VERMONT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

1 National Life Drive, Davis 5, Montpelier, VT 05620-2501
(p) 802-828-1130 | (f) 802-828-6430 | education.vermont.gov

State Board of Education

Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Place: Rutland Senior High School Library
Address: 22 Stratton Road, Rutland, VT 05701
Date: January 21, 2020

Present:

State Board Members: John Carroll, Chair; Jenna O'Farrell, Vice Chair; Peter Peltz, William Mathis, John O'Keefe, Kim Gleason, Kyle Courtois, Sabina Brochu.

Agency of Education (AOE): Emily Simmons, Judy Cutler, Jess DeCarolis, Pat Fitzsimmons, Suzanne Sprague

Others: Sean-Marie Oller, citizen/ Bennington; Chelsea Myers, Vermont Superintendents Association; Mike McGraith, Vermont Principals' Association; Stefanie Allen, student; Kael Kysar, student/Rutland; Jacob Knipes, student/Rutland; Emilia Sabalaso, student/Rutland; Giovanni Falco, student Rep/Rutland; Jeff Francis, Vermont Superintendents Association; Jay Nichols, Vermont Principals' Association; David Ruff, Great Schools Partnership; Jody Normandeau, Dummerston; Michael Thomas, Vergennes Union High School; Ric Reardon, Castleton; Marilyn Mahusky, Vermont Legal Aid; Lola Duffort, VTDigger; Sue Ceglowski, Vermont School Boards Association; Liz Mackay, Castleton; Sue DeCarolis, Bomoseen; Pete DeCarolis, Bomoseen; Brad Colier, Stowe; Nicole Courtois, Georgia; Kendra Rickerby, Waterbury; Ben Freeman, Landgrove; Mary Haskell, Rutland High School; Maria French, Mill River; Mill Moore, Vermont Independent Schools Association; Helen Beattie, Up for Learning; Galen Reese, Up for Learning; Lindsey Halman, Up for Learning; Melissa Connor, Stafford Tech-Rutland; Curtis Hier, citizen; Steven Dillinger-Pate, U-32 Principal; John Pelletier, citizen; Laura Maclachlan, Vermont Energy Education Program; Kate Toland, Peoples Academy; Emily Rinkina, Champlain Valley School District; Rachel Duffy, Peoples Academy; Trevor MacKay, Rutland High School; Chris Whalen, Harwood Union High School; Sheila Soule, Addison Northwest School District; Jonah Ibson, Harwood Union High School; Juliette Longchamp, VT-NEA/Hinesburg; Hope Petraro, Montpelier High School; Stan Williams, Champlain Valley School District/Champlain Valley Union High School; Jen Stainton, Woodstock; Ann Dages, Rutland taxpayer/School Board; Abby Brodowski, Rutland High System; Jennifer Wigmore, Rutland High School; Jody Sabalaso, Rutland High School; Yoshi Aday, Rutland High School; Karen Rogers, Rutland; Debra Taylor, Washington Central Unified Union School District; Noelle Higgingson, Rutland; Greg Schillinger, Rutland; Jennie Gartner, Rutland; Noel Bryant, Hartford School District; Don Cunningham, citizen/Burlington

Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions/Amendments to Agenda

Chair Carroll called the meeting to order at 12:37 p.m. He thanked the Rutland High School and Stafford Technical Center for all their assistance in organizing the meeting. Chair Carroll asked the State Board members to introduce themselves. There were no amendments to the agenda.

Welcome from David Wolk and Bill Olsen

David Wolk, Rutland City School District Superintendent and Bill Olsen, Rutland Senior High School Principal, introduced themselves. Wolk welcomed the State Board of Education. He said he was proud of the school district and was delighted to host the State Board. Wolk said the high school and technical center have completed a NEASC review and received rave reviews. Olsen welcomed the State Board back to Rutland High School.

Consent Agenda/Board Announcements/Student Report

Consent Agenda: Chair Carroll asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Gleason moved and O'Farrell seconded. There was no discussion. Chair Carroll called the vote. The vote passed to adopt the minutes from the December 18, 2019 meeting. This was the only item on the consent agenda. O'Keefe abstained since he was not present at the meeting.

