

**April 19, 2016**

*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.*

**MINUTES**

**Present**

**State Board of Education (SBE):** Stephan Morse, Chair, Sean-Marie Oller, Vice Chair; Peter Peltz; William Mathis; Mark Perrin; Krista Huling; Stacy Weinberger, Rainbow Chen, Student member non-voting.

**Agency of Education (AOE):** Rebecca Holcombe, Robert Stirewalt, Rebecca Plude, Suzanne Sprague, Maureen Gaidys, Donna Russo-Savage, Hayley Dover.

**Others:** Tiffany Pash, VT Digger; Julie Longchamp, VT NEA; Mill Moore, VT Independent Schools Association; Ken Page, VPA; Nicole Mace, VSA, Joanne Unrue, Jeff Francis, VSA.

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

Chair Morse called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM. He congratulated Secretary Holcombe on receiving her doctorate. He also reminded those in attendance to sign the attendance sheet.

**Item B: Public to be heard**

Ken Page, Executive Director of the VT Principal's Association. The VPA will be celebrating 100 years of service, he extended the invitation to Board members to attend August 2-4. He distributed a press release from the VPA in which they recognize outstanding Principal's in Vermont.

Jeff Francis, VT Superintendent's Association, on May 19, the VSA and VT Council of SPED Administrators are hosting a conference on creating trauma informed education systems. They will have an expert from California presenting on the topic.

**Item C: Consent Agenda**

**Motion:** Oller moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Peltz.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Item D: Board Members Announcements and Student Representatives Emails**

Huling stated she attended a conference in Washington, D.C., whose theme centered on gender equity.

Mathis attended the American Educational Research Association in Washington. He also attended the Association for Education Finance and Policy. Mathis met with Diane Ravages of the National Public Education group in North Carolina. There was a push for less test-based measures with the advent of ESSA. He gave interviews with both WDEV and VT Digger. He attended an official ceremony where he swore in the Otter Valley School District and the Barstow School District.

Weinberger attended the New England Regional Head Start Conference in RI last month. She was struck with how much overlap there is in services between the AOE and AHS.

#### **Item E: Chair's Report**

Morse updated the Board that a Board meeting in St. Johnsbury will not be possible. Board members will visit instead on April 27<sup>th</sup> to tour the school and will report back at the May meeting.

#### **Item F: Secretary's Report**

Secretary Holcombe informed the Board that the SBE support will be transitioned back to the Secretary's office.

The VT Legislative Joint Fiscal Office released an issue brief Special Education report entitled: [Why Does Spending on Special Needs Vary Across Counties in Vermont?](#) This is an incredibly complex topic which will require much discussion. Secretary Holcombe will return at the May meeting and report on the Agency and Board's role in this discussion.

The Agency's website has a page dedicated to the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#). Several decision points will be brought back to the Board at the May meeting.

Holcombe traveled to Washington to meet the new Secretary of Education, John King. They spoke about several issues including the Perkin's grant, in regards to each state's allocation of funds for staff to administer the grant.

She apprised the Board on a recent bill H.280 requiring schools to upgrade their lighting. The SBE will need to revise their rules. This will only be required when school construction funds are available.

The AOE distributed a press release: [Vermont Secures Grant to Improve Career Preparation Systems for Young People](#). Vermont is among 24 states and the District of Columbia that secured grants for this work through phase one of the New Skills for Youth grant opportunity.

There has been much discussion in the media regarding Act 46. She distributed an update on the current merger status.

### **Item G: Committee Reports**

Mathis spoke with the Government Operations committee about the Agency's role in Educator Licensing.

### **Item H: AOE/AHS Report on Act 46 of 2015 Heather Bouchey, Deputy Secretary, Agency of Education**

Act 46 requires that the "Secretaries of Education and of Human Services, in consultation with school districts, supervisory unions, social service providers, and other interested parties, shall develop a plan for maximizing collaboration and coordination between the Agencies in delivering social services to Vermont public school students and their families. The Secretaries shall present their plan and recommendations to the Senate Committees on Education and on Health and Welfare and the House Committees on Education and on Human Services."

