



SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

To: WSD Board President and Board of Trustees
From: Wilmer Chavarria, WSD Superintendent
Re: **Superintendent's Report for October 2025**
Date: 10/6/2025

Dear Members of The Board,

Below please find my report for **October 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



Comfortable temperatures in late September and early October have provided optimal recess conditions.

BUDGET SEASON IS HERE

Everyone's least favorite season is here, but challenges can also be opportunities. This is what I am choosing to think as we enter yet another complex period of fiscal decisions against a backdrop of ever-increasing uncertainty at the state and national levels. The truth is that even with no additions, we would still need to figure out how to realize a significant amount of savings in order to keep up with the increase in costs—from teacher salary increases, to health insurance, facilities upkeep and increasing numbers across the state with students showing the highest levels of psychological needs. Our internal numbers show a potential gap similar or higher than last year's preliminary numbers, so it is entirely possible that the board would have to engage in a similarly challenging process of prioritizing. It is also possible that the administration will have to plan for several reductions across the district.

Luckily, we are better prepared now than we've ever been in terms of process and creative options. While reductions are possible, we are beginning to implement ways to minimize their impact on student learning and staff experience. This begins with transparency, and it includes strategic investments such as the attrition incentives the board approved last year. Incentives are scheduled to be announced this week. We are also looking at small but positive enrollment trends, which could help provide some stability in revenue.

SAFETY UPDATES

- **Our schedule of drills** for the year is now finalized and available for administrators. This includes all state-mandated drills and any other the Public Safety Committee has deemed necessary. The months of September and October and busy months for safety, with at least three different drills happening within a two-week period: one bus evacuation drill, an egress drill (fire drill), and an Options-Based drill to prepare for a violent intruder.
- **An emergency information poster** has been placed in each classroom and common areas. The emergency information poster was designed from Standard Response Protocol (SRP) to provide consistent clear shared language and actions among students, staff and first responders.
- **New signage** displaying "do not prop or block this door" has been added to the 25 exterior doors (4 doors in Area A, 9 doors in Area B, 3 doors in Area C, 4 doors in Area D & 5 doors in Area E) of the school building to ensure security.
- **First Aid kits** have been placed in staff areas of MLL office, C130 (JFK office kitchen), E210L (JFK staff rm) & D158C (JFK staff kitchen). Wall mounted First Aid kits have been ordered for remaining staff rooms.
- **The parking lots** of Winooski School District are being monitored for parking permits through the issue of notice of violations and a record is being kept of offenders. New signs in the front parking lot designating 4 spaces for the WSD vans have been installed to reserve the spaces closest to the front entrance.



This year marks the fourth year of our transportation contract with STA. We are committed to an ongoing process of optimizing our operations. This includes continuous work to develop the most efficient and reliable routes and ensuring we have the highest quality drivers available to serve our community and transport our students safely.

GENERAL AND OPERATIONAL UPDATES

- **Our fiscal office** hosted our auditors on-site last week. We anticipate receiving the draft audit report for Fiscal Year 2025 before the end of November. In preparation for the upcoming budget cycle, we have also begun the process of collecting essential data to ensure a smooth and effective budget season ahead.
- **Since the start of the school year**, we have seen a significant increase in participation in both our breakfast and lunch programs. This growth demonstrates the vital role our services play in supporting student health and readiness to learn.
- **We are continuing to refine our menu options** to ensure they are both appealing and compliant with nutritional standards. We remain committed to collaborating with the greater Winooski community to provide our students with a valuable and nutritious breakfast and lunch every day.
- **Our first Options Based Drill** will take place this Thursday October 10th. As usual, there is plenty of preparation ahead of one of the most complex drills we are required to carry out, and the most complex annually. This drill entails preparing staff and students to engage in any options they find most appropriate in a violent intruder emergency, including running, hiding, or fighting. During a drill, actual fighting is not allowed but classes are required to watch instructional videos and have guided discussions about what would happen in that scenario. Classes that choose to hide are required to barricade doors and follow other steps in the hiding protocol. Classes that choose to run are required to report to muster points just as they would during an egress drill. A drill of this nature can only be lifted jointly by the superintendent and a law enforcement officer. All instructions are provided to staff in advance (but not posted publicly) and families are notified 24 hours prior to the drill. Families are also notified while the drill is taking place.