Board Announcements: Mathis said he attended the Vermont Supreme Court hearing on Act 46 which took place at Middlebury College on January 15th. Chair Carroll said it was inspiring to see democracy in action.

Student Report: Brochu spoke about her school's Academic Leadership Council who shared their views on proficiency-based learning. She will share their views during the second half of the meeting. Courtois said a lot of students have gone to him with their thoughts on proficiency-based grading.

Chair's Report

Chair Carroll said that on January 17th, the two-member committee selected by the State Board, conducted a review of the hearing of a school counselor from Chittenden County whose license was revoked. The State Board appointed O'Keefe (Chair) and Carroll. The conclusions are being drafted by the attorney assigned to the case. Chair Carroll said that the findings and conclusions will be brought to the State Board for review, adoption and action. The business will be conducted at the next meeting during a Deliberative Session which is like Executive Session.

Chair Carroll mentioned a report regarding the development and introduction of legislation regarding the reform of the State Board of Education to become independent of the Agency of Education, with more focused activities.

Chair Carroll presented a Resolution of Appreciation to Connor Vandagriff, videographer from the Regional Educational Television Network (RETN). Vandagriff has been the designated staff from RETN since 2016 and is moving on.

Peltz asked if the State Board will discuss at some point the bill that the Chair and Senator Baruth have worked on. Chair Carroll said sure. Mathis would like to discuss it sooner rather than later and noted that the whole State Board should be involved.

Chair Carroll reminded audience members to sign in.

Opportunity for Public to be Heard

Sean-Marie Oller, Bennington and former member of the State Board of Education, addressed the State Board and wished to learn more about proficiencies. She spoke of transparency and suggested that State Board members speak more at their meetings. Oller shared her concern that the State Board's Annual Report was submitted to the General Assembly without the State Board's full vote or discussion. She took exception to how the Rules 2200 series process was described during her tenure.

Jody Normandeau, Dummerston, thanked Vandagriff for his work with the State Board. She is interested in learning more about proficiency-based learning and how other high schools are handling it. She appreciates the new direction of the State Board and its interest in what the public has to say.

Act 173

Chair Carroll shared that Secretary French was attending the Governor's Budget Address and was unable to attend the meeting. Emily Simmons, Agency of Education General Counsel, and Judy Cutler, Agency of Education Staff Attorney introduced themselves. Simmons began by stating that they brought a summary of changes regarding two chapters of the rules. They are the new chapter series 1300 which contain the funding rules and the substantive Special Education Rule series 2360. Cutler prepared a summary of changes document that includes the substantive changes the Agency of Education is proposing and highlights the changes that have occurred since that last time the Agency of Education presented to the State Board. Cutler said there are three changes. She reminded the State Board of the Agency of Education's approach to keep the revisions to the programmatic rules as narrow as possible to those necessary to implement the act and those inconsistent with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Chair Carroll said that at the last State Board meeting the State Board approved the recommended language, through a vote, brought forth by the Act 173 Advisory Group. He wondered why that language was not reflected in the Agency of Education's draft. Simmons said that the Chair is referring to changes in Rule 1300. She said the Act 173 Advisory Group does not have any changes to Rule 2360. Chair Carroll confirmed that he was referring to Rule 1300. He said he was disappointed that the Agency of Education did not incorporate the changes as requested. Simmons said that was not what she took back from the conversation. She said that the Board has the authority to ultimately decide what is in the rules, but the Agency of Education would not recommend rules that they don't consider the best draft rules. Chair Carroll said that the Agency of Education may recommend but the State Board decides what will be in the rules. He explained the legislative intent of having both the Agency of Education and the Act 173 Advisory Group provide feedback to the State Board. Chair Carroll said that the State Board has been advised.

Simmons said that since the last State Board of Education meeting, the Agency of Education had reviewed their changes with the Act 173 Advisory Group and had a productive conversation. Chair Carroll said that the Agency of Education has had the Advisory Group's proposed changes for over one month. Peltz said that page 5 of the prior month's minutes read that the State Board voted on the Act 173 Advisory Group's recommendations. Mathis said that it would have been useful to have a summary of the changes the State Board approved. Simmons confirmed that the State Board did not ask for any changes to the Rule 2360. Chair Carroll concurred. Gleason felt overwhelmed by the State Board packet and the documents pertaining to Act 173. Chair Carroll referred to a side-by-side document of Rule 1300 created by Moore, Act 173 Advisory Group member. Simmons said that she must review that document as it may not be accurate and includes at least one change not approved by the Act 173 Advisory Group.

