

December 20, 2016

- Strategic Goals: (1) Ensure that Vermont's public education system operates within the framework of high expectations for every learner and ensure that there is equity in opportunity for all.*
- (2) Ensure that the public education system is stable, efficient, and responsive to changes and ever-changing population needs, economic and 21st century issues.*

## Minutes

### Present:

**State Board of Education (SBE):** Stephan Morse, Chair; Sean-Marie Oller, Vice-Chair; Mark Perrin; Connor Solimano; Bill Mathis; Bonnie Johnson-Aten; Rainbow Chen; Peter Peltz, via phone

**Agency of Education (AOE):** Rebecca Holcombe; Donna Russo-Savage; Cindy Moran; Chris Kane; Cassandra Ryan; Bill Talbott; Clare O'Shaughnessy; Rebecca Gile; Haley Dover; Suzanne Sprague

**Others:** Dan French, Manchester; Matt Levin, VT Early Childhood Alliance; Jonathan Wolff, Primmer/Lyndon Institute; Ken Page, VT Principals' Association; Kyle Midura, WCAX; Bill Kimball, WCSU Superintendent; Tiffany Pache, VTDigger; Julie Longchamp, VT NEA; Jerry and Nancy Dyke, Windham; Mill Moore, VT Independent Schools Association; Matt McMahan, MMR; Richard Gripp, BRSU; Jeff Francis, VT Superintendents Association; Sherri Arrin, WNESU; Christopher Kibbe, WNESU Superintendent; Stan Sanborn, VSBA Consultant; Wayne Gerson, WNESU Consultant; Michael Clark, ECSU Kingdom East; Celeste Marie Girrell, CNSU, KEG, Sutton; Tony DeMasi, CNSU Burke; Tisha Hankinson, CNSU Kingdom East; Cynthia Stuart, ECSU; Joe Winrich, WCSU Townsend; Emily Long, WCSU Newfane; Rich Weiner, Dover; John Everett, VSBA; Jen Botzjorns, CNSU Superintendent; Eric Jones, Wright, Jones; Josh O'Gorman, Act 46 Project

### Item A: Call to Order

Chairman Morse called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Superintendent Kimball welcomed the State Board of Education to U-32 to celebrate the announcement of the Teacher of the Year.

### Item B: Public to be Heard

Ken Page, Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association, handed out their annual Leadership Survey and invited the board to review. He stated the Waddington Leadership Initiative had 101 people registered to participate in leadership trainings in North Carolina.

### **Item C: Consent Agenda**

Oller made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Perrin seconded the motion. Chairman Morse called for a vote which passed unanimously.

### **Item D: Board Announcements**

Mathis said he testified to Bernie Sanders' staff on Title 1.

### **Item E: Chair's Report**

Chair Morse said that the State Board of Education at the request of the Governor-elect formed a Secretary of Education search committee that consists of Oller, Perrin, Mathis and Chair Morse. The search committee interviewed four candidates for the position. Chair Morse said that the Governor-elect asked the committee to extend the deadline because some applicants applied directly to the Governor's office. He said the cut-off date was extended to January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Chair Morse hopes to bring the names of the three finalists to the January 17<sup>th</sup> State Board of Education meeting.

Chair Morse reported that he met with the Governor-elect's transition team and reviewed the proposed Rules series 2200 process, the Board's position on Act 46, the working relationship between the AOE and the SBE over the last three years, as well as the Secretary search process. Morse added it was a productive meeting.

### **Item F: Secretary's Report**

Secretary Holcombe mentioned that she spoke at a panel at Harvard on test-based accountability and how it is related to ESSA. The panelists included Professor Dan Koretz, Professor Tom Kane, Mitchel Chester, Massachusetts Commissioner of Education and Secretary Holcombe.

Secretary Holcombe said that the Federal Government has delayed the submission date of the state's ESSA plan to April 2017. She continued it will take three months to approve or not approve. Secretary Holcombe added that schools will not know how they will be held accountable until just before the new school year begins in fall 2017.

Secretary Holcombe said that legislative work continues to move forward. She continued that the Governor-elect's transition team has been very supportive. Secretary Holcombe said she appreciates the support provided by both the current and next Administration in the transition. She is hopeful that the legislature will adjust the statute around fingerprinting to make it less burdensome for PreK providers.

### **Item G: Committee Report**

Mathis provided a legislative paper that he would like sent to the Legislature prior to the beginning of the January 2017 session. The board considered the paper. There was a motion by Oller to approve the report and strike the paragraph on tuitioning which was seconded by Perrin. Chair Morse added he would like the AOE to vet the numbers in the document before submitting. There was a vote to approve the report, once revised, without the tuitioning paragraph which passed unanimously.

## **Item H: Independent Schools**

Cassandra Ryan, of the Agency of Education, provided descriptive statistics on independent schools in Vermont. Cindy Moran and Christopher Kane provided details on the Special Education Approval System for independent schools as well as the placement process of students with disabilities in independent schools. Secretary Holcombe added that the placement process for students with disabilities is the same for all schools.

Recess by Chair Morse called at 10:15 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 10:25 a.m.

## **Item I: Merger Proposals**

Donna Russo-Savage, Agency of Education, introduced the Bennington-Rutland SU (Taconic and Green RSD). The group included Jon Wilson, Act 46 Study Committee Chair, Vice-Chair, Richard Grip, and Dan French, Consultant.

