

State Board of Education

Draft Meeting Minutes

Central Vermont Career Center
155 Ayers Street, Suite 2, Room 136
Barre, VT 05641
Via Teams Teleconference
Call in #: 1-802-828-7667, Conference ID:244 740 133#

Date: April 19, 2023

Present:

State Board Members (SBE): Jennifer Samuelson, Chair; Tammy Kolbe, Vice Chair; Kim Gleason; Gabrielle Lucci; Amera Severtson, Jenna O'Farrell, Richard Werner, Mohamedou Diop, and Heather Bouchey.

Agency of Education (AOE): Josh Souliere, Meg Porcella, Emily Simmons, Suzanne Sprague, Maureen Gaidys.

Others: Jody Emerson, Central Vermont Career Center (CVCC); Abby Allen, CVCC; Ken French, Media Factory; Adam Walker, Media Factory; Mill Moore, Vermont Independent Schools Association; Jennifer Oldham, Lincoln School District; Madelyn Crudo-Burke, Lincoln School District; Dr. Jeneve Joslin, CVCC; Lucinda Garthwaite, ILI.

Chair Samuelson called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m. and asked for roll call.

Item A: Central Vermont Career Center's (CVCC's) Student Leadership Team

Chair Samuelson recognized the Student Leadership Team, who introduced themselves.

The Student Leadership Team spoke about student voice and some of the activities that they have organized: surveys, field days, and program-switch days.

Student Leadership Team members spoke about:

Why they chose CVCC: hands-on learning, career readiness, specific programs.

Future plans: cooperative next year – then journeyman – then Master Electrician; going to Georgia to be a Cosmetology Instructor; open own business.

Advantages of CVCC: gives options for different paths, independent work, entrepreneurship/business.

Impact of COVID on CVCC: Some restrictions on what could be done, hard to get clients in with the pandemic.

What do you like most: hands-on learning, opportunities, scholarships.

What would they change about CVCC: more field trips.

There was discussion on importance of the trades, demand for this work, value of having a leg up, time spent on-site and at sending school, CVCC as their community, challenges transitioning between the sending school and CVCC, diplomas, graduation, post-program counseling/support, cooperative learning, job-shadowing, job opportunities, recommendations for sending schools in regard to student voice, how new programs are added, community input, program demand, competitive application process, and transportation logistics.

Item B: Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission ([MIC3](#))

Chair Samuelson gave background information on the MIC3. She explained that authority for appointing a MIC3 Commissioner/Military Family Education Liaison is delegated by the Governor to the SBE. David Young was re-appointed to this position last fall, then he became the Superintendent of Catholic Schools within the Roman Catholic Diocese in Burlington and stepped down. [Secretary Bouchey's recommendation](#) is to appoint Rene Sanchez.

Samuelson moved that the State Board of Education appoint Superintendent Rene Sanchez, Champlain Valley School District, as the Commissioner for the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3). Superintendent Sanchez's prior experience and geographic location in Chittenden County, including proximity to the Vermont National Guard, will be beneficial in this role. Vice Chair Kolbe seconded. Chair Samuelson called the vote. The vote passed unanimously.

Chair Samuelson recessed for lunch at 12:33 p.m. and reconvened at 1:20 p.m.

Item C: Public to be Heard

Andrea Goldman, Ludlow, spoke about the Expeditionary School at Black River (Expeditionary School). She has been a property owner for 20+ years. She said she is not here in any official capacity, but as a concerned citizen about Ludlow and education and the unintended consequences of Vermont's educational tax policy. She spoke about well-intended policies, unintended consequences, Ludlow has been limited economically, funding (or not) a town high school, that the town sacrificed education for money, Ludlow is becoming a town/village dominated by senior citizens and Airbnbs. She said there is a lack of quality education in town and that is supporting a trend in declining population. She said there is an opportunity right in front of us with Expeditionary School and headmistress Kendra Rickerby. She has visited the school and seen voluntary staff in action. The Expeditionary School has been able to offer great opportunities in a short amount of time. At the annual town meeting, the town voted to take on the tax burden of \$75K to keep the Expeditionary School alive for another short while with the hope that this committee would see its way to the benefit of allowing the school to have school choice funding and enable the school to have that funding to continue its amazing efforts. She invited any information on formulas on tax receipts, and any studies that might have been done on unintended consequences. She implored the SBE to help Ludlow, Rickerby, and the Expeditionary School by allowing them access to public funding.

Item D: Review and Approve [March 15, 2023, Meeting Minutes](#) and [April 13, 2023, Special Meeting Minutes](#)

Gleason moved to approve minutes to March meeting; Samuelson seconded. Chair

Samuelson called the vote. The vote passed. Werner abstained. Gleason moved to approve Special Meetings minutes; Lucci seconded. There was a discussion on potential edits from Vice Chair Kolbe. Chair Samuelson called the vote. The vote passed unanimously.

