

State Board of Education

Draft Meeting Minutes

VIRTUAL Teams Meeting/Video/Teleconference

Call in #: 1-802-552-8456, Conference ID: 851 915 050#

Date: March 15, 2023

Present:

State Board Members (SBE): Jennifer Samuelson, Chair; Patrick Brown; Tom Lovett; Lyle Jepson (joined at 9:16 a.m.); Kim Gleason; Gabrielle Lucci; Jenna O'Farrell; and Dan French.

Agency of Education (AOE): Pat Pallas Gray, Josh Souliere, J. Deborah Ormsbee, Emily Simmons, Suzanne Sprague

Others: Mill Moore, Executive Director, Vermont Independent Schools Association; Kelley Bushey, Connected Circles LLC; Parwinder Grewal, President, Vermont State Colleges; Patricia Moulton, Executive Director, Vermont State Colleges; Barry Hulce, Executive Director, Vermont Manufacturing Collaborative, Vermont Technical College; and Jody Emerson, Superintendent, Central Vermont Career Center; Jayshree Bhat, Associate Vice President of Workforce, Community, and Economic Development, Vermont State Colleges; Marcy Webster, Media Factory

Item A: Call to Order/Roll Call/Amendments to the Agenda

Chair Samuelson called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. and roll call was taken. There were no amendments to the agenda.

Item B: Public to be Heard

None

Item C: Review and Approve February 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Gleason made a motion to approve the [February 15, 2023 meeting minutes](#). Brown seconded the motion. Gleason mentioned the links in the draft minutes do not work. AOE confirmed the links will be corrected. The motion carried.

Item D: Board Announcements

Chair Samuelson said Jepson would be late to the meeting and Kolbe would join the meeting as she is able. She said the Champlain Valley Christian School withdrew its application to become an approved independent school and had instead applied to be a recognized independent school. The correspondence was included in the State Board meeting materials packet.

Discussion occurred regarding the SBE's role with recognized independent schools and adding a legislative update and discussion to future agendas.

Item E: Student Report

Lucci said that school has been stressful following the February break due to sickness and the weather. Students are getting excited for spring sports and events.

Item J: Update: Education Quality Standards (EQS)

Gleason said the committee is nearing the end of its work. She asked the State Board members to become familiar with the [draft](#) that was shared in the materials packet and to provide any feedback. The committee held an executive session and met with an attorney related to a few points where questions were raised and clarification was required. The target for filing with the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules (ICAR) is early May. The committee may request a special meeting in April to review and seek full State Board approval.

Item G: Vermont State Colleges – Supplemental report on Collaboration with Career Technical Education (CTE)

Parwinder Grewal, President, Vermont State Colleges; Patricia Moulton, Executive Director, Vermont State Colleges; Barry Hulce, Executive Director, Vermont Manufacturing Collaborative, Vermont Technical College; and Jody Emerson, Superintendent, Central Vermont Career Center; Jayshree Bhat, Associate Vice President of Workforce, Community, and Economic Development, Vermont State Colleges addressed the State Board. They provided a historical overview on the pilot program and explained how the program moved forward. The work is focused on pathways to earn credit while at CTE centers and progress toward a degree or certificate program. They discussed their collaboration, access to the programming, funding stream, concerns and challenges.

Discussion followed regarding class size, integrating new Americans into workforce development programs, point person so CTEs have all the same information at the same time, ages of the students in the program, opportunities for adults, non-credit opportunities and the potential for expansion to the pilot. Chair Samuelson hoped to have another update about the program in a year.

Item F: Independent School Attestations

Mill Moore, Executive Director, Vermont Independent Schools Association (VISA) provided an update to the State Board. Moore said he has been collecting from VISA's 62 dues-paying members written affirmations of the independent school assurances statement required of all independent schools seeking approval or reapproval. As of the meeting, 21 statements have been collected from both general education and therapeutic VISA member schools. Moore reminded the State Board that some of the schools have already submitted their signed affirmation statement in connection with their request for initial approval or reapproval. He added that no member school has raised any concern with providing one. Moore offered to provide the State Board with a [list of all its member schools](#) and status of their affirmation clause for the record. Chair Samuelson asked Moore for another update at the State Board's April meeting.

Discussion followed regarding linking Moore's list to the meeting minutes, VISA voluntarily seeking assurances, process going forward, attestations will be sent to the AOE, mechanism for ensuring the affirmations are received on an ongoing basis, impact on the tuition payment, AOE process is in law and regulation, no enforcement mechanism in the rules other than for initial approvals and reapprovals and the potential for making a tuition payment to a school that is not a member of VISA that has not signed an attestation.

Chair Samuelson called for a recess at 9:58 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 10:06 a.m.

Item H: Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Presentation – Windham Central JEDI Program

Postponed

Item K: Special Education Approval

Lovett said he and his committee will be proposing initial approval of general and special education for 2 years for Connected Circles LLC.

Lovett made the following motion:

That the State Board of Education grants initial approval of general and special education school approval, to serve a maximum of 12 youth ages 12-22, in the disability categories of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Emotional Disturbance (ED), Other Health Impairment (OHI), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Intellectual Disability (ID), Multiple Disabilities (MD), Speech Language Impairment (SLI) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), to Connected Circles, Berlin, VT. This approval is for two years, through June 30, 2025.

This approval is conditional on the requirement that the school reports to the Agency of Education within five business days whenever any changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing or administration during the approval period. Jepson seconded.

Lovett advised that his motion corrected the Secretary's recommended action for reapproval to reflect that the school was seeking initial approval. Discussion followed regarding the practical implications after July 1, mechanism for follow up, discussing the process at a future meeting and schools being compliant with Act 173 by July 1, 2023. There was no further discussion. The motion carried.

Item L: Election of Officers

Chair Samuelson said election of officers occurs every two years in March. She asked for nominations for the position of chair. Jepson nominated Samuelson. Brown seconded. There were no other nominations. A roll call vote was taken. Yay: Brown, Gleason, Jepson, Lovett, Lucci and O'Farrell. Abstention: Samuelson. The vote passed naming Samuelson as Chair.

Chair Samuelson asked for nominations for the position of vice chair. She nominated Kolbe. Gleason seconded. There were no other nominations. A roll call vote was taken. Yay: Brown, Gleason, Jepson, Lovett, Lucci, O'Farrell and Samuelson. The vote passed naming Kolbe as Vice Chair.

Item M: Future Meeting Planning

Chair Samuelson said that there are two seniors on the State Board and their terms are expiring. She proposed in-person meetings at the April 19th meeting at the Central Vermont Career Center and at the May 17th meeting at Rutland High School. There will be a tentative start time of 11:00 a.m. for tours of the schools followed by lunch and an afternoon meeting. Lovett and Jepson are unable to attend the April meeting.

Chair Samuelson said potential agenda items include an update from the Lincoln School District, AOE presentation on independent school rules and compliance with the Agency's attestation clause by approved independent schools that are not part of VISA.

Item N: Public to be Heard

None

Adjourn

Chair Samuelson moved to adjourn; Lovett seconded. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Suzanne Sprague.