WINOOSKI SCHOOLS
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Winooski School Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting
Wednesday, August 12, 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: ***Wilmer Chavarria*****,** ***Nicole Mace*****,** ***Katie Livermore*****,** ***Sarah Haven*****,** ***Allyssa Ravelin*****,** ***Elom Essiba*****,** ***Erik Johnson*** ***Gabby Dzessou*****,** ***Barakit Gyi*****,** ***Cheyne Racine*****,** ***Matt Gonzalez*****,** ***Judy (resident)*** ***Virtual: Robert Millar***

1. **Call to Order** (5 Minutes)
    a. Nicole Mace calls the meeting to order at **6:02pm.**

2. **Agenda Review and Adjustments:** (5 Minutes)
    a. Nicole Mace shares that the agenda was not posted to the website so some items will be tabled.
        i. Table action on 6Biii until retreat- assignment of rep to merger committee, agenda waiting for feedback on other districts.
        ii. Internal Monitoring Report (6dii) not in our packet, table until September.

3. **Announcements and Recognition**
    a. Other Announcements and Recognitions
        i. Robert Millar International Youth Day; happy birthday to Nicole Mace.
        ii. Barakit Gyi- Nimo Ali went to an AI conference in Boston.
        iii. Elom Essiba- Recognising the voting that happened yesterday.
        iv. Nicole Mace- Recognizes Barakit and Gabby for their student representation on the Board.

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 10, 2026
    b. Policy Title: 2.3 Financial Condition and Activities
        i. Approval of Bills

ii. City-WSD MOU
iii. Dissolution Notice of the Heart of Winooski Foundation

c. Policy Title: 2.7 Compensation and Benefits
d. Nicole Mace entertains a motion to accept the Consent Agenda
   i. Elom Essiba- "So Moved."
   ii. ***Passed Unanimously.***

6. **Governance Processes (Policy Section IV):** (60 Minutes)
   a. Policy Title: 4.2.1 Community Engagement
      i. Discussion: Recent Community Activities by Board
         1. Nicole Mace- Attended a radio interview with Barakit & Gabby about student members on the School Board.
         2. Robert Millar- VSBA Meeting, attended with Nicole Mace and Wilmer Chavarria was able to attend. There they shared concerns regarding recent sessions.
      ii. Board presence at the Welcome Back Family BBQ
         1. Nicole Mace- Email has gone out regarding Board representation at the Welcome Back BBQ. There are a lot of questions coming regarding the new way of funding schools. The BBQ is a great place with lots of people to share information. There is a one page document as an overview.
         2. Katie Livermore - The Board doesn't have a lot of opportunities to share with the public. There was a positive experience at the Winter Supper; This is a similar opportunity. People appreciate being asked about having questions, sometimes the newsletter is hard to follow.
         3. Nicole Mace shares that if Board members have questions that are unable to be answered, direct to her or Wilmer Chavarria . Flyers will be handed out.
         4. Elom Essiba- Maybe have another session after the BBQ for information, like we do with the budget.
            a. Nicole Mace this is very preliminary, as things take shape, we can have an informal opportunity.
   b. Policy Title: 4.2 Board Job Description
      i. Discussion: City-WSD Joint Meeting Date (10/19 or 11/02)
         1. Nicole Mace This is an annual event. We will be going to the city. They came to the school last time. Consensus: October 19th works best.
      ii. Discussion: CESA Update
         1. Nicole Mace Some information in the Superintendent's Report. Winooski, Burlington, South Burlington, Colchester, Essex/Westford. Main item of business, elected a chair. Superintendent of South Burlington Schools, Joe Clark has offered to Chair. Other times on agenda: establishment of by-laws. The group has too many questions with no training. There is one entity in Vermont. What

legal status do we have? Are we governmental or 501(c)3. Lots of questions. Agreed monthly schedule, only required 4. Fourth Monday of the month. Looking for guidance from the State and training. By-laws need to be established, such as, how are CESA's going to be paid for?

