



SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

To: WSD Board President and Board of Trustees
From: Wilmer Chavarria, WSD Superintendent
Re: **Superintendent's Report for April 2024**
Date: 4/05/2024

Dear Members of The Board,

Below please find my report for **April 2024** 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
wchavarria@wsdvt.org

ADMINISTRATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

- On April 1st I met with the city manager and the Ray Coffey to continue joint planning and collaboration. On that same day I attended the Regional Advisory Board for the tech centers and the Antiracism Steering Committee.
- On April 3rd I delivered the fourth and last training session for CVSD around supporting learner variability in the classrooms and schools. As mentioned before, I was invited by colleagues there and I took it as an opportunity to sharpen some of my own priorities for our district over time. I had a great time.
- On Thursday April 4th I will be attending several external engagements (in person and Zoom) including the Superintendents Association's All Members Meeting, the new CCV Multilingual Learner Working Group, and a committee meeting for the Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation. In addition to other in-district commitments like attending Middle School expedition presentations, meeting with the Board president, union negotiations in the evening, and finalizing the Board packet, this day is one for the history books in multitasking.
- This Friday April 5 I am an invited guest for the legislative Public Health Caucus in Montpelier.
- On April 6 I am joining a celebration with the outgoing Superintendent of the CVSD.
- On April 8 I will be attending our regular City-WSD meeting.
- On Tuesday, April 9, I will join Jean and other leaders at Stoweflake for a reception dinner as part of the "Next Generation Learning Challenges" supported by the Barr Foundation.
- On April 12 I will be attending the Champlain Valley Superintendents Association and the Regional Standards Board.
- On April 18 (and 19 as needed) I am offering in-person coaching sessions to students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education who are part of the Education Leadership, Organizations, and Entrepreneurship program. I offer a Zoom option for most of my sessions during the year, but I offer in-person options sporadically and when it is the least disruptive to my district work.

KEY DATES

- April 4-5: Kindergarten Screening
- April 5: Veggie VanGo
- April 8: No School Pre K-12. (Solar Eclipse)
- April 9: No School Pre- K-12 (Eid-al-Fitr)
- April 17: K-2 Spring Concert, 2pm, PAC
- April 18 and 19: JFK Parent/Teacher Conferences, Early Release at 11am, No Pre-K
- April 19: Veggie VanGo
- April 22-26: No School Pre K-12



Enjoying the community Iftar

GENERAL UPDATES

On Friday April 5 I am in Montpelier speaking to legislators about the impact of education on Public Health and how Winooski aims to build a symbiotic model where the needs of the community are at the center of our decision-making in all other aspects of education. Administrators and leaders in the district have chipped in their ideas and I put together a summary presentation, which I will do first before a question-and-answer session from the Public Health Caucus.

This Friday April 5th we have our first Board orientation session. I encourage all members to participate whenever feasible, but I understand if you cannot make it to every session. This will be led by Robert, but there may be sessions where you are asked to take the lead as well. Please check the most updated schedule in our Annual Plan document.

We are gradually improving our visual presence online and in person, from social media to the look of our new facilities. As part of this effort, Miriam has been collaborating with IT to rethink the layout of our website. We have already begun to modify the main page in case you want to check it out and provide Miriam and Mike Skwar with feedback.

UPDATES (CONTINUED)

From our Facilities team: The Facilities team is feeling very saddened and also extremely happy to announce the retirement of Ronald King. Ron has been a dedicated part of our team for 7 years and has been a valuable asset to the District. We held a retirement party which brought out many faces to wish him well in his future endeavors! March is a time for gearing up for spring sports. We have been working in between the warmer days and the snowfall to prepare the fields for the start of spring sports. This is always a promising time as it proves that spring and warmer weather is approaching. As the warmer weather approaches, we will shift our gears to work outdoors and get equipment ready for the seasons change. Preventative maintenance on equipment, digging out lawn tools and cleaning out the fieldhouses is in full swing. We are excited to welcome spring and all it has to offer. We look forward to prepping the fields, mowing lawns and making the grounds look fresh while gearing up for the school year to end soon, which will be here before we know it. Always an exciting time of the year!

