

6/22/2018

Dear members of the Vermont State Board of Education,

First, let me thank you for your dedication to the education of our kids in Vermont. It is appreciated. Also, thanks for accepting testimony on a variety of topics with which you are dealing.

I have some thoughts on the Small Schools Grant issue, and most importantly the Geographic Isolation issue. The Legislature has put you in an untenable position, by adding language to legislation which throws to the BOE the responsibility of establishing metrics but does not provide any resources nor sufficient information to establish these metrics. As the last few meetings of the BOE make clear, this is being done too hastily and without any real clear guidance. For example, what are the definitions which will be used for "capacity" or "portal"? In the case of my school district, Marlboro, the nearest schools in Brattleboro do not operate with the same structure so it is unclear as to which schools would be used to establish "portal to portal".

There is time, since the changes do not take effect for a year, to do a better job. I urge you the BOE to take one of 2 paths: either simply return the chore to the Legislature, asking them to allow six months or a year to get better info and a clearer picture of what makes sense. Alternatively, establish a set of metrics which can be used on a temporary basis, probably very similar to the 2011 report metrics, which would allow school districts to create realistic budgets during this coming budget season.

Thank you for listening,....

Dan MacArthur Marlboro School Board and Regional Rep to the VSBA Board