Advisory Council on Literacy
January 13, 2022, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting
Call In: 1-802-552-8456
Conference ID: 983 532 895#
One National Life Drive Davis 5, Room 514
Montpelier, VT 05620

<u>DRAFT MEETING MINUTES</u>

Present: Bill Clark, Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE); Chelsea Myers, Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA); Martine Gulick, Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA); Donald Tinney, Vermont-National Education Association (VT-NEA); Beth O'Brien, Vermont Principals' Association; Susan Gray, Vermont Independent Schools Association (VISA); Gwen Carmolli, Vermont Curriculum Leaders Association (VTCLA); Katie Campbell, St. Albans Town Educational Center; Jennifer Farnsworth, Hiawatha Elementary School; Julia Spaulding, Enosburg High School; Emily Lesh, Richmond; Cynthia Gardner-Morse, Calais; Jacqui Kelleher, Vermont Agency of Education (AOE)

AOE: Suzanne Sprague, Jess DeCarolis, Pat Fitzsimmons, Meg Porcello, Emily Leute, Lori Dolezal, Glenn Bailey, Katie McCarthy

Others: Lori Quinn, Stern Center

AGENDA	
GOAL: **By the end of this meeting we will** • **Agree on the information to include in the Report for the House & Senate Education Committees** • **Compile assessment questions for AOE** • **Prioritize input on Statute 2903**	**Attendees:** Bill Clark**,** Chelsea Myers, Martine Gulick, Don Tinney, Mill Moore, Gwen Carmolli, Katie Campbell, Jennifer Farnsworth, Julia Spaulding, Emily Lesh, Cynthia Gardner-Morse, Jackie Kelleher, Beth **O'Brien** **Chair:** Gwen Carmolli **Note Taker:** Pat Fitzsimmons **Time:** 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. **Format:** Online meeting
TO PREPARE FOR THIS MEETING, PLEASE: • Review <u>draft minutes from November meeting</u> • Review <u>A Blueprint for Early Literacy Comprehensive System of Services, PreK Through Third Grade</u>	

NORMS	DECISION MAKING PROCESS
• Listen thoughtfully & assume positive intentions • Ground statements in evidence • Stick to the protocol • Begin & end on time	• Gather information & input • Deliberate • Prioritize • Vote or agreement

3:00 – Council Work

The meeting convened at 3:02 p.m.

- Welcome
- Roll Call & share 1 positive from the statewide literacy plan
- Spring Meetings - 3/14 10:00-12:00, 4/13 1:00-3:00, 6/8 1:00-3:00

Attendees: Martine Gulick, Emily Leute, Jacqui Kelleher, Julia Spaulding, Jen Farnsworth, Emily Lesh, Ellen (Guest), Cynthia Gardner-Morse, Chelsea Myers, Gwen Carmolli, Bill Clark, Beth O'Brien, Glenn Bailey, Lori Dolezal, Donald Tinney, Ellen Thompson, Jess DeCarolis, Pat Fitzsimmons, Katie McCarthy, Meg Porcella, Suzanne Sprague, Susan Gray, and Susan Koch

Notes:
- Two new members, Susan Gray and Martine Gulick
- Positive things that stood out about Blueprint:
  - Theory of change is very important
  - As a state, we are nimble enough to revisit how we're doing
  - Appreciate the work
  - Research-based
  - Focus on equity, especially for HM populations
  - Use of a range of instructional approaches
  - Flow starting with early childhood goals
  - Clear that the way we thought kids learn is not necessarily the way all kids learn
  - Focus on explicit and systematic instruction (foundational skills)
  - Focus on family and community collaboration – home/school connection
  - p. 14 – balance of code- and meaning-based skills

3:20 – Approve Minutes
Notes: Approved
3:25 – Hear Public Comment
Notes:
- Lori Quinn from Stern Center here to listen and learn
- Written comment from Mack Gardner-Morse
  - Wonders: are the recommendations we've made sufficient to changing current practice?

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- o Two suggestions – teacher training and early identification of struggling readers
- Question of MTSS came up from Standards Board – what is the position of the committee and how is it going to be incorporated into the report?
  - o It is in statute – work is to continue ongoing work of improving literacy outcomes

3:35 – Hear and Discuss Literacy Outcomes – Follow-Up Questions & Answers
- ● Presentation by VT AOE Representative
- ● Questions, Answers & Discussion

Notes:
- FAQ presented by Jess DeCarolis
- Clarifying questions in the chat, new questions are being held
- Definition of Literacy
  - o Wanted a link to the Defining Literacy document – linked in the notes, but AOE is working on creating a space for all the documents to be housed
- Reading Proficiency
  - o AOE clarifying question: what do you mean by "cohort reading proficiency"?
    - ▪ AOE data specialist talked about problems with tracking individual students through time (from A4 on document) - how it could undermine closing equity gaps
  - o Local Comprehensive Assessment System for assessing individual students
    - ▪ FAQ contains links for suggestions of assessment tools
- Assessment Data Trends
  - o FAQ document provides link to tool to explore NAEP data
- Historically Marginalized Student Groups
- Benchmarks and Other Assessments
- Literacy Across the Continuum
  - o Q17 is a large question that requires a collaborative approach
- Questions from chat:
  - o Q 4. Strengthening and Streamlining Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems - On pages 19 – 25 the reader will find an overview of assessments of skills related to literacy and assessment of strengths and limitations of those assessments.
    Includes Fountas and Pinnell on p. 21 https://www.nctq.org/publications/The-Four-Pillars-to-Reading-Success specifically recommends NOT using this measure (p.6, I believe) There are a number of tools which do not align with the principles of the science of reading. The tools in this list, while popular in many schools, rely on the three-cuing system of reading words, a method that is not supported by consensus research. Most notable of these are Running Records, Fountas and Pinnell, Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), and the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA).
    - ▪ Are the recommendations being revised over time?

