WINOOSKI SCHOOLS
We are the future.

Winooski School Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 6:00 pm
WSD Library Learning Commons or via Google Meet
Google Meet Link: meet.google.com/szx-gwkh-oee

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: ***Sarah Haven*****,** ***Matthew Gonzalez*****,** ***Cheyne Racine*****,** ***Allyssa Ravelin*****, Nicole Mace, Wilmer Chavarria, Robert Millar, Emily Bowers, Elom Essiba (virtual),** ***Matt Gile*****,** ***Katie Livermore*****,** ***Erik Johnson*****,** ***Sara Raabe*****.**

1. **Call to Order** (5 Minutes)
    a. Robert Millar calls the meeting to order at **6:01pm**

2. **Agenda Review and Adjustments:** (5 Minutes)
    a. Robert Millar- Noted some cross outs, delays in internal reports due to time management issues.
    b. Robert Millar- Agenda Changes: One "first read" item was removed from the agenda as it was an oversight and not yet due for review.

3. **Announcements and Recognition**
    a. Black History Month
        i. Robert Millar- Acknowledged as a primary focus for February.
    b. Other Announcements and Recognitions
        i. Robert Millar shares that there are a couple of opportunities to learn about the budget.
            1. **February 28th:** Coffee at Scout (Budget Q&A).
            2. **Tomorrow:** Nicole will be tabling at the concert.
            3. **Annual Meeting:** Held the night before the vote for a full presentation.
        ii. Robert Millar shares that the Community Dinner had positive feedback on the turnout for the joint city/school dinner.
            1. Nicole Mace shares "I just want to thank the city and the school folks for the great community dinner last week... more engagement than I've seen related to a budget presentation... ever."
            2.
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: January 14, 2026
    ii. Finance Committee Board Meeting: January 19, 2026
b. Policy Title: 2.1 Students, Parent/Guardians and Community
    i. 2026-2027 School Calendar
c. Policy Title: 2.3 Financial Condition and Activities
    i. Approval of Bills:
d. Policy Title: 2.7 Compensation and Benefits
    i. Judith Lawson
    ii. Carin Palsrok-Lilly
e. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept the consent agenda.
f. Emily Bowers- "So Moved.
g. **Passed Unanimously.**

6. Executive Limitations (Policy Section II): (20 minutes)
    a. Policy Title 2.3 Financial Conditions and Activities
        i. Discussion: Real Estate Update

Wilmer Chavarria reported that following the inspection, the district negotiated a lower purchase price, now estimated at approximately $360,000–$365,000. He noted that the team is currently waiting for the voters to approve it before finalizing next steps.

1. Katie Livermore raised a clarifying question regarding the timeline for zoning confirmation: At what point are we gonna know about zoning? Like is there a way to know that before we have purchased it?
    a. Sarah Haven responded that she believed the zoning requirements were part of the "due diligence" check boxes and the contract, noting, we have the opportunity to back out if it's not.
2. Nicole Mace expressed concern regarding the fiscal feasibility of the project, asking, Is there a possibility that the cost to rehab the building might be high enough so that we can't use it for programming?
    a. Wilmer Chavarria acknowledged that student-use codes could carry a "higher ticket price" and suggested that if the board isn't ready to invest in a full renovation immediately, the property could temporarily house district offices to free up space elsewhere.
    b. Nicole Mace shares that she doesn't feel comfortable as that isn't what we have been sharing with the public.
    c. Wilmer Charvarria- It comes down to how much are you comfortable sharing and how fast? I don't want to have a property sitting there if we need to save money to use for the original use. We could use it in the meantime. The goal remains the same.
    d. Nicole Mace shares it is important to be transparent to the voters.
    e. Wilmer Chavarria- The inspection came back and there will be things that are costly. The board has to confront that.
    f. Nicole Mace- I just think it's important we're transparent about that with the voters... There's no denying we move very quickly for a board on this, just because real estate moves quickly.

g. Robert Millar states that there is at least one board member requesting a special meeting, is there a second?
h. Emily Bowers seconds this.
i. Robert Millar shares that our realtor and director of facilities should be there.
j. Listen to the full discussion over the Real Estate Update

ii. Discussion/Action: Quarterly Financial Management Report
1. Nicole Mace shares that her and Emily Bowers, and Wilmer Chavarria met as the quarterly meeting. Fund balance has been audited $2.2 million dollars, at close of second quarter, we will be meeting our budget for the current fiscal year.
2. Emily Bowers shares that it was discussed that an ongoing project of how numbers are presented was discussed. Combining some of the numbers for the public knowledge.
3. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept the Quarter 2 Financial Management Report
4. Nicole Mace- "So Moved."
5. ***Passed Unanimously.***

