



SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

To: WSD Board President and Board of Trustees
From: Wilmer Chavarria, WSD Superintendent
Re: **Superintendent's Report for July and August, 2025**
Date: 08/11/2025

Dear Members of The Board,

Below please find my report for **July and August, 2025**, 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
wchavarria@wsdvt.org



Students perform a play about the migration of the monarch butterflies.

INCIDENTAL REPORTS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

Within your new **Annual Plan**, you will find a new line for incidental reports that align with your decision to receive information and data throughout the year, organized in such a way that your Ends Statement indicators of compliance are covered over time. This “incidental” information, as is usually called in policy governance, will be provided to you via our existing mechanism: the superintendent’s report to the board. As you may recall, Policy Governance requires that the superintendent provide Internal Monitoring Reports for each of its policies but leaves discretion open for how to address other information outside the given policy due in a specific month. As a product of the board’s discussions over the past year or so, we’ve decided to also add a degree of organization and predictability to the rest of the information by using the indicators of compliance and the data associated with each. For this month, I am pleased to provide you with an early look at our VTCAP data, which is the default academic data that the state uses for much of its decision-making and directly connects to our “college and career ready” portion of the Ends Statement.

DATA SNIPPET

We received our third year of data from the state standardizes assessment, VTCAP. As is the case nationwide for students living in poverty and those with additional barriers, Winooski's overall scores underperformed when compared to the rest of the state. We do not have current statewide results yet available since the AOE stopped providing comparative data in the reports after their first year. We will wait for additional public data in order to compare Winooski's latest data to the state.

However, raw proficiency scores do not tell the whole story, even within the rigid margins of a standardized test. **When taking a closer look at our three years of available data, Winooski's case is in fact a success story. While the rest of the state remains stagnant or decreasing in proficiency, Winooski's students trend in a positive direction.**

