry is prior to the meeting.

Thank you for your work in advancing the mission of our district to form students who will "lead healthy, productive and successful lives and engage with their local and global community."

Respectfully Submitted,

Wilmer A. Chavarria, NBCT
Superintendent of Schools
Winooski School District
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KEY DATES

- Board and Leadership Retreat, October 14
- Indigenous Peoples Day, October 9
- Tenants' Training Workshop," October 14th, 12:00 - 1:30 pm, for our Swahili Speaking Community Members at WSD in the PAC. On Sunday, October 15th, 2:00 - 3:30 pm, the same will be provided for our English Speaking Community Members at WSD in the PAC.
- MHS P/T Conf., Early Release 11:00am, JFK In-service, October 19-20
- Anti-racism Steering Committee, October 23
- School Recess - No School Pre-K - 12 (Dussehra), October 24
- VSBA/VSA Conference, October 26-27

ADMINISTRATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

- I continue to meet with Elaine Wang, city manager, for city-schools collaboration.
- This Friday, October 13, I am at the Champlain Valley Superintendents Association monthly meeting in the morning.
- The same Friday, I am attending the Vermont Superintendent's Association's bi-monthly meeting with mentors. My official mentor is Amy Rex, from Milton, but we will meet all others.
- I continue to attend community-based celebrations and events. This past weekend I attended the Latino community gathering at the Obrien Center and will be attending a similar event in celebration of Hispanic History Month on Saturday October 15th. I also attended the Teej Festival celebration that took place in our building.
- On October 20th, I will attend the Vermont Educational Equity Collective monthly meeting. This month the meeting will take place in Colchester.
- On October 24th, I will host the first of three work sessions for the Chittenden county school districts to draft inter-district procedure to address racial and prejudice-based harm in athletics.
- On October 26, I will join board members at the VSBA/VSA conference at Lake Morey.
- I continue to attend ARSC meetings as planned.

GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL UPDATES

- As we end the 1st quarter of Fiscal Year 2024, we are predicting an unfavorable balance of - \$36,658 or -0.14% of the approved budget. That deficit is in part due to the increase in salary for administrators and a projected increase in interest is offsetting that deficit. Please keep in mind that many assumptions have been made in projecting fiscal year totals because we are so early in the fiscal year.
- This week we are meeting with a vendor to explore an interface to hold and make sense of the many sources of student data, specifically to accelerate the educational support systems process. Currently, our data is disjointed and lives in many different places, which makes planning individualized support for a student an unnecessarily tedious task. More details on pricing will be offered once the vendor has provided details and once we are comfortable with bringing a proposal forward.
- Safety drills and new options-based drill: In September, we received guidelines from the state regarding the implementation of options-based drills in schools. These drills are meant to prepare students and staff for a potential violent intruder situation. Unfortunately, these guidelines included a “required” first drill in September even schools did not expect this to be required so quickly with little preparation. Our safety committee moved as swiftly as possible to provide guidance for staff and students and we had an overall successful drill. Still, there were high emotions as is to be expected and we all would have appreciated more notice. We are already preparing for the second drill but we have a few months to do so.





A student in our Pre-K program enjoying his time after an arduous family journey from Ecuador.

GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL UPDATES (CONT.)

- The Facilities team is off and running with the first four weeks of school being completed and very excited to see all the smiling faces from the students, as well as staff throughout the building. This year has started as planned and has run smoothly thus far. Work orders are coming in with completion rates as expected, minus a few kinks still being worked out with the new systems but overall, we, as a team are very happy with the start of SY24. We had staff return from summer trips and are prepared to bring on a new team member this month which will help the team significantly and put us where we need to be staffing wise. Transition work between fall and winter is ongoing, soccer season is in full swing and the temps have been above par, can't beat it.
- Another note of celebration for IT is that our other technician, Carl Affinati, has passed a large milestone in support of our school district. Carl closed his 10,000th ticket in September! This shows an exemplary level of dedication over the past 6 years, thank you, Carl!

GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL UPDATES (CONT.)