Receiving tailored academic support at the Middle High School.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

- **We are now into our second** year of a pilot reading intervention, Readable English, that we are very excited about. We have seen some students jump as many as two grade levels in reading in under eight weeks in this program.
- **National College Application Month:** Staff and students are supporting seniors in completing college applications and FAFSA, with Early Action and Early Decision deadlines emphasized; staff and students will show solidarity by wearing college hoodies on Fridays.
- **The Winooski Early Childhood Program** is in its third year of implementing *The Creative Curriculum*, a play-based preschool curriculum that supports school readiness in the areas of social-emotional, cognitive, physical, and language development. Classroom environments and activities are intentionally designed to align with the Vermont Early Learning Standards, while integrating literacy, math, and science throughout the day in engaging, developmentally appropriate ways. We started the school year with our first 6-week curriculum, *Building Your Classroom Community*, which focused on learning classroom routines, building relationships, and understanding the expectations of school.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

- We are working with a new math assessment from All Learners Network that we think has the potential to be a diagnostic assessment in math. We currently do not have any standardized diagnostic in math so we have high hopes this tool will fill a critical gap in our assessment plan.
- We are coming to the end of our first assessment window. Our initial data shows the majority of our students showing growth equal to or greater than their peers nationally in both reading and math. We will also be sending letters to the caregivers of any child in grades k-3 who fall below the 40th percentile in the DIBELS assessment.

Highlights Students Experiences via Our Flexible Pathways Learning Coordinator in September:

- **FIRST Robotics® FTC Kick-off & Robotics Club:** Students participated in regional kick-off events and expanded engagement in robotics during school and after school with mentorship from GlobalFoundries.
- **Career & Work-Based Learning Experiences:** Students participated in job shadows at UVM Radiology, the Winooski Farmer's Market Youth Vendor Fair, and professional conferences, gaining exposure to careers, workplace environments, and entrepreneurial skills.
- **Community & Leadership Events:** Students and staff attended the VYCC Harvest Dinner and VT Women's Fund Annual Event, connecting learning to community engagement and leadership opportunities.

A passing period at the Middle High School.



LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITY

- **Omo Moses Author Visit (Oct 1):** The entire high school attended a presentation by writer Omo Moses who talked about his memoir *The White Peril*. He engaged students in a discussion on identity and creative expression. 12th grade English students participated in a smaller Q&A afterwards.
- **Last week** marked the Dashain celebration, and we expected many, if not most, of our Nepali students to participate in the festivities. As a result, attendance among our Nepali students was low. In recognition of the cultural and religious significance of this celebration, we excused absences for students whose parents or guardians informed us that their child or children would be absent due to this event.
- **The Redistricting Taskforce** will have its meeting in our facilities on October 28, followed by a public engagement session at 6 PM in our auditorium. Board members are strongly encouraged to attend as this is our opportunity to listen first hand and to participate in an important process. Craig Dwyer, our District Safety Coordinator, is in contact with the taskforce to ensure a smooth day of events.
- **The Vermont Senate Education Committee** Chair requested access to the district for an all-day public engagement event. We politely declined and instead offered a smaller group approach if they are interested in feedback from Winooski stakeholders. We have not heard back, but if they do accept this counteroffer we will welcome anyone interested in being a part of this conversation with legislators. We will expect at least a couple of board members to be present.

Our Fall 2025 WMHS Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled for October 16th & 17th and this entails significant planning and logistics, particularly for our liaisons. To efficiently schedule our WMHS students and their parents or guardians, we've set the following deadlines for scheduling:

- Our ML Liaisons have from September 30 to Monday, October 6, at 3:00 p.m. to complete scheduling conferences for our ELL/ML students and their parents or guardians.
- Our WMHS teachers have from October 7 to October 14, at 3:00 p.m., to complete scheduling conferences for our non-ELL/ML students.

Due to the ongoing Main Street construction, we will not be holding our annual Walk to School event this year again. While this is a disappointment for many who look forward to this tradition, we are prioritizing student safety and exploring alternative ways to promote physical activity and community engagement.



Our student athletes giving it their all on and off the field.