This legislative report summarizes our work to date on the development of this plan, specifically as it relates to addressing Emotional Disturbance (ED) and mental health issues in school-age children. They elected to narrow the scope of the work to support students with emotional disturbances, as this is an identified priority statewide for our schools. Students with emotional disturbances often come from families with other needs for support services provided through AHS.

Bouchey distributed a summary of the report's findings.

Board members asked questions regarding the review's findings, and how they will be used going forward.

Mathis asked about the average cost per FTE, if this was for all students or specifically Special Education students. He asked if the number higher for AP students than it is for other SPED student's.

Morse asked about section 49 of Act 46, the two agencies were to present a plan on January 15, 2016. Morse was curious of the plan has been developed yet. Bouchey responded that this is true due to the staff reduction. The committees involved in the report were all very supportive of this work. Huling echoed the sentiment that the report states beginning in 2008 that due to staff reductions both agencies will need to pull back and provide less technical assistance.

### **Item I: Report on Act 77 of 2013 - Flexible Pathways Heather Bouchey, Deputy Secretary**

This act creates a Flexible Pathways Initiative within the Agency of Education to expand opportunities for secondary students to complete high school and achieve postsecondary readiness. Among other features, the act provides the opportunity for each high school student to enroll in two dual enrollment courses at no expense to the student, authorizes the development of additional early college programs through which student's complete 12th grade entirely on a college campus, and removes the upper age limit for participation in the High School Completion Program. The Act includes multiple effective dates, beginning July 1, 2013.

Bouchey reviewed the report with Board members.

**Item J: Universal Access to Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Education Act 166 – Stephan Morse, Chair**

The Board would like to create a committee to discuss the inequities that exist within Act 166. There needs to be a means of addressing this to make the Act more supportive and equitable. The committee will generate language and changes to Act 166 for the Legislature next season. Secretary Holcombe stated that the creation of a task force would be a positive step. Chair Morse will create a proposal for review by the SBE.

**Item K: Legislative Update - Robert Stirewalt**

Robert Stirewalt distributed and discussed a brief update on current legislative initiatives. As the session winds down, AOE is appreciative of testimony provided by SBE members.

The Board broke for lunch at 12:15 and reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

**Item L: Resolution: Distinguished Principal Award Stephan Morse, Chair**

Chairman Morse presented a resolution acknowledging Robert C. Riley, Principal, Integrated Arts Academy at H.O. Wheeler Elementary School located in the Burlington School District. He is the Recipient of the 2016 National Distinguished Principal Award.

**Motion:** The Vermont State Board of Education is committed to ensuring that all students develop the knowledge, capabilities and dispositions they need to thrive as citizens in their communities, higher education and their careers in the 21st century. A key component of developing these characteristics, through learning, is a diverse school environment that is fully committed to equity for all students.

These goals are uniquely reflected in the daily learning environment that is fostered at the Integrated Arts Academy (“IAA,” Grades K-5), in the Burlington School District. It is one of just two “magnet” schools in the State of Vermont. Magnet school assistance is a key feature of the Every Student Succeeds Act – “ESSA.” The ESSA law prioritizes the creation of magnet schools that promote socioeconomic integration and diversity, like the IAA (and the Sustainability Academy, also within the Burlington School District). This acknowledges a wide body of research that shows the socioeconomic composition of schools is an extremely significant factor affecting student achievement.

At the IAA, the magnet curriculum focus is a commitment to learning core subjects through arts-based instructional practices. This requires significant training and execution among the faculty and staff, on top of existing requirements associated with regular instructional practices and curriculum development. What underlies the magnet school mission of the IAA, is a passion for the work. At the IAA, that passion starts in the Principal’s Office. From the “Monday Morning Meeting” to Friday Afternoon “Town Meeting,” the school week is a community-based endeavor. Students, faculty, staff, and families come together to make the IAA a gateway to rich learning opportunities for every child. Robert C. Riley, or “Mr. Bobby” as he is known to all who enter through the IAA’s doors, has demonstrated exceptional leadership in building an inclusive culture and school climate that strives to make learning a joyful experience for all students, while promoting fidelity to high academic standards.