Chair Carroll asked Cutler to review the changes to Rule 2360. Cutler said that Rule 2360 and Rule 1300 are two distinct bodies of rules that are moving in parallel but must be adopted separately. O'Keefe asked what the ramification would be if one of the rules was delayed. Cutler said that there would be two rules that would be in conflict, one using the block grant and the other census-based funding. Cutler explained that it's a revision to an existing rule, a new rule and a new series which is the reason why they must be submitted separately.

Cutler focused on the three new changes to Rule 2360. They are 1) Rule 2360.2.12 - revising the definition of Special Education Services and retain the Co-teaching rule and Transition Services rule; 2) Rule 2361.1(hh) - referring back to the new definition of Special Education Services; and, 3) reinserting Rule 2369 Educational Surrogate Parents which was inadvertently omitted in the 2013 version submitted to the Secretary of State. Chair Carroll confirmed that the State Board is now current with the Agency of Education's proposed changes to Rule 2360.

Chair Carroll invited Marilyn Mahusky, Assistant Chair Act 173 Advisory Group, to offer her thoughts on the proposed changes made by the Agency of Education. She said that she has not reviewed the new proposed draft. Mahusky said that the Act 173 Advisory Group agrees with the Agency of Education's definition of special education included in Rule 2360. She said she would need to review Rule 2369 because it is new to her.

Chair Carroll said the State Board could incorporate the Act 173 Advisory Group's preferred language for 1300 and the Agency of Education's version of 2360 and submit it as the proposed rule for rulemaking. Discussion occurred regarding programmatic and fiscal monitoring and administrative burden. Chair Carroll gave a brief explanation of the rulemaking process and referred to the Administrative Procedures Act. Mathis asked if the Independent School piece will be addressed. Chair Carroll invited Mill Moore, Executive Director of the Vermont Independent Schools Association to address the State Board. Simmons said that the new statute that will require changes to Rule 2200 had a delayed implementation of July 1, 2022. She added that the Legislature incorporated an intentional phased implementation of the Act. Chair Carroll said that according to Act 173, the Rule 2200 series must be initiated by November 2020. Discussion followed regarding independent schools, reimbursable costs and timeline.

Chair Carroll said that the State Board of Education could draft two rules, 1300 and 2360, that incorporates the language that the State Board approves and pending the Act 173 approval of the 2360 Agency of Education's proposed changes. Simmons said that the Agency of Education would not be able to act on a conditional request. She added that the Agency of Education has asked the Act 173 Advisory Group's input on Rule 2360 many times. Simmons said that the Agency of Education has made all the changes that the Act 173 Advisory Group asked. She said that the field has been working on the notion that the Rule 2369 is in place. Mahusky would like to have the time to compare drafts.

Chair Carroll said he is looking for a motion to adopt the proposed rule language for rulemaking and a separate motion to send the two rules for rulemaking. A sample motion would be shall the State Board adopt the language advocated by the Act 173 Advisory Group in whole for Rule 1300 and adopt the Agency of Education's proposed language for Rule 2360 presented at the current meeting and adopt them as the proposed State Board's rules. O'Keefe made the motion. Peltz seconded the motion. Gleason asked that if it's fine that the Agency of Education incorporate drafting the language .Chair Carroll said that if not, the State Board will find another way to have it drafted. Simmons said that there need be no doubt that the Agency of Education will staff the work that the State Board approves. Gleason said that the State Board indicated clearly what was expected in the Agency of Education's proposed draft and if it wasn't then it should include an explanation why. Simmons said that she had come prepared to discuss that with the State Board. She was prepared with two documents on Rule 1300; a redline version that includes the Agency of Education's changes and a clean version. Simmons read the section in the minutes from December 18th that stated what the State Board was asking of the Agency of Education so that both sides could understand any confusion. Chair Carroll explained that the Agency of Education has not been given a chance to explain why they did not incorporate all the proposed changes made by the Act 173 Advisory Group. Sprague read the original motion which was moved and seconded. Further discussion followed regarding the Agency of Education's proposed language or making another motion. Chair Carroll said that in fairness to the Agency of Education, they should be allowed to state their case. He suggested leaving the motion pending, suspending discussion and coming back to the topic at a special meeting or the February 2020 meeting. Simmons said that the Agency of Education will prepare 2 versions of 1300; one that reflects the Act 173 Advisory Group edits and the other that reflect the Agency of Education's response to Advisory Group edits. Gleason asked that it be accompanied by a written rationale. Mahusky suggested reading the document shared by the Chair of the Act 173 Advisory Group which will help explain the conversation that took place between the Agency of Education and the Act 173 Advisory Group.

