



PreKindergarten Education Implementation Committee – Meeting

November 28, 2023: 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Microsoft Teams Virtual
Meeting Call In: 802-552-8456
Conference ID: 812 475 175#
[Meeting Link](#)

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Present: **Heather Bouchey**, co-Chair, AOE, Interim Secretary of Education; **Janet McLaughlin**, co-Chair, AHS, DCF Deputy Commissioner; **Erica McLaughlin**, Vermont Principals' Association; **Jeff Francis**, Vermont Superintendents Association; **Sandra Cameron**, Vermont School Boards Association; **Colin Robinson**, Vermont National Education Association; **Pam Reed**, Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators; **Theresa Pollner**, Vermont Curriculum Leaders Association; **Morgan Crossman**, Building Bright Futures; **Renee Kelly**, Head Start Collaboration Office; **Sherry Carlson**, Let's Grow Kids; **Nicole Miller**, Vermont Afterschool, Inc.; **Sharron Harrington**, Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children; **Korinne Harvey**, Building Bright Futures Appointee; **Chris Wells**, Building Bright Futures Appointee; **Sheila Quenneville**, Committee on Committees Appointee; **Rebecca Webb**, Regional Prekindergarten Coordinator; **Jeff O'Hara**, Speaker of the House Appointee
AOE: Suzanne Sprague, Meg Porcella, Leslie Freedman, Tammy Bates, Amy Murphy, Michele Johnson, Teresa Haskins
Others: Lee Lauber, Lisa Pike, Meg Baker, Jolie Frechette, Jay Nichols, Matt Levin, Molly Loomis, Kaitlin Northey, Kyle Hibbard

Interim Secretary Bouchey called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. She took a roll call. She asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. There were none. Reed made a motion to approve the [meeting agenda](#). Webb seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried. Pollner made a motion to adopt the [minutes from the October 24th meeting](#). Harvey seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried. Francis abstained.

Members of the public were present and invited to be heard.

Jay Nichols, Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association, addressed the

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committee.

Betsy Barstow provided a [written statement](#).

The Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators (VCSEA) provided a [written statement](#).

Meg Porcella, Director of Student Support Services, led the discussion on the [draft report](#). She said the report requirement is in section 2B of Act 76. The goal of the report was to advise the General Assembly (GA) on whether the cost of educating a prekindergarten student is the same as educating a kindergarten student in the context of a full day. The report is to include recommendations and implementation plans and be aligned with the weights that are currently used in Vermont. The report deadline is December 1. The AOE does not collect the data requested by the GA. Porcella reviewed the [draft report](#). She explained the background, factors and conclusion. Discussion occurred regarding using the same methodology from the University of Vermont weighting study report to apply to prekindergarten and feedback from the committee is critical to getting the report right.

Deputy Commissioner McLaughlin and Porcella used [Padlet](#) to collect the committee members' questions, comments and feedback. Discussion occurred regarding the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) cost estimates and data, data from the Early Care and Education Financing Study and state-level costs related to teacher salaries and classroom supports, responding to the GA without the information requested, why this provision was included in Act 76, consensus among the committee members that the cost is no less than that of a kindergartener, consideration of using a weight of 1.0, role of stakeholders to inform the GA and highlighting pieces that support higher costs.

Feedback from the committee members included a request for additional information on how the New York custom estimates are established, adding definitions such as teaching staff, fleshing out standards, taxing capacity, using the [Blue Ribbon Commission](#) and the [Rand Report from 2015](#) as a resource, developmental needs and differences between young and older 4-year-olds, age when significant disabilities are discovered, special education costs, cost outside six hours and 180 days and how it intersects with universal afterschool efforts, using Head Start's information around wrap around services and the costs, variations on specific costs, sharing information gathered with committee is useful, facilities costs, transportation costs, private providers adding more 4-year-old spaces would decrease the number of spaces available for infants and toddlers, equal access, most subsidized students require full-day access, seeking consensus from committee that costs will be higher than for a kindergartener, opportunity to change a severely underfunded system, data is needed, the cost of coordination between school districts and private programs, seeking consensus that updating the weighting study is needed, cost of contracting reports, new pupil weighting system is in effect, starting with 1.0 Average Daily Membership (ADM) but it is likely not enough for many regions and prekindergarten students have not been accounted for in data.

Deputy Commissioner McLaughlin recapped the conversation and added the report is due on December 1. Interim Secretary Bouchey asked for further comments to be shared with the co-chairs by November 30 so they can be incorporated into the report. The report will

note that it is the preliminary estimate and the committee will continue its work.

Porcella provided an update on the meeting facilitator, note taker and project manager contract. She said that a final contract will be sent out soon for signatures. Interim Secretary Bouchey added that the hope is for the facilitator to begin at the next meeting. Deputy Commissioner McLaughlin said the final report is due one year from now which gives a lot of time for the committee to do good work together.

The meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Meeting Minutes recorded by: Suzanne Sprague