2. Katie Livermore - When you say you are looking for guidance/training, from who?
    a. Nicole Mace- Superintendents have been asking the AOE for training and education.
3. Nicole Mace - CESA's were created so that we can share regional transportation, purchasing, IT & specialized programs without altering local school attendance lines or existing governance.
4. Barakit Gyi- Is there data to share from other schools that they are saving money?
    a. Wilmer Chavarria shares that he is in touch with New York schools who use CESA's and it does work. However, they are serving districts that are as big as the state of Vermont.
5. Barakit Gyi- Whose budget are we using?
    a. Nicole Mace- Every district is contributing money to CESA's to pay for other entities and in addition, pay for our staff.
    b. Robert Millar - How do we budget for this now?
        i. Nicole Mace- No expectation of providing services this year, other than providing an executive director, by-laws, what are services that can be regionalized. We may have an unexpected budgeting contribution for the regional director.

iii. Discussion/Action: Assignment of Representative to Merger Committee

1. Nicole Mace - **Just a discussion. Tabled Action for this Meeting.**
2. Wilmer Chavarria shared the method that is required by statute. Based on weighted long term membership (LTWM). We are required to study prospects we are merging. Expected to have seats: Burlington (3 members), South Burlington (2 members), we would have one member. If we appoint 2 members, Burlington would have 5 members, and South Burlington 3 members. We will take action at the retreat.
3. Katie Livermore Clarifies that the CESA is more open to members, the merger is only board members.
4. Barakit Gyi- How does the number of the members get selected?
    a. Nicole Mace - based on LTWM, long term weighted membership.
5. Judy (resident)- Who gets to be on these committees?
    a. Nicole Mace - Board members.
    b. Wilmer Chavarria shared an update on the Act 170 committee timeline. Voter Decision Date (March 7, 2028)

i. To review the timeline: Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA) Act 170 Guidelines.

6. Nicole Mace - Merger study committee look at in statute number of areas of gathering information education opportunity analysis- gather and analyze. Do we believe the analysis that a merger is a good idea? Allows the committee to say all three areas are a good idea, two is a good idea?? The deadlines are just to ensure things are happening. If any necessary district says "no" it does not move forward.
7. Robert Millar
8. Nicole Mace- Proposal will be shared at the Board Retreat.

c. Policy Title: 4.2.2 Create Written Governing Policies
   i. Action: Public Hearing and Adoption of Policy
      1. B4 Drug and Alcohol Testing of Transportation Employees
      2. Nicole Mace - Federally required policy. Open public hearing. Closed public hearing after no comments shared. Look a motion to adopt B4 Drug and Alcohol Testing of Transportation Employees
      3. Elom Essiba- "So Moved."
      4. ***Passed Unanimously.***
   ii. Discussion/Action: Policy Second Read and Approval for Adoption
      1. No policy number, skip.
   iii. Discussion: Policy First Read
      1. B7 Tobacco Prohibition
      2. Wilmer Chavarria This was not in the queue for the past couple of years, we had one. VSBA had updated their policy. A few notes, removed procedure section, header/title changes, breaking up of organization into different sections. Nothing should trigger a discussion, just up to date in 2026.
      3. Nicole Mace this is a state law requirement. This version is cleaner. Second read coming in September.

d. Policy Title: 4.8 Governance Investment
   i. Discussion/Action: Final Board Retreat Agenda
      1. Nicole Mace- Draft agenda, State of the Schools from the WSD administrators
      2. Wilmer Chavarria shares the draft and that the administrators will share the data, that can help with discussion further in the day. Starting a new coherent Professional Development Program, presentations will be shared. Requested to revisit linkage with ownership policy noncompliance status. Looking at improving, bringing the Board into compliance. Mergers and what's ahead discussion.
      3. Elom Essiba clarifies that the date is the first day of school.

4. Nicole Mace shares that she hopes the students will be able to attend.
5. Wilmer Chavarria Would you like an outside facilitator for some of these topics?
    a. Nicole Mace Prefers to have the merger and Act 170 conversation happen first, then linkage ownership.

ii. Discussion/action: Internal Monitoring Report

1. **Tabled for this Meeting.**

7. Executive Limitations (Policy Section II): (30 minutes)
    a. Policy Title: 2.3 Financial Conditions and Activities
        i. Discussion: Fund Balance Update
            1. Nicole Mace- Looking from the Finance Department on a preliminary estimate of how the fiscal year ended on June 30th.
            2. Wilmer Chavarria- A report to the state, sent every year. Best overview. Another positive year (close to $1 million). Spending on only what needs to be spent. Healthy surplus for the past year. Later, a conversation on deferred responsibilities that we put off during the Capitol Project)bleachers, fields, lights, boiler). Budgeted within, responsibly.
            3. Robert Millar a million dollars sounds like a lot; it's about 2.5% of our budget. That really isn't a lot.
            4. Nicole Mace shares that we budget a year and a half before actual costs are being incurred; 80% is employees (changes that impact, unexpectedly).
            5. Sarah Haven - If we close the year, we would have roughly $3.6 million in Fund Balance.
            6. Judy (resident)- Does the state have parameters regarding the amount?
                a. Nicole Mace- They have talked about it, but nothing definitive.
                b. Wilmer Chavarria We have recommendations from our auditors. They may say this still isn't enough, based on our size. Act 127, law that changed the weights and how much money districts get. Some districts tried to budget for more than they needed to put money in reserves. It would deplete the ED fund and take away from the benefits schools depend on. Our school has made cuts, reserves, cut $1.5 million, reducing education tax rate. Barely budgeting to meet the needs. If we end up in the green, it's great. But it shouldn't be a surprise because we have been mindful about not spending what is not necessary.
            7. Sarah Haven shares that auditors vary and some say we should have 3 months of expenses to some saying 16%. Comfortably, $10 million

in Fund Balance. $1 million/ twice a month for payroll, $600-$700k for expenses.