HEALTHY, PRODUCTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL LIVES

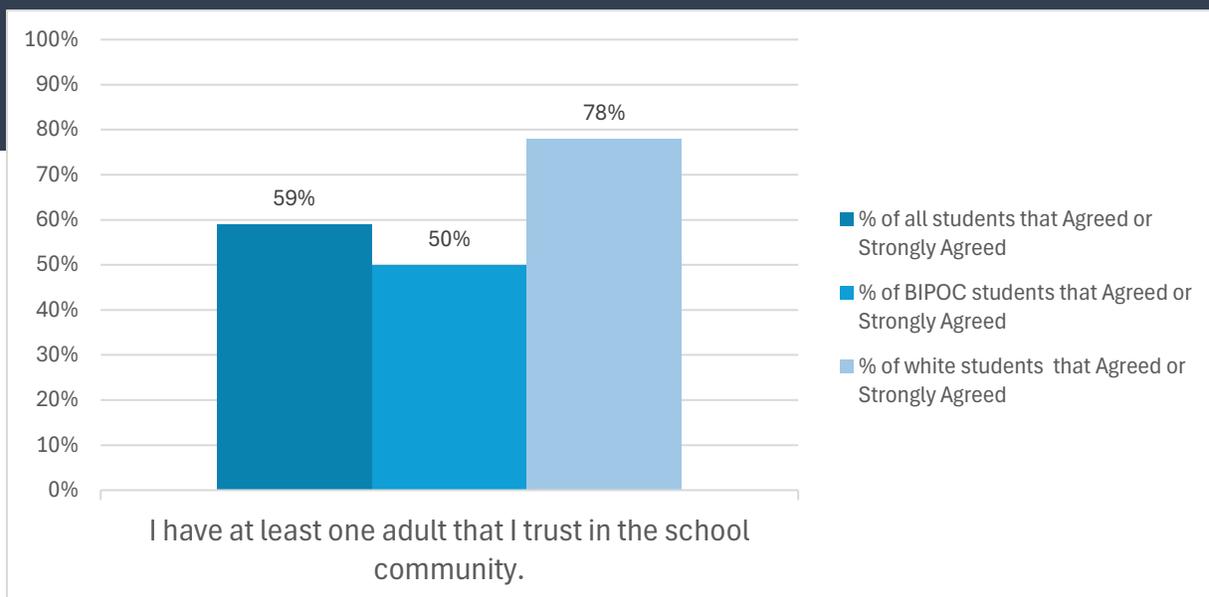
- **21C Afterschool programs** began the week of Sept 22nd with some old-time favorites and some new offerings. Check out the Session 1 flyers on the WSD website under the parent and family tab. It is exciting to bring back the JFK Violin program with over 23 students enrolled.
- **6th Grade Circus (Oct 10):** The seventh annual 6th Grade Circus (it would be the ninth if not for COVID), culminating on October 10, is a student performance that highlights persistence and a range of social emotional skills. This event integrates physical education, math, and language arts while engaging students in all aspects of production—from planning and rehearsals to costumes and budgeting for a cast party—fostering ownership and teamwork. Families and the community are invited to the culminating performance.
- **Athletics is in full swing this fall**, and our teams are competing hard in every game. We're seeing great effort, resilience, and sportsmanship across the board, with athletes showing pride in representing our school community. The stands have been full of families, classmates, and staff, which continues to build momentum and school spirit. Seniors are being recognized for their contributions, and younger players are stepping into leadership roles, setting a strong foundation for the future.
- **At the same time**, we're reinforcing the connection between academics and athletics through the rollout of the *Green Form* accountability process. This has created valuable conversations between students, teachers, and coaches about responsibility and effort. While transportation challenges remain, our athletes and coaches are adapting, and the overall energy around our programs is very positive as we head toward the later stages of the season.

