

State Board of Education

Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Place: Virtual Teams Meeting/Video/Teleconference

Call in #: 1-802-552-8456, Conference ID: 840 216 347#

Date: November 16, 2022

Present:

State Board Members (SBE): Jennifer Samuelson, Chair; Tammy Kolbe, Vice-Chair; Patrick Brown; Kim Gleason, Lyle Jepson; Tom Lovett; Gabrielle Lucci; Jenna O'Farrell; Amara Severtson; Secretary Dan French

Agency of Education (AOE): Emily Simmons; Donna Russo-Savage; Suzanne Sprague

Others: Dan Morris, Northfield; Jen Oldham, Lincoln School District; Cassie Damkoehler, Principal, Brattleboro Union High School; Traci Lane, Assistant Principal, Brattleboro Union High School; Hannah Parker, Assistant Principal, Brattleboro Union High School; Lashawn Sells, DEI Coach, Shelburne Community School; Ava O'Brien, Shelburne Community School; Avery Ananou, Shelburne Community School; Jillian Upton, Shelburne Community School; Ivy Lea Simons, Shelburne Community School, Fiona Sherman, Shelburne Community School; Saffron Chang, Shelburne Community School

Introductions and roll call

Chair Samuelson called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. A roll call was called. There were no amendments to the agenda.

Public to Be Heard

Dan Morris, Northfield resident, Paine Mountain School Board member and Central Vermont School Board member, addressed the State Board about not only considering efficiencies when discussing the Lincoln School District but to also consider equity and autonomy. It would not be equitable to merge the Lincoln School District and the Central Vermont Supervisory Union.

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes from October 19, 2022

Jepson made a motion to approve the [minutes](#) from the October 19 meeting. Brown seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Board Announcements

Gleason said she attended the annual fall conference of the Vermont School Boards Association and the Vermont Superintendents Association. She enjoyed engaging with the field. Gleason found the video "Listen UP" by Bess O'Brien impactful and will try and obtain access to it for the full State Board. Gleason also attended a recent meeting with the Rowland Foundation. The speaker was Dr. Goldy Muhammad who spoke about students, equity and joy in the educational system.

Chair Samuelson said that Oliver Olsen stepped off the State Board of Education and will be recognized at the December meeting. Chair Samuelson thanked Olsen for his years of service and guidance.

O'Farrell acknowledged former State Board member and legislator, Peter Peltz, who passed away in October.

Lovett recently attended a meeting of the National Merit Scholarship Board where educators around the country discussed what is happening in schools and to young people. Some of the takeaways included: increased immaturity in students around social emotional learning, academic learning and overall mental health; schools are making progress on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI); middle school students are going into high school with little executive functioning skills; toxic rhetoric and politics; aggressive early college decision and application process; staff mental health and staff shortages; and, that the SAT test is scheduled to go online in 2024.

Student Report

Lucci said that there is more student academic stress with classwork. The upcoming fall break will help alleviate some of the stress. Lucci noticed an uptick in verbal harassment toward marginalized groups such as females, LGBTQ+ and BIPOC people. She was not certain how to combat the issue and it has been affecting her school for a while. She would like to find a way to fight back against it because any form of harassment is not ok.

Severtson said she is on the school board for the Central Vermont Career Center. She said that the students fund the cosmetology program and through the services that they provide as part of their training. The money earned, including tips, is given directly to the school. She would like the tips to go to the students and the money earned by the program to be used to fund the program. She is working with the school board on the issue and to make sure that her program is funded.

Lincoln Assignment

Chair Samuelson said that representatives from White River Valley Supervisory Union, Central Vermont Supervisory Union, Mount Abraham Unified Union School District and Lincoln School District are on hand to answer questions if necessary. Chair Samuelson shared a [presentation](#) and invited discussion.

Discussion followed regarding Lincoln rejoining Mount Abraham Unified Union School District, making a decision today being preferable, if approved requesting a status update from Lincoln in February, monitoring progress, process for Lincoln if it cannot support itself as a stand-alone district, concern with Lincoln fundraising and concern with sustainability.