- The IT department welcomed a new member to the team this month. We are eager to expand our level of support and services with the expertise that our new technician brings.
- We are exploring ways in which to make drop off and pick up safer. Some ideas include incorporating additional signs and making the loop behind the building a one-way road.
- Our wellness office is happy to announce that Veggie Van Go kicked off for students, families and community members twice a month (the first and third Friday of each month), that the School Store is open for students and their families, and that we have initiated Housing Help on site for the Winooski students and their families Every Tuesday from 11am-1pm in the main lobby.
- 21C Afterschool programs began the week of Sept 18th with some old-time favorites and some new offerings. Check out the Session 1 flyers on the WSD website under the parent and family tab.
- 4th grade classrooms infections disease protocol: this past week, we were notified of one case of MRSA in a 4th grade classroom. Our healthcare staff advised administration of CDC-recommended protocols that included throughout cleaning of the classrooms and bathrooms. We are not worried that others at risk of becoming infected, but it is difficult to control rumors and myths when events such as these occur. Families and staff were contacted and a plan is in place to return to regular operations.
- Pre-budget: Leadership team members have been busy doing pre-budget season work, gathering and analyzing data and identifying future opportunities. You will receive a preliminary presentation of our thinking during the retreat this weekend.
- Posted procedures: Two new sets of procedures have been published since the last report: Parental Involvement (which is prescribed by the E1 policy but does not require its prior adoption) and clarification on residence determinations when the regular paperwork cannot be produced. Other important procedure will continue to be created, modified, or rescinded as we move along with the policy adoption process and as urgent administrative clarifications become apparent. As mentioned in Policy Monitoring Report 2.2 and 2.1, much work remains to catch up with procedural guidance for our schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATES

- The 6th grade Academy launched its fall expedition “Power by Persistence”. Students work together with an artist from Circus Smirkus to create a performance and then transfer their newfound excitement for the circus directly into theme related art, music, science, history, math and language studies.
- WMS launched clubs for the first time in a long time! On Wednesday students attend a club of their choice to learn something new and enjoy time with staff and peers. Some current clubs are: martial arts, community service, origami, friendship bracelets, chess and more!
- College Essay Boot Camp- Wednesday, October 11th and Wednesday, October 25th WHS is hosting a College Essay Boot Camp, where all 12th graders are invited to work on their college essay (or personal statement) with the help of WHS teachers. Pizza will be provided.
- Students in our dual enrollment (high school & St. Michael’s College) class entitled African-American Experience, 1619-Today spent Thursday, October 5th on St. Michael’s campus with their high school teacher Bill Clark and college professor Dr. Jolivet Anderson-Douning. Students experienced college life, attended classes, and spent time in a college library.
- Due to overwhelming interest in taking the Pre-ACT exam to prepare for college, we will now be offering 2 test dates: October 17th we will test 10th graders and October 18th we will test 11th graders. Both tests will take place from 8am - 11:30am and students will be excused from morning classes for them. We are excited to see so many Winooski students taking this important step to prepare themselves for college!

OTHER UPDATES:

Policy audit: I just finished doing a second round in the policy audit process (with Krista’s support) which included not only what is recorded and published on our website, but every set of meeting minutes over the past year or two and its associated meeting recording. Much insight was gained from it, including the fact that many policies that were set to be brought forward for a first read this year had already been presented to you recently, but no action was taken or the recorded action was not materialized. For example, Policy E1 – Parental Involvement- was due for a first read this week, but now it is coming to you for a second read and approval for adoption because a first reading already took place without it coming back to you in April, as was decided by the board. Several other policies have not been removed from the review column on our audit spreadsheet.



Impressive percussion skills in several instruments by our students in band.

TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATES (CONT.)

- We are in the middle of our fall season and our student-athletes are working hard on and off the field. This week the Spartan spirit is running through the veins of our students via spirit week that was planned by our student advisory representatives in the high school. Later this month we are excited to bring back a homecoming dance that is being planned. Much appreciation to the PTO/Boosters for their support!
- The Winooski Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (WSAAC) is a committee made up student-athletes assembled to provide insight on the student-athlete experience. Students on this committee will develop leadership skills and advocacy skills. This committee is a student-centered group to improve the athletes' experiences at WSD.
- We have just finished our fall assessments in reading and math for all schools and are now starting to examine the results. The assessments we gave are Star, which measure math and reading comprehension in grades 1-12, and DIBELS, which measures basic literacy skills in grades k-6.



A sunny start to the fall.

TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATES (CONT.)

- The Winooski Early Childhood Program has started using The Creative Curriculum, the top-rated play-based preschool curriculum that focuses on school readiness skills in Social/Emotional, Cognitive, Physical, and Language development. The planned activities, classroom setup, selection of toys/materials, and interaction with the children, are all designed to accomplish preschool learning goals, and objectives that align with the Vermont Early Learning Standards. The Curriculum shows teachers how to integrate learning in literacy, math, science, social studies, and the arts throughout the day in a play-based way.
- Our Winooski Preschool Programs continue to struggle to hire support staff openings (currently 5 openings) and 1 Special Education teacher position. Preschool programs are required to follow the Licensing Regulations for Center Based Child Care and Preschool Programs, which have specific ratio requirements (1 teacher to every 10 students). The lack of staff has caused us to close preschool classrooms 4 times since opening on September 5. The Head Start program on Elm Street has reduced its daily running time and has also closed multiple times due to staffing challenges.

