

PHILIP B. SCOTT
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 26, 2023

Jennifer Deck Samuelson, Chair
State Board of Education
P.O. Box 1091
Manchester Center, VT 05255

Dear Chair Samuelson:

Pursuant to 3 VS.A. Sec. 2702, I'm writing to ask the State Board of Education to initiate the candidate selection process for a new Secretary of Education.

Vermont could have the best and most nimble education system in the country, from cradle to career. Such a system - that produces the best results in the country - is the strongest community revitalization tool and would attract families and workers back to Vermont's county economic centers, and the rural communities around them.

To achieve this goal, we must face a range of challenges, which the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated. These challenges include adjusting to steadily declining student populations, persistent inequality in educational opportunities from school to school and district to district, widening academic performance gaps, unsustainable increases in tax burden, and growing social and human services pressures.

There is immense ground to cover to reverse pandemic learning loss, while also responding to our students' social and emotional needs. In partnership with our Agency of Human Services, the Agency of Education must lead this work to ensure our students are successful academically, prepared for the next step in their education or training, and have the skills to engage constructively with their peers and communities. We must drive transformation in the system and be more responsive to the evolving needs of our students and families.

In service to both pandemic recovery and a cradle-to-career education system, I've asked the Agency of Education to prioritize:

- reducing educational inequality in schools in communities that have experienced the most substantial demographic declines;
- increasing the number of older students who are engaged in career and technical education and work-based learning opportunities. And ensuring our high schoolers are enrolling in higher education and training;

Jennifer Deck Samuelson, Chair
July 26, 2023
Page Two

- improving testing scores;
- aligning more directly with the early care and learning system; and
- achieving statewide access to afterschool and summer enrichment.

In a more modern and adaptable school system, we can use improvements in efficiency to reinvest in expanding the scope of opportunities for kids. This work requires relentlessly positive and energetic leadership at the Agency of Education.

I ask that when you evaluate candidates, you prioritize applicants who, above all else, have experience managing complex issues (does not need to be exclusive to education) and share my optimistic vision of what our system of education must be.

Again, I believe we must use this moment to transform our system to preserve and expand the opportunities we can provide to kids, and to help attract young families, making our education system the state's strongest community revitalization tool. Our next Secretary must share this view, have the highest levels of character and be compatible with the enormously talented executive cabinet I have assembled.

Given the recent State of Emergency from this month's flooding, I will be prioritizing recovery work going into the fall. I also want to ensure the Board has the time it needs to conduct a robust search and identify candidates you believe will be prepared to carry out the work outlined here. I have full confidence in the current Acting Secretary and would like to suggest that you take eight weeks to conduct your search. Thank you and I look forward to meeting with you this fall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip B. Scott", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

PBS/kp