Understanding the Charts



Consistent Improvement, three-year growth as desired



Showing improvement this year, despite not improving prior



No improvement this year, but potential improvement prior



No Improvement this year nor last

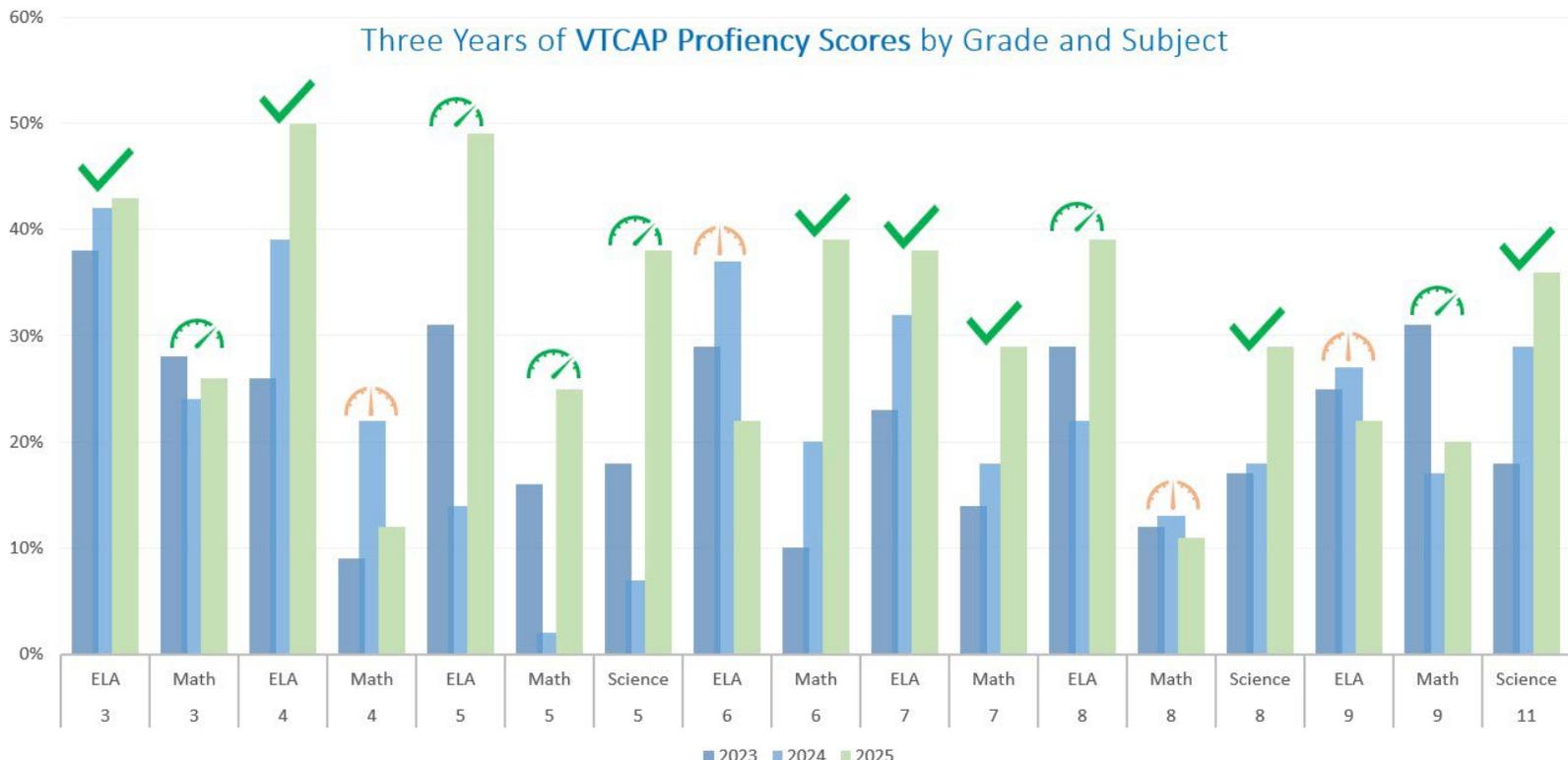


No improvement for more than two years

In other words, we know that our students just by demographic predictions are underperforming the state in raw scores, **but are they at least improving? Are our students closing the gap? The answer from the data is a resounding YES.** The first chart shows the varying degrees in which this is true across grades and subjects.

The second chart shows the same data but with additional detail. Additional charts exist and can be made available, such as the growth rates by cohort rather than grade alone, but they all show a similar story of improvement.

Three Years of VTCAP Proficiency Scores by Grade and Subject



Every single grade and subject have shown improvement in at least one of the two cycles measured since the creation of VTCAP

Grade Growth Comparisons

Grade	Test	2023	2024	2025	23-24 Difference	24-25 Difference	23-25 Difference
3	ELA	38%	42%	43%	4%	1%	5%
3	Math	28%	24%	26%	-4%	2%	-2%
4	ELA	26%	39%	50%	13%	11%	24%
4	Math	9%	22%	12%	13%	-10%	3%
5	ELA	31%	14%	49%	-17%	35%	18%
5	Math	16%	2%	25%	-14%	23%	9%
5	Science	18%	7%	38%	-11%	31%	20%
6	ELA	29%	37%	22%	8%	-15%	-7%
6	Math	10%	20%	39%	10%	19%	29%
7	ELA	23%	32%	38%	9%	6%	15%
7	Math	14%	18%	29%	4%	11%	15%
8	ELA	29%	22%	39%	-7%	17%	10%
8	Math	12%	13%	11%	1%	-2%	-1%
8	Science	17%	18%	29%	1%	11%	12%
9	ELA	25%	27%	22%	2%	-5%	-3%
9	Math	31%	17%	20%	-14%	3%	-11%
11	Science	18%	29%	36%	11%	7%	18%

This Year

FEDERAL FUNDS SAGA

As you may recall from not long ago, the Trump administration had decided to withhold funding for all schools in the nation that related to titles supporting vulnerable communities. This included funds aimed to support English Learners, students who live in poverty, among others. While this is in line with what many in our community see as the Trump administration's policy of cruelty and punishment for the children who need most of our support, it was an unlawful move from almost any angle. Luckily, some order still exists in the country, and the administration reversed course after many states joined a legal pushback. Districts like Winooski stand to lose the most when arbitrary attacks on public schools such as this happen. We spent much of the summer internally brainstorming ways in which to ameliorate the negative impacts of the Trump administration's decision while still safeguarding the limited resources our community has entrusted to us. We are relieved that this decision was successfully challenged and that we did not need to take drastic measures to save some of the programs and services we had already budgeted for, and which Congress had already approved. Moving forward, however, the sustainability of everything we do will have to be planned, accounting for the arbitrary, erratic, and sudden decisions at the federal level. We are now engaged in a different type of budget planning and use; one that does not take any federal support for education for granted and that instead considers carefully what we have in order of priority and impact on student learning and experience. We already knew that we would have challenging budgeting years ahead, but these new and significant factors cannot be ignored. We will maintain a robust educational experience for our students and families while working in the background to make it affordable and sustainable. The board, as always, will play an important role in this.



