

# Update on District Quality Standards (DQS) and Quality Assurance Regulations (QAR)

January 18, 2023

# Rationale

- There is a lot of district "process variability" between instruction in the classroom and state-level accountability.
- One cause of this variability is a lack of district process standards and quality assurance regulation which minimizes the effectiveness of AOE support and oversight functions in reducing this variability.
- This tendency toward variability in district processes has always been a feature of Vermont's education system but has now been exacerbated by the pandemic and the larger demographic trends which together are contributing to labor shortages and the potential for even higher levels of staff turnover and variability.
- Stronger and more consistent district-level **core** processes can address persistent quality and equity concerns and mitigate the impact of staff turnover to a certain extent.
- Imagining core district process standards as a function of a concise quality assurance process will increase the effectiveness of these new regulations.

# Responsibility and Authority

- The State is ultimately responsible for education (quality and equity) - education is a common benefit
- The State delegates authority to enact its responsibility.
- The State largely delegates authority to three entities:
  - The Electorate of a School District (budget, purchase real estate)
  - School District Boards (policy, curriculum, facilities)
  - District Superintendents (CEO, general administration)
- DQS and QAR will focus on the points of delegated authority to districts and superintendents.

# Timelines

- AOE initial description of standards (October)
- Create Quality Scales to test definitions of standards (November)
- Develop QAR (December-January)
- Submit draft rules to ICAR (February)

# District Quality Standards

- Three Domains
  - Business Operations (includes data)
  - Facilities Management and Safety
  - School Board Governance

# SBOE Role in QAR

- The State Board has a significant role in the QAR process relative to identified schools under 16 V.S.A. § 165 where the Secretary shall recommend to the State Board one or more of the following actions:
  - the Agency continue to provide technical assistance for one more cycle of review;
  - the State Board adjust supervisory union boundaries or responsibilities of the superintendency;
  - the Secretary assume administrative control of an individual school, school district, or supervisory union, including budgetary control to ensure sound financial practices, only to the extent necessary to correct deficiencies;
  - the State Board close an individual school or schools and require that the school district pay tuition to another public school or an approved independent school; or
  - the State Board require two or more school districts to consolidate their governance structures.