Jen Oldham, Chair of the Lincoln School District, addressed the State Board. She said that the fundraising in place is to support the cost to transition through July 1, 2023, at which point the Lincoln School District will have a budget and tax revenue from which to operate; any expenses not covered by fundraising will be covered by bank notes or lines of credit; AOE has technical expertise to review its plan to assure it is sound; a former superintendent is consulting Lincoln and has reviewed the plan and considers it achievable.

Discussion followed regarding Act 68, statewide funding for public schools, lines of credit should be voted on by the electorate, VT-NEA consulting on staffing, maintaining teacher seniority and negotiating contracts, more detail on the Lincoln School District plan at the status update, percentage of transition budget being fundraised, families and students are protected and do not need to contribute to fundraising efforts, no fundraising plans after July 1, 2023, approved budget, hiring central office staff, teacher shortages and part-time teachers, Plan B if fundraising falls short of expectations and the average cost per pupil state-wide.

O'Farrell made the following motion:

I move that the State Board of Education declares:

1. That the Lincoln School District is DESIGNATED to be its own supervisory district (i.e., a single-district supervisory union) pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 261(c); and
2. That the supervisory district:
 - a. Shall fulfill its responsibilities through a combination of providing its own services where possible and contracting for services where it would be more efficient or effective pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §§ 261a(b) and 267; and
 - b. Shall be fully operational on July 1, 2023.

Kolbe asked that a section be added to the motion indicating that, on or before February 2023, the Lincoln School Supervisory District will provide the State Board of Education with an update on its progress to becoming fully operational by July 1, 2023. Chair Samuelson asked if the date could be moved to February 15, 2023 which is the date of the State Board's monthly meeting. Kolbe agreed.

O'Farrell read the motion as amended:

I move that the State Board of Education declares:

1. That the Lincoln School District is DESIGNATED to be its own supervisory district (i.e., a single-district supervisory union) pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 261(c); and
2. That the supervisory district:
 - a. Shall fulfill its responsibilities through a combination of providing its own services where possible and contracting for services where it would be more efficient or effective pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §§ 261a(b) and 267; and
 - b. Shall be fully operational on July 1, 2023.
 - c. On or before February 15th, 2023, Lincoln School District will provide the State Board of Education with an update on its progress toward becoming fully operational by July 1st, 2023. The State Board of Education will provide a framework that Lincoln School District will follow in providing this update.

Jepson seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Yea - Brown, Gleason, Kolbe, Jepson, Lovett, Lucci, O'Farrell, Samuelson. Nay – none.
The motion carried unanimously.

Update on District Quality Standards (DQS)

Chair Samuelson said the State Board is required to adopt an engagement plan and if one is adopted, then the State Board will need to appoint a member to serve on the Quality Assurance Working Group.

Secretary French referred to his [Memorandum - District Quality Standards and Recommended Agency Engagement Plan - Revised](#). He outlined an engagement plan and asked the State Board to adopt one, either the one he offered or another one. He reminded the State Board that the Agency has been charged with developing rules and district quality standards. The AOE is required to engage with stakeholders in accordance with a written plan approved by the State Board. The AOE will present and finalize the rules and standards in February.

Discussion followed regarding a typo pertaining to the due date which should be February 2023 and not February 2022.

Brown made a motion to adopt the Secretary's engagement plan as presented with the small correction of the due date of February 2023. Kolbe seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Samuelson nominated Kolbe as the State Board representative to the Quality Assurance Working Group. Gleason seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Update on Education Quality Standards (EQS)

Kolbe said the subcommittee continues to meet. They recently received proposed technical corrections to the language from the AOE. An open hearing/listening session is scheduled for Wednesday, November 30, from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. which is an opportunity for the public to share comments and concerns around the committee's revisions, including proposed language from the Act 1 Group and technical corrections from the AOE. Information will be posted on how to sign up to provide feedback. All persons will have a 2-minute time limit. Kolbe reminded the State Board of the intent to keep the timeline on revisions to the EQS in parallel with revisions to the DQS and hopes to submit a final document on EQS to the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules (ICAR) in February at the same time the AOE files the DQS document. The subcommittee will present to the full State Board for its consideration at the December meeting and for a vote from the full State Board at the January meeting.