Chair Carroll called for recess at 2:15 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 2:23 p.m.

Inquiry re Proficiency-Based Learning (afternoon session)

Chair Carroll suggested that speakers present from the podium so audience members can hear.

John Downes, Ed.D. Director, Tarrant Institute at UVM presented testimony on Proficiency-Based Learning (PBL) in Vermont. Mathis asked if proficiencies and personalized learning can be melded. Downes explained his definition of personalized learning and said measuring the learning cannot rely on traditional tests and requires different tools to evaluate the learning. Chair Carroll asked for an explanation of the gaps that are left in assessments and how to fill them in. Downes said using a comprehensive assessment scheme and standardized tests may help raise areas of concern on a student's basic performance in literacy and numeracy. Proficiency-Based Assessment may be good at making sure that all students are getting access to deeper learning opportunities. O'Keefe asked him to respond to criticism that proficiency-based grading (PBG) leaves too much of a gap between different learners and asked for solutions. Downes said the concept of grading cobbles together multiple issues such as student behavior, compliance and achievement information. If the purpose in PBG is to replace the old grading system, it will not work. Downes suggested using a portfolio of authentic work that is assessed against proficiencies.

David Ruff, Executive Director, Great Schools Partnership, New England presented testimony regarding PBL. Courtois mentioned authentic work and how it is assessed over time. He asked what are the goals for student transcripts. Ruff said task neutral scoring criteria allows for multiple ways for a student to achieve the standard. He said it would be problematic for local school systems if told how every transcript should look. Ruff said that most people want to see a course grade and suggested a transcript that includes both grades and standards. Peltz wondered about Carnegie Units and if young males are still disengaged. Ruff explained Carnegie Units and said the gap between males and females is narrowing. Brochu asked if there should be a limited number of standards for graduation. Ruff said that administrators need to be clear regarding the non-negotiables.

Chair Carroll asked for the State Board to introduced themselves and explained the role of the two State Board student members.

A teacher panel consisting of Rachel Duffy, teacher, Peoples Academy, Lamoille County; Kate Toland, teacher, Peoples Academy, Lamoille County; Chris Whalen, teacher, Harwood Union High School, Washington County; and, Jonah Ibson, teacher, Harwood Union High School, Washington County presented on PBL. Brochu shared a graph which showed 2 different tracks of student progression to proficiency. She wondered why students should work hard at the beginning of the class versus doing the work later in the semester. Toland said the art of design is to make sure that doesn't happen and to create an environment that is compelling. Her school has created a deadline and due date policy. Chair Carrol asked if the student is rewarded for consistently getting work completed on time. Toland said yes. Ibson said it depends on the grading system the school implements. He explained the system his school chose and the unintended consequences it caused. He said PBL is not the same as PBG, a grading system that is designed to hold students accountable and reflects what the teacher believes about the student. Brochu said that at her school the most recent grade is what counts.

A student panel consisting of Hope, Montpelier High School; Rosanna, Rutland High School; and, Trevor, Rutland High School presented on PBL. O'Keefe asked if students struggle with lack of competition. Trevor said that students receive feedback on .5 increments and students still maintain a GPA. He feels at Rutland High School competition still exists. He added that students realize that education is a collaborative effort. Hope said that she sometimes compares herself to other students. She tries to remember it doesn't matter how other people are doing. O'Farrell wondered if PBL in middle school helped the students to prepare. Hope said she only experienced PBL in the 8th grade. Peltz asked if student voice influenced teaching. Trevor said at the higher-level classes, teachers are trying not to put assessments on the same day. Rosanna said that teachers will slow down to make sure that all students understand the standard and speed up if warranted. Brochu wondered if student effort could be better reflected. Trevor said that was a problem with traditional grading as well. He said habits of work could be better represented as part of the overall grade.