2016 Recipient, National Distinguished Principal of the Year Award, State of Vermont

For all of his amazing effort and the results that are apparent at the IAA, Mr. Bobby Riley has received national recognition by the National Association of Elementary School Principals. NAESP's annual award program, "The National Distinguished Principals program," honors outstanding elementary and middle-level administrators who set high standards for instruction, student achievement, character, and climate for the students, families, and staff in their learning communities. These standards speak directly to the goals of the IAA, and the related outcomes that are being realized by and for students.

Accordingly, the Vermont State Board of Education, and the Vermont Secretary of Education, are pleased to acknowledge and congratulate Robert C. Riley, upon his being named the 2016 Vermont recipient of the *National Distinguished Principal Award*.

The motion was seconded by Johnson-Aten.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

**Item N: Chittenden South Supervisory Union**

Colleen Mackinnon, Chair Act 46 Study Committee; Kelly Bowen, Director of the school board, Mike Deweese, Consulting, Russ Catherine, Dave Connery, Shelburne Board members.

The CSSU consists of five towns and six school districts, each governed by its own board. The Charlotte, Hinesburg, and Shelburne School Districts each operate an elementary/middle school. The Williston School District operates one elementary school and one elementary/middle school. These four town districts are members of the Champlain Valley Union High School District. A fifth town school district, St. George, currently contracts with the Williston School District for the education of its elementary and middle school students and pays tuition for its students in grades 9–12.

The CSSU Study Committee recommends creation of a unified union school district (New Unified District) that would be its own supervisory district pursuant to the Accelerated Merger process and timeline created by Act 46, Sec. 6 (2015). The Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne, and Williston School Districts and the Champlain Valley Union High School District are identified as "necessary" districts pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(1). The non-operating St. George School District is identified as an "advisable" district pursuant to § 706b(b)(2).

**Motion:** Mathis moved that the State Board of Education finds:

- (1) that the proposed formation of a new unified union school district by all member districts of the Chittenden South Supervisory Union, which will be its own supervisory district, is "in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts" pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c(b);

*and alternatively*

- (2) that the proposed formation of a new unified union school district by all member districts identified as “necessary” districts is “in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts” pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c(b).

That the State Board of Education votes to approve the temporary assignment of the new unified union school district to the Chittenden South Supervisory Union for the purpose of receiving administrative and other transitional assistance. Assignment would be for the interim period beginning on the date on which the unified union school district becomes a legal entity pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706g and ending on July 1, 2017, and would not modify the governing structure of the existing system.

That the State Board of Education votes to approve the attached report of the Chittenden South Supervisory Union Study Committee.

The motion was seconded by Johnson-Aten.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

### **Orleans Central Supervisory Union**

The OCSU consists of seven towns and eight school districts, each governed by its own board. The Albany, Barton Incorporated, Brownington, Glover, Irasburg, and Orleans Incorporated School Districts each operate an elementary/middle school. The Westmore School District pays tuition for its resident elementary/middle school students. All seven town districts are members of the Lake Region Union High School District. The OCSU board oversees centralized, supervisory union-wide prekindergarten education offered in two locations. More than one-half of all three and four-year old children living in the OCSU are enrolled in the prekindergarten program. High school students access career technical education at the North Country Career Center in Newport.

The OCSU Study Committee recommends creation of a unified union school district (New Unified District) that would be its own supervisory district pursuant to the accelerated merger process and timeline created by Act 46, Sec. 6 (2015). The proposal identifies all districts in the OCSU as “necessary” districts pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(1). No district is identified as an “advisable” district.

**Motion:** Peltz moved that the State Board of Education finds that the proposed formation of a new unified union school district by all member districts of the Orleans Central Supervisory Union, which will be its own supervisory district, is “in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts” pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c(b).

That the State Board of Education votes to approve the temporary assignment of the new unified union school district to the Orleans Central Supervisory Union for the purpose of receiving administrative and other transitional assistance. Assignment would be for the interim period beginning on the date on which the unified union school district becomes a legal entity

pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706g and ending on July 1, 2017, and would not modify the governing structure of the existing system.