CHILD FIND

The Winooski School District is required by federal law to locate, identify and evaluate all children with disabilities. The process of locating, identifying, and evaluating children with disabilities is known as Child Find. The Winooski School District conducts a Kindergarten Screening every spring, but parents may call to make an appointment to discuss their concerns at any time. As the school district of residence, we have the responsibility to identify and provide services to any child with special needs who may require special education and related services in order to access and benefit from public education.

GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL UPDATES

The Fiscal Services team has had a highly productive summer, focusing on strategic transitions and key financial tasks to prepare for the new school year.

Our department has been undergoing a **restructuring of roles** to enhance operational efficiency. This includes a reduction in the Finance Services role and the strategic transition of our payroll position to a new Fiscal Services Analyst role.

Key achievements this summer include:

- **Fiscal Year 2025 Closeout & Audit Preparation:** We successfully closed out Fiscal Year 2025 and are diligently preparing all necessary documentation for our fall audit.
- **Grant Management:** The team has finalized all closing reports for previous grants and secured new funding for Fiscal Year 2026.
- **Regulatory Submissions:** We are in the final stages of preparing the annual STAT book for the Agency of Education, which is scheduled for submission in August.
- **Fiscal Year 2026:** To ensure a seamless start to the new year, we have been updating and refining our internal procedures. We are also actively onboarding new staff and look forward to their orientation on August 14th.

The Fiscal Services team is excited for the start of the new academic year and looks forward to welcoming back staff and students.

GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL UPDATES

- **Our policy audit for the year is completed**, and the board should be in a good position to adopt, review, and rescind policies for the upcoming year in such a way that it allows it to remain compliant and even proactive. As a Policy Governance body, our board's primary method of business is through policy. Having a clean and up-to-date policy audit allows the board to engage in its work with focus and order. If you have not done so, ensure that our Annual Plan spreadsheet is bookmarked for your easy access and that you review the different tabs as needed. The policy audit tab is a good resource for you to understand where policies are in terms of their adoption. We are currently working on creating a similarly comprehensive tab for all administrative procedures. This tab will be for your awareness, although procedure is primarily for management.
-

- The Facilities Team has had an incredibly productive summer, and we're excited to share the results of our hard work in preparing the campus for the new school year.

With a fully staffed team and the help of three summer assistants, we were able to tackle our annual deep-cleaning and maintenance projects with greater efficiency than ever before. This summer, we focused on:

- **Revitalizing the Campus:** In addition to our full-campus deep clean, which included furniture, carpets, and windows, we were able to paint several hallways, giving those areas a fresh, new look. We also completed significant landscaping, refreshing garden beds and adding new mulch.
- **Essential Maintenance:** All HVAC and drinking water filters have been changed, and we've closed out all pending work orders to start the year with a clean slate.
- **Prioritizing Safety:** Our annual safety check, including a walkthrough with the Winooski Fire Marshall, has been completed, ensuring our campus is secure and up to code for everyone's return.

Being ahead of schedule has allowed us to not only be more thorough in our work but also to build stronger bonds as a team. We've been able to organize team-building activities outside of work and look forward to continuing this throughout the year.

The entire Facilities Team is proud of the work we've accomplished this summer, and we can't wait for the community to return to a beautiful and safe campus. A huge thank you to everyone on the team for their dedication!





Summer school at JFK.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

One of my priorities during my tenure so far has been to formalize and inventory our most important processes. Our [procedures manual](#) is a collection of procedures required by board policy, state and federal law, or simply established to provide clarity and consistency to common questions of our practice. Many new procedures have been added over the past couple of years, and more will be added as we identify other areas or as we audit our policies to find language where procedure is required. We will replace our current website list with this document in the upcoming weeks.

I recommend that staff familiarize themselves with the ones that relate to their role the most. I'd like to call attention to two important ones that were recently added. The [use of personal electronic devices](#) and the [afternoon dismissal](#). These two procedures take effect immediately and it is important that all staff become familiar with them and do their part in making their application successful.

