



SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

To: WSD Board President and Board of Trustees
From: Wilmer Chavarria, WSD Superintendent
Re: **Superintendent's Report for June 2024**
Date: 6/07/2024

Dear Members of The Board,

Below please find my report for **June 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 June 12 I will be attending the Champlain Valley Superintendents Association end of year gathering in St Albans.
- I am meeting with the City Manager on June 17.
- On June 22 I will be co-hosting the Winooski Together Event with the city, being organized by the multi-sector Equity Action Committee.
- On Friday June 7th I am in Montpelier for a Vermont Superintendents' Association Luncheon with the Board of Trustees
- On Friday June 7th I am also in Stowe for a retreat with the Vermont Educational Equity Collective.
- On June 5th I met with the city Chief of police to go over the DLO plans for next year.
- On May 28th I was a panelist for Senator Welch's Listening Session in Winooski
- On May 24 I attended the Vermont Ed Equity Collective session in Hartland.
- On May 23, I joined Kelley Freeman for a licensing training in Colchester with the AOE.
- On May 21st I attended the quarterly board meeting for the Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation.
- On May 17th I attended the Vermont Superintendents Association Annual Meeting
- On May 17th I attended the National Board Certified Teacher reception hosted by the Vermont NEA



KEY DATES

- June 6: WMHS Orchestra, Chorus, and Band Concert, 7pm, PAC
- June 7: Veggie VanGo
- June 7: Athletic Awards, 6pm, PAC
- 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



Students perform inspiring original poetry and speeches to educate about cultural and religious difference.

GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL

- **Our most updated tax projections** will not be possible yet because the Governor vetoed H.887 (the Yield bill) which effectively keeps us with the last official projection presented to Winooski residents prior to the March vote. As Jeff Francis from the VSA puts it, it is not clear where things will be heading from here, except for the only plausible route of overriding this veto during the upcoming veto session next week. The Board will be notified in subsequent communication as needed. Should H.887 remain intact, the updated projection would be \$1.35 for the Homestead Tax Rate (a change from the pre-March projection of \$1.41) with a Yield of \$9,893, and an income dollar equivalent yield of \$10,110.
- **On May 30** the school district administration joined the Winooski Education Association for two “townhall” sessions for employees under the new Support Staff contract to ask questions and get clarification from both entities simultaneously. While it was clear to both the Association and the district that there was widespread misunderstanding about the rollout of the new pay grid, this was to be expected given that the change is major and that it will take several years for placements on the grid to be a straightforward process. After fielding each question, employees overall were understanding of the limitations of the contract.



GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL

- **As an important outcome** of the resolution of two union grievances filed at the end of the last school year, the Association and the school district will form a joint committee to create clarifying guidelines for initial placement for all staff and will hopefully maintain this committee on a standing basis should unique situations arise where further clarification is needed. The district welcomes this measure and is eager to work with union representatives to better care for our employees and subsequently our students and families.
- **The WSD administrative team** will be attending our team retreat on July 29 and immediately after will attend the Vermont Principals Association annual conference where Jean Berthiaume will be recognized as this year's Principal of the Year. Our agenda is already fully populated and it allows us time to better prepare for the school board's own retreat that same weekend.

OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS



On May 17th I had the pleasure to accompany Courtney Poquette and Lindsey Cox while they were recognized as the two finalists in this year's Vermont Teacher of the Year. We are fortunate to have educators like Courtney and Lindsey in our team as we benefit from their expertise in modeling effective teaching and learning in Winooski. Congratulations to both.

GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL UPDATES

- **We are grateful to have virtually all our staff present** these last few days of school. As you may know from our Collective Bargaining Agreement, staff are free to use their personal days any time during the year except immediately prior to a vacation. This means that in a moment such as immediately before summer, we have all of the help we need during a time with much activity and energy. One drawback we noticed this Spring from the current agreement language, however, is that many staff chose to save up their personal days to use them in the late Spring. This led to an overwhelming number of employees being absent while the remaining staff scrambled to cover. We hope that future negotiations between the WSD and WEA can address this phenomenon in a productive way and that the outcome continues to protect our employees' access to personal days and autonomy in how they are used while creatively preventing too many people being out all at once.
- **The Heart of Winooski Foundation** carried out its annual meeting on June 4 where bylaws were reviewed in detail, finances were reviewed, and an in-depth conversation was had about the history of the foundation and ideas for its future. Important questions were raised by all members present and tasks were assigned to staff to make progress before the next quarterly meeting in August. One of these tasks was exploring the possibility of placing the remaining financial assets into an interest-bearing account as was the intention of an initial investment when the foundation was first created. More details can be found in the meeting minutes. The WSD Board must have representation in the governance of the foundation as well. One Board member has already expressed interest and we hope to have someone appointed by the WSD Board president prior to the next meeting.

The Winooski School District and the City of Winooski will co-host the Winooski Together event this June 22nd at 12:30 PM in the O'Brien Center. We will be recognizing people in the community who have demonstrated a spirit of service and collaboration over the years, will update the community on the progress both entities have made in response to the Equity Audit, and will provide an opportunity for community members to brainstorm ways to advance grassroots work toward making Winooski a more inclusive and equitable city. Board members are invited to attend. The board allocated money toward this work during a previous meeting.



Middle School students teach the room how to properly dance during the Cultural Day organized by the Student Council

GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL UPDATES


- **The Fiscal Services office** is preparing for the FY24 audit to begin. We've been working with the administration to prepare for the close of FY24. We have recently completed an RFP and bid selection for a new food service management company. Human Resources has spent the last few weeks onboarding new teachers for FY25 and looks forward to onboarding support staff over the next few weeks.
- **Some of our Muslim students and families at JFK** were not using the bathrooms at school because they did not have the needed kettles to properly clean themselves to be able to pray during the day. We have placed kettles in three single-stall bathrooms at JFK - one outside the shared gathering space (D196), and two in the George Street hallway (E123 and E146). Facilities installed hooks for the kettles in each bathroom. Cheyne is working to order stickers or emblems that are pictures of the kettles and will place them on all bathroom doors that have them so students, families, and community members can visualize them and know where to find these bathrooms. We are communicating this with the families via the liaisons, and Cheyne and Yussuf will be working with facilities to ensure they get cleaned. Teachers are having conversations with students about being respectful and leaving the kettles alone unless they need to use them for religious reasons.

LOCAL AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

- **On Sunday, April 28th**, Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver took students to see Pulitzer prize winning author Isabel Wilkerson speak (organized by the Greater Burlington Multicultural Center). Students had previously read excerpts of both *Caste* and *The Warmth of Other Suns* in the class *Challenging Systems of Oppression*. Each student had a question selected by the moderator that was asked. Wilkerson offered messages of hope, the importance of individual action to create change, and the necessity of understanding and reconciling our nation's history in order to move forward. Students were inspired by her words.
- **A student-organized protest** in support of Palestine took place outside the school facilities on June 5 immediately after school. Fortunately, no incidents were reported except for some concern regarding the high heat of that day. Students chose to walk off campus down Main Street and we monitored their return about one hour later. As a reminder, as a public institution we are not to endorse, sponsor, facilitate, or co-organize protests at the request of students. We can do this without simultaneously becoming a barrier to students expressing their views and what is important to them in an environment of respect. We trust that our students will continue to feel encouraged to engage civically in ways that minimize their exposure to unnecessary risks or physical danger. We understand that students of color are especially more likely to become victims of verbal or physical abuse from the public. Finally, I encourage all members of the WSD school community in any capacity, from the Board to Staff, to promote spaces of conversation about things that matter to students, and to center their voices rather than promote our own.

