



Winooski School Board of Trustees
Special Meeting - Board Budget
Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 6:00pm
WSD Library Learning Commons or via Zoom
Zoom Login: <https://wsdvt.zoom.us/j/87380690607>

Policy Title 1.0 Ends Statement: All students will graduate from the Winooski School District (WSD) college and career ready at a cost supported by a majority of the Winooski community. WSD students will lead healthy, productive and successful lives and engage with their local and global community.

Attendees: Wilmer Chavarria, Sarah Haven, Robert Millar, Isaiah Donaldson, Nicole Mace, Kamal Dahal, Elom Kpesse (virtual), Corali (virtual), Carsen Small, Michael Eppolito, Adam Herwitz, Jean Berthaimé, Allyssa Ravelin (note keeper)

1. Call to Order: 6:01pm

- a. Meeting called to order by Robert Millar @ 6:01pm

2. Agenda Review and Adjustments:

- a. None

3. Public Comments:

- a. None

4. FY25 Budget Work Session

- a. Presentation/Discussion: F525 Budget Presentation 3
 - i. Updates from Wilmer Chavarria from last meeting-
 - ii. Information regarding the 13% increase in tuition by Katharine Blair was presented by Sarah Haven
 - iii. The school district continues to access independent school placement for particular students due to not having the present capacity to meet the intensity of needs for many of our students. Significant challenges for students since COVID such as emotional and behavioral challenges continue to rise. These challenges many times include safety concerns for both individual students and others. The cost of these programs continues to rise as the options for these programs continue to decline. In order to meet the requirements of providing a free, appropriate education. Some students may require

- classroom teachers, special educators, behavior interventionists, social workers, counselors, and other specialists along with transportation access, which can be very expensive.
- iv. ESSER investment was discussed. This information can be found by viewing the [December 6, 2023 Budget Meeting Recording](#).
 - v. Sarah Haven reviewed the projected \$106K deficit and the board was given time to discuss this information.
 - vi. Nicole Mace - notes that she believes there is a \$100K fund balance to offset expenditures. Sarah Haven confirms this is correct.
- b. Wilmer Chavarria -welcomes everyone to the 3rd Budget Session.. We are getting all the information we can so that in a few weeks the board can come up with a budget that the city will then vote on.
- i. Education of the public involves: A district budget, education spending, the role of the board, resident role and timeline of budget adoption.
 - ii. Board rules itself by our global policy or Ends Statement: All students will graduate from the Winooski School District (WSD) college and career ready at a cost supported by a majority of the Winooski community. WSD students will lead healthy, productive and successful lives and engage with their local and global community.
 - iii. Sarah Haven shares and reviews the Key Budget Factors.
 - 1. Absorption of ESSER positions and Contracted Services
 - 2. Open 2 Preschool Classrooms
 - 3. Salaries and Wages as negotiated - Licensed Staff- 8.5%, Support Staff- TBD
 - 4. Loan Payment
 - 5. Insurance - Health 16%, Property Insurance 23%, Workers Comp Insurance 4%
 - 6. CCC New Child Care Tax 0.44%
 - 7. IT Infrastructure
 - 8. Required Security Updates (Previously Committed) - Cameras, School Safety Position
 - 9. Out-of-District Tuition 13%
 - 10. Utilities
 - 11. Transportation
 - 12. Replace Maintenance Truck
 - iv. Discussion around specific budget factors took place between the board, budget buddies and administration. This detailed discussion can be viewed by watching the [December 6, 2023 Budget Meeting](#)
 - v. A discussion and explanation around the numbers associated with the weighted long term membership, CLA and Homestead Property Yield was discussed and can be viewed by watching the [December 6, 2023 Budget Meeting](#)