- Yes
- Also, the tools in this document are not recommendations, just an indication of what is being used, their strengths and weaknesses
    - Q. p. 3 Start in Grade 3, too late for most effective and cost-effective interventions
    - A. 10 TS Gold I couldn't find this assessment listed in the references mentioned. Where can I find more about this test?
        - Hyperlinked in document
    - Is TSGold required for all VT pre-K students, including private schools in VT?
        - Yes
    - Comment about definition of literacy – is broader than what NRP defined as components of reading

4:05 – Hear and Discuss Statewide Literacy Plan and Provide Input
- Presentation by VT AOE Representative
- Discussion about overview of plan (development process, author group, stakeholder groups, resources)

Blueprint Presentation Notes:
- Blueprint for Early Literacy is our state's literacy plan.
- A variety of stakeholder groups were involved in the development of the literacy plan.
- The structure of the Blueprint was explained.

Discussion:
- Vermont has tended to follow the minority opinion of the Reading Panel rather than the majority opinion of the Reading Panel. Include information about writing and spelling in our updated reports.
- VTmtss provides the systemic framework for SU/SDs.
- [The Education Quality Standards](#) identify the importance of needs-based professional development.
- Covid struck shortly after the Blueprint was finalized. The Blueprint is quality work and now we need to focus on implementation.
- **Questions from Jess for the Council to pose and consider**:
    - (1) How many people feel like they see/have a coordinated curriculum in their supervisory union/district?
    - (2) How many people feel like they are getting sufficient needs-based professional learning based on student outcomes and performance?
    - (3) How many people feel like there is a high-quality, effective education support team structure that folks can turn to so that we are intervening and responding to the needs of students with appropriate supports and instruction?
    - (4) How many people understand what their Local Comprehensive Assessment System is and how it informs Needs-Based Professional Learning (NBPL),

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Education Support Teams (EST) and decision-making within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)?

1.
2. The FAQ document helps to connect all of the different pieces of this work. It is well researched and referenced. How can this Council support or leverage these areas?

Questions:
- What assets does the Blueprint identify?
- What is meant by balance literacy?
  - A balanced approach to literacy instruction is not synonymous with the approach that has come to be known as "balanced literacy," despite the fact that the Blueprint for Early Literacy uses the term "balanced literacy instruction" in reference to a balanced *approach* to literacy instruction. "Balanced literacy" refers to a combination of phonics instruction with "whole language" components such as three-cueing, leveled texts, and separating reading from writing, some of which are not supported by research (Riley, 2020). On the other hand,, a balanced approach to literacy instruction includes a balance of evidence-based practices that meet the needs of all learners and respond to those needs accordingly. Research clearly supports the use of a range of instructional approaches in supporting literacy development for students during the PreK through third grade period (Foorman, et al., 2016, and Christie, 2008)
  - This is an area that the Council may dig into a little further.
- If our plans are already supporting literacy, but our scores are so low, is our Balance working? How will we recommend improvement for all students, and particularly for marginalized student cohort groups, where only 1 in 9 is successful in learning to read?
  - The AOE can provide additional information and clarification about how some parts so the document can be updated.
- How does the Early Literacy system connect with follow on instruction through middle and high school? Is there a parallel document for 4-12 students? What is the overall plan for these students?
  - Improving Adolescent Literacy document can provide ideas about how to meet the needs of these learners. (Hyperlinked in the FAQ document.)
- There is a lack of consistency in how literacy is taught across the state. Is there a plan to create more consistency?
  - This could be considered as part of the implementation of the plan that is developed.
- What is the current lay of the land? Are there districts that have exemplary literacy plans? How is progress measured?
- **What role can the Council take on to move the work forward and fill learning gaps? How can we be a productive voice in helping to solve this issue?**

I.   Suggested Resource: **[Science of Learning to Read Words: A Case for Systematic Phonics Instruction](#)**

Links to AOE webpage resources:
[VTmtss Framework (2019)](#)
[VTmtss website (many pages of tools and resources)](#)
[Coordinated Curriculum](#)
[State and Local Assessment Systems](#)
[Act 173 Guidance Documents](#) webpage

To Be Prepared for the March Meeting:

Share the Blueprint with constituents and respond to the following prompts:

- **Strengths of the plan:** 1-2 areas of strength (cite specific section or language from the plan)
- **From your perspective, what steps have been taken to implement this plan?** List of actions (Ex. Developed, posted, etc.
- **From your perspective, how widely understood is the plan?** Rate from 1 (low/not well understood) to 5 (high/well understood)
- **Based on current implementation, provide suggestions for implementation of the plan:** 1-2 suggestions
- Get information to Gwen by March 4th.

The meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

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