On Friday, March 22nd, Winooski schools' representatives participated in the regional job fair in Middlebury organized by the University of Vermont. This was a well-attended and fun event and the first of its kind in a long time. Thank you to Katherine Blair and Kelley Freman for their dedication to recruiting high quality staff.

Parking tags have been ordered and a parking lot procedure will go into effect once they arrive. All staff will be provided with a tag and their use will be monitored by our DLO and the facilities team. Parking tags are issued by the District Office Manager and are color coded depending on the role. Students requesting tags must be seniors and provide the appropriate documentation. All parking closest to the front entrance has been reserved for visitors, so parking will not require tags for this area. Board members may request staff tags if you have any issues finding parking for meetings or if the visitor spots are unavailable.



On April 4, a late start was called a little before 7 AM. Normally a late start or school closing is announced by 6 AM. However, we had to respond quickly to events that happened after 6, including a sudden change in the snow amount and an incident involving one of our buses (no students in it).

Immediately after it was clear to our teams that our buses would need to be delayed anyway, I made the call to simply have an official two-hour delay. Most other districts around us did the same after, some districts even announcing the delays after students were already in buses. Most Chittenden area districts announced their delays well after 7 AM. This is for context so that our community understand that our late announcement was not isolated (in fact we were the second to pivot, soon after CVSD), and it was in response to the best information available to us in the moment. We take this very seriously and responsibly engage in a difficult game of balance between student safety and the disruptions caused by a delay or closure.

HOW A CLOSURE DECISION IS MADE

1. Consult with the National Weather Service in Vermont and monitor the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s briefings throughout the day. All Vermont superintendents receive updates via email.
2. As soon as the possibility of a strong weather event is apparent, so strong that it could lead to closures, the area superintendents begin an email chain and consult with each other individually via phone and text. In some cases, a group call is necessary.
3. Consult with road crews, city officials, and WSD facilities members about facilities readiness for the event.
4. Make a decision the day before if enough information is available. If the outlook is still unclear, begin a cycle of consultation the next day as early as 4 AM.
5. Locally decide whether to close or delay primarily based on Winooski's roads and ease of access from neighboring towns and the district's facilities readiness, including parking lots. If necessary, consult with city officials and other relevant authorities. Finally, ensure that buses are able to safely run their routes uninterrupted and on time.
6. If no delay or closure is deemed necessary, consult with area superintendents about their situations in their respective districts. If most surrounding districts have closures, it is best to follow suit due to the interconnection between communities to avoid staff shortages for the day and the confusion from town to town.
7. If a delay is necessary whether due to obvious dangers to a regular opening or due to most or all surrounding schools deciding to close, an announcement to families, community, and staff is made via phone and email before 6 AM.
8. Postings are made to our social media and website.
9. A report is made available to the media via the WCAX portal, which sends it to all other media.
10. Superintendents continue to post their decisions in real time in the internal email chain.
11. In some cases, circumstances may change dramatically after 6 AM and closure or delay may still be necessary. In this case, an announcement will be made as early as possible but before any buses have picked up students (roughly 7 AM). If buses are already transporting students, an announcement will be made specifying that there will be flexibility for tardies and to exert caution on their way to school. Any specific bus delays will also be announced.



Holi in Winooski.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

Late in March, the leadership team explored two different options for an Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) management interface and decided to go with one called “Branching Minds.” This online tool will help schools better organize student achievement data and properly recognize the need for early support for students not making adequate academic progress and keeping track of any form of targeted interventions over time. The team engaged in careful discussion about this tool since it deals with some the most critical work in our schools, and it can either hinder or boost our ability to provide students with the support they need and the rest of stakeholders with the information necessary to make informed decisions. We will use School Improvement Grant funds to pay for this tool. Should the funding go away in the future, the cost of maintenance of the platform is relatively manageable.

So far, we have several important investments with our SIG funds: We sent a team to get trained to build strong project-based learning events from our new ELA program; we sent a team to look at how to use strong advisory programs to improve student literacy outcomes, use data to inform intervention and how to implement our new middle school ELA program; we will send a team to get trained to look for high-quality student work; we will purchase materials and professional development to revamp our foundational literacy program. We will be moving from Foundations to Expeditionary Learning Skills.

JFK held Kindergarten Registration and screening on April 4th and 5th. Incoming Kindergarten students had time with JFK teachers, and families met with Sara Raabe to learn about Kindergarten at JFK.

