



# SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

**To:** WSD Board President and Board of Trustees  
**From:** Wilmer Chavarria, WSD Superintendent  
**Re:** **Superintendent's Report for November 2024**  
**Date:** 11/8/2024

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Dear Members of The Board,

Below please find my report for **November 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 Ends Statement 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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Winooski wins state for the third time in a row.

## CONFRONTING UNCERTAINTY TOGETHER

I want to express deep gratitude for the educators and school staff that have shown up for students during a tumultuous time. While there is always a diversity of perspectives, the Winooski school staff as a collective have been supportive of each other and created supportive spaces for our students, especially those struggling with the outcomes of the election. While this is a time of uncertainty for many, it is also a reminder of the power of our immediate human environment and how much it matters to come together as a community even against a national backdrop that may look different. Our work as a school district does not change based on the outcome of an election, but we must be attuned to the changes in needs, fears, and hopes that these results produce among our students and families. We will continue to make strides toward meeting our Ends Statement and I am proud of the resilience and professionalism shown by the WSD team.



## HEALTHY AND SUCCESSFUL LIVES

- **The Winooski High School boys' soccer team** won their third consecutive Vermont Division 4 Championship title! Trailing 2-0 at halftime, they rallied with HEART, grit, and determination to secure an unforgettable 4-3 victory in overtime. A special mention to Oliver Mathys-Vallario for his hat-trick, scoring three critical goals. This team's unity and spirit of perseverance are truly commendable. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the fantastic coaches, families, friends, students, and staff. Your unwavering support was vital, and the team's victory is a testament to our strong community bond.
- **On October 30, middle schoolers participated** in a newly improved Spartan Games. These are friendly competitions between advisories meant to create space to practice skills related to our HEART values. Sportsmanship was the value of the Fall Games. A great thank you to special educator Hannah Handloff and PE teacher Kyle Blindow for coordinating the event with a new opening/closing ceremony, Spartan Oath and a quick scoring system.

## HOUSING SUPPORT

We are greatly appreciative of the Winooski Housing Authority for approving funding for Jennie Davis to continue working closely with our students and community to help address the housing issues that our district may face.






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**Join us for the PTO's Holiday Craft and Vendor Fair** at the Winooski School District on Saturday, November 23rd, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM!

Explore over 100 talented artists, makers, and food vendors offering a variety of unique creations.

Admission is free, and plenty of parking is available. Don't miss this festive event!

## ACCOLADES

**Congratulations to Grace Holcomb.** Grace was nominated by her colleagues to be JFK's UVM Outstanding Educator for the 2024/2025 school year for the amazing, above and beyond work she does to support students, their families, and her colleagues. Grace works tirelessly as the case manager for several students, teaches impactful SEL lessons to each of the K-2 classes, and runs research-based small support groups. She is an invaluable resource to her colleagues, always willing to meet and partner to make the best plans for students. She is incredibly helpful and supportive and always lends an ear when needed. She is a spectacular school counselor that our school and district are so lucky to have on our team.

**We are thrilled to share that Amanda Babcock,** our incredible Behavior Coach at JFK Elementary, was honored with the prestigious Sherry Schoenberg PBIS Champion of the Year Award at the Vermont PBIS Conference. Amanda has been dedicated to education since 2005 and has served as JFK's Behavior Coach since 2016. Amanda is our PBIS Coordinator, a member of the JFK Leadership Team, attends PBIS Coordinator meetings, works with Vermont PBIS, and has been instrumental in developing and implementing our PBIS and MTSS systems at JFK. Our school and community are truly better because of Amanda's dedication and hard work.

**Lucas Dunn,** our incredible World Language teacher, has been recognized as UVM's Outstanding Teacher of the Year for 2024/25. Lucas brings boundless energy to his French classes and a deep commitment to honoring all students' language experiences. His work in the Graduation Expectation of Persistence and our Non-Native Language GP reflects his dedication to making learning meaningful for every student. As the MS boys soccer coach, Lucas's leadership has been equally impressive. With 34 players this season, he fostered inclusion, growth, and accountability through restorative practices, helping every student thrive.



