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## MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education  
FROM: Daniel M. French, Secretary of Education  
RE: District Quality Standards and Recommended Agency Engagement Plan  
DATE: September 20, 2022

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Act 127 of 2022 amended 16 V.S.A. § 165 to read, “In addition to the education quality standards provided in section (a) of this section, each Vermont school district shall meet the school district quality standards adopted by rule of the Agency of Education regarding the business, facilities management, and governance practices of school districts. These standards shall include a process for school district quality reviews to be conducted by the Agency of Education. Annually, the Secretary shall publish metrics regarding the outcomes of school district quality reviews.”

Additionally, “On or before February 1, 2023, the Agency of Education shall initiate rulemaking to update education quality standards as required under 16 V.S.A. § 165. Prior to the filing of the draft updated rules with the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules, the Agency of Education shall engage stakeholders for input on the draft rules in accordance *with a written plan approved by the State Board of Education.*”

Act 127 describes three topics for District Quality Standards: Business Operations, Facilities Management, and Governance. We have reviewed these topics and believe no additional topics are needed at this point. However, the topic of Facilities Management has been expanded to be *Facilities Management and Safety*.

The second aspect of the rulemaking in Act 127 refers to the development of a process of, “school district quality reviews to be conducted by the Agency of Education.” The Agency intends to outline this process in “Quality Assurance Rules” that will pull elements from both the existing Education Quality Standards (EQS) and the new District Quality Standards (DQS). These quality assurance rules will lead to a revision of the state’s ESSA State Plan including a re-examination of current quality assurance processes such as the Annual Snapshot and Integrated Field Reviews.

Based on the above outline of this project, the agency has created a tentative timeline for this work:

- September 2022
  - Frame out rulemaking project
  - Present overview to SBE on September 28, 2022 along with proposed engagement plan
- October 2022
  - DQS rule development and refinement with education stakeholder groups
- November 2022
  - Incorporation of governance standards from Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA) draft
  - Refinement of complete model, EQS, DQS, and Quality Assurance (QA) rules
- December 2022
  - Stakeholder engagement including legislative leaders
  - Stable draft achieved
- January 2023
  - Public comment and final revisions to proposed rule, in preparation for Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules (ICAR) filing

### Recommended Engagement Plan

1. October – Definition of DQS Rules
  - a. The agency will reach out to relevant content experts among the various Vermont education stakeholder groups to develop rules for Business Operations and Facilities Management and Safety.
  - b. The agency will work directly with VSBA and Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA) to develop School Governance rules.
2. November – Refinement of DQS Rule Model and Development of QA Rules
  - a. The agency will work with education stakeholder groups to refine and develop these rules.
  - b. The agency shall solicit formal written comment on these rules from VSBA, VSA, Vermont Principals' Association (VPA), and Vermont-National Education Association (VT-NEA) by November 23, 2022.
3. December – Feedback on Complete Draft Rules
  - a. The agency shall solicit public feedback on the draft rules through a formal comment period and shall provide a written rationale for either incorporating, modifying, or rejecting this feedback.
  - b. The agency shall provide an overview of the draft rules to legislative leaders.

January – Final Draft

- c. The agency shall present evidence of compliance with the engagement plan to the SBE at its regular meeting in January 2023.
- d. The agency shall also present a final version of its proposed rules to the SBE at this same meeting. The purpose of this presentation will be for information and discussion purposes not approval.
- e. The agency shall file its proposed rule with the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules in advance of the February 1, 2022, deadline.