

January 30, 2023

Lincoln School District Board
795 East River Road
Lincoln, VT 05443

Good afternoon, Lincoln School District Board.

At its November 16, 2022 meeting, the Vermont State Board of Education (the Board) designated the Lincoln School District (LSD) to be its own supervisory district pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 261(c), effective July 1, 2023. This approval came with the requirement that, on or before February 15, 2023, LSD provide the Board with an update on its progress toward becoming fully operational by July 1, 2023. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide LSD with a framework that will be useful when preparing this update.

In an effort to ensure that LSD will comply with existing state and federal laws and regulations and adopt (or adapt) required policies provided by the Vermont School Boards Association, LSD should carefully review each area of activity noted below. This framework is patterned after the guidelines that the Board provided to Ripton to assist it in its efforts to stand up its own supervisory district, and the Board considers each of the following to be essential to LSD's ability to become fully operational by July 1, 2023. Although LSD is not required to report on the status of each activity listed below, doing so will allow both LSD and the Board to understand the progress that LSD has made toward its ultimate obligation to provide for the education of all K-12 students who reside in its district.

Areas of Activity

1. Finance, Personnel & Data Management

a. Budget approval and funding for planning and transition activities

- Describe the actions taken to develop a budget and secure funding to pay for expenses incurred to date and future expenses related to planning and transition of LSD to an operational supervisory district, up until July 1, 2023. Funding should be consistent with the requirements of 16 VSA §4029.

b. Financial and operational modeling and first year budget

- Describe the actions that have been taken and will be taken to develop financial and operational modeling, to include enrollment, staffing, revenue, expense, debt service, and tax rate projections for the district, including for the Lincoln Community School, tuitioned grades, central office, special education, and transportation.



- Provide the final draft of the first-year budget, accompanied by a presentation or discussion of how the budget will ensure compliance with federal and other budgeting requirements and is connected to LSD's goals and priorities. The update should identify the sources of all funding and provide details of requirements and application deadlines for grants upon which LSD will depend for revenues during its first year of operations.

c. Accounting & Internal Controls

- Describe the actions that have been taken or that will be taken to ensure:
 - LSD will maintain accounting systems and records that ensure transparency and accountability for all funds, regardless of source, and provide complete, accurate, reliable, and timely data for reporting, including: (a) maintaining accounting records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Governmental Accounting Standards Board principles (GASB) and (b) recording and reporting information consistent with Vermont's Uniform Chart of Accounts within the SD's accounting software.
 - LSD's grants management practices will enable the SD to spend its federal grant funds, effectively and efficiently, and prevent reversion of funds.
 - Internal controls will be in place to provide reasonable assurance that LSD (a) follows state and federal statutes and regulations regarding required audits, records and record retention, and safeguarding protected information and other information designated as sensitive; and (b) maintains effective procurement and contract administration processes.

d. Personnel Management

- Describe the actions that have been taken or that will be taken to ensure that LSD has the policies, practices, and resources in place to ensure equitable and inclusive personnel practices that support effective recruitment and retention of staff, including policies and processes for hiring staff; ensuring staff have completed all required background checks in accordance with the law; and that all positions that require professional licensing meet current licensing requirements while employed by LSD.

e. Data Management

- Describe the actions that have been taken or that will be taken to ensure LSD's efficient and purposeful data collection, use, and sharing, including providing the Agency of Education with accurate and timely data, as required; using a single Student Information System for educational records that meets interoperability requirements specified by the Agency of Education; and purposefully using data to identify needs, evaluate programs, and communicate with the community.



- Describe how the district will comply with records management requirements of FERPA and the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA).

f. Employee contracts, payroll, benefits, tax withholding and insurance

- Describe the actions that have been taken and that will be taken by LSD to develop new employee contracts (including transition of existing staff) for each employee group.
- Describe the steps that have been taken or that will be taken to (a) implement the systems and processes necessary to manage payroll, benefits, insurance, tax withholding, union dues, and voluntary and other deductions for all employees; and (b) implement time-tracking and absence management systems.