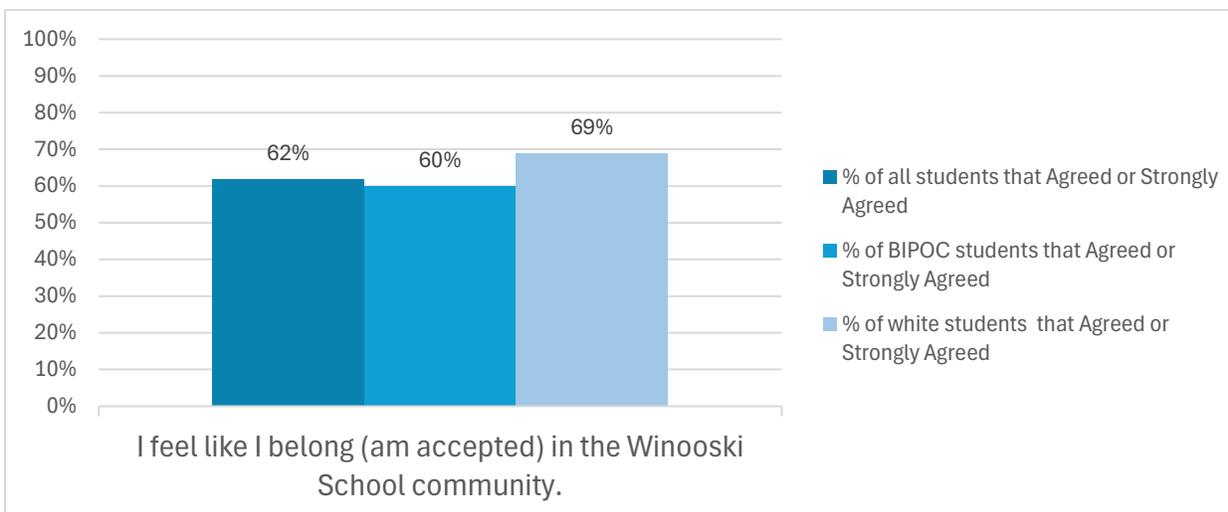
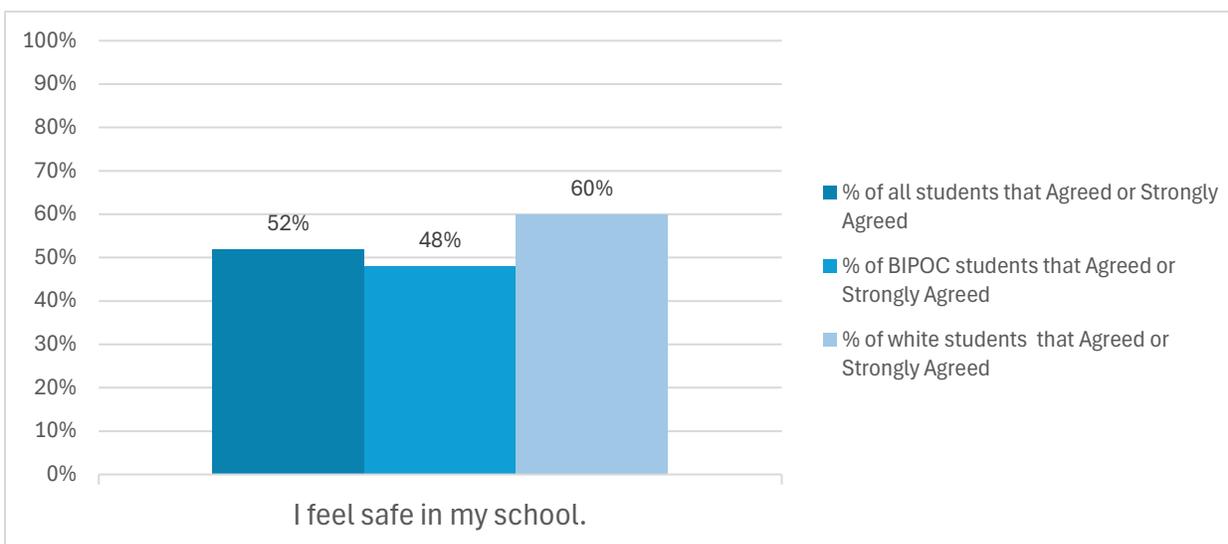
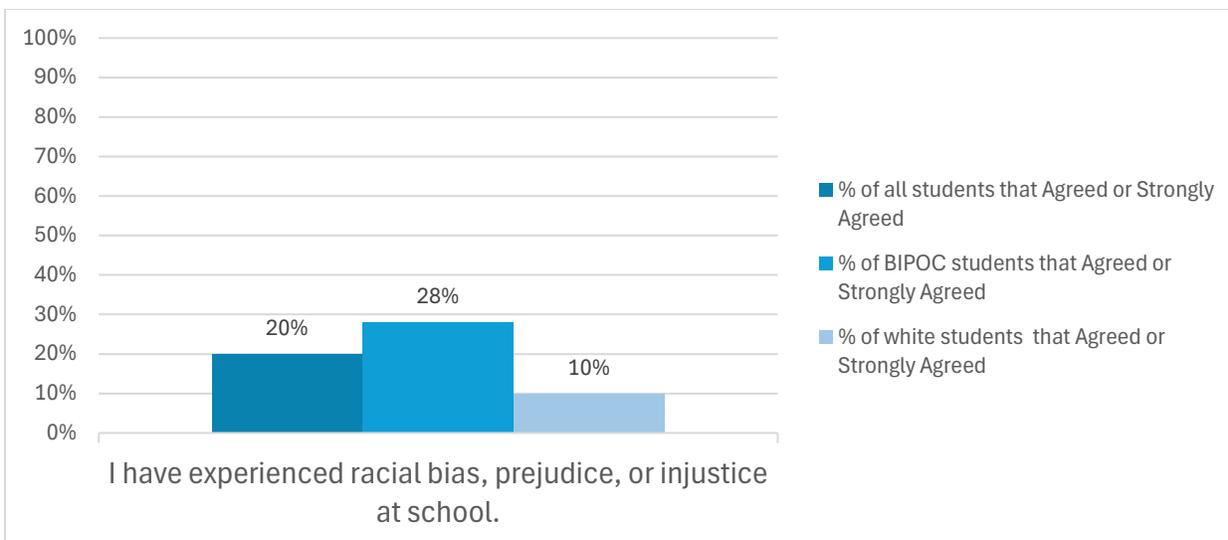


