

Washington Central Supervisory Union 2014 Efficiency Study

- The Washington Central Executive Committee commissioned an efficiency study in August 2014 in response to observing a trend of declining enrollment and escalating costs across the supervisory union.
- Michael Deweese, retired Vermont educator and superintendent, completed the first phase of the efficiency study. In so doing, he reviewed records and documents, conducted interviews with administrators and supervisory union personnel and conducted independent observations.
- Michael Deweese's report was presented to the full school board on Wednesday, December 3, 2014. The report outlines several opportunities for change, organized around themes including governance and board structures, operations and structural opportunities.
- It is important to note that Phase 1 of the efficiency study represents the very beginning of a conversation and a process. Should the full supervisory union school board decide to move forward with any opportunities articulated in the report, they would need to engage in an extensive analyses of costs and benefits, including financial, human resources and community impact, before making any proposals or implementing any changes.
- On December 3rd, the full board members heard a presentation from Michael Deweese. They collaboratively consider which changes would be easy and quick to make, which should be considered because they will lead to improved student outcomes and which could potentially have the most savings.
- On March 25, 2015, Phase 2 of the efficiency study will be presented to the full board and will have cost analysis for some of the opportunities that were presented in the study.

List of Potential Opportunities

Governance & Board Structure:

1. Expend the work of the WCSU Full Board.
2. Streamline goal setting process.
 - 2.1. Administrative goals
 - 2.2. Board goals
3. Reconsider the composition and work of the Executive Committee.
4. Audit local board agendas, (parallel with #1).
5. Strengthen board agendas and management of meetings.
6. Assert clear purpose for administrative reporting.
7. Remand educational issues to the administration.
8. Examine the responsibilities of board members as articulated in the "WCSU Roles and Responsibilities Manual for Administrators and Board Members."
9. Restructure principals' roles with board meetings.
10. Clarify accountability chains.
11. Make principals' responsibilities current.
12. Adopt an administrative compensation schedule.
13. Revisit the necessity for a governance role on the employment of central office administrators.
14. Annually subscribe to codes of ethics and protocols.
15. Delegate acceptance of all grants to superintendent.
16. Reduce WCSU's and U-32 policy committees to one.
17. Establish common policies.
18. Remand responsibility for procedures to the superintendent.
19. Edit board presence on the schools' web sites.

Operations:

Business Operations:

20. Audit the current district financial software.
21. Examine the work-flow of the purchasing structure.
22. Enable electronic inter-agency payments.
23. Rethink principals' contract terms.
24. Consider the effects of principals managing contracts and vendors.
25. Use common bidding approaches.
26. Know when to go "off" the state bid list.
27. Authorize bill payments in advance of warrants.
28. Reconsider purchasing and accounts payable practices.
29. Administratively re-norm formatting of financial statements.

Centralized Services:

30. Design a shared services model for property services / maintenance / building and grounds functions.
31. Utilize the purchasing power of Vermont's FMDA.
32. Consolidate food service functions.
33. Employ the "School Nurse Leader" school health services delivery model.
34. Restructure the student transportation system.

Collective Bargaining:

35. Consider the impact of collective bargaining agreements on instructional leadership.
36. Use electronic payments for all employee reimbursements.
37. Require direct deposit for payroll.

Human Resources:

38. Consider the effects of limited human resources staffing at the WCSU office, and the related effect on principals' time.
39. Consider Information Technology and Human Resources as departments for joint agreements with other supervisory union(s).
40. Install technology-based substitute management and human resource systems.

Professional Development / Curriculum Development:

41. Share elementary schools' professional development *in situ*.
42. Use remote technology to make curriculum development more cost effective.
43. Enforce pre-paid or reimbursed professional development costs more strictly.

Special Education:

44. Redeploy some education specialists through central assignments.
45. Continue to build on alternative student placement opportunities through regional collaborative ventures.
46. Assess the currency of the U-32 special education service delivery model.

Technology:

47. Standardize technology training.
48. Set design parameters for schools' web sites.
49. Switch traditional phone service to VoIP.

Structural Opportunities:

50. Reconfigure grades and schools.
51. Expand rights of transfer within the teachers' and ESP collective bargaining agreements.
52. Make alternative work years or schedules non-elective.
53. Provide more clarity on work day definitions.
54. Evaluate the school calendar.
55. Monitor U-32 Policy G16: Class (Section) Size.