iii. Discussion/Action: Accept Audit
1. Nicole Mace- We had a great audit. No material weaknesses and no significant deficiencies were found. The district was fully compliant with financial statement materials for both the operating budget and federal awards. Kudos were given to Sarah and her team for a "clean audit," reflecting strong business processes and adherence to federal rules and accounting practices. The district added $1.2 million to the fund balance over the past year.
2. Sarah Haven shared that the auditor said you should be able to cover at least three months of payroll and expenses... according to that metric, I would say probably 10 million... We don't have that, roughly 24%. This is significantly higher than the 4% figure the Board had heard historically. No material weaknesses and no significant deficiencies were found. The district was fully compliant with financial statement materials for both the operating budget and federal awards. The district added $1.2 million to the fund balance over the past year.
3. Sarah Haven shares next year- end of contract with RHR - we had three years and an additional year. The current firm, RHR Smith, provided a quote with a 23% price increase, bringing the cost of next year's audit to $50,000**.** Sent proposals to 9 vendors, not getting good feedback. Lots of people aren't doing school audits. Many places aren't willing to do a bid. Current company prices have raised 23%, it would be $50K to stay with them.
4. Nicole Mace Board policy (and potentially state statute) requires inviting three or more bids for costs exceeding $40,000.
    a. Sarah Haven will look into whether accounting services are exempt from this bidding requirement.
    b. Nicole Mace shares that the auditors work for the board. We might want to have a Finance committee meeting before the 20th of February to answer RHR.

5. Wilmer Chavarria asks if we want to add this to the Special Board Meeting. The finance committee can meet before that.
6. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept the audit.
7. Emily Bowers- “So Moved.”
8. ***Passed Unanimously.***

b. Policy Title: 2.6 Asset Protection
   i. Internal Monitoring Report
      1. Wilmer Chavarria noted very little has changed since previous reports, though the format has been updated to the new standard adopted last year. He reported full compliance. The report includes "public image and credibility" as a protected asset. Chavarria argued that recent events have actually strengthened the district's image, stating, it's helped our public image rather than affected even though we, even though many people, especially outside would disagree.
      2. Robert Millar- It is fascinating that we include public image and credibility as under our asset protection policy. It’s a very different type of category to report on than the rest of them.
      3. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept the Policy 2.6 Asset Protection
      4. Emily Bowers- “So Moved.”
      5. ***Passed Unanimously.***

c. Policy Title: 2.8 Communication and Support to the Board
   i. Discussion/Action: February Superintendent’s Report to the Board
      1. Wilmer Chavarria provided updates on student services, family engagement, and legislative testimony. Wilmer Chavarria highlighted the ongoing success of the Necessity Store, the Backpack Program, and Veggie Van Go. He shares that Winooski maintains a high attendance rate for family conferences, though it requires significant planning: Winooski has a pretty healthy attendance rate for families... but that also means that it takes additional work and planning. Due to interpretation needs, the district must use dedicated half-days to accommodate all families. Robert Millar and Wilmer Chavarria scheduled to testify tomorrow in regards to immigration protocols in schools.
      2. Nicole Mace transportation stuff questions. When is the contract due with STA?
         a. Sarah Haven and Nicole discuss the current five-year contract with STA is approaching a bid cycle. Pricing was included for the first three years, and updated pricing for the final two years has recently been resolved.
      3. Nicole Mace continues to share when we went out for bids four years ago, we received no bids, no drivers. We developed a homegrown bus driver program. The drivers have to take the test every four years. Some of the drivers that passed the first time around were only successful because the district provided a lot of support. They did not get that support from the bus company. We can't take for granted our transportation program. Bus driver shortages are impacting districts all over the state.
      4. Wilmer Chavarria We will be monitoring closely what our drivers might need. It was new information to use that there were barriers. We have to ask ourselves, are we ready to be partners in removing those barriers? Because we have to keep this alive. It took a lot of community effort.
      5. Katie Livermore asks when the pilot of the student aid program starts?

a. Wilmer Chavarria shares that our Flexible Pathways Coordinator Jess Handrick is leading this. Chavarria explained, This is not just, who wants to be a bus aide? We, we will pay you. It's really professional. We want to use that as an opportunity for learning as well. There is a job description, they apply for it, they get trained. It is preparing our students for the future, career ready.