There may be other procedures that you could find informative, and different stakeholders can also get involved in crafting future ones. For example, the new set of procedures for common discipline incidents at the middle high school have been diligently crafted since the spring by a group of dedicated teachers and staff. It is my hope that similar collective efforts continue to be made in the future to bring consistency and clarity to our practices.

WELCOMING OUR TWO NEW ADMINISTRATORS

Jarod Wunneburger:

Jarod is our inaugural JFK Assistant Principal, joining Principal Sara Raabe and Co-principal Maybeline Lopez to enhance the administrative capacity of our largest school. Jarod brings a wealth of experience from his previous roles as Director of Programs at Farm and Wilderness in Vermont, and as a math teacher, academic dean, and afterschool program founder in New York City.



Craig Dwyer:

Craig is officially our new School Safety Coordinator. This was a position created by the board in 2022 which had gone unfilled until now. But the wait was worth it. Craig is a remarkable licensed administrator who, in addition to overseeing the creation and implementation of safety protocols district-wide, has the experience and credentials necessary to step in for other administrative tasks as needed, such as substituting for a principal or joining our new team of evaluators.

We are grateful for Jarod and Craig choosing to join our team in Winooski. We extend our warmest welcome and look forward to benefiting from their leadership.



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT ON ENDS

Our administrators spent two full days addressing the “bigger picture” questions, reflecting on the successes and challenges of the past year, and strategizing for greater impact this upcoming year. One important item on the agenda was reviewing the decisions the board had made over the year in relation to the Ends Statement and brainstorming the best ways to match the same efforts at the administrative level. As is customary now, each year the administrative team prepares a presentation for the board on our efforts towards fulfilling the Ends Statement. Additionally, we examined the role of what we have come to consider our three pillars: HEART, Graduation Expectations, and Graduation Proficiencies (or the PIs). This summer we asked ourselves: how do these three things guide and uphold the Ends Statement and promise to the PK 12 community?

Even more specifically, we asked about each pillar. How do the three things (HEART, GXs, GPs):

- Create a shared vision for success?
- Reflect the Winooski community?
- Represent a holistic vision oriented towards student growth?

Through conversation and reflection, we reimagined our district logo in alignment with our three pillars that together support a PK 12 vision for the WSD. The next page shows the resulting poster, which will visually guide how we continue to make sense of all our efforts together. This poster will be printed and distributed to be visible to the educational community. Since this is a poster size file, some fonts may be too small to read without zooming in. If we receive the posters in time, we may be able to provide you with one during the regularly scheduled board meeting.

OUR PROMISE

CONNECTING THE WINOOSKI SCHOOL DISTRICT'S ENDS STATEMENT TO OUR WORK ACROSS GRADES

WHAT IS AN "ENDS STATEMENT"?

The Winooski School Board's first and most important policy is called the Ends Policy, also known as the Ends Statement. It reads:

All students will graduate from the Winooski School District 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.

This all-encompassing policy informs our work as educators and guides our focus in nurturing our students from the moment they arrive until graduation day. **Although our work is complex and multifaceted, three general pillars support our day to day efforts to make the promise of our Ends statement a reality:**

