

District Quality Standards (“DQS”)

Vermont Agency of Education

“District” below is defined as: A supervisory union, including a supervisory district (a single-district supervisory union), in connection with:

- (a) The duties it performs on behalf of the supervisory union itself; and
- (b) If applicable, the duties it performs on behalf of its member school districts or the duties for which it is responsible for ensuring performance on the member districts’ behalf.

I. Business Operations

- a. **Budgeting and Accounting:** The District follows consistent and financially sound processes to effectively manage its budget, maximize the use of funding, and ensure transparency of financial operations.
 - i. District engages in budget planning and preparation processes that enable improvement of educational outcomes for all students and ensure compliance with federal and other budgeting requirements.
 - ii. District ensures that budget preparation demonstrates a clear connection to established District goals and priorities.
 - iii. District maintains accounting systems and records that ensure transparency and accountability for all funds, regardless of source, and provide complete, accurate, and reliable, and timely data for reporting.
 - iv. District maintains accounting records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Governmental Accounting Standards Board principles (GASB).
 - v. District records and reports information consistent with the most current version of the Vermont Agency of Education Uniform Chart of Accounts within its accounting software.
 - vi. District employs grants management practices that enable it to effectively and efficiently spend its federal grant funds and prevent reversion of funds.

- b. **Risk Management and Internal Controls:** The District maintains adequate internal controls to provide reasonable assurance the entity follows State and Federal statutes and regulations.
 - i. District completes required audits in accordance with established deadlines and communicates audit results with the School Board(s).
 - ii. District maintains a records retention policy which adequately addresses all State, Federal, and local requirements related to records and records retention.
 - iii. District takes adequate measures to safeguard protected information and other information designated as sensitive, consistent with applicable federal and state law.
 - iv. District appropriately contracts for good and services and maintains effective procurement and contract administration procedures.

- v. District has incorporated a risk management assessment, including but not limited to liability insurance coverage into their operational procedures.
 - vi. District maintains adequate cybersecurity practices.
- c. **Hiring and Licensure:** The District employs staff in accordance with State and Federal law and implements equitable and inclusive personnel policies which support effective recruitment of staff.
- i. District establishes clear and consistent policies and procedures for equitable hiring and selection of staff.
 - ii. District ensures that all employees, volunteers, and other applicable staff have completed all required background check requirements in accordance with the law.
 - iii. District ensures that all positions which require professional licensing meet current licensing requirements throughout duration of employment.
- d. **Data Management:** The District ensures systems are in place for the efficient and purposeful collection, use, and sharing of data.
- i. District reports accurate and timely data as required by the Secretary of Education.
 - ii. District utilizes a Single Student Information System for all schools within the district as a data source for up-to-date educational records.
 - iii. District's Student Information System meets interoperability requirements as specified by the Secretary of Education.
 - iv. District demonstrates purposeful use of data in identifying needs, evaluation of program effectiveness, and communication of current state of educational outcomes.

II. Facilities Management and Safety

- a. **Facilities Management:** The District adequately maintains and cleans its facilities and has developed the plans necessary to ensure current and future operations.
- i. District maintains a comprehensive school facilities Operations and Maintenance Manual (OMM) for each of its school buildings and other instructional facilities that it operates.
 - 1. District ensures that educational and program facilities are accessible, clean, safe, secure, well-lit, well-maintained, and conducive to student learning, including adequate access to technology.
 - 2. District OMM describes regular cleaning routines and maintenance tasks such as the periodic cleaning/changing of HVAC filters and other mechanical systems to ensure good air quality.

3. District updates OMM as changes to facilities or staffing are made and provides training to staff on how to implement the OMM.
 - ii. District maintains a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and updates it annually. The CIP describes future capital development and improvement needs, including adequate-sized facilities based on enrollment projections.
 1. The CIP also addresses the following categories in addition to capacity:
 - i. Safety and security infrastructure;
 - ii. Accessibility;
 - iii. Technology infrastructure;
 - iv. Capacity to deliver STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) programming; and
 - v. Building systems' condition and performance, including energy efficiency improvements and indoor air quality to address the health and safety of students and employees.
 - iii. District designates a person with responsibility for facilities management for the school district or supervisory union. The designee receives the necessary training and certification to ensure compliance with these standards.
- b. **Facilities Safety:** The District ensures each of its buildings are safe and maintains up to date operational plans to ensure staff and other stakeholders can respond to threats.
- i. District maintains a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in the format prescribed by the Secretary. This plan is reviewed and updated annually by district and school leadership and includes the essential procedures, operations and assignments that are required to plan, prepare, mitigate, respond and recover from an emergency/disaster.
 1. The district ensures each school in the district conducts all required drills, practice exercises and other emergency procedures.
 - ii. District ensures each of its buildings has adopted an appropriate and layered approach to physical security measures to ensure each district building is a safe and secure environment.
 - iii. District staff are trained in emergency operations including threat assessment protocols.

III. Governance

- a. **Governance Priorities** – Through an equity lens, the board adopts a vision and measurable goals to support continuous improvement and monitors student academic progress and wellness.

- i. The board follows an inclusive process to invite and incorporate community input into the vision and goals for the school system.
 - ii. At least annually, the board sets measurable goals and regularly reviews the progress toward those goals.
 - iii. At least annually, the board monitors student academic progress and wellness.
 - iv. At least annually, the board formally evaluates the performance of the superintendent, based in part on the superintendent's progress toward meeting agreed upon goals.
- b. **Governance Protocols** – The board adopts, reviews annually, and revises as needed, Operating Protocols for how it does its work, and annually reads foundational documents such as articles of agreement.
 - i. The board annually assesses its performance, including adherence to agreed norms, protocols, procedures, and policies.
 - ii. The board annually reviews whether and/or how its actions and contributions have impacted the school system's success in meeting goals.
 - iii. The board annually evaluates the effectiveness of community engagement and public communication efforts.
 - iv. The board undertakes its own continuous learning and development and provides members with opportunities for ongoing training and support to maintain and increase their skills and understanding.
- c. **Governance Processes** – The board establishes and follows inclusive, transparent, and predictable methods to conduct its work.
 - i. The board discusses, adopts, and revises policies on a regular basis to ensure the system is supporting and meeting the needs of every student.
 - ii. The board ensures its annual budget aligns with its stated priorities and provides an equitable distribution of resources to help meet the needs and goals of every student.
 - iii. The board ensures its members are aware of conditions set forth in negotiated agreements and contracts.
 - iv. The board ensures its members understand and comply with Vermont statutes and regulations relevant to board work and public education.
 - v. The board stays apprised of proposed legislation and policy-making that may affect its school system and students.
 - vi. The board maintains an ongoing relationship with locally elected officials.