Public Comment

Chair Carroll said that the time limit will be 4 minutes.

Galen Reese, Up for Learning and Helen Beattie, Up for Learning provided comment. Reese said that PBL in theory is a good idea but the way it was implemented has negated any positive effects. There should be guidance so that every school can see the full potential and be used in the way it was intended. He added that students should be involved in the implementation. He said that student feedback should be sought more than it is.

Beattie said a shift to personalized learning and PBL and assessment is the lynchpin to close the achievement gap and promote equity. She said there is a disconnect between the traditional grading system and what is known about the neuroscience of learning. And in contrast, how congruent PBL assessment is with the science of learning. She said that grading systems are inherently flawed. Students who struggle are hurt the most. PBL helps students feel ownership of their learning and space to demonstrate their true potential.

John Pelletier is a father in the Stowe School District. He said the State Board has been told of the research that shows the benefits of PBL. He referred to a book called "Wrong" by David Freeman which demonstrates why experts often are wrong. Pelletier said that less than 1% of education research is ever subject to replication. He added making educational reforms based on this research is dangerous. Pelletier asked if the Agency of Education (AOE) showed data that PBL/PBG is hurting scores. He said that the VT-NEA data shows a decline in student effort. He wondered what measures are in place to measure the success or failure of PBL.

Ben Freeman, citizen, parent and school board member, spoke in support of PBL, personalized learning and flexible pathways. He said PBL is a transformative tool on how to reach and engage students. It is reimagining schools from the industrial age to the present day. He said that making the change to PBL is not easy, but it is best practice. It transforms learners and how learners are engaged. He added that by focusing on building proficiency in what matters most for today's learners we're building capacity for all youth to realize their full potential.

Dan Cunningham is a parent from the Burlington School District. PBL has a convoluted history. Dislike of it may not be apparent to the State Board. He said all students should be proficient and that is the goal of education. He is concerned with the grandiose initiative that did not allow for teachers and communities to experiment in a careful way. It is not compatible with the U.S. collegiate system. No one asked if there is actual data showing improvement or increased parent engagement or considered the costs and resources. PBL arrived without a quantitative process to demonstrate value. He said there are many skeptics including teachers that fear retribution. There should be an anonymous way for people to provide feedback without having to travel.

Inquiry re Proficiency-Based Learning (afternoon session continued)

A teacher panel consisting of Emily Rinkema, Instructional Coach, Champlain Valley High School, Chittenden County; and, Stan Williams, Instructional Coach, Champlain Valley High School, Chittenden County presented on PBL. O'Keefe asked if hard work means success. Williams said he has seen many examples of students working hard but missing the mark. He said his teaching was too broad and now the target is clearer, and a student's hard work can be focused. He added that the work should be more complex and not difficult. Rinkema said that the mental sweat comes with complexity and not difficulty. Chair Carroll said that grading seems more complex. He asked if grading 1-4 is an improvement of A-D. Williams said that the reality with standards-based grading is that there is not one way. He said the PBG exposed inconsistencies in grading but did not create them. Gleason wondered if marrying PBL and PBG and then assigning a grade that is approved by the community, sacrifices any of the efficacy. Rinkema said in theory, she doesn't believe in letter grades. There is much better disaggregated information to better assess students, but communities still stick to what is familiar. Further discussion occurred regarding customizing grading at the local level. Gleason asked if schools share best practices. Williams said everyone needs to get better at communicating; be willing to collaborate; do so more intentionally; and, include challenges and strategies.

Chair Carroll called recess at 4:58 p.m. and invited everyone that wished to a light-fare supper. The meeting reconvened at 5:49 p.m.

Inquiry re Proficiency-Based Learning (evening session)

Chair Carroll asked the State Board members to introduce themselves.