Middle School Students tackle problems collectively with the support of their teacher during “Spartan Games”

## MORE ACCOLADES

**Congratulations again to Jean** who celebrated with all the NASSP 2023-2024 State Principals of the Year in Washington D.C this October. This is a well-deserved honor and also a testament to Jean's significant impact on education in Vermont. During his time in D.C., Jean met with policy makers at the U.S. Department of Education where he weighed in on important topics and initiatives that ranged from special education to A.I. in schools. He also was invited to the White House to meet with officials about important policy work around school safety and mental health.

**Patrice Lumumba had the honor** of representing our organization at the 2024 Governor's Excellence in Worksite Wellness Awards, where we were recognized with the Gold Level award. This prestigious recognition highlights our organization's strong commitment to the health and well-being of our employees, reinforcing the importance of creating a supportive and healthy workplace environment.

**Ms. Demore's third-grade class** entered the 2024 Vermont Name a Plow Program and won with their creative name: Flying Pickle! To celebrate Vermont Plow Day, a plow operators and the newly named truck visited JFK. Our students got an up-close look at the plow with their winning name proudly displayed. Of course, they took tons of photos with the Flying Pickle.



## GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL UPDATES

**The city has extended** an offer for the District Liaison Officer position to officer Saja Almogalli. She will be replacing officer Jason soon. A start date is yet to be determined. We received positive feedback from the people that attended the meet and greet sessions and she has good references. We are hopeful that given her background she will be able to approach her work and responsibilities with compassion and a deep understanding for the realities of our communities. She will also build a new program that is related but not the same as the former SRO model. This new model includes an opportunity for in-school programming while remaining stationed primarily externally. We hope, however, that many key elements of the SRO program continue to be executed and supported, such as immediate administrative support for legally-mandated duties, and co-leading the district's Public Safety Committee with the superintendent.

**We have filled the vacant position** of District Data & Software Manager with Sean Pagal, previously our District Registrar. We are thrilled to welcome Sean, who has a proven track record for our district. Sean will not only benefit our entire district in his new role, but he will also collaborate and assist whoever fills the District Registrar position by training and onboarding them to ensure our data is accurate and timely. Welcome, Sean!

Staff join students during one of the "Spartan Games" activities in the Middle School.





Proud parents show appreciation after the student athlete's last soccer game in high school.

- **To adhere to the licensing** ratio regulations, the Pre-K program is working on hiring four open support staff positions.
- **We have initiated our network** hardware upgrade. We have upgraded two out of nine networking areas without interrupting our students' learning. The hardware replacement will be a continuous effort throughout the following months.
- **On December 13**, we will be hosting superintendents from across the region for our monthly Champlain Valley Superintendents Association meeting. We expect around 15 superintendents from surrounding districts and supervisory unions.
- **Winooski was selected** as part of a 7-district cohort for Resource Allocation Review by the AOE. This is another layer of time-consuming reporting (of things that we already report to them) but we have no say on whether we participate. Luckily we have excellent oversight over our investments and Michael Eppolito, our director of Curriculum, will be leading this effort. The original designation notification from the AOE reads as follows: "The purpose of this message is to inform you that your LEA has been selected to participate in a Resource Allocation Review process (RAR) with AOE staff. The Every Student Succeeds Act requires SEAs to administer a periodic review of resource allocations to support school improvement in Local Education Agencies (LEAs) serving a significant number of schools identified for comprehensive and targeted supports. Since your LEA serves more than one school identified for comprehensive support and improvement, or at least one school identified for targeted support and improvement, you have been selected for inclusion in the first, pilot round of these reviews."





A high school student shares their progress with the teacher.

## LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITY

- **Patrice Lumumba has been meeting** with Lowry on the development of the student mentorship program. Lowry is now in the process of connecting with other mentorship organizations and will begin drafting the necessary documents at the end of November.
- **We had our second Student Food Committee**, organized in collaboration with our new food provider. The committee invited students, staff, families, and community members to contribute suggestions and feedback and had excellent attendance. This open forum will help us work together to enhance the food program and ensure it meets the needs of our diverse school community. Our Next meeting will be in January.
- **21C is working on the 2nd session offerings** with new offerings that will include yoga, card trading and science programs. Fifth graders that currently work with Randy Argraves during the school day will be able to continue their music lessons afterschool on Thursdays. Session 2 begins Monday, December 9th- March 7th, 2025. Be on the lookout for the new flyers coming out within the week.





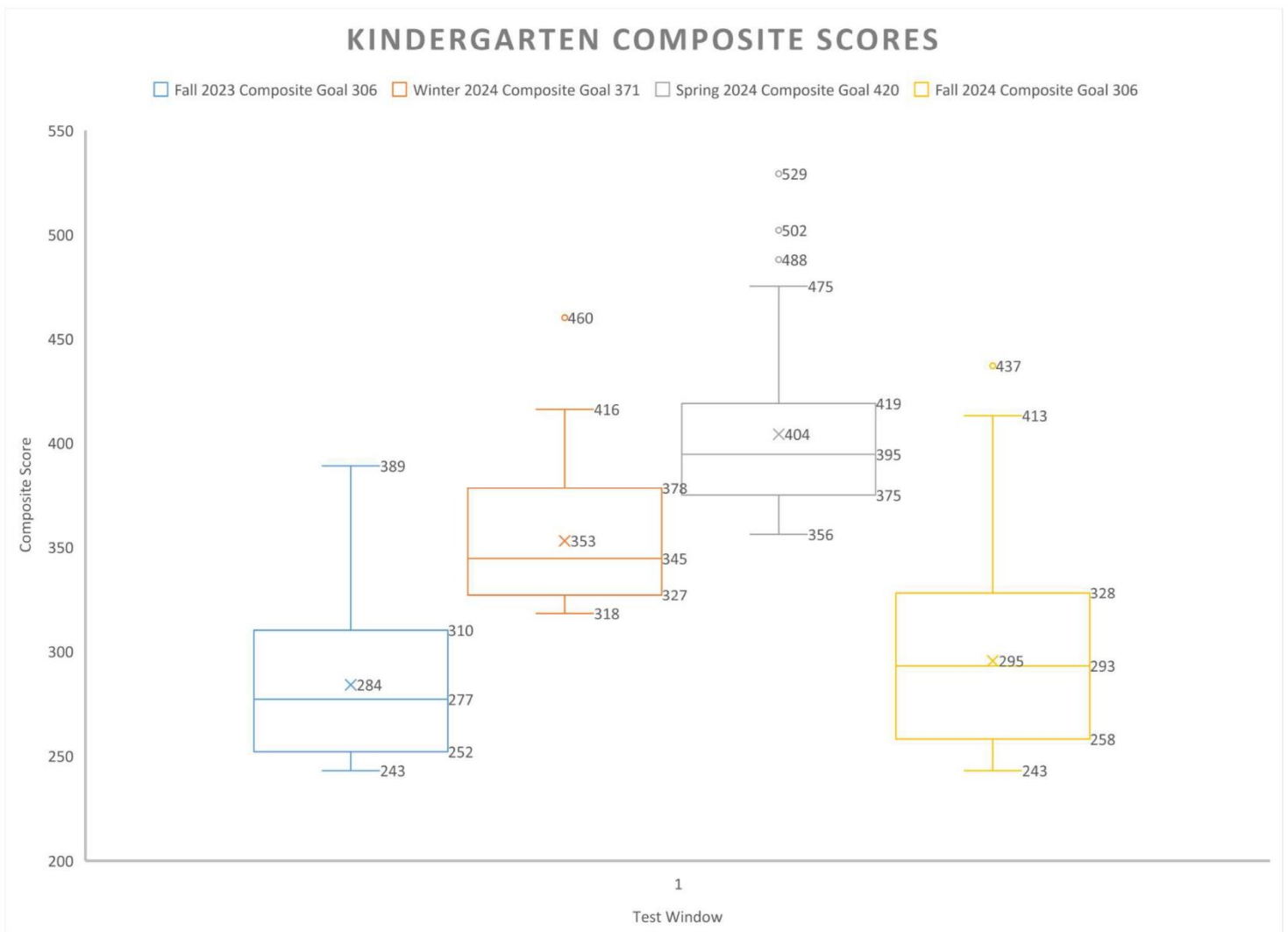
Library time for JFK students with Mr. Gile

## COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

- **The Winooski Early Childhood Program (WECP)** has started hosting family engagement events celebrating children's learning in school. Family engagement is essential to kindergarten readiness and improves children's attendance, academic performance, and classroom behavior. Our WECP started a monthly family newsletter to keep preschool families informed about what is happening in our classrooms.
- **On Saturday, October 26th our high school counselors**, with support of Upward Bound and VSAC provided families with a well-designed presentation around navigating college and post-secondary pathways. On Saturday, November 26th our high school counselors will be engaging families around pathways to graduation and graduation requirements.
- **On November 1st the Agency of Education issued "Requirements and Recommendations on Screening Notification for Parents and Guardians"** which requires us to notify parents within 30 days if their child is significantly below benchmark in reading. Since we have completed our first screening, we have 30 calendar days from November 2nd to issue letters. We are well-positioned to meet this requirement.
- **Over the last three years, our 3-8th grade math teachers** have been working with the All Learners Network. This year our teachers are focused on using ongoing formative assessments to target differentiated math supports through a tool called Math Menu. Teachers are reporting high degrees of student engagement due to their work.

# KINDERGARTEN DYNAMIC INDICATORS OF EARLY LITERACY SKILLS (DIBELS)

Here is a graph showing the growth of Kindergarten Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) composite scores over our last four testing sessions. This graph compares last year's kindergarteners with this year's cohort. Any student falling below the screening window's Goal is at a high risk for reading difficulties.







## KEY DATES

- Friday, November 8th and Tuesday, November 12th: Student Flu Shot Clinic, 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM, Winooski School District School Based Health Center
- Thursday, November 14th: Fall Concert, 7:00 PM, WSD PAC
- Friday, November 15th: Veggie VanGo
- Thursday, November 21st and Friday, November 22nd: Early Release, JFK Family - Teacher Conferences
- Saturday, November 23rd: PTO Holiday Craft and Vendor Fair, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM, Winooski School District
- Monday, November 24 - Friday, November 29: Fall Break - No School

## ADMINISTRATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

- 12/13 I will be the host of the regional Superintendents' Association gathering.
- 11/25 I will be at Harvard coaching all day.
- 11/19 I will be attending the quarterly board meeting of the Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation
- 11/18 I will be meeting with the city manager
- 11/18 I will be attending the ARSC
- 11/10 I will be meeting with several legislators for lunch
- 11/7 I am attending two events organized by the Winooski Partnership for Prevention (inc. Alcohol Policy leadership meeting)
- 11/5 I attended the School Leader of Color 5-session series on organizational change, offered by the Harvard Graduate School of Education
- 11/5 I met with the city manager to go over our usual collaboration items.
- 11/5 I attended the "Winooski Together" planning committee with the city.
- 11/3 I joined board members in the city council and school board joint meeting.
- 11/1 I was at Harvard providing coaching sessions for graduate students
- 10/24 I joined the board the VSA/VSBA Annual Conference

## ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

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

Item	Board Direction	Status
Budget Timeline	The board requested updates to some dates in the proposed timeline, especially around Thanksgiving break.	The updated timeline is included in this packet as part of the budget presentation and is updated in the board's Annual Plan spreadsheet.
Board Development	Board learning based on the Policy Governance book was tabled by the board.	The board will continue their learning after their board self-assessment, which will be completed by November 20 <sup>th</sup> .
Policies	The board has approved six policies so far since August. They are to be adopted during the upcoming board meeting.	Six policies are included in the packet in the "adoption" folder. Please note that a hearing is to take place prior to adoption.