ENDS MONITORING: INDICATOR OF COMPLIANCE 1

The ARSC has changed considerably over the past two years. One of the most significant changes is that it is now almost exclusively student-led. Some of its leaders have been invited to be present at the next board meeting and two volunteered to be budget buddies.

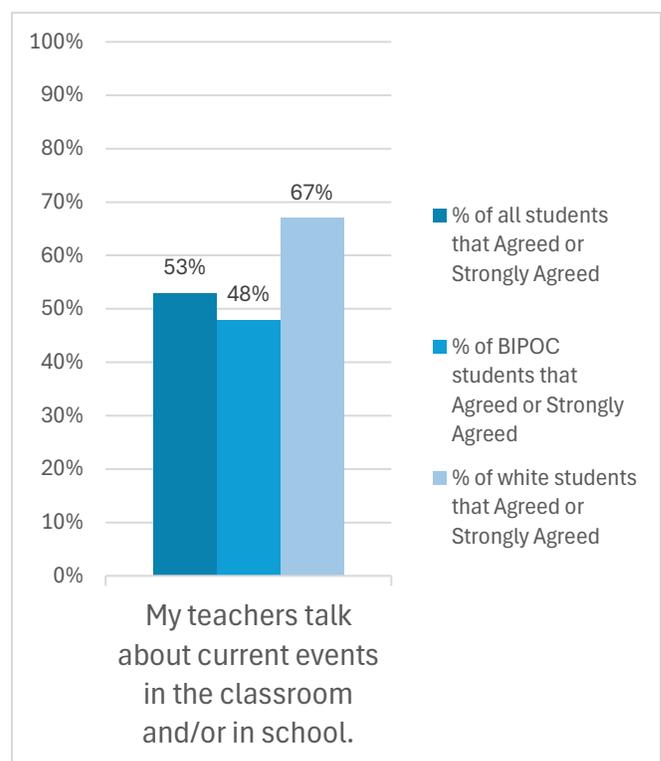
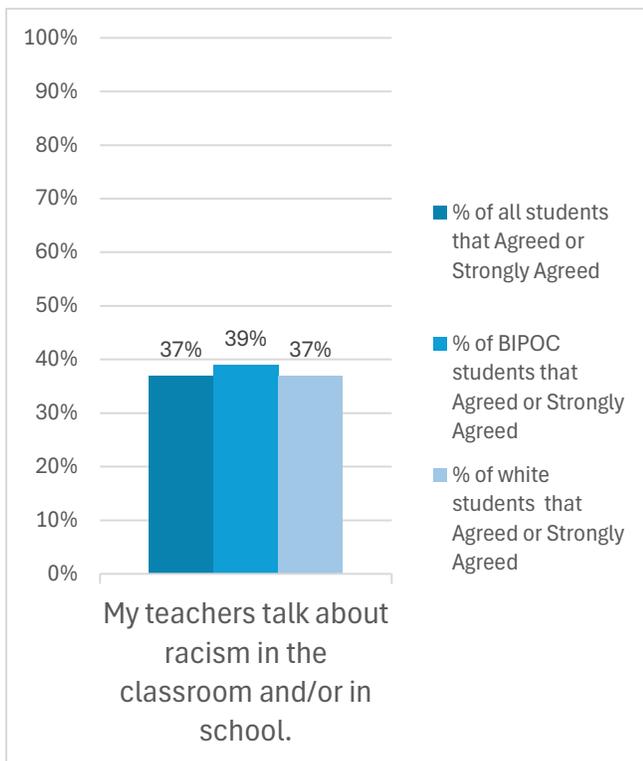
One major project they have now undertaken is the gathering of data from their peers regarding perceptions of belonging. See below for some sample data from these surveys.





