



VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Vermont Agency of Education
219 North Main Street, Room 418
Barre, VT 05641

November 29, 2017

*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 (via phone): Peter Peltz, William Mathis, Krista Huling, Connor Solimano, John Carroll (joined at 10:38 a.m.).

Agency of Education (AOE): Maureen Gaidys, Robert Stirewalt (joined at 10:47 a.m.)

Others (via phone): Matt Levin, Vermont Early Childhood Alliance

Item A: Call to Order

Chair Peltz called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m.

Item B: Sign In for Guests/Callers

Chair Peltz asked for Roll Call and for callers to identify themselves. The subcommittee members identified themselves and Matt Levin, identified himself. He was the only member of the public to call in.

Item C: Amendments to Agenda

There were no amendments to the agenda.

D: Approve November 9, 2017 Draft Minutes

Huling moved to approve the legislative subcommittee meeting minutes from November 9, 2017. Mathis seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

Item E: Review Draft Report to the Legislature

Peltz suggested delaying the discussion until Carroll could join the meeting. Huling shared that she is working on the historical pieces of the report. It was suggested that the latest merger map from Russo-Savage be included; subcommittee members agreed with this idea. Huling stated that she would also include the number of proposals heard by the SBE. Mathis asked if other issues would be incorporated. Huling responded that she thought only Act 46 and Act 49 were to be included. Mathis wanted more included. Carroll joined the meeting at 10:38 a.m. It was agreed that the number of new districts would be highlighted. Huling asked what Mathis would like to have included. Mathis suggested addressing standards adopted by the SBE this year – ISTE, C3 and any others. Huling

asked if the subcommittee wanted Mathis' suggestions to be incorporated and related back to PBG and EQS. Mathis sees these as separate, but said he leaves this decision to Huling. Peltz thought it was topical and asked how it would be received by the field. There was discussion on proficiency based graduation requirements, the status of financial literacy standards, crosswalk for standards, time involved for using these standards, etc.

Carroll clarified that he sees the report as a big picture update on the main contours of education in Vermont – EQS, standards adoption, consolidation, expectations of educators, challenges/concerns and that this was an opportunity to give an overview of major trends/issues that are happening in the state. He continued to offer that if concerns are acknowledged in the report, then perhaps that shows appreciation for their complexity and the burdens they place on people. Huling recapped the current initiatives – Act 46/49, PBGR, EQS, Act 77, dual enrollment, etc. and suggested noting the concerns around the heavy demands of all these initiatives. Carroll said the report should mention the need for more sustainable expenditures and staying mindful of cost impacts. There was discussion on the dynamics in governance, affects/pressures on communities, budget/cost management challenge, sheer overload on frontline educators, and the effect on students while educators wrangle through various new initiatives.

Huling asked Solimano for input on his experience, recognizing that he might be somewhat insulated as a senior, and how the underclassmen are affected. Solimano said many students are stressed about the Proficiency-Based (PB) grading scale and how that will play out with colleges. In his school, juniors' and seniors' PB grading is converted to a 100-point scale. The younger grades will have complete PB transcripts. There was discussion on heavy demands on communities, students, school boards, school leadership, assessment results, the letter from SBAC, and expected pushback on several fronts.

Carroll noted that people get very frustrated with any government body when they think that government body is unaware of the consequences of what it is doing. He reiterated the need to acknowledge this and be mindful. Peltz asked if the expectation is to present a draft report to the SBE at the December meeting. Huling affirmed that could happen. Carroll said he shared a first draft with subcommittee members before the last SBE meeting. Huling reminded the subcommittee that the plan was for her to add to this draft. Mathis asked if the draft could also include that the SBE had asked in years prior that mandates be controlled. Peltz asked how to move forward. Mathis suggested that Huling combine her and Carroll's sections and create a draft to be shared via email with subcommittee members in two separate groups, to not violate Open Meeting Law (unwarned meeting). She cautioned the subcommittee not to reply all to her email, but to return comments to her for compilation. Carroll asked when to expect a first draft; Huling said she could send it by the end of day. There was discussion on including a description of major happenings that the SBE has a role in, the demands that these place on the field, making a bow towards AHS, DOL, and ACCD and saying that this is a team ballgame and there is a need to work together.

Item F: Draft of Board Norms/Procedures for Responding to Legislative Requests/Invitations - Chair Peltz

Peltz asked if this item was on the Consent Agenda for the next meeting and if this item could be amended if it is on the Consent Agenda. Carroll wanted there to be opportunity for debate; Mathis said that he would like to avoid a debate and concurred with the previous version – the one that said

the Board Chair or subcommittee Chair would be informed if there was going to be presence at the State House. Carroll referenced Item W at the November SBE meeting; Mathis affirmed that this was the version with which he agreed. Peltz asked for other thoughts on that matter; there were none.