6. Nicole Mace states the data for family conferences was really helpful. For future reports on family conferences, Nicole requested that data be presented as a percentage of the total student population. The raw numbers are improving which is great.
7. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept the February Superintendent's Report to the Board
8. Nicole Mace- "So Moved."
9. ***Passed Unanimously.***

7. **Governance Processes (Policy Section IV):** (45 Minutes)
    a. Policy Title: 4.1.8 Governing Style
        i. Discussion: Updates on Potential Student Board Member
            1. Nicole Mace shares that she and Elom Essiba recruited two students. Reached out to Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver that they are looking for 2 more students. We currently have a freshman and sophomore who were part of the budget process. Presenting about the Board Scholarship on Wednesday to high school.
            2. Katie Livermore shares that one thing that stood out from the last policy governance talk where they discussed this a little bit.
                a. Nicole Mace shares that there is a bill in the legislature for this, student board members.
            3. Katie Livermore shared one thing that stood out was what is the goal or purpose of having a student on the board?
            4. Robert Millar Some boards have a panel for interviewing candidates. It doesn't feel like the best way to get authentic student voices.
            5. Nicole Mace will give an update in March as to who is on the committee and what the meeting schedule will look like.
    b. Policy Title: 4.2 Board Job Description
        i. Discussion: Legislative Updates
            1. Robert Millar shares that he and Wilmer have been asked to come speak to the senate about 227, protecting immigrants.
            2. The Board noted that Winooski's existing local policy regarding the protection of immigrant students is already significantly more comprehensive and straightforward than the proposed state bill.
            3. Nicole Mace shares concerns regarding redistricting. Concerns of political energy and people getting so focused on the maps. Worried that they come out of this year just working on the funding and it's every district for themselves. Primary concern remains that any legislative change must work for Winooski. There is a fear of a scenario where funding is constrained but districts are left to manage the fallout individually without the benefit of scale.

4. The Board held an extensive discussion regarding a map recently introduced by the House Education Chair which suggests redrawing district boundaries. Listen to hear the Legislative Updates

c. Policy Title: 4.2.1 Community Engagement
   i. Discussion: Recent Community Activities by Board
      1. Nicole Mace shares that the armory was not approved by the DRB to move forward, the vote was 2-2. Reached out to the city council to share perspective. Students came on their own and shared personal stories. We need more affordable family housing. Welcoming others to share that perspective with the local council.
      2. Katie Livermore shares that they were in support but there are variables that could be worked through. Nicole shares that there are two vacancies on the DRB.
      3. Katie Livermore shares that her and Robert Millar were at SPEC. Mostly shared about the purchasing of property, no one we talked to was aware.
      4. Nicole Mace shares that she and Elom will be speaking to high school and that tomorrow she will be at the concert 30 minutes prior to share information.
      5. Robert Millar Winooski School District was recently honored by the Greater Burlington Multicultural Center at an MLK Day event. Wilmer Chavarria accepted a plaque on behalf of the district. The award was presented by the President of UVM.
      6. Wilmer Chavarria noted he was particularly pleased that the district was recognized as a whole rather than him as an individual.
      7. Robert Millar shares that we had our CCTV Presentation. The full presentation is available online for public viewing. The board had their regular VSBA forum for policy governance. Attendance at an info session for the Vermont Asylum Assistance Project (VAAP). Wilmer Chavarria and Robert Millar were invited to an event with Bernie Sanders as well as another Burlington-led meeting regarding ICE preparedness-probably not the place for us in the future, wasn't what was expected.
      8. Robert Millar calls for a break at **7:33pm**
      9. Robert Millar calls meeting back to order **7:37pm**
d. Policy Title: 4.2.2 Create Written Governing Policies
   i. Action: Public Hearing and Adoption of Policy
      1. PG.2.3 Financial Conditions and Activities
         a. Robert Millar- No public comments, closed hearing. Open to the board, no comments.
         b. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept PG.2.3 Financial Conditions and Activities
         c. Emily Bowers- "So Moved."
         d. Passed Unanimously.
   ii. Discussion/Action: Policy Second Read and Approval for Adoption
      1. PG.2.5 Emergency Superintendent Succession
      2. Robert Millar shares no changes, confirms with Wilmer Chavarria.

3. Robert Millar looks for a motion to approve PG.2.5 Emergency Superintendent Succession
4. Katie Livermore - “So Moved.”
5. ***Passed Unanimously.***