Joy and pride was seen in the hallways of the schools as the graduating class was celebrated by their peers





Social Justice Speech Competition at the Winooski High School

FROM FACILITIES:

We are grateful for the beautiful start to summer and the warm temperatures we have all been enjoying. This favorable weather has enabled the Facilities Team to diligently prepare the grounds for the most significant time of the year—Graduation. We eagerly anticipate this occasion, as it is a collective effort to ensure our campus looks its best for this important day.

We have applied 96 yards of mulch around the campus, particularly focusing on the front of the building. If you have not been on campus recently, you will notice the substantial improvement. In addition to enhancing the exterior, we will ensure the interior of the building is equally presentable for families as they arrive to celebrate their child's graduation. Beyond graduation preparations, we are also assisting with the end-of-year activities organized by teachers, which are a delight to observe.

This time of year is exceptionally busy for our team, as we manage setups, events, and assist staff in closing out the year and preparing rooms for summer cleaning. We are gearing up for the comprehensive summer cleaning of the entire building and look forward to welcoming everyone back in August to see the results.





JFK Students showcase their singing talent during the JFK Spring Concert

HEALTHY, PRODUCTIVE, AND SUCCESSFUL

- **JFK had its End Of Year Celebration.** Each grade level spent half of the day at school doing activities in their classroom, and half the day at Landry Park. Students played yard games, had time on the playground, and got to go swimming at Landry Park. This is the third year we have split our time between school and Landry Park. The collaboration with the City and specifically Parks and Rec make this day extra fun for the students!
- **From Athletics:** Spring sport Season is wrapping up. Congratulations to all of our spring athletes. Our Middle School track and field took 3rd place overall and Teraji Bradley took 1st in Javelin. Special thanks to our coaches for their time and effort this season. Softball and baseball finish the season on a high note with team building and Lake monster game with Middle school baseball. We notice it's especially hard to compete at high levels without a feeder system. We are working on building stronger connections in the JFK. Coaches will develop programming for the younger age groups. **ESPORTS AT WSD?** We are currently having pre-conversations about Esports. We are sending interest surveys out to our students soon.

LOCAL AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

From PeaceJam Advisors: “We were awarded with an Envision Equity grant through the NEA to provide the opportunity for a group of students to travel to New York City this May. In that experience, we were able to visit the United Nations where we took part in a guided tour of the general assembly hall, the secretariat wing, and much of the United Nations headquarters. Our students showed leadership and appreciation for such an opportunity. Our goal as advisors is to educate and support students to become future leaders beyond Winooski’s borders. Students were thrilled to learn about the United Nations objectives, history of the Statue of Liberty, and the Women’s suffrage movement by experiencing the musical “Suffs” on Broadway.”



WINOOSKI PANEL

On May 28 I participated as a panelist during Senator Peter Welch’s listening tour in Winooski. I joined three others to bring light to the progress the city and schools have made toward improving the quality of life and education for residents as a product of the support of investments by the USDA. The evening was pleasant, and the event was a perfect venue to share some of the wonderful things happening in our school district with partners and the community.



Middle and High School students singing in choir are always a crowd favorite

HEALTHY, PRODUCTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL

- **With support**, guidance and a generous grant from Dr. Amra Sabic-El-Rayess and Columbia University's Project Belonging Team, a group of 8th graders worked together with advisors Michael Eppolito, Sona Iyengar, and Amanda Spencer since February 2024 to create a community project representing Belonging in our school. The underpinning of Project Belonging is the enduring knowledge that students who feel Belonging in their school community are best positioned to share kindness, compassion, understanding, and empathy. Their project engaged our school in how we can visualize students, staff, teachers and other Winooski Community members enjoying the courtyard space and particularly feeling welcome to sit at the Project Belonging picnic table. This unique table will have a commemorative plaque designating the work of Project Belonging and will serve as a physical representation of creating Belonging in our school community.
- **The first ever student led** newspaper was created by HS student Thera Neilson during our 3rd session. HS students regularly attended this Friday afterschool program and are hoping to publish their first paper before the end of school.



