

WSD Board of Trustees Engagement Procedure
DRAFT - October 2023

Winooski residents elect School Board Trustees to represent their interests in defining the Winooski School District's (WSD) vision for student success, establishing policies, and monitoring outcomes. As Trustees, we are accountable to the residents of Winooski and should be accessible to all we represent.

Being accessible requires Trustees to meet residents where they are to ensure as many voices as possible are heard and represented in the Board of Trustees' decision-making process. Trustees can be reached through a variety of channels, but proactive and regular outreach to residents to share information and hear about concerns or questions is an essential part of the Trustee's work. This procedure outlines a structured method for Trustees to use to expand the community's access to the Board.

Barriers that need to be considered regularly:

- **Timing** – Hold meetings at a time that people can attend. Consider school hours, culturally significant days, weekend and overnight shifts.
- **Language** – Plan ahead for printed materials, interpretation, access to follow-up communications and resources from WSD.
- **Technology** – Provide in-person options when possible.
- **Civics** (what Trustees/School District can/cannot do) – May be wide variation in level of familiarity participants have in how local government works. Educate community members on the structure of the WSD and who to go to with concerns or questions.

Procedure for regular, ongoing listening and engagement:

- **Purpose:** Provide an opportunity for Trustees to share information about what is happening in the School District, hear from residents about the issues that matter to them, and report back on topics raised at previous sessions.
- **Timing:** Join at least one engagement held each month, with a goal of a 6-month return time to each group. 1-2 Trustees attend each event. Trustees commit to doing 1 event a month.
- **Event outline:** Provide introductions, updates on major initiatives/happenings in the School District, review any updates on previous issues raised at that group/venue (if any), questions and discussion on those issues, discussion of other issues residents raise.
- **Content development:** Trustees will be responsible for developing content for the meeting. This will include a list of current topics under discussion at the Board level, any follow-ups on discussions from prior meeting(s) at that group/venue, and, if needed pre-meeting discussions with facilitators or service providers (e.g. interpreters, building manager).

- **General/civics outreach:** Trustees could consider tabling at community events without an initiative focus as a more formal 'Meet the Trustees' approach where we offer basic information on the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees in Winooski.
- **Advertising:** Trustees and WSD staff will maintain a connection with a key contact in each venue/group to promote upcoming sessions that are specific to individual groups. For events that are open to the public, WSD staff will help advertise through existing media channels. Trustees will promote activities within their networks as appropriate to the venue/group.
- **Post-event follow-up:** Report back at Board of Trustees meeting about the discussion; share list of any issues raised that could need Board or staff action with Board President and Superintendent, preferably ahead of next Trustees meeting when report back would be given.
- **Priority stakeholder groups for engagement:** Some community members are less engaged or face higher barriers to participation, including limited English proficiency residents, low-income residents, limited-mobility residents, and those marginalized by existing structural racism and other inequities.

WSD FY 25 Budget Communications Plan
DRAFT Proposal

Group Meetings: Trustees select groups from the contacts list to reach out to. Trustees schedule meetings in November and December. 2 Trustees per event - one notetaker, one facilitator.

Draft Script:

Vermonters have always valued education. That's why we're one of the only states with a constitution that guarantees all students, no matter where they live, will have equal access to education funding.

In 1997, the state supreme court identified this constitutional demand and the legislature acted quickly to pass a law ensuring it was met. They created a system for counting student populations based on how much it costs to educate them. Unfortunately, they didn't have any data on how much funding different students require. By 2018, it was clear that the law wasn't working for our kids, in particular kids living in poverty and multilingual learners.

The good news is, after commissioning a study from the University of Vermont, the legislature passed Act 127, which adjusts how students are counted based on the real-life, practical costs of educating them. This new way of counting students will benefit school districts like Winooski by ensuring that more of the state's education dollars are dedicated to serving students with more complex needs.

The Winooski School Board is obligated to use these additional funds to support the learning needs of multilingual students and students living in poverty. Our administrators have identified several high leverage investments that would improve student outcomes while not adding to the tax burden of Winooski residents.

We are looking for your feedback!

[NAME 3-5 KEY INVESTMENTS (and why they meet the requirements of the law) - ask participants to rate them as High Priority, Mid Priority, Low Priority or Not Enough Information]

What are we missing? [Open-ended question]

In addition to in-person meetings, get the survey out to the community using student and family email distribution lists, and a QR code on a postcard that gets mailed to every household.

Once the budget is finalized, use regular methods to inform the community - joint presentations with the City, community dinner, CCTV, etc.