



# SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

**To:** WSD Board President and Board of Trustees  
**From:** Wilmer Chavarria, WSD Superintendent  
**Re:** **Superintendent's Report for May 2024**  
**Date:** 5/03/2024

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Dear Members of The Board,

Below please find my report for **May 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](mailto:wchavarria@wsdvt.org)



## KEY DATES

- May 3: Veggie VanGo - CANCELLED
- May 8: JFK 3-5 Music Concert, 2pm, PAC
- May 11th: Winooski Jazz Feast! Music and Spaghetti Dinner, WSD Cafe, 6pm. Adults: \$12 Students: \$5
- May 16: Early Release, 12:15, No Pre-K
- May 17: Veggie VanGo
- May 26: Winooski High School Prom, 7pm-10pm, The Mansfield Barn
- May 27: Memorial Day, School Recess - No School Pre-K - 12
- June 6: WMHS Orchestra, Chorus, and Band Concert, 7pm, PAC
- June 7: Veggie VanGo
- June 12: 8th Grade Moving Up Day, 6pm, PAC
- June 13: Last student day of school, Early Release at 12:15pm
- June 15: Graduation, 1pm, Main Gym

## ADMINISTRATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

- On April 15, I met with the city manager as part of our continued collaboration efforts. We will meet again on May 6.
- On April 15, I attended the ARSC meeting. On May 6, I will be attending the community conversation at the O'Brien Center, also organized by the ARSC.
- On April 18, I attended the CCV multicultural food festival.
- On April 19, I met with the Interim Secretary of Education for a meet and greet.
- On Thursday May 2, I continued to meet with the city and the Creative Discourse Group to plan the community event that will follow up the equity audit from a few years ago.
- On Thursday, May 2, I met with Michael Martin, the Director of the Rowland Foundation to discuss diversifying the workforce and the value of representation.
- On April 22, I attended a Governance Committee Meeting for the Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation.
- On May 9<sup>th</sup>, I will meet with the WEA leadership to go over routine matters.
- On May 9<sup>th</sup>, I will attend the Policy Governance training with Robert.
- On May 10<sup>th</sup>, I will attend the following: CVSA Monthly Meeting, VSA biweekly meeting, and various events around the district.
- On May 17, I will attend the VSA annual meeting and the NBCT-NEA Reception Dinner.
- On May 22, I will attend various Harvard graduation events. As a coach for a program in the School of Education, it is my last chance to interact with some of my graduating students and cheer them good-bye.
- On May 24, I will be hosting the Vermont Educational Equity Collaborative in Windsor.



Students focused on a Social Studies task at the Winooski High School

## FROM FACILITIES

Warm welcome to spring. Our Facilities Team members have been working on getting the fields ready for the outdoor athletic season. With this work comes clearing out and organizing the fieldhouse and getting sports related items out so we can work to install them such as the outfield fence on the softball field. We have our first home games on May 3rd which we are excited about and ready for our Athletes to play. We have also been doing spring cleanup such as leaf cleanup, garden maintenance, powerbrooming the drainage stone around the roadways and fixing any plow damage that may have occurred over winter. Inside the building, over April break we were able to accomplish many tasks such as carpet extracting in many areas, some deep cleaning and other various tasks and loose ends. We are honing in on our work orders which we are down to 22 and still knocking them out. They continue to come in but the team stays on top of them so kudos to them for continuing to strive on getting that number to ZERO by the school year's end. I believe we can do it and the team does too!



## WINOOSKI STUDENTS IN THE NEWS

**VTDigger:** A humble and beautiful voice to help educate the next generation. ([click here](#))

**WCAX3:** Area students explore research careers during UVM Cancer Center visit ([Click here](#))

**LOCAL44:** Your Best Life: Money Savvy Little Kids ([Click here](#))





"Going to Winooski was so good that it left me feeling like I missed out the last four years by being in my high school. It was like if Apple made a high school by looks, but if students were the ones running it- And I mean that in the highest compliment. Student voice was so loud and it was very refreshing."