JFK Elementary School students know the drill.

HEALTHY, PRODUCTIVE, AND SUCCESSFUL

- **Vermont Treasurer Pieciak, state representatives, and stakeholders** attended Courtney Poquette's Personal Finance course at Winooski High School. After a semester covering topics like budgeting, saving, investing, and managing credit card debt, Ms. Poquette's students presented their future budgets and plans as their final assignment. Amira Mohamed-Oussaid, a senior, shared that the course transformed her approach to money management and boosted her confidence. "Taking a personal finance class has changed the way I manage my money and given me the confidence to take control of my finances. I believe personal finance should be part of every high school curriculum to prepare the next generation for success and help them navigate financial challenges."
- **It was exciting** to bring back Girls on the Run for our 3rd session of afterschool. There were eight students that participated in the run on June 1st at the Champlain Valley Exposition. 21C is exploring a partnership with the WSD's track athletes next year.
- **On May 24 & 26** the WMHS musical Urinetown was performed! The PTO sponsored a dinner before the Friday night show.
- **The high school prom** was a huge success and was held at the Mansfield Barn on Sunday, May 26th. Much appreciation goes out to Karen Greene for being the advisor and working with our fabulous students in planning.



The Winooski Early Learning Program finishes a successful and joyful year with lots of play.

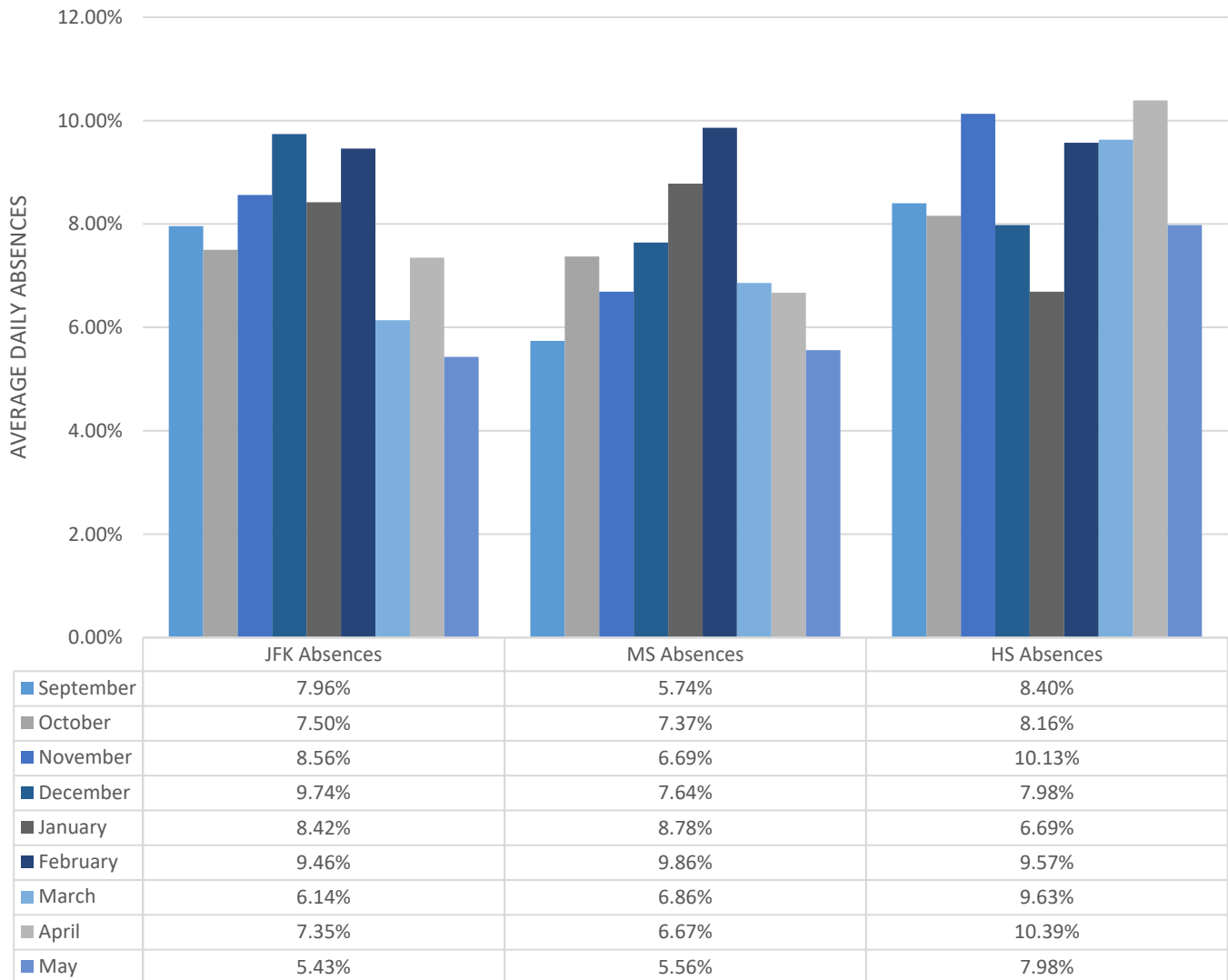
COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