More details about the survey:

- 220 students grades 6-12 responded to this survey.
- 65 students identified as “White” or Caucasian.
- 119 students with many other racial and ethnic identities are grouped as BIPOC, which stands for Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Pronounced “bye-pock,” this is a term specific to the United States, intended to center the experiences of Black and Indigenous groups and demonstrate solidarity between communities of color” (BIPOC Project).
- In these survey results, it includes students who noted the following racial and ethnic identities: African, African American, Afro-Hispanic, Black, Asian, Arab, Nepali, Biracial, Black African American, Somali, Brown, Latina, Middle Eastern, and Somali Bantu.
- Grouping these responses together limits the nuance and diversity but allows us to explore the differences in experiences between students of color and white students in the data.





KEY DATES

- 10/7 Bus Evacuation Drill
- 10/16-17: E. Release, 11am; MHS P/T Conf.
- 10/16-17: E. Release, 11am; JFK Inserv.
- 10/23: No School/No Evening Events (Diwali)

ADMINISTRATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

- 9/24 led a panel at the Vermont Council on World Affairs' Annual International Day of Peace Summit.
- 9/25 I joined the Redistricting Taskforce leaders as was a panelist at the Student Leadership state conference at Champlain College
- 9/26 I attended a legal debriefing session with Pietro Lynn and superintendents about Mamoud v Taylor
- 9/26 I attended a lunch with the Vermont Educational Equity Collective
- 9/30 I spoke at a special gathering at UVM for students in the College of Education
- 10/6 I attended the ARSC meeting
- 10/6 I met with the City Manager
- 10/7 I am attending the state administrators LGBTQ+ Affinity meeting
- 10/10 I am at the Champlain Valley Superintendents Association's monthly meeting
- 10/10 I am a co-panelist at a book talk organized by the Harvard Education Press with the author of the book "Sanctuary Schools"

ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

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

Item	Board Direction	Status
Budget Buddies from Student Group	The board expressed a desire for student representation during the budget meetings. It was suggested that an invitation could be extended to groups like the ARSC.	The ARSC was contacted, and several students were interested in having some representation during the budget meetings. The board will receive at least one student representative for every meeting and members are invited to engage students with questions and/or allow space for their thoughts. Our office will be providing dinner and transportation if needed.
Policy B8	The board supported the removal of exceptions for family members and suggested formatting fixes	Policy B8 is ready for adoption, with the following caveat from the VSBA sent to members on September 16, 2025: MODEL POLICY ALERT: Model Policy B8 addresses electronic communications between employees and students. This model policy is issued by the Agency of Education. To the extent that this model policy is inconsistent with Act 72 (2025), follow the requirements outlined in the Act. The Agency of Education has been alerted to the need for revisions.
Policy D23	The board rescinded this policy and established an October 10 deadline for procedures. The board will not approve procedure but will want to see them in the packet for review.	Procedure was issued and published in our Procedures Manual.
Appointment of new member	The board announced its search for a new temporary member. A special meeting was scheduled for September 29.	Members carried out personal outreach and the office notified former applicants and budget buddies. Two well-qualified applicants were interviewed and Katie Livermore was selected as the new member.