MORE TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATES (CONTINUED)

- A team of educators from Essex-Westford will visit next week to look at our literacy programs at JFK. We have also had an interest in visiting from Missisquoi Valley SD.
- In collaboration with the City of Winooski, UVM Medical Center, The Winooski Housing Authority, and WSD, CVOEO will present a Tenant Skills workshop that covers the fundamentals of tenant rights and responsibilities, leases, security deposits, repairs, health code violations, terminations, evictions, fair housing, and disability law. Our Team of Multilingual Liaisons had a session with the presenters on October 4 for insight about the presentation before the actual events. We plan to provide these training sessions to all our WSD language groups. The first two rounds of our “Tenants' Training Workshop” will take place on Saturday, October 14th, 12:00 - 1:30 pm, or our Swahili Speaking Community Members at WSD in the PAC. On Sunday, October 15th, 2:00 - 3:30 pm, the same will be provided for our English Speaking Community Members at WSD in the PAC.
- WMHS October Parent-Teacher Conferences will take place on October 19th & 20th. In preparation, our multilingual liaisons are working on scheduling ML parents' meetings this week through October 10th. Then, our teachers will work on planning for our non-ML parents from the 11th to October 18th.
- VTCAP results were recently released. This is the standardized test that the state of Vermont requires of every student 3rd through 12th grade. Much controversy has surrounded this test, including changing vendors last minute last year and a chaotic first administration across the state. This has resulted yet another year of decreased validity and confidence in the data. However, the scores have a strong impact on how success is measured for districts, and we are digesting results carefully and planning on how to incorporate this information to improve instruction moving forward. All families will receive copies of their results.
- We have slowly begun promoting more administrative visibility in classrooms and in learning spaces but will become more methodical about my accompaniment of school leaders in their own visits. This has the advantage of allowing me the opportunity to become deeply familiar with the day-to-day of the schools while also allowing staff to communicate with school and district administrators more often, proactively, and authentically.

ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Below are a few items the board assigned to management along with a status update.

Item	Board Direction	Status
Superintendent Report to the Board	Steven would like to discuss the portion of the report that speaks to the SRO.	Agenda item added to October 11th agenda
Board member appointment to the ARSC	Isaiah Donaldson appoints himself to the ARSC	Isaiah has been connected with the ARSC and has attended meetings.
Board Policy Governance Training	During the training it was stated that the board would like to move the monitoring reports from Consent Agenda to Executive Limitations.	Monitoring reports and Superintendent Reports will be moved to Exec. Limitations moving forward.
C15 Policy	The Board directs the Superintendent to confer with the parties he mentioned and bring back to the board for a 3rd read before adopting.	The Superintendent is currently meeting with stakeholders. The policy is not yet ready to come back to the Board.
C2 Policy	The Board President notes that prior to publishing this policy the second paragraph should be updated to read substance misuse instead of substance abuse.	Changes are reflected in publication draft.
B1 Policy	Robert asks if this precludes someone with a GED. Wilmer will look into Robert's questions and have more information for the second read.	Rule 5381 (VSBPE) Does not specify beyond requiring that the candidate has graduated from "high school." Per 16 V.S.A. § 945 a GED entitles the person a "secondary school equivalence certificate." This can be treated as meeting the policy requirement.
C5 Firearms	Minutes: Steven asks if we are required to provide services to those expelled. Robert notes that there is information regarding	Upon closer examination, the board is not required to provide the student who has been expelled with educational services, unless it decides at its own

	<p>this question under definitions and in the old policy.</p>	<p>discretion to provide limited services in a location other than the educational facilities. 16 V.S.A. §1162 limits itself to “encourage” boards to provide these services, which is unusual statute language, but it does not make it a requirement.</p>
C13 Policy	<p>The Board discussed the language in this policy, “student who is homeless” vs “homeless student”</p>	<p>The Superintendent added a line to the policy noting that “a student who is homeless follows the same definition as a homeless student.”</p>
Heart of Winooski Foundation (HOW)	<p>The Superintendent will research the foundation/implications of closing and bring more info back to the board. Recruitment of board members for HOW is needed to carry out the remaining obligations.</p>	<p>A status report will be provided at the November Board Meeting.</p>
VSBA Annual Meeting Report	<p>Change date for report from VSBA annual meeting on annual plan requested by the board.</p>	<p>Report on VSBA Annual Meeting moved to December meeting.</p>

RECOMMENDED ITEMS TO REVIEW

It is my recommendation that the board review all agenda items in your packet ahead of time and be prepared to approve the Consent Agenda and other applicable items produced by the administration and listed for approval.