Oller made a motion to accept the merger proposal.

Perrin seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Russo-Savage introduced the Windham Northeast SU. The group included Chris Kibbe, Superintendent, Sherri Arrin, Act 46 Study Committee Chair and Wayne Gerson, Consultant.

Johnson-Aten made a motion to accept the merger proposal.

Oller seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Morse called for a recess at 11:15 a.m. and to reconvene in 30 minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 11:45 a.m.

## **Item J: Teacher of the Year**

Superintendent Kimball welcomed the audience to U-32 for the announcement of the 2017 Teacher of the Year.

Secretary Holcombe introduced the 2017 Vermont Teacher of the Year Distinguished Finalist, Corey Smith, a teacher at Proctor Elementary School.

Secretary Holcombe introduced the 2017 Vermont Teacher of the Year Alternate, Rachel Potts, a teacher at Harwood Union Middle and High School.

Chair Morse introduced the 2017 Vermont Teacher of the Year, Kate McCann, a teacher at U-32 Middle and High School and offered his congratulations on behalf of the State Board of Education.

The meeting recessed following the ceremony for lunch at 12:10 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 1:02 p.m.

### **Item L: Merger Proposals**

Donna Russo-Savage, Agency of Education, introduced the Caledonia East SU and Essex Caledonia SU (Kingdom East). The group included Michael Clark, Essex-Caledonia SU Superintendent, Jen Botzjoorns, Caledonia North SU Superintendent, Celeste Girrell, Chair Act 46 Committee, Tony DeMasi, Vice-chair Act 46 Committee, Tisha Hankinson, Caledonia North SU Business Manager, Eric Jones, Legal Counsel, Steve Sanborn, Act 46 Consultant and Cynthia Stewart, Act 46 Committee member.

Oller made a motion to accept the merger proposal.

Perrin seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Russo-Savage introduced Windham Central SU (West River Education District). Joe Winrich, Chair Act 46 Study Committee and John Everitt, Consultant, presented the proposal.

Mathis made a motion to accept the merger proposal.

Perrin seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Russo-Savage introduced Windham Central SU (River Valleys USD). Richard Werner, Chair Act 46 Study Committee and John Everitt, Consultant, presented the proposal.

Johnson-Aten made a motion to accept the merger proposal.

Mathis seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Morse called for a recess at 2:05 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 2:15 p.m.

### **Item M: Update on Proposed Rules for Alternative Education Structures**

Russo-Savage said that there was a public comment hearing on the proposed rules on December 12<sup>th</sup>. She added 12 people attended in person or electronically and Mark Perrin represented the State Board. Russo-Savage said that five people testified and there were nine pieces of written comment. She continued that 30 comments were sent directly to the VSBA where the comments were collated and sent to her. Russo-Savage said there was good representation of people through-out the state.

Russo-Savage said there was significant comment on why there was more work for an alternative structure than for a regular merger proposal. She said this is a misconception as the data required is the same for all proposals. Secretary Holcombe suggested that Russo-Savage

supply an update showing the tiered steps that may help clarify. Perrin asked for this update at the January meeting.

### **Item N: Update/Discussion on Proposed Rules Series 2200**

Chair Morse said that there were two stakeholder meetings in early December; one at St. Johnsbury Academy and the other Burr and Burton. He said Oller, Peltz, Mathis and Morse along with Chris Leopold, Legal Counsel, represented the State Board. Chair Morse said the two meetings were well attended with 70-80 people testifying. He said the testimony was limited to 2 minutes each. Chair Morse said that school choice was the common theme and attendees worried that choice would be taken away by these proposed rules changes. He mentioned many times that choice was not at risk.

Chair Morse said that prior to both stakeholder meetings there was a meeting with representatives from the Vermont Independent Schools Association, Vermont Superintendents Association and the Vermont School Boards Association. He continued that he thought the meetings were productive and everyone in attendance had a better understanding of health and safety, fiscal accountability and accreditation with not much understanding about open enrollment and special education requirements. Chair Morse said that he is hoping to receive some proposed language changes from the independent schools but has not seen any yet. He continued that the committee will meet again in early January with some substitute language and will bring the changes before the board at the January meeting.

Chair Morse said that the Attorney General has released its opinion that the State Board of Education does have full authority to enact the proposed rules.

### **Item O: Budget Presentation**

Bill Talbott, Deputy Secretary of Education, shared the budget with the Board. He said that he created the budget as if there were additional 3 staff positions for the State Board of Education. Talbott said that the Agency is working with a level-funded budget and the State Board's budget is a little over \$78,000. He said the proposed budget with the additional lines is well over. Chair Morse asked that if the Agency submitted the budget with the additional State Board budget requested would that be at the expense of the Agency. Secretary Holcombe said that the Agency would have to cut over \$200K from the Agency's staff and programs. Chair Morse said that he does not want to take away from the Agency.

Oller suggested that the Agency submit their budget as is with the \$78,000 allowance for the State Board of Education and the Board should contact appropriations and ask for additional funding. Chair Morse said that the State Board will take it to the Legislative Committee for their consideration.

Chair Morse announced that there will be a 10 minute break at 2:50 p.m. He said that when the meeting reconvenes it will be in executive session to discuss personnel matters.

Executive session began at 3:00 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 3:07 p.m.

Johnson-Aten made a motion to adjourn.  
The motion was seconded by Chen.  
The vote passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Suzanne Sprague

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