ACADEMIC READINESS: Graduate Performance Indicators

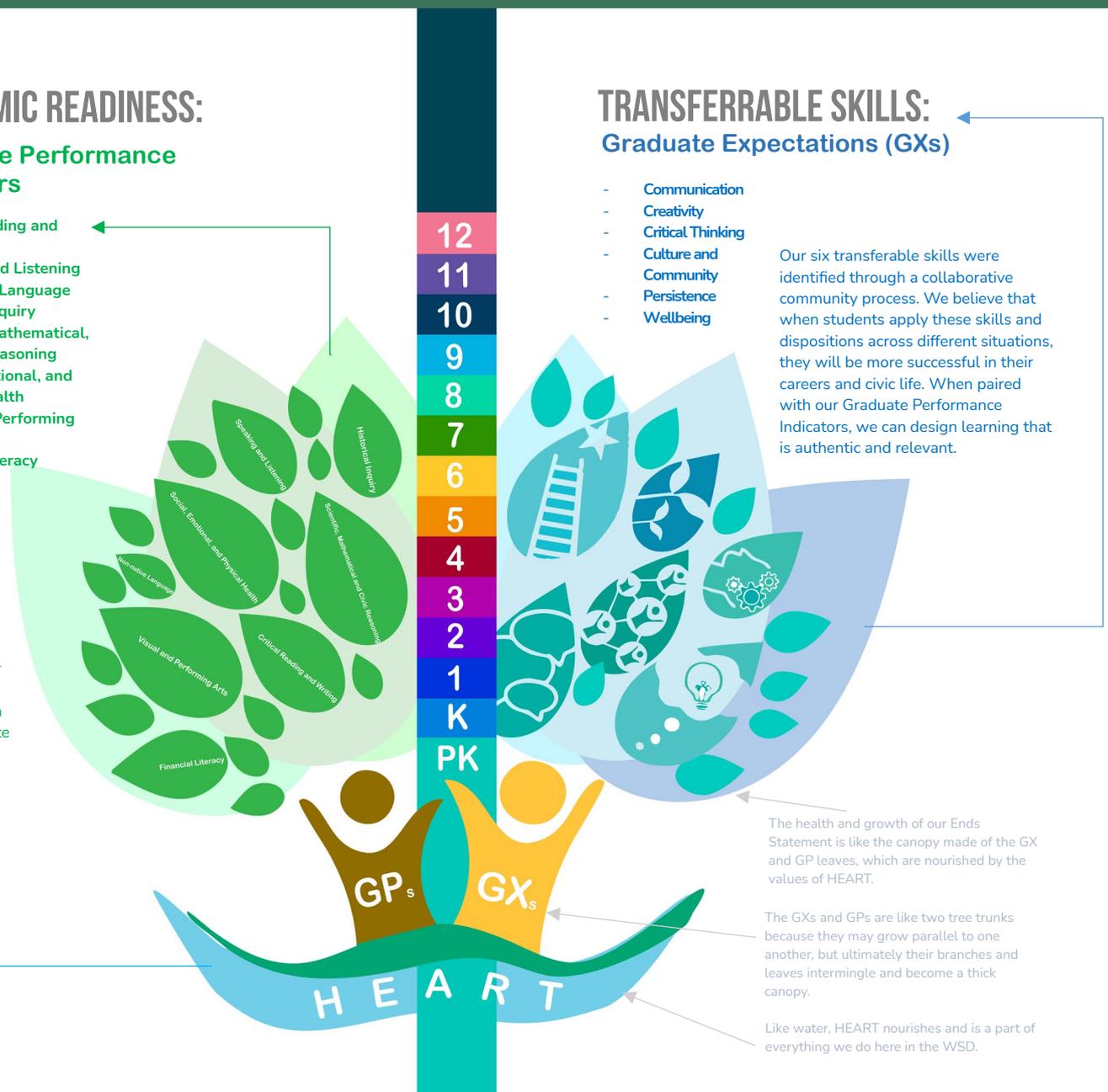
- Critical Reading and Writing
- Speaking and Listening
- Non-Native Language
- Historical Inquiry
- Scientific, Mathematical, and Civic Reasoning
- Social, Emotional, and Physical Health
- Visual and Performing Arts
- Financial Literacy

These are our academic expectations and are drawn (prioritized) from national academic standards. These standards, which we call performance indicators, form the backbone of our curriculum. We use our performance indicators in conjunction with Graduate Expectations to design rich learning experiences for our students.

TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS: Graduate Expectations (GXs)

- Communication
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Culture and Community
- Persistence
- Wellbeing

Our six transferable skills were identified through a collaborative community process. We believe that when students apply these skills and dispositions across different situations, they will be more successful in their careers and civic life. When paired with our Graduate Performance Indicators, we can design learning that is authentic and relevant.



The health and growth of our Ends Statement is like the canopy made of the GX and GP leaves, which are nourished by the values of HEART.

The GXs and GPs are like two tree trunks because they may grow parallel to one another, but ultimately their branches and leaves intermingle and become a thick canopy.

Like water, HEART nourishes and is a part of everything we do here in the WSD.