That the State Board of Education votes to approve the attached report of the Orleans Central Supervisory Union Study Committee.

The motion was seconded by Perrin.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

### **Washington West Supervisory Union**

The WWSU consists of six towns and eight school districts. Two of the school districts are union school districts and two are inactive schools districts. The Fayston, Moretown, Waitsfield, and Warren School Districts each operate an elementary school. Duxbury and Waterbury comprise the Duxbury-Waterbury Union Elementary School District, which operates the Thatcher Brook Primary School (PK-4) and the Crosset Brook Middle School (5-8). All six communities are members of the Harwood Union High School, either for grades 7-12 or 9-12.

The WWSU Study Committee recommends creation of a unified union school district, which would be its own supervisory district, pursuant to the Accelerated Merger process and timeline created by Act 46, Sec. 6 (2015). Alternatively, it recommends creation of a modified unified union school district pursuant to the criteria, processes, and timeline created by Act 153 (2010) and Act 156, Sec. 17 (2012), as amended.

The proposal identifies all districts as “advisable” pursuant to § 706b(b)(2). No districts are identified as “necessary” districts. The combined average daily membership (ADM) of all districts within the WWSU for FY2016 is 1,903.82.

**Motion:** Johnson-Aten moved that the State Board of Education finds:

- (1) that the proposed formation of a new unified union school district by all member districts of the Washington West Supervisory Union, which will be its own supervisory district, is “in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts” pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c(b);

*and alternatively*

- (2) that the proposed formation of a new modified unified union school district within the Washington West Supervisory Union is “in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts” pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c(b).

That the State Board of Education votes to approve the temporary assignment of the new unified union school district, if formed, to the Washington West Supervisory Union for the purpose of receiving administrative and other transitional assistance. Assignment would be for the interim period beginning on the date on which the unified union school district becomes a legal entity pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706g and ending on July 1, 2017, and would not modify the governing structure of the existing system.

That the State Board of Education votes to approve the attached report of the Washington West Supervisory Union Study Committee.

The motion was seconded by Peltz.

**Vote:** The motion passed (7-1).

**Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union**

The FNESU consists of five towns, each of which is its own school district governed by its own board. The Enosburg and Richford School Districts both operate schools for their respective elementary and secondary students. The Bakersfield, Berkshire, and Montgomery School Districts each operate an elementary/middle school and pay tuition for students in grades 9-12.

The FNESU Study Committee recommends creation of a unified union school district (New Unified District) that would be its own supervisory district pursuant to the Accelerated Merger process and timeline created by Act 46, Sec. 6 (2015) or that would either be a Regional Education District (RED) under the Phase 2 voluntary merger process (Act 153 (2010)) or a Conventional Merger under Phase 3 (Act 46, Sec. 7 (2015)).<sup>1</sup>

The Berkshire, Enosburg, and Richford School Districts are identified as “necessary” districts pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(1). The Bakersfield and Montgomery School Districts are identified as “advisable” districts pursuant to § 706b(b)(2).

**Motion:** Oller moved that the State Board of Education finds:

- (1) that the proposed formation of a new unified union school district by all member districts of the Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union, which will be its own supervisory district, is “in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts” pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c(b);

*and alternatively*

- (2) that the proposed formation of a new unified union school district by all member districts identified as “necessary” and either one or none of those identified as “advisable” is “in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts” pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c(b).

That the State Board of Education votes to approve the temporary assignment of the new unified union school district to the Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union for the purpose of receiving administrative and other transitional assistance. Assignment would be for the interim period beginning on the date on which the unified union school district becomes a legal entity pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706g and ending on July 1, 2017, and would not modify the governing structure of the existing system.

That the State Board of Education votes to approve the attached report of the Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union Study Committee.



The motion was seconded by Peltz.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

**Act 46 Update - Approval of Act 46 Study Committee Proposals - Donna Russo-Savage**

Russo-Savage presented an update on the merger process, she distributed a revised map showing which districts are considering or have approved mergers.

**Adjourn**

**Motion:** Mathis moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:07 PM. The motion was seconded by Johnson-Aten.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Rebecca Gile