HEALTHY, PRODUCTIVE, AND SUCCESSFUL LIVES

Several leaders collaborated with Lauren Broadbent to update and improve the bus form for families so that the first few days of the school year are smooth in terms of transportation, especially for students in PK, K, and 1st grade. We are also requiring that students from all other grades have a form filled out for consistency. Busing was a relatively new thing this past year and we have found several new ways to improve the process, including improved communication with caregivers, ongoing support for drivers and assistants, and an added stipend for a bus coordinator.

Our Preschool Skills Screening/Registration day was a success. We were able to connect with over 30 new Winooski families with children eligible to attend our Winooski Early Childhood Program the 2024-2025 school year.

Climate Survey underway: Beginning March 14th we invite all parents, guardians and caretakers to complete a climate survey for our school. Parents will have until April 19th to complete the climate survey.

The district assembled a Significant Disproportionality team and conducted a three hour work session on March 12th to determine root causes and draft a preliminary action plan to address our recent identification by the VT AOE with disproportionality in our identification of white students with emotional disturbance (ED). This team includes support staff, teachers, administrators, parents and outside providers who all work and/or live in Winooski. The next step will be a follow-up with the VT AOE and continued refinement of our action plan.

Enjoying class and moving our bodies.





ahx: 'u4! ¥. |

Select students with the Winooski School District are participating in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) which has a testing window of March 11th through April 26th. The MSAA is designed to assess students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and measures academic content that is aligned to and derived from Vermont's content standards. The MSAA acts as an alternative to the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP).

Our school necessity store provided a second round of Halal Chicken to our Muslim students and families this past week. Patrice is currently putting together a summer schedule for the school store and the VVG. He is also working with three groups of high school students with their capstone projects and coordinating tutoring with Annex programs for our students during school hours.

We sent seven teachers/staff to the TESOL International Convention and Expo, which was held from Thursday to Saturday, March 21-23, 2024, in Tampa, Florida. At the conference, Annie Schneider, Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver, and Rebecca Savage presented about "Creating Belonging in High School ELL Classrooms. They highlighted some of the great work our school is doing in creating belonging, including the liaison program, Community Iftar, the Holi celebration, daily practices, and innovative classes for students to study cultures. Many audience members were intrigued by Winooski and asked to use our resources to improve their own districts, which we gladly shared.

Along with Annie, Caitlin, and Becky, Aftaba Mezetovic, Amy Racicot, Andrea Wheeland and Erin Hurley also attended the convention, which offered various professional development opportunities for English Language Teaching professionals worldwide. Attendees participated in interactive sessions, exchanging ideas, research, and practices to develop a global perspective and gain knowledge about current trends in the field. Erin and Amy also put together a slideshow presentation to share with the ML department regarding the interactive sessions attended and resources available.

LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITY

The Jr. Iron Chef Winooski Wild Onions: Kamiya Coleman, Ankita Dhungana, Aili Olson and Anisha Tamang were guest servers at Waterworks Food and Drink on Wed, March 13th. These middle school students served their award winning dish of Street Corn Risotto Cakes! All proceeds from the evening was donated to the 21C afterschool program.

On March 21st, our student musicians in the orchestra, chorus, and band shared months of hard work at our middle/high school spring concert. Congratulations to the hard work that all of our students put into the incredible musical numbers that we were able to enjoy. It was more than evident that students put their best work forward and enjoyed making music together. Much appreciation goes out to our music educators, Randy Argraves and Mikayla Kelemen, for their dedication and commitment to our students. It was wonderful to see the mutual respect and positivity between students and their teachers last night on stage.

Congratulations Apolina Mbeleci! This week, the 2024 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards were released. These awards are billed as the nation's longest-running and most prestigious competition for creative teens. Apolina's piece titled Faith was awarded the top prize of Gold Key in the Art Portfolio category. As a Gold Key recipient, her work will be entered in the national competition and winners will be announced in June.

Community Iftar was held here at WSD on Wednesday, March 28th. This was an opportunity for our community to learn more about Ramadan.

