



Winooski School Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, August 13, 2025, 6:00 pm
WSD Library Learning Commons or via Google Meet
Google Meet Link: meet.google.com/szx-gwkh-oe

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, Nicole Mace, Isaiah Donaldson, Krista Parisi, Cheyne Racine, Allyssa Ravelin, Allison Novak
Virtual Attendees: Emily Bowers, Elom Essiba

1. **Call to Order** (5 Minutes)
 - a. Robert Millar calls the meeting to order at **6:05 pm**
2. **Agenda Review and Adjustments:** (5 Minutes)
 - a. *None Provided.*
3. **Announcements and Recognition**
 - a. [International Youth Day](#)
 - b. [Board Statement](#) Supporting WSD Superintendent
 - c. Other Announcements and Recognitions
 - i. Robert Millar shares that the city passed a resolution in honor of this day.
 - ii. Robert Millar shares that last month, Superintendent Chavarria was detained for a lengthy period of time when returning home from travel outside of the US. Robert shares the statement from the Winooski School Board of Trustees.
4. **Public Comments:** This item is reserved for comments and questions on topics that are not included on this agenda. Time for public comment is included by default for each item below.
 - a. *None Provided.*
5. **Consent Agenda:** (5 Minutes)
 - a. Minutes of Meetings
 - i. Regular Board Meeting: June 11, 2025
 - b. Policy Title 1.0: Ends
 - i. Annual Approval of CIPs

- c. Policy Title: 2.3 Financial Condition and Activities
 - i. Approval of Bills
- d. Policy Title: 2.7 Compensation and Benefits
 - i. Craig Dwyer, School Safety Coordinator
 - ii. Jarod Wunneburger, JFK Assistant Principal
 - iii. Amanda Schroth, JFK Preschool Teacher, Long Term Substitute
 - iv. Augustina Sirvent, JFK Elementary Educator
 - v. Christopher Flaherty, WHS Educator
 - vi. Justin Hoy, WHS Dean of Student Life
 - vii. Madeline Gemme, WHS Long Term Substitute
- e. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept the consent agenda.
 - i. Nicole Mace- "So Moved."
 - ii. *Passes unanimously.***
- f. Robert Millar shares his appreciation for Nicole Mace covering the June meeting.

6. **Governance Processes (Policy Section IV):** (45 Minutes)

- a. Policy Title: 4.1.6 Governing Style
 - i. Action: Assignment of Policies to Board Members for Internal Monitoring Drafting
 - ii. Robert Millar shares the assignments for the upcoming year. Isaiah Donaldson is up in September due to the content not being ready in June.
- b. Policy Title: 4.2.1 Community Engagement
 - i. Discussion: Recent Community Activities by the Board
 - ii. Nicole Mace shares that she represents the community on the Champlain Housing committee. The current project is centered around the O'Brien Center and expanding the library and dental services. Nicole is in charge of the fundraising for this project.
 - iii. Nicole shares an update regarding the residents who were displaced from 300 Main Street. The armory property is in the process of going through the redevelopment steps to offer more multi-family/large family dwellings. It will not be a multistory project. It will be two-story, family housing.
 - iv. Discuss: Board participation at Convocation and Family BBQ
 - 1. Wilmer Chavarria shares that he welcomes the board to the family BBQ at 5:15 pm and that Robert Millar will be present at 11:30 am for the staff convocation. This will take place on Thursday, August 21st.
- c. Policy Title: 4.2.2 Create Written Governing Policies
 - i. Action: Public Hearing and Adoption of Policies
 - 1. PG2.9 Race and Equity
 - 2. Robert Millar asks for comments from the public first. This is an existing policy with no changes.
 - 3. ***None provided, public hearing closed.***
 - 4. Robert Millar looks for a motion to adopt PG2.9 Race and Equity.
 - 5. Isaiah Donaldson- "So Moved."
 - 6. *Passes Unanimously.***
 - ii. Discussion/Action: Policy Second Read and Approval for Adoption
 - 1. PG.2.0 Global Executive Constraint

2. Wilmer Chavarria shares that there were no changes; that is the global policy. My suggestion last time was for you not to touch it– it is not necessary. In fact, global policy has supported me in some of my decisions, some of which could potentially be controversial, but at least I have the backing of adopted policy to justify some of my moves.
 3. Robert Millar looks for a motion to approve PG.2.0 Global Executive Constraint for adoption
 4. Nicole Mace- “So Moved.”
 5. ***Passes Unanimously.***
- iii. Discussion: Policy First Read
1. F5: Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams
 - a. Robert Millar clarifies that this is a new policy due to a new law.
 - b. Wilmer Chavarria shares that we are in compliance with this policy; we have been before this law went into effect. Now that it is a law, we need to have a policy. We are required to adopt procedures by the law. Our team is reviewing our policies to ensure we are meeting the minimum requirements. Wilmer recommends that the board adopt this policy as is.
 - c. Robert Millar asks Wilmer to speak to how this interacts with our existing conduct and discipline policy, which we did spend time on and got student feedback on.
 - d. Wilmer Chavarria notes that this isn’t going through the consequences of specific behaviors. This is for the highest level of violence. Policy shouldn’t give consequences, but should provide guidance on how to engage with the law. I am not worried about them overlapping or interfering with each other.
 - e. Nicole Mace, is this tool envisioned or available to assist with threat assessment for individuals who are not students? Members of the family, perhaps? Threats to an institution can come from a lot of different places.
 - f. Wilmer Chavarria, we were definitely not the proponents of this law. The focus is on students and if you think about what some of the points of the law were thinking of, it is sometimes a misguided perception that schools are not doing anything about certain behaviors. We might be talking about disability, we might be talking about things that we’re not supposed to give all that information to the public. The public believes we are just not doing anything; they feel we should be expelling kids– that is an unfair assessment. In practice as a school leader, I will tell you that when people are angry, they just want students expelled. The truth is, it's not just the host of laws that prevent us from just kicking kids out; Most of the time, it is just not the best approach to the situation to support that student and the community to heal and improve for the next time. This is focused on students and the highest levels of behavior posing a predictable threat to the community and students around them. We have a threat assessment team and also a standing public safety team that meets weekly.

