
MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Daniel M. French, Secretary of Education
SUBJECT: District Quality Standards and Recommended Agency Engagement Plan -
Revised
DATE: November 10, 2022

At the Board's September meeting, I provided a review of the agency's work on the development of District Quality Standards (DQS). Act 127 of 2022 amended 16 V.S.A. § 165 to read, "In addition to the education quality standards provided in section (a) of this section, each Vermont school district shall meet the school district quality standards adopted by rule of the Agency of Education regarding the business, facilities management, and governance practices of school districts. These standards shall include a process for school district quality reviews to be conducted by the Agency of Education. Annually, the Secretary shall publish metrics regarding the outcomes of school district quality reviews."

Additionally, "On or before February 1, 2023, the Agency of Education shall initiate rulemaking to update education quality standards as required under 16 V.S.A. § 165. Prior to the filing of the draft updated rules with the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules, the Agency of Education shall engage stakeholders for input on the draft rules in accordance *with a written plan approved by the State Board of Education.*"

At the September meeting, I heard feedback from the Board relative to Board members being included as stakeholders in the DQS rule development process. I subsequently met with Board members Tammy Kolbe and Kim Gleason to discuss this further especially considering the development of new quality assurance rules (QAR) that will likely include elements of both the EQS and the DQS.

Based on this feedback, I think it would be useful to include board members as stakeholders in the development of the agency's DQS and quality assurance rule-making processes. I am recommending an updated stakeholder engagement plan for the Board's consideration below.

Recommended Engagement Plan

1. October – Definition of DQS Standards
 - a. The agency will develop basic concepts of standards for Business Operations and Facilities Management and Safety.
 - b. The agency will work directly with VSBA and VSA to develop School Governance standards.
2. November – Refinement of the DQS Rule Model
 - a. The agency will work with education stakeholder groups, including members of the State Board of Education, to refine and develop DQS rules.

3. December – Development of Quality Assurance Rules
 - a. The agency will work with education stakeholder groups, including members of the State Board of Education, to refine and develop Quality Assurance rules.
 - b. The agency will solicit formal written comment on these rules from VSBA, VSA, VPA, and VT-NEA, and this feedback will be provided back to the agency by December 23, 2022.
4. January – Final Draft
 - a. The agency will solicit public feedback on the draft rules through a formal comment period and will provide a written rationale for either incorporating, modifying, or rejecting this feedback.
 - b. The agency will present an overview of the draft rules to legislative leaders.
 - c. The agency will present evidence of compliance with the engagement plan to the State Board at its regular meeting in January 2023.
 - d. The agency will also present a final version of its proposed rules to the Board at this same meeting. The purpose of this presentation will be for information and discussion purposes not approval.
 - e. The agency will file its proposed rule with the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules in advance of the February 1, 2022, deadline.