Item E: Board Announcements

Chair Samuelson announced that the SBE is looking for two new student members to replace the two students whose term expires June 30, 2023. One position will serve a two-year term (first year non-voting; second year voting) and the second student member will be a voting member, finishing Severtson's term.

Chair Samuelson shared that Severtson won a gold medal in a state-level competition for skills in Cosmetology and is going on to the National competition in Atlanta. Other CVCC students who received medals are: two gold medalists in the Digital Media Arts – Ty Thorton and Gino Massey; one silver medalist in Plumbing and Heating – Cole Dezan; and one bronze medalist in Plumbing and Heating – Marshall Aja. She extended congratulations to all students and added that it is a great representation for the state of Vermont.

Chair Samuelson announced that last Friday the State Board of Education issued its decision in an appeal brought by the parent of a minor child pursuant to 16 V.S.A. Section 828 challenging his school district's denial of his request to pay his son's tuition to attend an independent school in New Brunswick, Canada. [The Board's decision](#) affirming the school district's decision has been issued to the parties and has been posted on the SBE's website. Because this decision may be subject to further review or proceedings, the Board will not be discussing or commenting further.

Gleason reminded members that if there is any feedback on draft EQS revisions, to get those to Gleason and Kolbe by April 24, 2023. A Doodle poll will be forthcoming for another special meeting in hopes that this item could be voted on at the Board's regular monthly meeting in May.

Item F: Student Report

Lucci said her district is on spring break – the end of year is close, and this can be stressful, but many are excited for summer. This break will help everyone to recharge and refresh. She graduates June 15, 2023.

Item G: Independent School Rule Implementation Update

Josh Souliere shared a presentation titled, "[Independent School Rule Implementation Update](#)" to address where the AOE is at in providing support and resources to the field. He discussed pausing site visits, an independent school survey (target date of 4/28/23) to determine independent school interest in moving forward with implementation of the new rules with which independent schools must comply as a condition of receipt of public dollars, "office hours" for independent schools during which they can ask questions about the process, continued development and revision of resources (application, rate-setting application, assurances, future plan for site reviews).

There was discussion on independent schools that are already approved and that will have to comply with new rules but will not go through the reapproval process for several years and

how the AOE will be handling that issue. Simmons explained that a set of detailed assurances are being developed and will be required to be completed by these schools as a condition of their receipt of public funds. Additional information will be required to be submitted to the AOE to prove assurance and AOE will be examining these documents. The assurances will be more detailed than what they have been this past year. If assurances are not met, then AOE's intent is to revoke approval. Gleason reminded folks that the change effective July 1, 2023 is a new category of approved independent schools – and if a school is not able/willing to serve students with special needs, it is no longer able to accept public funds. Gleason expressed concern for decision points for families and independent schools' enrollment process and how this will work for these parties. The survey that AOE will send in the next week will provide information to help make these decisions.

There was additional discussion on the survey, deadlines for survey and assurances, capacity of AOE, whether the default position is to pay tuition, effective dates and impact on enrollment decisions, frustration with timing for families and schools, assurances will be for the 23-24 school year, information/guidance will precede survey distribution and telegraph survey results, problem with the timeline giving parents notice on July 2, 2023 that their child's school will not serve children with special needs and will therefore be ineligible to receive public funds, state and local responsibilities, how this information will be provided to families who don't speak English, AOE committed to providing documents in multiple languages, frustration with timeline, what happens to schools who will no longer be eligible for public funds, lay person/parents perspective, if/how this is communicated to families participating in school choice and tuitioning towns, this work has been ongoing for years, AOE will take this feedback and do its best work, engagement with community, challenges with local control, urgency cannot be overstated, compliance with American Disabilities Act (ADA) as part of assurances, construct for ADA compliance, and rules regarding nondiscrimination in admissions and employment apply to independent schools as a condition of approval regardless of completing assurances that are necessary as a condition to receive public funds.

Item H: Lincoln School District (LSD) Update

Jen Oldham, LSD Board, and Madelyn Crudo-Burke, Acting Superintendent, addressed the SBE. They have been very busy. They were able to get the report done, but not the timeline. Chair Samuelson opened it up for questions and discussion.

Vice Chair Kolbe asked about staffing and positions (attachment E, page 4) with most concern related to leadership team and special education staff. Oldham said they have commitments for all except one full-time food service staff and are under negotiation for the Business Manager position. There were questions/discussion on superintendent licensure, special education contracts for occupational/physical therapy, request for proposal (RFP) for transportation, projected cash flow management plan for July 1, bank commitment for loan, enrollment increase (10) from homestudy and non-district students (Ripton and Bristol), still reviewing requests for enrollment, projected staff present on a typical day (11-12), shared positions with Mt. Abraham Unified School District (MAUSD), staff with fractional employment are eligible for full benefits, staff bumping rights, non-resident tuition policy, enrollment policy alignment with Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA) model policy that is currently being updated.