On April 5th, JFK had a day of Eclipse activities. A HS teacher from Philadelphia, Deb Skapik, worked with about 25 of her students to create learning experiences for elementary students around this event. She is a trained NASA eclipse ambassador who teaches physics and astronomy. She and her students came to Vermont to witness the eclipse as well as work with JFK.

Two major celebrations took place the last week of March that attracted major crowds. The first was the Holi celebration. After a successful community party, we closed the gym for two days to ensure comprehensive cleaning. The second was the Community Iftar on Thursday March 28, which also attracted a record number of attendees. Both events ran out of food, which is a good sign. A special thanks to our facilities team members for their support both setting up and putting things back together after these events.

On March 28, Mayor Lott hosted the Annual Francophonie Celebration in New England organized by the Québec Government Office in Boston and the Alliance Francaise Lake Champlain Region (AFLCR). The event took place in the Performing Arts center and several of our students attended.

Our 21st Century program continues to support and grow our "Heritage Language" offering, which supports students' multilingual language literacy skills and appreciation of their culture. This builds strong connections between students and the elders in their community. The Nepali Heritage Language program taught by Tul and Padam has seen an average of 17 students

RESPONSE FROM KAREN GREENE ABOUT THE BOARD SCHOLARSHIP

“The School Board Scholarship is one of the longest running scholarships we give. It started in the 1970’s when this program began. The criteria that was set for it is that it is given to two seniors who have shown the most improvement over their 4 years. It is a five hundred dollar scholarship, \$250 for each recipient. The money is requested by June and is paid out upon completion of their first semester of college. Let me know if this helps.” Karen

RESPONSE FROM RE: UVMHC PARKING AGREEMENT

Thank you to the WSD for continuing to provide this critical resource for our child care center. The updated agreement is attached, reflecting the updated rate increase of 3%.

Regarding the question about Winooski enrollment, there are currently (54) children enrolled, (8) of which live in Winooski. While 15% of the total enrollment may seem low, it is our standard practice for families on the waitlist that live in Winooski to be offered open spots first regardless of where they are on the waitlist.

Please let me know if there are any follow up questions.

Thank you,

Ashley Bond

ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

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

Item	Board Direction	Status
Meeting Warning	Board members expressed a desire for more time to digest the Board packet and wanted the meeting to be warned on Friday rather than Monday.	Meetings will be warned on Fridays starting in April.
Monitoring Report	Board member Nicole wanted more details regarding preventative maintenance, new building systems, long term staffing plans, etc. Similarly Board member Kamal is interested in hearing about cybersecurity.	IT and Facilities directors have been invited to the next Board meeting to provide an overview of asset protection by each department. The Director of Finance and Operations will be present as well.
City-WSD MOU	Board member Nicole asked why housing was not mentioned (i.e. housing round table; providing mutual information re: housing) in the MOU and Board member Kamal mentioned that we should use the new SRO title in the MOU (DLO).	The MOU was open for revision between the city and WSD. Both parties agree to change the months covered (to begin in July) and will bring a final agreement for the Board's information in May.
Parking Lot Agreement	Board members wondered whether this a worthy cost-benefit case for the district. Wilmer mentioned there can be unexpected disadvantages to cancel this agreement but would find more information about how this is serving Winooski families.	A message from the center is included in a previous page of this report.
Policy D1 Graduation Requirements	In the discussion with the panelists the request for additional data came up again. Wilmer agreed to incorporate more data through the year to try to illustrate growth with an array of data types.	The District Director of Curriculum is finalizing a centralized place for all district data. Instructional and non-instructional data will be incorporated in reports and future presentations.
Policy A30 Role and Adoption of Board Policies	Board members questioned whether this is needed as separate policy or if an existing Policy Governance policy can simply be modified.	The related Policy Governance Policy will be included in the May agenda for a first read.

Policy C21 Search and Seizure	Board member Kamal would like to see more specificity on how we ensure confidentiality for students when search takes place	The policy for second read now includes more specificity for privacy and the dignity of students
Board member orientation schedule	Board members discussed preferences for the orientation schedule.	A first meeting was had on Friday April 5. A final plan will be announced during the April Board meeting.
School Board Scholarship	President Robert expressed that we need more information from Karen Greene about the scholarship.	Karen Greene was asked for more information on background and description of the scholarship. This information is included in a previous page of this report.

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.