- g. Robert Millar shares that we should tailor the #4 more to our school, for example, we don't have an SRO (School Resource Officer), we have a DLO (District Liaison Officer).
- 2. D8: Selection of Library Materials
 - a. Robert Millar confirms that this is not a new policy.
 - b. Nicole Mace asks if this is an update from VSBA?
 - i. Wilmer Chavarria makes the board aware that it has been in place since April 1st. The policy gets very direct about what our procedures absolutely need to include and provides a little more protection of the books on site.
- 3. B8: Electronic Communications Between Employees and Students
 - a. Wilmer Chavarria shares this is an important policy, especially as we move towards adopting the new policy for the new law. We currently have a cell phone "policy"/rule for middle and high school, not a district policy. This has not been done as it would have to be passed by the board. The law doesn't go into effect until July 1st, next year. We might as well start practicing; we are 90% of the way there.
 - b. Nicole Mace shares that, putting her CCV hat on, we engage with legislators quite a bit on this policy to make sure that there is ability for a carve out; A lot of dual enrollment courses that high school students take require two factor authentication. Many of those systems are moving away from email authentication. Without a cell phone, students are not able to access course materials on another institution's server. Since this is being implemented by administrations and not the board, just ask those questions– are there students who may be impacted?
 - c. To hear the full discussion regarding this: [Winooski School District-School Board Meeting August 13, 2025](#)
- d. Policy Title: 4.2.4: Advocate for Legislative Change
 - i. Discussion: Redistricting Taskforce
 - 1. Robert Millar I wanted to have a discussion. The redistricting task force has been put together with legislators and the governor and had at least one meeting.
 - 2. Nicole Mace shares that she resigned from the Commission on the Future of Public Education. The legislature passed Act 73, and several members of the commission resigned. The commission is still meeting; it has a much narrower focus, which is really a lot of design around roles and responsibilities of newly merged boards and the role of the electorate versus the role of the board, etc. The redistricting task force has been assembled and has had a meeting and has a series of meetings scheduled. The VSBA sent out the schedule of meetings. I think it is important for all school boards to pay close attention. Their charge is to develop three different scenarios of school district mergers, new school district boundaries/configurations, and present those to the general assembly for the next session. The general assembly may pick one of those three or make one of their own. Due to the magnitude of this charge, I feel it's important to have a

conversation and be proactive and engage in terms of envisioning what a future for our district could look like in a way that matters most. Although it isn't required with this law, with Act 46, districts were to engage with neighboring communities and I think that, although it isn't required, we should.

3. Isaiah Donaldson clarifies neighboring districts (yes). I am in support of this; it makes perfect sense.
 4. Nicole Mace makes a statement that part of this is transparency for the community.
 5. To hear the full discussion regarding this: [Winooski School District- School Board Meeting August 13, 2025](#)
- ii. Action: Authorize Board Officers to Establish Joint Advocacy with Neighbor District
1. Robert Millar looks for a motion for the Chair and Vice Chair to conduct outreach to neighboring districts to explore possibilities under Act 73.
 2. Isaiah Donaldson- “So Moved.”
 3. ***Passes Unanimously.***
- e. Policy Title: 4.5 Agenda Planning
- i. Action: Approve Annual Plan
1. Robert Millar shares that he would love to get this approved tonight. The Board Retreat is a few weeks away. Under policy governance, we try to have an annual plan so there are no surprises. Nicole Mace reflects on the only significant change from last year, the monitoring being spread out over every meeting. Isaiah Donaldson clarifies that the school newsletter topics are blank, asking if that is intentional.
 2. Robert Millar The line existed but it wasn't something that was shared, but it can be updated with due dates and assignments.
 3. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept the Annual Plan for ‘25 - ‘26.
 4. Nicole Mace - “So Moved.”
 5. ***Passes Unanimously.***
- ii. Discussion: Board Retreat
1. Robert Millar shares that the Board Retreat will be held on Monday, August 25th, here at Winooski School District.
 2. Nicole Mace asks for clarification of the 30 minutes of the Board Budget.
 - a. Wilmer Chavarria shares that there is a budget for the board, bringing up the conversation that we have had before regarding spending. A conversation that needs to happen about what the budget is, what it will be used for, etc.
- f. Policy Title: 4.8 Governance Investment
- i. Board Learning
1. Wilmer Chavarria asks for one takeaway from reading. It explains why it is good to focus on policy and why it's a good idea for a governance board. It gives you four different reasons why governance through policy is a good idea. It tells you about leverage and efficiency, expertise, fundamentals along with vision and inspiration. Out of those four, which one resonated with you?