*(testimony by an NGLC visitor)*

## GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL UPDATES

- **A Side Letter draft** has been included in the packet for your consideration. Both the WSD administration and the union are comfortable with the language in it and we believe that it stays true to the spirit of the change in start time for the school day. I recommend that the Board approve it. I will then send it to the union for their signature.
- **As you may be aware**, the Senate voted no to confirming Zoe Saunders as the next Secretary of Education in Vermont. Governor Scott immediately named her interim Secretary, which effectively circumvents the Senate's power but carries an expiration date. I have been concerned about what this means for Winooski for several reasons, ranging from simple worries about potentially tokenizing students or associating with a "diverse district" for political credit, to my concern about Winooski High School being the first school in the state to potentially be at the secretary's mercy. Within the next few years, Vermont law will allow the AOE drastic powers against schools that have been identified as in need of Comprehensive Supports. I expect to have a polite working relationship with the Interim Secretary and hope that we are not over-targeted to the detriment of our operations.
- **Our District Office** has continued to work on the details of the new pay grid proposed as part of the negotiations process. We are happy that all details have been cleared so that the Board may vote to ratify the agreement as part of the final step in negotiating a CBA for the next two years. Thank you to the negotiations committee and the WSD staff that made this negotiation process an efficient and productive effort. We are pleased with the result and know that the new contract and pay grid will take better care of our employees while being financially prudent.
- **The WSD-City Memorandum of Understanding** has been completed and signed for this year. A copy of it is included in your packet for your information. Among other changes, we updated the "SRO" title to "DLO" (District Liaison Officer), we added language to contain newsletter costs, and updated the hourly rate for additional officer support for after hours (when requested) from \$47.10 to \$50.



Student in the Winooski Middle School attentively listening to the teacher's question

## GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL UPDATES (CONT.)

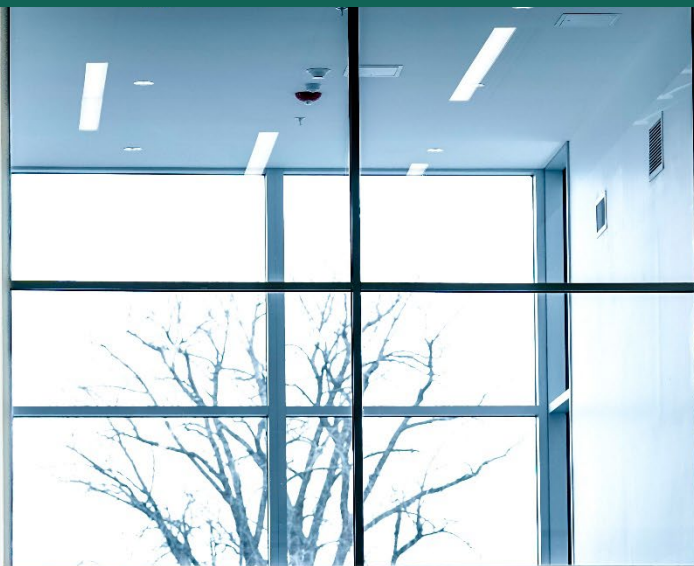
- **We have welcomed** Mike Cardinal as the new Finance Manager. Mike will primarily oversee the grants side of operations while working in collaboration with the administration on special projects.
- **RFP has been posted** for a Food Service Management Company and we are excited to complete this process in the coming weeks.
- **A date for the Board** retreat has been set. Please mark your calendar for Sunday July 28. We will gather at 8:30 in the library. Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon coffee will be served. Our District Leadership Retreat (administrators) will happen immediately after and will overlap with the Vermont Principals Association conference in Killington.
- **Our leadership team** has been working on their calibration around hiring processes. This past Tuesday, some final tweaks were made to the procedure and most positions are currently following this process. Among other changes, we now have preliminary phone screenings, sample lessons, and a collaborative approach to making a final decision between the Superintendent and the administrator. Not all documents related to this process can be shared publicly, but I am happy to provide more details about the process if the Board wishes. A more public version will be available as administrative procedure on our website in the coming weeks.



## COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

- **Students accessing** the Multi-State Alternative Assessment (MSAA) have finished their testing cycle and results have been submitted for review. The MSAA acts as an alternative to the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP).
- **We are adopting** a new foundational literacy skills curriculum at JFK. This program, "EL Skills," is a component of the EL-ELA program we adopted two years ago. We have been using Foundations, however our k-2 teachers asked that we move to the EL Skills Block for next year. This year, we will use SIG funds to purchase all the materials for Skills and provide PD for k-1 teachers. In the 26 school year 2nd grade will implement the program.
- **In the MHS, we are moving** closer to having a written curriculum for all classes. We began this work at the end of last year and have been using early release time this year to continue it. This written curriculum is not publicly available; however, we plan to start making parts of it public this summer.
- **JFK completed a School Climate Survey** with all 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students and the entire JFK staff. The survey was also shared with all families. The MHS students completed the MHS version of the School Climate Survey, and their families were also given the survey to complete. The School Climate Survey is through PBIS Assessment and the data can be looked at through different reports, such as ethnicity, race, gender, and grade. A summary of this data will be provided to the Board in a future report.

The main district lobby in Winooski is now beginning to be adorned with large portraits of our students.





## COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

- **JFK Parent Teacher Conferences** were April 18th and 19th. We had a great turnout with the majority of our families attending.
- JFK held our first Scholastic Bookfair since COVID. All students were given the opportunity to buy a book either through money they brought in, or from a fund that the PTO set up. It was a big success.
- **Our high school seniors** had an enriching experience as they visited our 3rd grade students and shared the inspiring story of "Sankofa". It was wonderful to witness the older students mentor and teach the younger ones, fostering a sense of camaraderie and learning across generations.
- **Our amazing first graders** just completed their EL Module focusing on the Sun, Moon, and Stars! To celebrate, they shared their beautiful poems with families and staff.
- **The WIDA assessment** results for the academic year 2023-2024 have been released. Out of 217 students who took the test, nine "passed" and will be monitored until June 2026. It is important to note that students who exit the ML program may not be counted for weighting purposes.
- **Seventh & eighth graders** culminated their recent unit on the impact of plastics on our environment by taking over the Winooski Learns IG account. After learning about how production, usage, and recycling contribute to plastic pollution, they wrote argumentative essays. They then worked in small groups across disciplines to design engaging posts that educated and called people to action during Earth Week. Be sure to check them out @winooskilearns!
- **The ML Department evaluated** our co-teaching models and organized professional development opportunities to improve collaboration between our mainstream and ML teachers, enabling us to meet our students' needs better. On April 11th, seven teachers from both groups attended a workshop called "Co-Planning Model for Multilingual Learners.pdf" to enhance this collaboration. After the workshop, our teachers were inspired to work more closely together to provide better support for our ML students.



## LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITY

- **On April 11th & 12th teachers**, administrators, students, school board members, and parents from around New England visited 3 Vermont Middle High Schools: Winooski, Twinfield, and Harwood. Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) hosted the excursion for approximately 90 visitors. NGLC has provided educators here at Winooski the opportunity to visit other schools of interest that are also engaged in similar work and goals, so it was exciting to be asked to host an event! The theme was: How genuine youth-adult partnership both reflects and can lead to genuine transformation of schools, learning, and outcomes for students. Here are two quotes from participants:
  - o "Going to Winooski was so good that it left me feeling like I missed out the last four years by being in my high school. It was like if Apple made a high school by looks, but if students were the ones running it- And I mean that in the highest compliment. Student voice was so loud and it was very refreshing."
  - o "This was just such an inspiring place. I don't have a question, but I'm really wondering how we can build a community that feels this good!"
- **Educators** Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver, Becky Savage, Annie Schneider presented in Tampa, FL at TESOL in April. They presented on creating belonging in our classrooms and school, highlighting our school-wide celebrations, our Global Explorations and Culture and Community classes, their daily practices to foster community in classrooms, and our Seal of Biliteracy. Collectively they elevated student voice with two student videos and celebrated the many things our district does well.
- **Please join us in congratulating** our outstanding students! The Center for Technology, Essex, hosted its annual Induction Ceremony for students who have excelled academically and have achieved the honor of being selected as members of the National Technical Honor Society (**NTHS**). The following student(s) were inducted from Winooski High School:
  - o **Raseda Be**
  - o **Cameron Bushway**
  - o **Suvisha Gurung**
  - o **Mea Ree Jan**
  - o **Christopher Lavalette (returning member)**
  - o **Elizabeth Perrotte**

## HEALTHY AND SUCCESSFUL

Extended Year Services (ESY) are being coordinated now for the month of July. Students entering grades K- 5th will attend services at JFK. Programming will also be available for students at the middle and high school who qualify for ESY services.

Our Early Learning team has begun furnishing our additional classrooms for the 2024-2025 school year. Once completed, the classrooms can be inspected to ensure full compliance with the Child Development Division preschool regulations.

Our Wellness and Belonging director is working with Miriam Greenfield to get the words out to families regarding VVG summer schedule and other food resources that's available in the community. Additionally, we continue to assist families with our housing advice program along with Jennie Davis.

JFK held our annual K-2 Spring Concert and Art Show. The PAC was packed with students and families, and the students did an amazing job. A huge thank you to Sara Poland for organizing the concert and Renee Weertman for organizing the Art Show. The 3-5 concert is May 8th.



A student says hi while in class in the Winooski Middle School

## HEALTHY AND SUCCESSFUL

- **April was Financial Literacy Month**, and Winooski School District students participated in Jump\$tart Coalition Teen Teach-In to educate the next generation! High school students shared valuable lessons on personal finance with our first graders. From reading engaging books to hands-on activities, they covered topics like needs vs. wants, savings strategies, and the importance of understanding the value of money. They even participated in an interview with ABC22 & FOX44.
- **The Winooski Early Childhood Program** will be offering an inclusive summer program for two weeks in July. During this time, Extended School Year (ESY) services will be provided to those eligible.
- **Middle School Summer Program** registration is in full swing with the following programs: Burlington Winooski Summer Program, a five week, all day program beginning June 24th-July 26th for students entering 6th-9th grade (current 5th-8th graders); Public Safety Camp, a one week all day program offered the week of June 24th for students entering 7th-12 grade (current 6th-11th graders).
- **The leadership team** recently met with the VT AOE in regards to our Significant Disproportionality work. The district team will be meeting on May 16th to finalize a draft action plan after which the VT AOE will provide more guidance on next steps.

# COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORTS GRANT INVESTMENTS

Below you will find investments so far this year. The data used and submitted to the state to illustrate the need for these investments is included in your packet as an addendum to this report.