Oldham asked if there was a need for LSD to return in May and if instead if this could be deferred to January and they could give an update and hopefully AOE could do an EQS review. Chair Samuelson said the SBE wants to help think through potential issues with LSD and ensure that it succeeds. She said the SBE would find it helpful to understand the staffing broken down by person and how different part-time positions are being filled by which person, receive an update on superintendent licensure, license status for each person for specific role, and positions under provisional licensure. O'Farrell asked about how class-size in a contract works with respect to enrolling students. The contract says state-recommended guidelines for class size are used and if circumstances arise and that is not possible, then there will be discussions with teachers on how to support larger classes. Chair Samuelson said it would be helpful to have LSD come back in May with another report. Oldham commented that questions about specific licensure of staff lead to feelings that there is no confidence in the work being done by LSD. There was discussion on if it is the job of the SBE to ask these detailed questions. A written update was suggested instead of SBE presentation from LSD. LSD will provide a written update to provide staffing broken down by person and updates on licensure.

Item J: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Presentation – Jody Emerson, Director, CVCC

Emerson introduced Dr. Jeneve Joslin, Medical Professions, CVCC, and Lucinda Garthwaite, [Institute for Liberatory Innovation \(ILI\)](#).

Dr. Joslin spoke about the Medical Profession Advisory Board at CVCC and their focus on equity and inclusion. One of their priorities is to help the program be a leadership development program for future healthcare providers in terms of DEI. They have reviewed curriculum and topics/assignments/activities have been added that help to teach the true history of healthcare and medicine – and used the learning for justice standards to align with curriculum, using culturally responsive classrooms to create leaders who can make the change that is needed within the industry. They recently drafted a vision statement. This gray area of living your values, knowing your cultural identity, and being empathetic, compassionate, and inclusive is a skillset that is desperately needed. This year, gender identity and implicit bias training was added, and next year they will add a justice service-learning project. There is policy level work that still needs to happen and support for teachers around DEI. She is grateful to have support from the administration for a pilot program and is looking forward to collaborating with all other CTE districts and borrowing from their great practices. Every CTE program has an Advisory Board of industry folks that meet in fall and spring.

There was discussion on student involvement on the Advisory Board, students reviewing and giving feedback on materials, and their voices are a lot of what is driving this. Emerson shared accountability data and noted that there are some inaccuracies in this, and she will provide updated data when received. Perkins Funding is about \$250K/year – materials for instruction, equity, and professional development (PD) for recruiting and retaining teachers. This data is used when applying for Perkins funding. There are areas for improvement. Goal setting includes WorkKeys testing and improving scores overall. The canned online curriculum is not strong enough to support what students need; they will have an English and STEM coordinator embedded into every program next year. This data is used to develop a 4-year plan for Perkins and Green Mountain writing platform. Also, a comprehensive level

needs assessment will be done every two years which allows feedback on the labor market, teacher programming and other areas that need improvement. Staff is trained in restorative practices, and they want to keep doing that work but it is hard to do that in a place where safety is key. Part of their 4-year plan is to partner with Garthwaite/ILI and hire an Equity Scholar in Residence. This person will administer the program. Teachers and students see Equity Scholars as a resource and the one who bridges gaps and provides resources.

Garthwaite spoke about ILI, and that it is a Vermont-based organization that works throughout New England. She said DEI does not work because it brings in a singular leader, and that person is often a person of color, and that harms that person of color. Some organizations might bring in top-down training but that also does not work. ILI was founded specifically and works differently with the Equity Scholar Program. Passionate education works better; this is combined with restorative justice and so far is working and moving the needle. The Equity Scholar works primarily with teachers until asked to work directly with student(s), is embedded in the school, and stays on top of what is happening in the world that needs to be understood and shared. Responsive scholarship means that we identify a school and community-specific example, and the Equity Scholar finds the most useful resources, and leans on thinking, not just scholarship. They focus on passion, respectful relationships, non-punitive interventions, and responsive scholars. They are fiercely anti-racist, even if they seem soft. Schools contract with ILI, who provides a scholar, and they are in the process of looking for funding to expand this throughout the state. This is currently funded by Perkins. The Equity Scholar just started and has only been here 2 days and the response has already been amazing. The position will be full-time next year. All Equity Scholars are master's level or higher. ILI is looking for funding partners. They are seeing that educators' behavior is positively changing. Research is looking at specific behavior changes quantitatively. It is about learner-centered experiences, and they have learned to reframe equity. Diversity and Inclusion get really performative. Equity means all children are doing well as who they are and are thriving and the result is that others are thriving too.

There was discussion on honest ignorance vs. willing ignorance, connection with the work of Act 1 and Education Quality Standards, DEI industry has gotten a bit rigid ideologically, concern that rigidity is backfiring in some ways, curious questions, resetting thinking patterns, and appealing to relational nature as proximity decreases the feelings of being at odds with someone.

Item K: Public to be Heard

Chair Samuelson asked for members of the public to be heard. There were none.

Adjourn

Werner moved to adjourn; Samuelson seconded. Chair Samuelson called the vote; the vote was unanimous, and the meeting adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Maureen Gaidys.