



Conference Call
Vermont Agency of Education
Room 419
219 North Main Street
Barre, VT 05641

January 24, 2018

*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.*

**State Board of Education
Legislative Subcommittee Conference Call Meeting
Draft Minutes**

Present:

State Board of Education Legislative Subcommittee Members: Peter Peltz, William Mathis, Krista Huling, Connor Solimano and John Carroll.

Agency of Education (AOE): Haley Jones, Maureen Gaidys

Others: None

Item A: Call to Order

Chair Peltz called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Item B: Sign In for Guests/Callers

Chair Peltz asked callers on the line to identify themselves; none did.

Item C: Amendments to Agenda

There were no amendments to the agenda.

D: Approve January 12, 2018 Draft Minutes

Huling moved to approve the draft minutes from the January 12th meeting. Carroll seconded, but requested discussion. Carroll noted that he was not present at the last meeting and his name should be removed. He also suggested updating/changing the "legend" in italics at the top of the minutes and agenda that lists the strategic goals to reflect the Board's new goals. Huling offered that this could be voted on at the February Board meeting. Solimano noted that the original agenda had the wrong end time. Peltz called the vote. The vote passed unanimously.

Item E: Discuss DMG Report - Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports for Students Who Struggle

Peltz opened this item for discussion. Mathis suggested starting with the executive summary. Carroll asked for clarification on the purpose of this discussion. Peltz said that he and Mathis were taking on the issues of special education as a priority of the subcommittee. Carroll clarified that this was not being discussed because of interest, but because it was requested by House and Senate Education committees. Huling added that Senator Baruth specifically asked that special attention be paid to

special education and through the equity lens. Carroll said he thought the process agreed on was for this subcommittee to give recommendations to Board, who would take action and give guidance to the committee; further, the process for today was to come to conclusions/recommendations to be presented at the February Board meeting. Peltz asked for any issues of concern to be identified. Carroll suggested that Mathis and Peltz prepare a presentation for the Board. The subcommittee agreed.

Huling said she was having trouble separating the two reports, and she commented on the fact that both addressed a multi-year change. There was discussion on timelines, implementation, resources, Agency staffing, inefficiencies in pushing this to the SU level, discussing with AOE, special education budgets, school calendars vs. legislative calendars, the need to endorse Tier 1 and 2 instruction, technical assistance capacity, and the need to invest on the front end to save money on the back end.

Huling suggested outlining concepts, what is liked, and what is causing concern. Mathis talked about higher-level interventions creating a gap and that there are resource challenges of having properly trained educators. There was discussion on both initiatives being timely and necessary, the need for coordination, the timing issue for school boards to adjust budgets and the challenge in developing and educating professional staff. Mathis referenced page 8, implications and next steps.

Huling commented that a lot of this change cannot be legislated, but will require a cultural shift within schools. There was discussion on time available and calendars, students missing instruction due to needing extra support, the SBE's role in hours of instruction and what is/is not in the Board's control, the need to be realistic in changing funding and strategies, and the role of the SBE. There was discussion on not having enough AOE staff to provide training to the field, as was provided in prior years, the need to have guardrails and that the field needs more than what they are getting from AOE. There was discussion on the ratios, replacing paraprofessionals with highly qualified teachers, the use of paraprofessionals, and how schools are structured. Mathis suggested moving on to the next agenda item.

Item F: Discuss UVM Report - Study of Vermont State Funding for Special Education

Mathis said that he likes the ideas presented in the UVM Report and thought it would save bureaucracy and time. Mathis' questioned how much bureaucracy should be accounted for. Another question was around ratios, reducing staff and how it is best handled. Peltz said it was noteworthy that the approach mirrors what is being done on the healthcare front. There was discussion on why this changed from census to student based; Mathis provided the history of this shift. Peltz asked if it was worth reminding the Legislature of this history. There was discussion on the need for outreach for the Agency, the comparison of this to the healthcare reform efforts, and that it could be good to include in the summary. Peltz and Mathis will provide a written statement for subcommittee members.

Carroll shared that he had a short topic for discussion under "Other."

