

November 17, 2015

*Strategic Goals: (1) Ensure that Vermont's public education system operates within the framework of high expectations for every learner and ensure that there is equity in opportunity for all.
(2) Ensure that the public education system is stable, efficient, and responsive to changes and ever-changing population needs, economic and 21st century issues.*

Draft MINUTES

Present

State Board of Education (SBE): Stephan Morse, Chair; Sean-Marie Oller, Vice Chair; Peter Peltz; William Mathis; Mark Perrin; Bonnie Johnson-Aten; Stacy Weinberger; Krista Huling; Dylan McDermott. Student Member; Rainbow Chen, Student member non-voting; Rebecca Holcombe.

Agency of Education (AOE): Jill Remick; Donna Russo Savage; Christopher Case; Rebecca Plude.

Others: Jeff Francis, Vermont Superintendents Association; Julie Longchamp, Vermont NEA; Nicole Mace, Vermont School Boards Association; Mill Moore, VT Independent Schools Association; Deborah Bucknam, Attorney St. Johnsbury; Jerry & Nancy Dyke, Windham; Mike Heaney, Hartland; Ethan Latour, MMR; Joanne Unruh; VCSEA, Kevin Christie; VT Legislature; Ken Page, VPA; Thomas DeBalsi, Superintendent; Josh O'Gorman, Vermont Press Bureau; Kevin Ellis, VT Public Affairs; Tiffany Danitz, VT Digger; Jonathan Wolff, Primmer.

Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call

Chair Morse called the meeting to order at 10:36 AM. He reminded those in attendance to sign the attendance sheet. The members of the SBE introduced themselves.

Item B: Public to be Heard

Huling introduced her student Nirali Desai who is the student member of the South Burlington School Board. Desai described the School Board's recent decision to keep the "rebels" mascot nickname for South Burlington High School.

The Board clarified the role of the student member on the South Burlington School Board.

Holcombe expressed her appreciation for Desai speaking up and making her voice heard. Including the student voice is a priority; the education community needs to be proactive in reaching out to include the voices of students of color.

Nicole Mace, VT School Board's Association thanked Desai for her comments. Boards struggle with how to authentically engage students in the process of being a school board member. The VSBA published a guide to students which will be more widely distributed.

Item C: Consent Agenda

Motion: Oller moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Johnson-Aten.

Oller noted that Rainbow Chen's comment should be included regarding the.

Vote: The motion passed. (9-0-1).

Specifically, the items approved were:

1. Minutes of the September 15, 2015, SBE Meeting
2. Independent School Renewals
 - a. The Downtown School of Manchester Center, VT

Updates

Item D: Board Members Announcements and Student Representatives' Emails

Chen stated she had attended a conference hosted by the Vermont Arts Council, where she moderated a workshop on Act 77, PLPs and student stories working with these elements. Overall they found Act 77 was improving their education.

Huling and Morse attended a conference hosted by the Governor's Institute on gender equity. Test score differences were discussed, data is being used to more closely examine these differences.

Mathis attended a conference hosted by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and gave a report. He commented on the items that were being discussed in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The SBEs memo to parents regarding the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program, has been well received and has gained attention via social media.

Morse received an email regarding the reauthorization of ESEA. The house is scheduled to begin rewriting the act today.

Holcombe stated that reauthorizing ESEA will necessitate the Agency to allocate resources to implement the legislation. This will also have implications on the Agency's ability to support state programs.

The SBEs letter to the legislature regarding staffing at the Agency for Act 46 has been sent. Mathis and Morse will arrange a meeting with Chairs of the committees between now and the convening of the legislature.

Perrin will attend a hearing with the House Education Committee on Act 46. Holcombe will present an overview, some clarifications, and an update on the current work underway.

Peltz stated that in his recent attendance at a VT School Board's Association (VSBA) and VT Superintendent's Association (VSA) meeting, Act 46 was being discussed positively. Morse agreed.

McAllister attended a Rowland Foundation workshop last month where he led a workshop for 75 students to discuss social responsibility and student voice as high school students.

Item E: Chair's Report

Morse received a letter from Representative Job Tate on behalf of a group of legislators, regarding the SBEs interpretation of Act 46 (Item E).

Item F: Secretary's Report

Secretary Holcombe spoke to the Board about the impact of the Agency's loss of five positions to retirements, we requested the return of two positions, we did not get any positions back.

Effectively, this is a reduction of 5 positions and about \$425,000 in General Fund moving forward into the FY17 budget. That reduction is out of the approximately \$9.5 million of General Fund in our budget.

This has forced conversations internally regarding what our core work will be and how we leverage the existing capabilities.

In some areas, Agency staff has identified new, efficient ways to complete critical work, that free up time and resources for other priority work.