Discussion followed regarding access to view the working documents, the need for a comprehensive legal review, and Request for Proposal (RFP) process for outside legal counsel.

Ripton – Reversal of Withdrawal per Act 176, Sec. 4

Russo-Savage said that, since the voters of the Ripton School District voted to rejoin the Addison Central School District and pursuant to the terms of Act 176, the State Board is required to make certain declarations to rescind its prior orders.

Jepson made the following motion:

As a result of the September 29, 2022 vote of the Ripton School District voters and as required by Act 176 of 2022, Section 4, subdivision (d)(3)(D), I move that:

(1) The State Board of Education REVERSES and VOIDS all of its earlier declarations approving withdrawal and reconstituting the Ripton School District including:

(a) The Board's approved May 19, 2021 motion conditionally approving the request of the Ripton voters to withdraw from the Addison Central School District and conditionally declaring that the withdrawal would be effective on July 1, 2022, that the Ripton School District was reconstituted, and that the reconstituted district would be solely responsible for the education of its resident students on July 1, 2022.

(b) The Board's approved May 19, 2021 motion approving continuation of the Addison Central School District despite the withdrawal of Ripton.

(c) The Board's approved January 19, 2022 motion giving final approval to the request of the Ripton voters to withdraw from the Addison Central School District and making final declarations:

(i) That Ripton's withdrawal would be effective on July 1, 2023;

(ii) That the Ripton School District was reconstituted, would assume sole responsibility for the education of its resident students on July 1, 2023, and until that date the Addison Central School District would be responsible for the education of students residing in Ripton;

(iii) That until July 1, 2023, the Ripton School District would exist solely to prepare for full operations; and

(iv) That, pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 261(c), the Ripton School District was designated to be its own supervisory district and, as such, would begin providing its own supervisory union services on July 1, 2023.

and

(2) The State Board of Education NOTIFIES all interested parties that, pursuant to subdivision 4(d)(3)(D)(i), "the withdrawal action initiated pursuant to the former 16 V.S.A. § 724 is concluded" and, as a result, Ripton is a town within the Addison Central School District, which is its own supervisory district.

The Agency will prepare a certificate for the Chair's signature to be recorded with the Secretary of State, as authorized by subdivision 4(d)(3)(D)(ii)(II).

Gleason seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Samuelson said that the December meeting agenda will include an update from the EQS Subcommittee, a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) presentation from Colchester, a presentation

on School Safety, an update from the quality assurance working group, a resolution for Olsen and there may be some independent school approvals.

Chair Samuelson called for a recess at 10:26 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 10:51 a.m.

Brattleboro Union High School Presentation

Chair Samuelson referred to a [VTDigger article](#) to introduce the topic on how the Brattleboro Union High School's administration handled recent drug overdoses of students in the school. Cassie Damkoehler, Principal, Brattleboro Union High School, Traci Lane, Assistant Principal for Grade 9 and 11, Brattleboro Union High School, and Hannah Parker, Assistant Principal for Grades 10 and 12, Brattleboro Union High School, addressed the State Board. Damkoehler, Lane and Parker shared their experiences.

Discussion followed regarding better communication among students and staff, immediacy and transparency of the administration's response, students feeling safe, trauma, counselling and supports, building trust, trauma informed practices, students feeling heard, training resources and support, active supervision, catching students being good, peer mentoring and student leadership.

Champlain Valley SD - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Presentation

Lashawn Sells, DEI Coach, Shelburne Community School and students, Ava O'Brien, Avery Ananou, Jillian Upton, Ivy Lea Simons, Fiona Sherman, Saffron Chang, addressed the State Board of Education. They shared this [presentation](#).

Public to Be Heard

None

Adjourn

Brown moved to adjourn; Gleason seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Suzanne Sprague