- **The Winooski Early Childhood Program** is offering an inclusive two week summer program for all returning preschool students. Extended School Year (ESY) services will be provided for eligible Pre-K students during this time. The program will continue to practice classroom routines and activities that support social-emotional, physical, and intellectual development.
- **Extended Year Services (ESY)** will be offered to eligible students of all other grades across the district starting in July. Students will receive programming that is reflective of their individual needs including individual, small and large group instruction. Students will receive support in both academics and functional skills depending on their individual needs with a focus on building relationships and student independence.
- **JFK will have its Move Up Day** on Thursday, June 13th. At 9 am, students will be walked to their 2024-25 school year classroom, including the 5th graders over to the middle school. There they will meet their classmates and teachers for the 2024-25 school year. The teachers plan special activities that allow students to get to know about each other and the adults. This annual event is a special part of the last day of school.
- **The district is in the process** of finalizing the Significant Disproportionality Action Plan with the VT AOE. This plan will include goals around strengthening and systematizing our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) with a focus on meeting the individual needs of students across the district. The district will also develop and implement a clear and consistent communication plan so that all families within the district have access to information on our MTSS and special education systems and processes.

THIS YEAR'S ATTENDANCE

Below is our attendance summary for our school year ending in June. Attendance percentages are different than absenteeism (Vermont defines it as a student missing more than 10 days in a 175-day school year), but they are good indicator of attendance trends per school. Absenteeism reports may be provided in a separate cycle. Early indicators show a decline in absenteeism, but this is difficult to gauge because data from past years is inconsistent or insufficient. A more careful analysis from previous data is necessary before bringing a final analysis to the board. For now, the data for this year shows numbers much in line with what was expected pre-pandemic according to the National Center for Education Statistics (92% average daily attendance).

WSD 2023-2024 Average Daily Attendance



OTHER BREAKDOWNS

There are many other ways to present attendance data, and the Board is welcome to request specific breakdowns and analysis even outside the regular monitoring schedule. Some examples of attendance data breakdowns include the number of students who meet the definition of absenteeism in Vermont (more than 10 days), absenteeism in most of the country (10%), students with more than a specific number of absences in the year for any reason, specific number of only unexcused absences, comparative data from year to year for a specified breakdown, any specific data by racial group, disability, etc, or a mix of any of the above. Below is an example of a racial group breakdown of percentage absences for the middle school this year, further analyzed by deviation relationship between total race ratios and absence ratios.