- vi. Wilmer Chavarria presents budget options for FY'25. He states that he is using the 2050 long term membership and calculating 2100. He highlights scenarios #3 and scenario #4 and notes that ACT 127 sets a limit of 10% increase on per pupil spending before you are reviewed by a team from the state to see if increases were justified. If they decide that they aren't, then the tax goes back to where they were before the increase.
- vii. Nicole Mace clarifies – Wilmer is asking for guidance from the board whether they want to see scenario 3, retaining the 13 ESSER positions, addressing other priority items (shared above) along with opening the other 2 Pre-K classrooms. That would reflect a 40% increase in our education budget. In scenario # 3 we can do all those things and see a 3% decrease in taxes. Scenario 4- does all that scenario 3 does, while keeping a grant funded position in the high school for flexible pathways. 42% increase in spending while keeping the tax rates the same.
- viii. Mike Decarreau states he hasn't heard what the one time costs are and what is the cost we are talking about? Sarah Haven– The preschool did have some one time costs, but Maybeline (Lopez) was able to secure some funding this year to absorb those costs. So the costs we put into the budget would be ongoing.
- ix. Sarah Haven continues to review FY'25 Key budget factors:
 - 1. Loan Payment- That is on going, but one time.
 - 2. IT Infrastructure- \$600,000 in the budget for that. It would be a one-time cost, and I think that is high. Anticipate with the E-Rate and additional grants, it will be less.
 - 3. Security Cameras- One time. Sarah Haven put in may cost \$40,000
 - 4. Maintenance truck- One Time Cost, as well. Estimated \$60, 000
- x. Mike Decarreau initiates a discussion regarding one term costs and how they could affect future budgets. Wilmer states that the one time cost yields for future budgets. Mike Decarreau shares that one time cost shouldn't be in the budget. He notes that fund balance can be utilized for some of these one time costs.
- xi. Mike Decarreau initiates a discussion around ESSER positions, what they are, where the funding comes from and who is paid out of this funding. He states that these positions would be the ones that would change the funding formula and would be aimed at getting more people to help the kids in the best manner to improve outcomes. Staffing makes a big difference if it's done in the right places.
- xii. The board and budget buddies continued to discuss positions and how they are funded as well as recruitment for new students to attend our schools. A discussion around all scenarios presented takes place with conversations regarding which scenarios can be dropped and which ones should be kept for further consideration.

***Five minute recess @ 745pm.**

***Meeting called back to order @ 7:51pm by Robert Millar**

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- xiii. The budget timeline is reviewed, Robert asks for the last comments regarding the budget, no other comments shared.

5. Executive Limitations (Policy Section II):

- a. Policy Title: 2.8 Communication and Support to the Board
- i. WSD Ad Hoc Budget Communication Committee Report Out (Wilmer)
1. Wilmer has a committee that was built temporarily to discuss strategy to discuss communication with the public. It will continue to be temporary, if we need more meetings than we can. This committee is not to replace usual mechanisms. Good outcomes have come up– including this Saturday's event. Local food and beverages and presentation by Isaiah and Nicole. Then the board needs to get ready to get with the city.
 2. Isaiah clarifies that childcare will be offered as well.
 3. Nicole states translation services will be provided.
 4. Robert asks for other questions.
 - a. None provided
- ii. Winooski High School Graduation Requirements Presentation
1. Presentation from Jean Berthiaume, Adam Hurwitz and Michael Eppolito
 2. Jean Berthiaume clarifies that the board is updating an outdated requirement
 - a. Jean states that the amazing commitment to proficiency based teaching, moving away from traditional grades is one of the reasons it moved me to come work here at WSD. The system that was in place when I started my tenure, we didn't have a transcript. Very different. No guidance from the state to do proficiency based. Adam Hurwitz who worked with lots of MLL, it was very hard to apply for grants without a grading system in place. Middle and High schools worked last year to define them and are putting them in place now.
 - b. We had to identify a proficiency base system, look at tradition on transcript. We now have standards in place for all courses or performance indicators. These are the minimum that students need to take. We needed to communicate what students have studied that would be reflected on transcripts.
 - c. Room for Flexible pathways, engage students in nontraditional ways.
 - d. Jean Berthiaume shares what the course of studies could look like in their 4 years. Still trying to map out standards so there is logical consistency for graduation readiness.
 - e. Flexible pathways to graduation, Dual enrollment & early college, tech programs, virtual learning, work based learning.
 - f. Course completion- students meeting (on a 4 point scale with rubric of learning). The students will have other performance indicators in one course. Showing proficiency in various levels of high school career.
 - g. Michael Eppolito– One of the items we attached a number to this is that students had a hard time grounding how students performed in classes. This way it would be clear to caregivers about completion moving towards graduation