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ETHICAL GROWTH: HEART

- Honest and Truthful
- Engaged and Persistent
- Appropriate and Considerate
- Responsible and Accountable
- Timely

HEART identifies our core values. Particularly in the early learning years, these values are explicitly used to create a positive, inclusive learning environment. These values also support our work in Social Emotional and academic Learning. In Winooski, we believe that social emotional learning (SEL) is always intertwined with academic teaching and learning. At JFK, students learn how HEART shows up in different spaces in our school. For the middle years, teachers teach HEART values alongside academics in every classroom. As students move toward graduation, HEART becomes an internalized set of shared values that guides our oldest learners and connects them to our youngest learners.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

- **Winooski Middle High School** has been granted continued Accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) following the June 2025 review of its Decennial Accreditation Report. The Commission commended the school for significant progress in key Priority Areas for Growth and alignment with the Principles of Effective Practice. Highlights include strong community engagement, a commitment to equity and inclusion, the promotion of core values (HEART), and successful facility renovations. The school met 7 of the 8 Foundational Elements, with one remaining area for continued focus: establishing a written curriculum in a consistent format across all courses. A First Report of Progress and Planning is due to NEASC by May 1, 2026, as the school enters the next phase of the Accreditation Process—focused on ongoing implementation of its School Growth/Improvement Plan.
- **We have made several important upgrades** to our K-12 curriculum. At JFK, we have adopted and will implement this year updated and improved versions of EL-ELA core curriculum and EL-Skills foundational literacy curriculum. We are also launching a K-5 science pilot, which we will run as part of the Unified Arts rotation. We have purchased curriculum, science furniture, and materials. We have also purchased tables and chairs for the library so that we will now have a classroom space. In grades 6-9 we are continuing with our development of a social emotional curriculum tied to our HEART values. We continue to refine our proficiency-based curriculum and processes, and our focus on high-quality work.
- **Extended Year Services (ESY) were offered** to eligible preschool, elementary, middle and high school students across the district during the month of July. Students received programming that was reflective of their individual needs including individual, small and large group instruction in both academics and functional skills. A key focus for all students was building independence and strengthening relationships.

Preschool plays a vital role in laying the foundation for lifelong learning, social development, and school readiness. We're excited to share that all four classrooms at our Winooski Early Childhood Program in JFK are fully enrolled for the fall! We look forward to welcoming our young learners and their families for a year filled with growth, discovery, and joyful learning.

JFK's 2025 Summer School program served over 100 incoming Kindergarten through Grade 5 students. Students in Grades 1-5 attended three weeks of programming, while incoming Kindergarteners participated in a two-week transition experience. The program ran Monday through Thursday, 8:00 AM-12:00 PM, with breakfast and lunch provided daily. Staff supported students receiving ESY services, as well as those in our ASD, Therapeutic, and ML programs. The program was led by Amanda Babcock, JFK Behavior Coach and Summer School Coordinator. We're grateful to the dedicated staff and families who helped make it a success.



Dumpling challenge in the spring.

HEALTHY AND SUCCESSFUL LIVES

- **This year, alternative programming will be offered at the elementary, middle and high school level to special education eligible students who require higher levels of support** with their social-emotional and behavioral needs. This programming offers students the ability to access their education on site by offering flexible and supportive programming based on individual needs as outlined in a student's individualized educational plan (IEP). Expanding programming within the district allows us to keep students close to their community and peers while at the same time meeting their unique needs. All alternative staff have training in Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) which is a training program focused on preventing and managing challenging behaviors in a safe and respectful manner. It equips individuals with the skills to identify potential crises, de-escalate situations, and intervene safely when necessary. The core of CPI lies in proactive strategies to avert crises before they escalate, promoting a positive and supportive environment.
- **Katie Taylor**, who completed her final year of a master's program in clinical mental health counseling at the University of Vermont last school year while placed within the Winooski School District, will run a private play therapy practice based principally in JFK Elementary this year. She will offer accessible counseling services to Winooski students. Katie will provide individual or group counseling to students who benefit from support in areas like emotional regulation, navigating interpersonal relationships, managing anxiety, and dealing with complex trauma. Her approach is rooted in play therapy and the growing research that connects therapeutic play to positive neurobiological changes in children who have suffered trauma and attachment disorders.

ADMINISTRATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

- 9/7 I am invited to be a Grand Marshal at the Pride Parade in Burlington
- 8/19 I am the invited speaker at the UVM College of Education kickoff event
- 8/15 I will be at the CVSA retreat all day



KEY DATES

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

ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

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

Item	Board Direction	Status
Agenda item	The board postponed “board learning” from last meeting to the next due to the limited number of members present.	Board learning materials are added to this meeting’s packet.