We have also made a few changes to how we are structured:

1. First, Karin Edwards will be reporting to Amy Fowler. Amy has deep K-12 experience.
2. In addition, Heather Bouchey has taken on a few projects, including interagency talks with AHS about mental health supports for schools. In addition, she will supervise the work in Tom Alderman's division, which includes Act 77, personalization, CTE, dual enrollment and more.
3. Heather has interviewed everyone who works on special education. Based on the feedback from staff who work on special education, we have decided to reunite this work group in one division, under Karin Edwards, so that we can use proximity to support their efforts to work closely as a team.
4. In addition, we are watching the news out of Washington DC about reauthorization of ESEA (No Child Left Behind), and anticipating what this may mean for us over the next several years. We have made a few strategic changes to anticipate this, including moving our assessment team over to work closer with our federal funds team, so they can work side by side as we enter a new accountability context.
5. In addition, some of our data folk have relocated to our research and data team, where they benefit from being able pool expertise and analytical techniques.

Huling asked for information on the number of staff at the Agency as compared to 10 years ago. Secretary Holcombe stated that 2/3 of the staff are federally funded.

The Board reviewed a handout on Data on Publicly Funded Students by School Type.

Secretary Holcombe played a video titled [Unleashing Partnership - YATST / UP for Learning](#) which shows many statewide efforts in progress – seeds of change that are living examples of what’s possible when students and teachers work. Featured in the video is Dylan McAllister.

Item H: Update on Act 46 Mergers – Donna Russo-Savage, Nikki South

Russo-Savage displayed [the Act 46 page](#) on the Agency’s website. There is much information available for districts regarding their options including eligibility requirements.

Nikki South, Director of the Act 46 implementation project; which is a collaboration of the VSA, VSBA and the VT School Board’s Insurance Trust. Consistent with the role that VSBA has played in the past, in providing consultation services to districts that are considering governance change, they created the Act 46 implementation project. They provide resources and consulting services to districts that are looking to implement Act 46. They are aware of 11 Supervisory Union’s that are pursuing an accelerated merger, of those, 5 will be voting on town meeting day, 2 will be voting in special meetings in April, and the remainder will vote in June. They anticipate up to an additional 4 that will vote on town meeting day to form a Regional Education Districts (REDs) or a variation thereof. They are also aware of 28 study committees that have been formed, 21 of which are being supported by consultants from the implementation project.

The meeting was recessed until 1:20 p.m. for lunch.

Item I: National Core Arts Standards - Christopher Case

Christopher Case and Erika Lowe, Arts Program Manager at the Vermont Arts Council presented The Vermont Grade Expectations and National Core Arts Standards to the Board. These standards are designed to serve similar purposes: both provide teachers with a framework for what art education should include in a K-12 setting. The Grade Expectations, which have been in place since 2004, differ in many ways from the new National Core Arts Standards, which were made available in 2014.

The Board will be presented with a formal proposal for adoption of the new standards in February 2016.

Item J: Legislative Update – Jill Remick

Jill Remick, Director of Communications and Legislative affairs, spoke to the Board about reports the Agency is currently developing.

There are 18 legislative reports that the Agency is currently developing and directly responsible for.

The Agency continues to update lawmakers on the Longitudinal Data System (LDS) implementation.

Staff at the agency will continue to speak with lawmakers about capacity issues. Any addition through legislation of: reports, mandates, task forces etc.; will overburden Agency staff further.

Remick gave an example regarding requests the Agency is making of the legislature, to charge fees for services. The current teacher preparation program approval process, i.e. ROPA (Results Oriented Program Approval); is solely funded by the Agency with very minimal expense to the institutions and program receiving approval. The Agency will request legislation requiring a fee for this approval, to be charged to the programs directly.

Item K: Initiate review of the 2200 series of the SBE Rules and practices

Motion: Mathis moved to approve the review of the 2200 series of the SBE Rules and practices. The motion was seconded by Oller.

Vote: The motion passed.

Mathis requested that the Agency draft and update rules to: update antiquated language; create fiscal accountability where independent school financial data and budgets be submitted annually in a common statewide electronic format, that GAAP procedures be employed, and that independent auditors be periodically employed; create equal opportunities for all in admissions, program availability and discipline; and that the rules explicitly address these issues; create a robust external evaluation system; approved independent schools shall provide special education services reasonably equivalent to those that would normally be provided in a traditional public school.

Holcombe responded that the Agency return with a recommended timeline at the December meeting.

Mill Moore Vermont Independent Schools Association spoke to the Board.

Item L: School discipline and social emotional interventions - Rebecca Holcombe

Secretary Holcombe gave a presentation regarding interventions that are currently in place throughout Vermont.

Adjourn

Motion: Huling moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:07 PM. The motion was seconded by Oller.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Rebecca Plude