Jess DeCarolis, Agency of Education Division Director, Student Pathways; and, Pat Fitzsimmons, Agency of Education Proficiency-Based Learning Coordinator, Student Pathways presented on Proficiency-Based Learning. O'Keefe asked if Act 77 made it easier to graduate. DeCarolis said that the college completion rates give the data. Peltz wondered if the college dropout rate is still an issue. DeCarolis said that all New England states need to work on college retention. Gleason asked what role the AOE plays in the sharing of best practices, professional learning and systematizing of the learning. Fitzsimmons said there are 4 convenings scheduled to cover Local Comprehensive Assessments. She said high-quality assessments are important to know if a student is proficient or not. Leadership teams are invited, and the AOE will reach out to the areas that are underrepresented. The AOE looks for as many opportunities as possible to

reach as many educators as possible. The AOE believes in a culture of collaboration with other organizations so the messages can be similar. Brochu asked if there was a way to better prepare teachers who will be implementing PBL. DeCarolis said the AOE convened a meeting with a group of stakeholders from the field on two separate occasions to update the Book of Standards which is the process by which teacher preparatory programs are approved in higher education which prepares leaders and educators to incorporate and represent the new initiatives around Act 77 and PBL. O'Farrell asked if the AOE has done a cross walk of the data to determine the districts that have been successful. DeCarolis said the Annual Snapshot would have good information on schools that are successful. She added that it is hard to capture all the support that the AOE provides. Her department has over 200 instances of professional learning opportunities and her department partners with other organizations and cofacilitates convenings. It's important that no one gets left behind.

A teacher panel consisting of Curtis Hier, teacher, Fair Haven Union High School, Rutland County; Michael Thomas, teacher, Vergennes Union High School, Addison County; Adrienne Weld, teacher, Rutland High School, Rutland County; and, Abby Browdowski, teacher, Rutland High School, Rutland County presented on PBL. Chair Carroll commented that the panel had very diverse views. Gleason asked Hier how a 3 on a rubric compared to a grade of 82 is different. Hier said that flattening out the scale is demotivating. There is more opportunity to reward a student on a 100-point scale. Thomas said he worries about the students at the bottom end of proficient because the scores may not equal college ready. Hier said that the decaying system is confusing and unfair. O'Keefe asked Weld how she thought her transition to PBL differed from other subjects such as math and science. Weld said it would be different because physical education has 8-week courses. Her department was one of the first to go through the transition. Her department had more time to better their response to students and parents. Weld feels it is more difficult for the other subjects to make the transition because they teach yearlong courses. Mathis said he would like to see strong empirical research. Thomas said that Thomas Guskey cites some research that he misinterprets. It reads that teachers cannot make accurate assessments based on more than four categories. Brochu spoke of demotivation and mentioned the habit of learning grade at Champlain Valley High School that does not affect the overall class grade. She wondered if the presenters saw a shift in their students no longer striving for a 4 and if the 3 was good enough. Hier said above and beyond is defined differently by different teachers. He said he was bothered by demotivation.

Jen Staintin, Curriculum Coordinator, Woodstock Union High School, Windsor County presented on PBL. Peltz asked how long the process took for her district. Staintin said her school district went through many rapid iterations and began the process in 2016. It was implemented in the fall of 2019. Chair Carroll asked if the parents' concerns have been mitigated by the school boards' clarity on the grading process. Staintin said yes. O'Keefe asked if the new policy impacted enrollment. Staintin said it may have contributed to small number of unenrollments. Chair Carroll wondered if the PBL system could be a draw to families and students. Staintin said yes and PBL includes voice and choice. O'Keefe wondered if the acceptance of the policy is different across grades. Staintin said yes. O'Farrell asked what tenets

were in place that allowed for a quick implementation. Staintin said there was a group of teachers that were willing to begin the process. There were a lot of frustrated people and various iterations. They worked to get the school board, administrators and robust community involvement to create a system. Mathis wondered about the cost, time and professional development. Staintin said that they need more cohesive time for the teachers to work together on the topic district wide. They have created a schedule to allow for collaboration throughout the day and are considering early release days for professional development in the future.

Melissa Connor, Director, Stafford Technical Center, Rutland County presented on PBL. Chair Carroll thanked Connor for hosting the State Board. Mathis asked about the passing ratio being used. Connor said that the student must master 90% of the competencies in the program completer with a 3 or higher. Mathis asked what has been gained. Connor said that in technical education there is no major difference on how they are reporting out. It has always been a 0-4 scale. It is confusing having to transfer the grades into 8 different systems because their grades must match the students' sending school. Peltz asked about Act 77 and students accessing technical centers. Connor said that Stafford Technical Center is at capacity. They are accessing students at a younger age.