8. Wilmer Chavarria We depleted our Fund Balance, remembering that as a community, we are starting from scratch.
9. Nicole Mace- Lots of posts on Front Porch Forum: Why didn't things get taken care of during the Capitol Project? $57.8 million bond, the project came in at over $60 million. A lot of "hope fors" had to be value engineered, due to costs increasing during COVID. We couldn't do all the things we hoped to do.

ii. Discussion: HVAC Work Update

1. Wilmer Chavarria- Geo Thermal infrastructure, part of new Capitol improvements. Technology has been a new learning process since installation. At the end of the last school year, some sections were not working. Preliminary reviews of the system were done, some damage done in key areas, sentiment through the pipes from the well, shouldn't have gone through. Insurance conversations, contractors– was this because of something we did? Or was it faulty from installation. Some of this has to be discussed in the Executive Session in case we have to engage in litigation. We have permission by law.
2. Robert Millar - Could you talk about the day to day work around? How are we going to ensure this is comfortable for everyone?
    a. Wilmer Chavarria The critical date is August 26 when kids come back, all ducks need to be in a row. We have identified the areas that can be most affected, contingency plans are in place. Areas, (such as Pre-K) have laws as to what the temperature must be, AC units have been installed. We are able to see the temperature in all rooms.
    b. Cheyne Racine- AC unites/fans to condition the air in key areas. Daily monitoring of the system. Some areas are cool, due to being a stand alone unit within the Geo system.
    c. Sarah Haven- This is new to the Northeast, not just our school. More common in the Midwest. (GeoThermal system)
    d. Cheyne Racine- Lots of discussions, trying to find someone who works with the systems, willing to.
    e. Wilmer Chavarria - Assures that we will be fine with heat in the winter, just cooling. We just installed new boilers?
        i. Cheyne Racine- In the process, ahead of schedule. Answers resident question regarding the boilers, JFK classrooms are not new, renovated (unit ventilators, kept). Boilers are 26 years old, pipes from the 60's.
        ii. Nicole Mace - This was in the works (boilers) for a while now.

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

i. Discussion/Action: August Superintendent's Report to the Board
ii. Nicole Mace calls out Mikayla Keleman and Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver for their teacher recognition. Also, the student who was already mentioned earlier for the AI conference (Nimo Ali)
    1. Encouragement for students to come and present on AI.
iii. Nicole Mace looks to take a motion to accept it.
    1. Elom Essiba- "So Moved."
    2. ***Passed Unanimously.***

8. **Executive Session:** 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a) (1) (E) "Premature Public Knowledge"

    a. Action: The board finds that "premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage."

        i. Nicole Mace shares the action and looks for a motion.

        ii. Katie Livermore - "So Moved."

        iii. Passed Unanimously.

    b. Action: Enter Executive Session for the purposes of discussing " Pending or probable civil litigation."

        i. Nicole Mace shares the action and looks for a motion.

        ii. Elom Essiba- "So Moved."

        iii. Passed unanimously

    c. Nicole Mace invites Wilmer Chavarria, Cheyne Racine and Sarah Haven into Executive Session

        i. Passed Unanimously.

    d. Enters Executive Session @ **7:37pm**

    e. Returns from Executive Session @ **8:17pm**

9. **Adjourn**

    a. Nicole Mace takes a motion to adjourn

    b. Katie Livermore- "So Moved."

    c. Passed Unanimously

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Upcoming Important Dates:

Thursday, August 20: Welcome Back BBQ at 5:15 PM
Friday, August 21: Veggie VanGo
Wednesday, August 26:

- First day of school for students in Grades K–5 from 8:15 AM - 3:00 PM
- 6th & 9th grade Welcome Day from 8:15 AM-12:15 PM

Thursday, August 27: First day for all students in Grades 6–12
Sunday, August 30: Winooski Friendship Festival, WSD, 2 PM – 9 PM
Friday, September 4: No School
Monday, September 7: No School in observance of Labor Day
Tuesday, September 8: First day of school for PreK