2. Robert Millar- Expertise stood out to me. I am trying to bring out that everyone brings something different. We want a variety of community members.
3. Nicole Mace shares that the policy provides the basic framework. The piece about fundamentals resonated with me. We have so many rabbit holes we could go down, but we do well at sticking to the policies, reflecting on the most impactful work that we do.
4. Isaiah Donaldson dealing with trees rather than the forest. As a board, we are constantly looking at trends, especially during budget season. What does the future hold for us? How can we lean towards that? Looking down the road 10 years from now. Other districts may get caught up in how the doors unlock every day, but we have a similar mindset and look beyond that.
5. Emily Bowers- Expertise, all of our different backgrounds and different life experiences allow us to go into the policies and bounce off each other. I appreciate each meeting, all coming with different hats on.
6. Elom Essiba- Vision and inspiration, for us to make a clear policy, we have to read each policy and redefine it.
7. To hear the full discussion regarding this: [Winooski School District- School Board Meeting August 13, 2025](#)

7. **Executive Limitations (Policy Section II):** (20 minutes)

a. Policy Title: 2.8 Communication and Support to the Board

- i. Discussion/Action: August Superintendent's Report to the Board
- ii. Wilmer Chavarria There is no internal monitoring report; this was planned. It is the one month we don't have one. Thank you to Sarah Haven's team for working hard over the summer. I'd like to call attention to the State's new data. VTCAP data, it only started three years ago, when we had the second test, we could start comparing. We have a learning cap compared to communities of privilege. Are we helping our students improve? Are we narrowing the gap? The answer from last year, yes!
- iii. Wilmer Chavarria We have done a lot of things intentionally. We have looked at the data not from the past three years but since even before I came, there were substantial processes where people were trying to figure out what was going on and how to best serve the specific communities we have. I came in the middle of a lot of that work, especially after a couple of crises that the world went through and after the big investment that we made. I was happy to walk in to see things that had been set in motion. I immediately went and supported things that I believe were promising. There has been a strong push for clarifying what we do, what we don't do. There has been a very strong push to adopt a very high-quality curriculum. We have invested heavily in anything from coaches to multilingual liaisons to outreach to families to training for teachers. All of these moves have been intentional, based on the data we are seeing and asking our community what it is we need. This is something that we need to be protective of, whether we end up in the same district or whether we merge with anyone else in the future. We have to remember what the factors are that may have contributed to this success to make sure those factors remain intact.

- iv. Nicole Mace shares that we didn't have a Director of Curriculum before COVID. I attribute this to you and your team, Michael Epolitto, principals. Wilmer Chavarria I will say this is one point of data that I gave to you last year and why I chose to give you, because all of our data actually looks better than this. Our internal data, the data we trust more, gives us more reassurance that a lot of things that we are doing are working. We don't want to be delusional and live in a bubble either. This data from the stat is usually the one that looks the worst, getting weaponized against us. It is the one I will more proudly show; even if it looked the other way, I would still be showing it to you because I know it will be consequential. It is what they put press releases out about, plastering the name of the school districts, their data, they say, look like they are behind. It has been used nationwide against our communities. My approach in New Mexico was exactly this. We have been sharing this explicitly, sharing with students and families. We changed the narrative.
- v. Nicole Mace, another piece I would be interested in seeing is the disaggregated data. As we talk about our demographic as a district, understanding how that growth looks by different students and subpopulations, historically, we have seen some pretty significant gaps between male and female students, between male students of color and others. I think it is important internally to see that we are not seeing improvement in the wrong direction.
- vi. Wilmer Chavarria shares that although the data isn't presented in that way, we can take the long route and do it ourselves. We have other measures. Wilmer shares that in the report, we are welcoming some new administrators, and data that will be shared with our staff next week.

8. **Upcoming Important Dates:**

- a. 8/14: New Staff Orientation
- b. 8/21: Staff Convocation 11:30 - 3 PM
- c. 8/21 Family Orientation and Back to School BBQ 4:15 PM
- d. 8/27: First Student Day K-5, 6th & 9th Grade
- e. 8/28: K-12 in Attendance
- f. 9/1: No School Pre-k - 12 (Labor Day)
- g. 9/2: First Day of School Pre-k
- h. 9/10: Regular Board Meeting

9. **Meeting Reflection**

- a. Robert Millar shares that this was his idea but he was not prepared to move forward with it at this meeting.

10. **Adjourn:**

- a. Robert Millar asks for a motion to adjourn.
- b. Isaiah Donaldson "So Moved."
- c. *Passes Unanimously.*
- d. Meeting adjourned @ 7:37 pm.

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