Percentage per total student count				
	19%	28%	7%	44%
Percentage per total absences in the month				
	Asian	Black or A.A.	M. Race	White
September	3%	38%	7%	52%
October	9%	35%	1%	55%
November	5%	18%	11%	67%
December	0%	9%	10%	81%
January	3%	15%	6%	75%
February	1%	19%	3%	77%
March	3%	11%	6%	80%
April	7%	40%	3%	51%
May	9%	20%	6%	66%

Sample Analysis: In December, 81% of the total absences were white students (there were 67 absence incidents recorded, 54 of which were white students), but they only make up 44% of the student population in this school. Hence, the deviation value for December is 0.37 and is depicted in darkest grey.

DEVIATION RELATIONSHIP FROM RACE RATIO TO ABSENCE RATIO

	Asian	Black or A.A.	Multi Race	White
September	-0.16	0.10	0.00	0.08
October	-0.10	0.07	-0.06	0.11
November	-0.14	-0.10	0.04	0.23
December	-0.19	-0.19	0.03	0.37
January	-0.16	-0.13	-0.01	0.31
February	-0.18	-0.09	-0.04	0.33
March	-0.16	-0.17	-0.01	0.36
April	-0.12	0.12	-0.04	0.07
May	-0.10	-0.08	-0.01	0.22

ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

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

Item	Board Direction	Status
Disaggregated Data	Board member Nicole would like to continue to see data disaggregated by subgroups. Wilmer responded that there is much data to look at and that it is preferred to give it to the board in gradual and digestible manner (preferably as part of an internal monitoring process).	One more example of disaggregated data was provided in this month's report (attendance). More will be provided in every report but will ideally follow a predictable arc through the Board planning of Ends statement monitoring.
Ends Statement Monitor	The same topic (last month's internal monitoring report) led to more discussion about how the Board plans to monitor its Ends statement.	A retreat agenda is being created and will include time for the Board to engage in Ends Monitoring planning so that success indicators relate to the type of data and manner of presentation that the Board would like to see.
Gun Safety Resolution	Some members expressed support for the work and the resolution overall but want to ensure that this does not open the Board for excessive or unorganized future petitions by other entities and that the administration does not receive unrealistic mandates through Board action.	Board member Isaiah is working on potential wording for a resolution the Board can back. He will bring an update during the next scheduled meeting. No action on potential policy change regarding adoption of resolutions or additions of agenda items by public petition. For now, agenda item inclusion rests ultimately with the Board President.
Community Engagement Planning	Board members were suggested to add their names to the spreadsheet with groups they would like to visit.	Board members were re-sent the Annual Plan and are encouraged to open the Engagement Contacts tab to add their names for their desired groups.
Yield and Updated Rates	The Board received an update about the Yield legislation at the time and were told they would receive updated information as it comes.	An update is provided in this report. As of now, the Yield Bill is still in limbo due to Scott's veto.
Board Scholarship	The board agreed to increase support for the scholarships but to have more involvement in the process. The committee was maintained until at least the summer.	Non-board members in the committee did not accept the changes at that point in the process so they were notified that the amount would remain the same for now

		with the increase scheduled for the upcoming year under the new criteria.
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From Jason: Hello Board. This month I attended the Juvenile Summit hosted by the Department of Children and Families and Vermont Judiciary that focused on Truancy. We discussed different approaches to dealing with truancy. Some of the discussion was changing language and renaming to "School Engagement." Different models were given and I will share with the administration ways to support families. **5th Grade DARE program** is winding down with 3 more classes. The students have been really engaged and are showing retention of the teaching points. Spoke to 6th grade Health class on the importance of wearing seatbelts when riding in vehicles. Taught CPR and Stop The Bleed to high school health class. **Summer Safety Camp events** are set with all the different topics and field trips laid out. Students will be traveling to different public safety groups to learn how they support our community and offer future possibilities as careers. Students from 7th - 12th grade are invited and the total number of students is 16.

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.