2. Organizational structure & staffing

- Describe the planned organizational structure for the employees who will be responsible for providing central office leadership and support, including those responsible for district administration, special education, transportation, and business and data management. The update should describe steps that have been taken and that will be taken to develop job descriptions and to recruit and hire central office staff. Please indicate the positions for which LSD has commitments from staff as well as the positions that the district has yet to fill.
- Describe the planned organizational structure of the employees who will be responsible for operating the school for the grades to be operated, including those responsible for administration, instruction, special education and student support services, food service, maintenance and plant management. The update should describe the steps that have been taken and that will be taken to develop job descriptions and to recruit and hire staff. Please indicate the positions for which LSD has commitment from staff as well as the positions the district has yet to fill. For positions not yet filled, the update should describe how staff will be recruited and the timeline for doing so.
- Describe how LSD's staffing plan will ensure that the consultative and direct services required in students' IEPs and 504 plans will be provided by LSD.

3. Transfer of Resources & Records from MAUSD

- Describe how responsibility for ongoing management of the physical plant that will serve as the school for the grades operated will be transferred to LSD. This should include details of actions that have been taken or actions that will be taken to transfer ownership of the school building and transfer and/or acquire maintenance and support agreements (e.g., sanitation, building maintenance, grounds



maintenance, HVAC maintenance, water quality testing, information technology support, and insurance policies).

- Describe actions that have been taken or that LSD will take to transfer student records and transition students' IEPs and 504 plans.

4. Adoption & implementation of policies and procedures

- Describe the actions that have been taken and that will be taken to ensure that all policies and procedures mandated under state and federal law that are applicable to SU/SDs and schools are identified and the steps that have been taken or will be taken for the new district to develop, review, adopt and implement these policies and procedures.
- Describe the actions that have been taken and that will be taken to review and verify LSD's compliance with Vermont's Education Quality Standards (State Board Rule Series 2000), prior to July 1, 2023. In particular, the update should address the requirements and responsibilities set forth in Rule 2120.6 (Curriculum Coordination); Rule 2021.3 (Needs Based Professional Learning); Rule 2021.5 (Tiered System of Support); Rule 2023 (State and Local Comprehensive Assessment System); Rule 2121.4 (Staff Evaluation); and Rule 2122.2 (Access to Instructional Materials).

5. Facilities Management & Safety

- Describe the actions that have been taken and that will be taken by LSD to ensure that the facilities for which LSD is responsible are adequately maintained and cleaned and the plans necessary to ensure current and future operations, including: (a) maintaining a comprehensive school facilities Operations and Maintenance Manual (OMM) for each building/facility LSD operates; and (b) ensuring that educational and program facilities are accessible, clean, safe, secure, well-lit, well-maintained, and conducive to student learning, including have adequate access to technology.
- Describe the steps that have been taken or will be taken to ensure that the facilities for which LSD is responsible are safe and that there is an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in the format prescribed by the Agency of Education, that each building/facility has adopted an appropriate and layered approach to physical security to ensure that the facility is safe and secure; and that all staff are trained in emergency operations, including threat assessment protocols.
- Describe the steps that LSD has taken or will take to develop a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for each building or other facility for which it is responsible.



- Identify the person whom LSD will designate as responsible for facilities management and the necessary training and certification that this individual has or will receive to ensure compliance with standards.

6. Food Service & Transportation

- Describe how food service will be provided at the school (for grades operated) and the actions that have been taken or that will be taken to develop and implement LSD's school food program in compliance with 16 VSA §1264 *et seq.*
- Describe the plans to develop a transportation policy, including whether transportation will be provided to students and, if so, how it will be provided for students in each grade. The plans should be specific about what transportation options will be provided, including for students with individualized educational programs or 504 plans who require specialized transportation. The update should identify any student populations that will not be offered transportation and the rationale for this decision.

Risks & Contingency Planning

The State Board also asks LSD to identify and describe risks that could threaten its ability to become fully operational by July 1, 2023. For each identified risk or issue, LSD's update should describe actions that LSD will take to mitigate the risk or resolve the issue, including a contingency plan of actions that LSD will take if it is not ready to operate by July 1, 2023.

Submission Guidelines

The State Board plans to schedule time at its February 15, 2023, meeting to discuss LSD's update. In order for Board members to have adequate time to review and consider any materials that will be submitted in support of LSD's update, we ask that you **submit such materials via email to me by no later than 12pm on Friday, February 10, 2023**. We also request that the chair of the LSD Board attend the State Board's February 15th meeting to answer questions that members of the State Board of Education may have about the update.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Deck Samuelson, Chair
Vermont State Board of Education