Investment	School Cost		
In order to make effective data informed decisions, track impact of programmatic decisions, develop an effective early warning system and monitor student growth we will purchase a data analytics platform. Cost of Educlimber Set-up \$15605. Local Consultant Fee \$5760.00	District	\$21,365.00	Branching Minds
In order to build academic vocabulary, particularly figurative language, and engagement in reading and writing to improve overall literacy proficiency, we will contract with a Poet in Residence to work with up to 50 JFK 4th grade students to write and perform poetry and then reflect on their use of language and imagery.	JFK	\$14,000.00	Rajnii Eddins
In order to address behavior issues that disrupt the learning environment we will conduct four days of training in classroom culture and management (Responsive Classroom) for up to 20 staff. Costs include contracted services for four days and stipends for up to 20 staff for work conducted beyond contracted hours.	JFK	\$24,000.00	Responsive Classroom
In order to increase student engagement in complex grade level texts we will train upto 4 elementary teachers in project based learning related to core ELA content. Costs include travel, workshop fees, and per diem.	JFK	\$25,180.00	Tucson, AZ-EL Conference JFK)
In order to reduce the number of disruptions and referrals for defiance, insubordination, noncompliance, and physical aggression in the classroom we will contract with a PD provider to conduct training in culturally responsive teaching. Costs include contracted services and stipends for up to 12 teachers for up to 24 hours of professional development. Consultant Fee \$42458.00, Stipends \$11520.00, Benefits \$921.00	JFK	\$54,899.00	SLSJ Consulting
In order to address the need to increase the volume of reading for students, purchase diverse classroom libraries and text sets connected to our knowledge-building curriculum. Costs include books \$3,500. (JFK)	JFK	\$3,500.00	



High School Counselor Salary: In order to address school attendance and progress toward four-year graduation, lower student-to-counselor ratio and clarify pathways for graduation we will hire a second high school counselor. This position will support and transition to 9th grade by developing an orientation for all students and families and also include the development of a school counseling curriculum.	WHS	\$67,775.00	Adam Hurwitz
High School Counselor Benefits	WHS	\$17,000.00	Adam Hurwitz
In order to design learning experiences that are developmentally and culturally appropriate and to establish solid expectations for proficiency in challenging academic standards based on authentic products and experiences, we will contract with a consultant to provide direct pd in instruction and consultation for up to 30 teachers up to 100 hours on the quality of instructional design. Costs include consultant fees.	WHS	\$10,000.00	Jolivette
In order to address the need to increase the volume of reading for students, purchase diverse classroom libraries and text sets connected to our knowledge-building curriculum. Costs include books \$3,500. (WHS)	WHS	\$3,500.00	
In order to increase student engagement in complex grade level texts we will train up to 2 middle school teachers in project based learning related to core ELA content. Costs include travel, workshop fees, and per diem.	WMS	\$10,792.00	EL Conference (WMS)Tucson, AZ
In order to reduce the incidents of abusive language and physical aggression in our middle school students, we will contract with a professional development provider for up to 10 hours of direct services at \$400 per hour and travel @\$1000. = \$5000	WMS	\$5,000.00	ISP International-Responsive Classroom
In order to address the needs of learners who are two or more years behind grade level expectations in math we will send up to six <b>Math</b> teachers to an intervention and differentiation seminar costs include travel and lodging 6 teachers at \$2000 each = \$12000.00	WMS	\$12,000.00	Colorado Trip
In order to increase student engagement in complex grade level texts we will train up to 4 middle school teachers in project based learning related to core ELA content. Costs include travel, workshop fees, and per diem.	WMS	\$6,360.00	Syracuse, NY Trip
In order to address the need to increase the volume of reading for students, purchase diverse classroom libraries and text sets connected to our knowledge-building curriculum. Costs include books \$3,500. (WMS)	WMS	\$3,500.00	