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- h. Isaiah Donaldson asks what 2.6 (over all score needed) rates to old style of grading
 - i. Michael Eppolito states it doesn't. It shares that 2.6 is meeting proficiency. There is no level.
 - j. Adam Hurwitz shares that the previous representation of learning, the 11 point learning wasn't relative to colleges. This feels better and it helps in explaining. Transcripts go out with the description of we are a proficiency based school.
 - k. Isaiah Donaldson asks about reception from other
 - l. Adam Hurwitz says that it's going well and colleges have thanked them for moving towards a system that is more in line with their school
 - m. Jean Berthiaume says that transient students when sending files they weren't able to translate.
 - n. Isaiah Donaldson asks about kids from other schools coming here, how do you translate their transcripts? Jean and Adam Hurwitz review the current procedure.
 - o. Isaiah Donaldson asks for clarity around how this is explained to parents and Jean notes that he does not get a lot of phone calls. Adan notes that most conversations are in favor of this change and Michael notes that parents are inquiring on how students can excel..
 - p. Jean Berthiaume says that schools are engaging in a proficiency based system (we are still in process). In addition we are still attending to the graduating proficiency (GP). We are also trying to keep track of whether they are proficient in all GPs. All students must have capstone in 3 (creativity, written & spoken communication & persistence). We are able to engage in a portrait of a graduate, not just high school but starting in Pre-K.
 - q. What does Capstone mean - Practice various presentations using a clear rubric and dimensions in any one of those areas (Creativity, Written and Spoken Communication, Persistence, Well being, Critical Thinking, and Culture and Community; One of which needs to be Communication). They will use a course experience to illustrate to students as well as other teachers, what their transferable skill is, and what it would look like in terms of work and experiences. They get an opportunity to practice in their high school career.
3. Nicole Mace - Thanks Jean, Michael and their team for the work that has been done to translate a system that was hard to understand. This better serves our students. When I first became familiar with the proficiency based system was the Nellie Mae foundation, part was to engage with parents about hopes and dreams for their students. Fortunate to be with a non-native English speaking system, at that time the most common comment was, why is my kid graduating without being able to prepare or take remedial classes? District decided to come up with a system. Not sure if the new system has taken those concerns away. We still have work to do. Would like to open to those tuning Corali and Elon to share if

wanted? I still hear the same concerns from 13 years ago, just wanted to acknowledge that

- a. Robert Millar says that he appreciates the presentation, it's exciting, but agrees with Nicole. Compared to my high school experiences, this is interesting. I got to see some presentations last year.
 - b. Any questions or comments?
 - i. None provided.
 - c. Michael Eppolito- passion for reading, it's our moral obligation. We are working on it. We are addressing this starting in Pre-K. Revamped new systems. Willing to be accountable at any community group about how students are performing. We are getting better about monitoring our own progress and raise our rigor starting with younger learners
 - d. Jean Berthiaume appreciates the acknowledgment. I wish we could go faster, I agree that we have work to do. When we had ½ time curriculum director ½ ELL director, we didn't have the resources.
 - e. Kamal Dahal states- when we had to do a budget presentation, I got a good understanding of how GX. The public is looking for the feedback, they supported the budget but now that kids are graduated. Do we have information about how they have continued on?
 - i. Do we survey the graduates about how well we prepared them?- Nicole Mace
 - ii. Jean Berthiaume says we are building systems that were not in place. If we had a consistent system over time, I could engage. We should always be asking how our students are doing. We should be developing systems to get feedback from students
 - iii. Kamal Dahal states he has personal experience but the public wants data
 1. Adam Hurwitz said they are using a new system SCORE. Coordination, tracking applications to institutions.
 - a. Use it to send transcripts, applications, etc. We will have really good data to see where students applied, where they got it, etc.
4. Jean Berthiaume shares our new transcript that didn't exist 2 years ago. It reflects who we are as a community. Share a lot about our proficiency system. Now it is organized and not a lot of people are trying to keep track.
 5. Kamal Dahal- for non native language requirement- feedback I have received is that parents are speaking their native language, and the kids are speaking English as their first language. They wish that requirement fulfill their native language, so they can connect with their grandparents and have that cultural heritage with them.
 6. Elom Kpesse- Are students being promoted to the next grade if they don't do well or are they staying back in order to work on that proficiency

- a. Jean Berthiaume- We are still trapped about 9th grade, 10th grade concept, but we are valuing the GPs and graduations of learning and figuring out what they need for learning or learning recovery
- 7. Nicole Mace- if a student doesn't get a 2.6 in algebra, do they take algebra again or do they take it again until they get a 2.6
 - a. Adam Hurwitz- Math is sequential where it would mean they would probably take it again. English – they have other options depending on the subject

6. Governance Processes: (Policy Section IV)

- a. Policy Title: 4.1.2 Governing Style
 - i. Board Resolution on Housing
 - 1. Robert Millar acknowledges Nicole turning this around in less than 12 hours.
 - a. Opens it up to comments and concerns
 - b. Nicole reads the resolution on the need to preserve, protect and produce affordable family housing.
 - 2. Robert Millar opens up for discussion
 - 3. **Motion made to pass the resolution**
 - 4. **Passes unanimously.**

7. Next Agenda:

- a. No new agenda items shared.

8. Upcoming Events:

- a. 12/13 - WSD Regular School Board Meeting

9. Adjourn:

- a. Isaiah makes a motion to adjourn the meeting on 12/06/23
 - i. **Motion passed unanimously**
 - ii. **Meeting adjourned at 8:52pm**