Item G: Legislative Update

Peltz opened discussion on key matters for discussion in the Legislature. Mathis expressed interest in Stirewalt's view on the five big issues. Stirewalt said the top five topics have not changed. The two special education reports are coming out: DMG report (going to Legislature in January) and funding study from UVM (due 12/15). He will make sure the SBE receives copies of the reports once they are sent to the Legislature. The Act 77 report is still in progress and will be done by COB December 1. Stirewalt said he would also forward this report to the SBE. Peltz asked if Act 77 would be on the agenda at the next SBE meeting; Huling said no, but CTE is on the agenda for the December meeting. There was discussion on talking with DOL about job force predictions as it relates to technical education, work towards MOUs with AOE and the state colleges, the newly hired AOE Pathways Coordinator and his report to the Legislature in January.

Peltz asked for the remaining five top issues and asked about CTE, Act 77 and PreK. Stirewalt responded that they are Act 77, PreK, Special Education, and changes to the funding formula. Stirewalt predicted changes to the funding formula and that the hope is that there are no changes to the Act 46/49, but that this is fleshed out. At the end of last session, there was discussion on the push to reward small schools with grants if they consolidated before Act 46 went into effect and folks were passionate about this topic. Peltz asked about the Rules Series 2200. Stirewalt responded that this is a big deal and that as mentioned in the VTDigger article, we are at a stalemate with the central issue being the obligation of private schools accepting special education students when they are taking public money. Stirewalt added that it is a polarizing issue and he is sure it will come up early in the session. Peltz asked how the subcommittee will weigh in on these issues and if they will prepare, wait and see, or ask to be heard.

Huling shared that she asked the AOE to prepare information on CTEs and she wants to make sure the SBE comes from a place of having good information and facts. This presentation will address the range of offerings, different programs, status of CTEs, financial information and costs-per-student. She wants to tie these into the SBE's three priorities of excellence, equity and efficiency. Peltz asked about the money following the student; Huling thinks this will be a big issue. Mathis is interested in special education and finance issues. Huling said she wants anything that the SBE comments on to be based on facts and data – that is when the SBE becomes more meaningful to the Legislature. Peltz concurred.

Carroll asked about the timing and said that there seemed to be a plan in mind for this. First, the SBE would wait for the legislative proposals to take shape in January, and then Stirewalt and others would brief the subcommittee. Following this, the subcommittee would narrow issues down to 3-5 and form a proposed SBE position by mid-February to present to the SBE. Lastly, the subcommittee would devise how that will be communicated to the Legislature.

Peltz stated that five issues are a lot. He prefers to focus on three, especially if the intent is to be well versed on the issue. His priorities are PreK and Dual Enrollment/Early College. Huling said the

important part for her would be what the SBE wants to talk to the Legislature about after hearing the information and having the data, and how this affects equity and affordability. Mathis said that the SBE needs to do their homework now, well in advance. Huling asked for other topics of interest besides CTE. Mathis and Peltz suggested PreK and special education reports. Huling clarified with Stirewalt that the DMG report is completed, but not cleared for release yet and the funding report is not yet done, due December 15.

Carroll clarified the four topics - CTE, PreK, special education, and funding as those that the Legislature is expected to be taking some action on, and that the subcommittee should be preparing for and gathering information on in advance. There was discussion on staying out of the weeds on CTEs, difficult issues with wide open questions and much controversy, turf issues between CTE and CCV, turf issues between high schools and CTEs, shrinking enrollments of sending schools, and steady enrollment of CTEs. Peltz said he could take CTEs off the list. There was more discussion on becoming better informed on PreK, concern for equity, and having a better understanding of PreK. Peltz asked Stirewalt where the Legislature was on PreK. Stirewalt said that a report is being finalized with bifurcated responsibilities between AOE and AHS; and in respect to equity, it will be contentious since there is still a strong wave of opinion that those who need it most are not getting it. Carroll circled back to helping Huling identify a few topics to be presented to the SBE at the December meeting to gain consensus in possible consideration of providing an opinion to the legislature – PreK, CTE, Funding and Special Education. Huling added the issue of independent schools. Mathis said Act 46/Act 49 could also come up. For some of these, the subcommittee needs to wait, see, and give these topics time to develop. There will also be other issues that come up that are not on this list.

Peltz asked about another legislative subcommittee meeting following the SBE meeting. Carroll said a final draft is needed before submittal and he offered a follow up meeting after hearing from the SBE. Mathis asked how this report would be presented and suggested a coffee/breakfast event with the legislators. There was discussion on what has been done in the past, hosting this at the State House or the Capitol Plaza, inviting legislators to present their agenda and interact with the whole SBE, the timing of this event, scheduling this immediately prior to the January SBE meeting, and the need to check the budget and be mindful of costs. Carroll asked how long a presentation; Huling said 5-10 minutes, with the bulk of the time being questions and answers. There was additional discussion on attendance, committee invites, using this to develop a good working relationship, the importance of being off the State House campus, and the need for name badges for SBE members. The subcommittee decided on a meet in greet with the full SBE in the State House cafeteria, open to all legislators, followed by a meeting in a separate room with the Senate and House Education committees. The subcommittee decided to meet again via conference call on December 20 at 1:30 p.m.

Item H: Other

Item I: Adjourn

Carroll moved to adjourn. Huling seconded. The vote to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:44 a.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Maureen Gaidys.