

State Board of Education

Physical Location:
Hub CoWorks
67 Merchants Row, 2nd Floor
Rutland, VT 05701
Virtual via Microsoft Teams Details:
Dial in number: 1-802-552-8456
Phone conference ID: 559 213 904#
[Meeting Link](#)

Draft Meeting Minutes

Date: August 21, 2024

Present:

State Board Members (SBE): Jennifer Samuelson, Chair; Tammy Kolbe, Vice Chair; Mohamed Diop; Grey Fearon; Kim Gleason; Caleb Greenwood; Lyle Jepson, Jenna O'Farrell; Rich Werner; Zoie Saunders, Interim Secretary

Agency of Education (AOE): Ian Burfoot-Rochford, Katie Gagliardo, Josh Souliere, Maureen Gaidys, Suzanne Sprague

Others: Logan Chalmers; Jordan Butterfield; 8022758666; Dawn Greenwood, Liam Rodgers; Mary Kay Jurovcik; Sonya Shedd; Jeremy DeMink; Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver; Kellie; Susan Koch; Katie Sullivan; Tom Payeur

Call to Order, Roll Call, Amendments to the Agenda

Chair Samuelson called the meeting to order at 1:22 p.m. and asked for a roll call. Chair Samuelson asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. There were none.

Item A: Oath of Office

Chair Samuelson welcomed new student member, Caleb Greenwood, to the State Board of Education. He is the non-voting member and Fearon is now a voting member. Chair Samuelson administered the Oath of Allegiance and Affirmation of Office to Greenwood.

Item B: Student Report

Greenwood provided some background. He is a junior at Lake Region Union High School and said he was excited to serve. School begins on August 27. He was, additionally, welcomed by State Board members.

Fearon said he enjoyed the summer. He participated in Boys State and Boys Nation sponsored by the American Legion. Participants become part of an operation of local, county and state government. He was honored to represent Vermont in Washington, D.C. and

received an education on the structure and function of federal government. Fearon made many connections with other students. He said that, unfortunately, the program is not well advertised in Vermont. He added there is a similar program called Girls State and Girls Nation. His first day of school is August 26.

Item C: Public to be Heard

None

Item D: Approve Draft Meeting Minutes

Werner moved to approve the [June 12, 2024 meeting minutes](#); Kolbe seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried.

Item E: Board Announcements

O'Farrell attended the Burlington High School graduation ceremony. She was inspired by the resiliency in both the students and the faculty after facing displacement from their high school building, especially during the pandemic.

Diop said he was proud of co-principal Jean Berthiaume, Winooski Middle High School, for being named one of the school leaders of the year by the Vermont Principals' Association.

Chair Samuelson referenced the [PRESS RELEASE: Vermont State Board of Education Announces Rule Series Updates](#). Both sets of rules were approved by the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (LCAR) at its meeting on June 13, 2024. Rule Series 2000 will go into effect on July 1, 2025. Rule Series 2200 went into effect on July 1, 2024, except for the instructional strategies and curriculum content sections (Rules 2223.3.3(b) and 2223.3.3(c)(1)).

Chair Samuelson said she was a member of the Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont, as per [H.887](#). She reviewed the Commission's charge - "to study the provision of education in Vermont and make recommendations for a statewide vision for Vermont's public education system to ensure that all students are afforded substantially equal educational opportunities in an efficient, sustainable, and stable education system. The Commission shall also make recommendations for the strategic policy changes necessary to make Vermont's educational vision a reality for all Vermont students". Chair Samuelson listed the members. She added that she also named to the Commission's the Steering Group. There is also an Education Finance Subcommittee. Chair Samuelson said the work will include communication and engagement, education delivery systems, education finance and government resources and administration. The work is important and there are many tight deadlines.

Discussion followed regarding service on the Commission, the membership of the Education Finance Subcommittee, deadlines and structure of meetings, workload of chair, input from the full State Board and a standing update at monthly meetings to help inform the Board on the work of the Commission.

Item G: Teacher of the Year Presentations

Chair Samuelson said the mission of the Vermont Teacher of the Year Program is "to promote the teaching profession and recognize educators who are modeling exemplary teaching practice in Vermont's schools. The Vermont Teacher of the Year is an outstanding

teacher who represents the thousands of excellent educators in our state, demonstrating leadership to peers by defining quality and rigor and support by sharing collaborative professional knowledge. The Vermont Teacher of the Year serves as an advocate for the teaching profession, education and students.” Chair Samuelson welcomed the finalists. Katie Gagliardo, Education Programs Coordinator, said there were several excellent candidates. Previous Teachers of the Year review and grade each candidate. Each candidate will present for 5 minutes. State Board members will score each candidate by using the scoring sheet provided. All materials, including scoring sheets, will be combined and forwarded to Interim Secretary Saunders for her final selection.

Teacher of the Year candidates that presented to the State Board were:

- Jeremy DeMink, Edmunds Middle School
- Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver, Winooski High School
- Sonya Shedd, Wolcott Elementary School

Josh Souliere, Educator Quality Division Director, said that, once Secretary Saunders makes her decision, the team will notify the local education agency (LEA) and plan for the announcement and celebration at the teacher’s school. The finalist’s name will be submitted to the National Teacher of the Year organization for consideration.

Discussion followed asking future candidates to share their platform prior to the presentations and receiving the application packet and the scoring rubric in advance.