In order to improve teacher skills by using student work as data and make informed decisions about the next instructional steps, we will train up to four staff in using High-Quality Work Protocols costs include fees, travel, and lodging.	WMS	11,800	Providence High Quality Work Workshop
In order to improve graduation rates and student achievement in literacy and mathematics, we will pay stipends for up to 90 teachers to attend an day long school-based workshop on aligning curriculum and assessments to Vermont's challenging academic standards, conduct content-based direct instruction, and provide peer feedback. Costs include stipends for 90 teachers @\$40 per hour plus fringe	District	115560	SDI
We will train up to 9 staff in verbal de-escalation, trauma-informed practices, and culturally responsive teaching resulting in behavior data indicating a significant number of students do not feel a sense of belonging and connection to the school community. Costs include workshop fees \$899 * 9 = \$8091	WMS	8091	Developmental Designs
To ensure access to high-quality math instructional materials aligned with our curriculum and Vermont's challenging standards we will contract with a provider to support up to 25 math teachers in understanding math progressions, intervention, math pedagogy, and how to use the digital components of our math curriculum. Costs include workshop and coaching fees for up to 11 days not to exceed \$31,500	District	31500	Math PD
In order to track Winooski graduates' success in postsecondary systems, we will purchase a system for tracking postsecondary outcomes, enrollment, and degree completion over time. The annual fee is \$595.	WHS	595	Counseling Software
To ensure consistent teaching practices in foundational literacy skills, we will purchase high-quality instructional materials and provide direct professional development for up to 16 teachers and 12 classrooms. Costs include materials and course fees.	JFK	\$39,954.00	Skills Block Training and Materials
In order to increase student graduation rates, we contract with providers for up 144 hours at \$125 per hour to help us develop a school counseling curriculum and a schedule that supports students reaching graduation prepared for post-secondary education. Costs in consultant fees \$18,000	WHS	\$18,000.00	Tim Wile
We will send up to five staff members to a day-long workshop and history tour of the Harlem Renaissance to support the creation of engaging reading environments and help teachers build background knowledge.	WMS	\$9,005.00	MS Harlem Renaissance Workshop

## ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

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

Item	Board Direction	Status
Data	Board member Nicole asked for less narrative data in reports when appropriate. One specific question related to School Improvement Grant investments. Wilmer responded that information regarding SIG can be easily produced.	A portion of this information is included in this month's Superintendent's Report to the Board in the section immediately prior and as addendum.
Board Retreat	The board discussed potential dates for the retreat. No decision was made during the meeting.	Krista polled members and the decision was made to have the retreat on July 28.
WSD Board of Trustees engagement contacts	The Board discussed the previously created engagement contacts spreadsheet and suggested that the information should live in the Board's Annual plan document for easier organization and assignments.	The engagement contacts spreadsheet was already incorporated into the Board planning document (Annual Plan) and was added as an item of discussion for the May Board meeting.
UVM Childcare MOU	The Board expressed that the numbers for Winooski students in the UVM Childcare center were low. The Superintendent expressed that for the next MOU, a specific goal for the following year (30%) will be established, with a renewal of the MOU contingent upon meeting this goal.	We were waiting to receive the latest language from the center before modifications but since it is taking long we will instead draft our own version and send it for their signature before the end of the school year.
New Member Orientation monthly meeting	The Board could not at the time agree on a date and time for recurring orientation. The Board asked administration to poll members and decide on a recurring date and time.	It was determined that the best day for Elom was the Tuesday before the Board meeting at 5 PM. We will continue to meet every month on the Tuesday before the Board meeting.
Board Scholarship	A committee was formed to explore the Board scholarship history and plan forward.	The committee met on 5/1 and minutes are provided in the packet.
F22 Policy	Other than changing to gender-neutral language, no changes were agreed to regarding the policy itself as presented during the first read. Board member Nicole asked	Coincidentally, the AOE published an updated memo named "School Records Retention and Records Management" on April 30, 2024 (last week) and the memo has been shared with all administrators in



	about schedule of educational records and whether people are aware of them.	the WSD. Additionally, IT has been directed to create a procedure based on Policy F22 Electronic Communications Use and Retention.
Board Stipend	Stipend process needs to be clarified for the future, with timelines, roles, and expectations.	Sarah Haven is creating a clean and clear procedure, which will be published on the website once it is ready and will be shared with the board. This procedure is based on the questions that have arisen this cycle and the decisions that have been made along the way.
Policy C21	Policy C21 Search and Seizure was sent back for a third read with the request to list expectations around parent communication and additional clarity on when and how a search takes place. More student input was desired as well.	The Superintendent met with students and shared the draft with all staff for input. The new draft is included in the packet and is listed for a third read and discussion on the agenda. Quinn, our intern from Harvard, will potentially present some of these changes.

## 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.