Item G: Legislative Update - Haley Jones

Jones shared that special education is a timely discussion and the House Education committee will be drafting a bill that will focus mostly on the funding portion of the UVM report. The Legislature heard

from AOE and Tammy Kolbe, UVM, about the need for a 5-year transition and the need for staffing changes. Mathis commented that there was good teamwork. Mathis asked for a copy of the drafted bill; Jones said she would send the report by Friday at the latest. Jones continued that AOE and AHS/DCF met last week to finalize draft language on PreK; the draft language went to Representative Sharpe, Representative Keefe and Legislative Council. Jones will send final language when available. Mathis asked for details. Jones replied that it responds to the recommendations presented by Secretaries Holcombe and Gobeille and those discussed at the Education Summit. Jones mentioned that the Budget Address was yesterday, and AOE was following testimony on funding formulas and ratio conversations. Jones will send legislative notes at the end of the week. Peltz asked about testimony on dual enrollment/religious schools. Jones said there was a draft bill and the Legislature took testimony last week.

Item H: Other

Carroll was not present for the January 12 subcommittee meeting and expressed concern over a comment on page 3 (Item G) at the bottom. He advised that it was not wise to use the Legislature to get funding. Huling clarified this was not funding for the Board and went on to say that Sharpe had asked for vetting of legislation that is inefficient and requested suggestions for any changes. He also asked that if there was legislation that might create a capacity issue, to remind the Legislature of that and advocate for staff for the AOE. Carroll said that he did not see resolution on the issue and asked where it stands. There was discussion on capacity issues, being attentive to how legislation is funded, reviewing legislation in relation to the three Es, and to think about past legislation, but to focus on moving forward. There was discussion on legislative asks and the response of the Board, the request for a retrospective efficiency review, lack of capacity, and how to respond to the request. Carroll suggested a conversation with Representative Sharpe to acknowledge the request and to let him know that it cannot be accommodated, due to capacity issues. Peltz clarified that Sharpe should get a response to the request. There was discussion on curbing the Board's scope, but only through statute, that the Legislature can require the Board in statute to do something, an ask vs. an order, and taking this request on if it came with staff (i.e. through the Miscellaneous Education bill). Peltz and Mathis expressed capacity concerns. Carroll reiterated that the Board was part of the executive branch and that it should be cautious and avoid advocating for more staff when the Governor is trying to control costs. He suggested working through the Governor's Office for this; Peltz concurred. Mathis disagreed slightly and said it was the Board's responsibility to advise the Governor, Legislature and Secretary on what is good policy. Huling said that the Governor's Office had requested that all resource requests go through Secretary Holcombe.

Peltz asked if Mathis wanted to discuss the Governor's memo. Mathis said there are many cost shifts to the local districts and that asking local districts to pick up \$50 million is a tax increase. There was discussion on the Brigham decision, the effect on equity, lack of specifics in the plan, taking action on cost shifts, looking at the big picture, misalignment between spending and resources, support for the general idea, and advocating for the solutions.

Peltz asked for a date for the next conference call. Carroll suggested meeting when the special education report from Peltz and Mathis was ready. The members decided to meet next on February 7, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

Huling asked about the Board's role in special education, as requested from the House Education committee, and if it could be included in their summary. Mathis and Peltz agreed to include it in the summary.

Peltz asked for a motion to adjourn. Mathis asked what was decided about the Governor's memo and if there should be a statement. Peltz thought it should be a Board decision and deferred to Huling. Mathis clarified that it would not be an endorsement but a message of support towards concerns. Peltz asked if Carroll and Huling could come up with something for the next Board meeting. Huling and Carroll were open to attempting to create a document. There was concern about having an open discussion at the Board level, supporting the general premise, raising concerns about the specific methods proposed, what can be supported and how it will have impact, being part of the solution, and the need to talk about how many schools Vermont has and needs. Mathis offered to send some bullet points; Peltz asked to have it sent to all subcommittee members. Carroll said he hoped to have this compiled by February 7, 2018.

Item I: Adjourn

Carroll moved to adjourn; Huling seconded. Peltz called the vote to adjourn. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Maureen Gaidys.