Item F: Interim Secretary’s Report

Interim Secretary Saunders said the AOE has been focusing on developing its strategic plan to ensure that it can align its initiatives with and support the priorities of the communities across Vermont. The AOE is focusing on improving data accessibility and enhancing reporting to help contemplate the future of public education. The AOE will release a State of the State in Vermont by compiling several indicators to put together a framing document for those conversations. The AOE is working on refining its communication to the field to ensure consistent messaging and to obtain feedback from educators around the best method by which to communicate. The AOE is working on its interagency collaboration to leverage the expertise of team members across divisions to advance critical work.

Interim Secretary Saunders said that the AOE priority areas include improving literacy and math outcomes, expanding college and career readiness and supporting students’ mental health. The agency is launching a Listen and Learn Tour with the purpose of engaging deeply with the field and center its work around the priorities for education across the state. It is a phased approach. This summer focused on data reporting and analysis. In September, the AOE will engage in regional planning sessions with education leaders to collaboratively identify strengths and opportunities. In October and November, there will be regional public input sessions with the communities at large focusing on informed input. A facilitator/consultant will assist in these conversations. The goal is to support alignment with the AOE’s strategic plan and help inform the Commission on the Future of Public Education and its goals.

Interim Secretary Saunders said there were some Board inquiries around the closing of a therapeutic school, LiHigh School, and an article that appeared in a local paper. She said she

could not speak to why the school closed. She acknowledged that the article raised questions about the quality of education offered to students who receive special education services regardless of setting and especially those that receive services in more restrictive settings. It prompts a larger conversation around how we are structured as a system. The AOE is developing a report to analyze its current special education system related to therapeutic schools, independent schools and special education more broadly. It should warrant its own discussion at a future meeting. Discussion followed regarding the process of accrediting therapeutic schools, status of desk audits, rural communities having several listening sessions, subcommittee on communication and outreach, inclusion of people who are hard of hearing or visually impaired, feedback from Board members on approaching work so it is most impactful, elevating student voice, therapeutic school rules, an updated list of approved independent schools, multiple ways to provide feedback and updated Independent School Technical Assistance (ISTA) form.

Item H: New Health and Physical Education Standards

Interim Secretary Saunders introduced Ian Burfoot-Rochford, Proficiency-Based Learning Health/Physical Education Coordinator and provided some framing around the topic. Burfoot-Rochford shared this [presentation](#). He provided background and a brief history of when the health and physical education standards were last updated. Burfoot-Rochford said the National Health Education Standards and the Society for Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America National Physical Education Standards are the standards being recommended for approval. He explained some of the differences between the prior version of the standards and the proposed standards. Educators are excited for the changes because they provide more autonomy for teachers and more flexibility for students.

Burfoot-Rochford said that the standards will be provided in the Interim Secretary's recommendation when the State Board takes the topic up for a vote at a future meeting. He provided a timeline if adopted and said the standards would be effective in the Fall of 2026. He added that there is alignment with the Education Quality Standards as well. Discussion followed regarding the number of states that have and have not adopted the standards, if there is a framework for inclusive education like gender identification and gender transition, time requirements, some states may use these standards as a framework, providing a framework around gender inclusivity and sexual health inclusivity, standards are skills based and broad, physical activity versus physical education, personal learning plans and opt out plan, independent study, body composition, focus on full health, fitness gram, process for taking in and considering standards and cultural differences in physical education and activities.

Item J: Overview of Literacy and School Construction Legislation

Interim Secretary Saunders provided a brief background and said that she would highlight some updates of implementation on two key policies. She presented an [Overview of Literacy and School Construction Legislation](#). Interim Secretary Saunders provided major elements of Act 139, an act relating to supporting Vermont's young readers through evidence-based literacy instruction. AOE has launched Read Vermont which is a comprehensive state-wide initiative to improve literacy outcomes for Vermont students. She shared Read Vermont's priorities. Interim Secretary Saunders shared summer accomplishments, milestones and next steps. There will be some recommendations that the AOE will provide to the Vermont Standards Board to strengthen and improve teacher preparation programs. Discussion

followed regarding capacity and the Act's timeline, Heritage Language class to assist with multilingual learners, professional learning pilot programs, job embedded coaching and a short-term credential.

Interim Secretary Saunders said that Act 149, an act relating to the development of an updated State aid to school construction program, created a Working Group. She shared its charge to address and consider several topics. Interim Secretary Saunders shared the requirements and deliverables. She shared a timeline of the Working Group's work and recurring themes. She shared the next meeting's considerations and upcoming ask or focus. Discussion followed regarding school consolidation and sustainability, governance and return on investment, regionalization and data informing the work.

Item K: Future Meeting Planning

Chair Samuelson said the next meeting will be in person in either Essex or St. Johnsbury. Possible agenda items include District Quality Standards (DQS) update, Community Schools update, Special Education Advisory Panel update, AOE Special Education presentation, update on the Commission of the Future of Public Education in Vermont and process for curriculum standards. Parking lot items include possible vote on Health and Physical Education standards, update on therapeutic schools, update on the ISTA form, budget, and reinstating membership to the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE). Gleason will send the Ethics Commission Training online module to Gaidys and Sprague to distribute to State Board members.

Item L: Public to be Heard

None

Werner moved to adjourn; Kolbe seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:04 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Suzanne Sprague.