Steven Dellinger-Pate, Principal, U-32 High School, Washington County; and, Greg Schillinger, Assistant Principal, Rutland High School, Rutland County presented on PBL. Brochu mentioned that she felt the word unity as defined in the presentation was not a universal definition. Peltz said that in the 80s, schools encouraged students to drop out. He added its clear how far education has come, and that Vermont does not let any kids go. Chair Carroll said that what the schools are struggling to achieve is the promise of making schools more inclusive. He asked if the change has made an observable change to the students where school is not a natural fit. Dillinger-Pate said yes. He shared a story about a student who had not been successful in school overall and how now he was ready to learn. It is why Act 77 and its multiple pathways are so important. Brochu asked should students be striving for a 3 or 4 and should the only way to get a 4 be through earning extra credit. Schillinger said the question is about grades and what they mean at different levels. It's a technical and local decision that schools wrestle with and is one of the challenging issues. Discussion followed regarding different grading interpretations and teaching to a 4 instead of a 3.

Public Comment

Rutland High School Student Senate addressed the State Board. They said there are many positives and negatives. They said it was good to hear the testimony of the day on PBL. They said there are more cons than benefits. Grades do matter and they explained the demotivating factors of the grading system. They're comment is focused on PBG and not PBL. In theory, the system sounds beneficial but in practice it affects students' learning. The 1-4 scale is vague and subjective. It clumps the good, the ok and the excellent into one category. They explained the grade levels and the problem associated with each level. They explained decaying averages and how they affect grades. They explained that even if they get a 100 on a quiz it may only be

worth a 2 and not a 4. They are seeing consistent problems with codifications across the state and not only at Rutland High School. There needs to be commonality between grading systems.

Courtois left the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Jennie Gartner is a teacher at Rutland High School. She read a collaborative statement written by many faculty members. They believe all voices should be heard especially those on the front lines. They do not represent the whole faculty but represent a sizeable group. They believe the system falls short of its theoretical claims in many ways. Their concerns are 1) the 1-4 grading system is too vague and fails to differentiate student performance, score of 1 is passing and students have little incentive to do more than the minimum 2) the 1-4 system may hurt students that apply to colleges out of state because of fewer increments, it lumps students together into broad categories 3) separating habits of work grades that carry no weight, retakes and late homework carry no consequence so there is little incentive, low percentage complete work on time, not prepared for higher education system 4) system harms students that do not do well on final exams with no opportunity for correction. The system is a flawed grading system and creates mediocrity. Chair Carroll asked for an indication of the number of faculty Gartner represents. She said more than 70 percent.

Sean-Marie Oller, Bennington and works at the Tutorial Center in Bennington. There are 4 adult center hubs in Vermont with Bennington being the smallest. Adult Education has been using proficiency-based education since at least 2015. There are 87 students at the Bennington center around 13 are using the Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements. Students are 16 and older. She thought it would be informational for the State Board to know that the Adult Education Centers use proficiencies. Local high schools sign off on each graduation plan.

Karen Rogers, parent and teacher at Rutland High School. She shared her first exposure to standards-based grading when her child was in elementary school and through middle school. She shared that the grading was very subjective and she misinterpreted her child's grades based on the subjectivity. She said that PBG is great in theory and if done right. She said implementation matters. She spoke about decaying averages and how they hurt the student grades.

Inquiry re Proficiency-Based Learning (evening session continued)

Chair Carroll shared his appreciation of Chelsea Myers from the Vermont Superintendent's Association and Mike McRaith from the Vermont Principals' Association. They took notes of all testimony at the meeting.

Mike McRaith, Assistant Executive Director, Vermont Principals' Association, Vermont presented on Proficiency-Based Learning. Chair Carroll thanked McGraith. Discussion followed regarding the different grading systems available. McRaith said the actual representation is arbitrary. The core tenets are what matter.

Chair's concluding remarks

Chair Carroll thanked the State Board members.

Adjourn

Chair Carroll adjourned the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Suzanne Sprague.