iii. Discussion: Policy First Read

1. AOE2 Student Use of Cellphones
    a. Robert Millar shares that this is something we got ahead of.
    b. Wilmer Chavarria shares we didn’t have a model policy before, because we were waiting on the AOE who had been working on this for a while. A lot of this policy is just the changes with the new law.
    c. Emily Bowers asks for clarification of use if students are allowed to have cell phones on field trips, outside of the building.
        i. Wilmer Chavarria share that if you are in any of our buildings, or anyone we have any liability for, you would have to follow our rules.
    d. Nicole Mace Interested in the policy regarding exceptions for two-factor authentication required for dual-enrollment college courses which requires a cell phone. Nicole wants to be sure those things are flagged leading to this kind of exception.
    e. Wilmer Chavarria shares that he doesn’t expect any changes to this policy regarding this, but he does expect a walk through. We will do a revision of this to be sure the language of the AOE is good to go. Pretty sure, we are already compliant.
2. B3 Alcohol & Drug Free Workplace
    a. Robert Millar brought it back from last time, with some updates from VSBA, definitions (Marijuana/Cannabis).
    b. Wilmer Chavarria shares that there were updates for some of the footnotes. No materialized differences.
    c. Robert Millar In the second read, I would like to see some of it cleaned up, like the footnote (2) seems like it was more for model policy rather than our ultimate policy.
3. B5 Harassment of Employees
    a. Nicole Mace between September and January why were there so many changes, immigration status was added and then taken away. Asks for Wilmer Chavarria to get clarification from VSBA. Looking for understanding regarding the Public Accommodation and if it has new protected classes? Sounds like the Act was expanded to include protected classes to include immigration and citizenship.
4. ~~C11 Student Freedom of Expression in School-Sponsored Media~~
5. C12 Prevention of Sexual Harassment As Prohibited by Title IX
    a. Nicole Mace This is a place where the state of the law is truly influx recommending adopting the current version of model policy knowing it may not b e the way the law is currently. Can we not touch it? Can we readopt?
    b. Nicole Mace expressed hesitation in adopting the newest version if it mirrors interpretations they do not support. They may opt to leave the

2020 version in place until legal requirements become clearer. Waiting for Wilmer Chavarria to get clarification and go back to Robert Millar.

6. C14 504 and ADA Grievance Protocol
    a. Robert Millar shares the biggest change, no longer an office in Boston to direct people to.
        i. Nicole Mace clarifies that it has been shut down.
        ii. Wilmer Chavarria says the infrastructure is still there, but you may never hear from them–unless the complaint is that your school is indoctrinating your kids into becoming gay or something like that.
        iii. Robert Millar reminds the board it is a required policy. Requested that gendered language (he/she) be updated to gender-neutral terms (e.g., "a person") and get in the habit of doing that going forward.
7. C3 Transportation
    a. The Board engaged in an in-depth discussion regarding three options for the Transportation Policy
        i. Listen here for the discussion regarding Our Transportation Policy.
    b. Winooski currently operates community stops based on established routes (e.g., LaFountain, Elm) rather than home pickups, prioritizing younger students and neighborhood distance.
    c. Summary- Board members raised concerns that "Option 2" of the model policy (transporting "each legal pupil") would broaden the district's obligation beyond its current budgetary and driver capacity.
    d. The Board is seeking a "middle ground" that preserves the superintendent's flexibility to determine routes based on budget and safety while meeting legal requirements.
    e. Robert Millar shares that we will come back to this with a full read reset.
8. F1 Travel Reimbursement
    a. Wilmer Chavarria confirms that most important parts of this policy remain the same as the old one. This one separates procedures from the policy.
9. F2 Policy on Nondiscriminatory Mascots and School Branding
    a. Wilmer Chavarria recommends that we adopt as it is.
    b. Nicole Mace clarifies that this is a required policy. Being a policy governance, there are a lot of extra policies.
        i. Wilmer Chavarria confirms it is required.
10. PG2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting
    a. The Board engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the phrase "credible [conservative] projection" found in the current policy It was pointed out that the word "conservative" appeared in brackets, which was described as confusing and potentially a misunderstanding of formatting. The Board agreed to strike "credible" and the bracketed

"[conservative]" in favor of the word reasonable, aligning the policy with standard professional accounting expectations.

~~e. Policy Title: 4.5 Agenda Planning~~

~~i. Internal Management Report~~

f. Policy Title: 4.8 Governance Investment
    i. Discussion: Board Learning
        1. Robert Millar tabled board learning.
        2. No objections from the board

8. **Proposed Executive Session:**
    a. Finding of Premature General Public Knowledge
        i. Union Grievance § 313(a)(1)(B)
        ii. Robert Millar I would look for a motion to find the premature general public knowledge regarding a union grievance would place the board and the employee involved at a substantial disadvantage because it would reveal non-public employee information.
            1. Nicole Mace- "So Moved."
            2. ***Passed Unanimously***
        iii. Robert Millar I would look for a motion to enter executive session for the purpose of hearing a union grievance under Title 1, Section 313 (a)(1)(b), inviting Superintendent Chavarria and Principal Sarah Raabe to join us.
        iv. Emily Bowers- "So Moved."
        v. ***Passed Unanimously***
        vi. Entered Executive Session @ 8:22pm
        vii. Return from Executive Session @ 9:16pm

9. **Adjourn:**
    a. Robert Millar looks for a motion to adjourn
    b. "So Moved."
    c. ***Passed Unanimously.***
    d. Meeting adjourned at 9:16pm

Upcoming Important Dates:

- Friday, February 20: Veggie VanGo
- Monday, February 23-Monday, March 2: No School - Break
- Friday, March 6: Veggie VanGo
- Thursday, March 12: Community Iftar, 6:00 PM -8:00 PM