

State Board of Education

Draft Meeting Minutes

VIRTUAL Teams Meeting/Video/Teleconference

Call in #: 1-802-828-7667

Conference ID: 814 782 73#

1 National Life Drive

Dewey Building - Room 206

Montpelier, VT 05620

Date: January 25, 2023

Present:

State Board Members (SBE): Jennifer Samuelson, Chair; Tammy Kolbe, Vice Chair; Patrick Brown; Tom Lovett; Lyle Jepson; Kim Gleason; Richard Werner, and Dan French.

Agency of Education (AOE): Suzanne Sprague, Emily Simmons, Courtney O'Brien, Donna Russo-Savage, Heather Bouchey, Maureen Gaidys.

Others:

Item A: Call to Order/Roll Call/Amendments to the Agenda

Chair Samuelson called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. and roll call was taken. There were no amendments to the agenda.

Item B: Public to be Heard

There were none.

Item C: Quality Assurance (QA) Rules Presentation and Discussion

Chair Samuelson turned the meeting over to Secretary French. He explained that his presentation will focus on the Quality Assurance (QA) regulations/rules that are being proposed. The purpose of this special meeting is to explain the major role the SBE has in the process. AOE participants include Emily Simmons, General Counsel; Donna Russo-Savage, Legal Staff and Courtney O'Brien, Project Manager. They will collect feedback from the meeting. Secretary French said he would walk through the [DRAFT Quality Assurance Framework for K-12 Education](#) to stimulate a discussion. The first iteration of the [DRAFT District Quality Standards Rule Series 100](#) was previously distributed. Any feedback on the draft rules can be sent directly to French, Sprague or Gaidys. This draft will be provided to major education stakeholder groups, soliciting their formal written feedback by January 31, 2023. This draft will then be reviewed/compiled, and a revised draft will be ready to file with the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules (ICAR) by February 7, 2023 to begin a formal public comment period.

Secretary French shared his [DRAFT Quality Assurance Framework for K-12 Education](#) and explained that he would be pointing out areas of interest to promote conversation. It is a complex process and part of a coherent regulatory approach that will achieve the goals and intentions and ensure that it can be administered in an efficient and effective manner.

He spoke about the idea that the AOE is designing a new QA framework and it is not meant to be QA for every aspect of education. The central goal is to eliminate or moderate some of the variability that occurs in the education system. This is a critical time for the education system. Elements of the Education Quality Standards (EQS) that should be represented in the QA process are Coordination of Curriculum, Local Assessment, Tiered Systems of Supports, Needs-Based Professional Development, and Continuous Improvement. These were identified as essential to Act 173 implementation. In addition to this, Staff Evaluation and Educational Materials were added. Items added to the left-hand column of the framework document have undergone a rigorous level of scrutiny. The fear is that a lever has been missed that would make an impact toward stability and quality.

On the far-right column in the document is the destination and the SBE's role which is described in [16 V.S.A. §165](#). There are three actors in this process: Local Education Agencies (LEAs), AOE and SBE. We need to consider how we can leverage those roles. He explained that this was a complex process, and it is iterative. The exercise of defining the QA process has implications for the EQS.

He continued to talk about how the table framed out the major roles and responsibilities and wanting to maximize the impact of the local education agency roles to provide QA. There are two mechanisms: annual assurance by the superintendent and annual self-assessment. We are trying to pave a road between local responsibility and state oversight. He summarized the roles as shown on the chart. He said the AOE has a responsibility to the federal government to identify schools' proficiency and that is not going away. This is highly dependent on state assessments.

Secretary French said AOE is seeking comment on the draft rules and on the larger framework as well. Outside of today, if there is feedback, it can be provided directly to French, Sprague and Gaidys.

There was discussion on rating scales. Secretary French said the scope of work is to produce rules and what is being contemplated would replace the existing process – data snapshot and Integrated Field Reviews (IFRs). To do that, we need to have a plan of accountability, which would be an amendment to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan. Work on the amendment has started and is concurrent with this work. The third piece of this work is to restructure the AOE to support the implementation of both the new rules and the ESSA state plan and this would begin during the summer.

There was discussion on the SBE having a role/sign off on the amended ESSA State Plan, Continuous Improvement (CI) doesn't provide assurance, State's responsibility to provide assurance to the public, potential value lost in the IFR process, CI is a means to an end, IFR is labor-intensive and not sustainable, SBE acting as a convener, attentiveness to quality and equity, instructional strategies as part of EQS, differentiation and best practices, fidelity of systems, visiting schools as part of the process, schools versus districts, balance between QA and doing the work, coherence, facility safety requirements, coordinated curriculum being an area of proposed changes in EQS, agency staffing, AOE being well-resourced compared to other states, flexible pathways and key requirements for districts as points of leverage, public responsibility and engagement, assurance adds more to the system but it is an essential responsibility, other state models that are effective, need to be responsive to the Vermont reality, making the process more manageable, crosswalk/consistency between DQS and EQS, articulating the QA process, policy governance, specificity of outcomes while offering flexibility in means, concern with consistency of quality of outcomes and state/local partnership is important.

Secretary French encouraged any feedback to be provided. All feedback will be subjected to a rigorous analysis. AOE will engage in a broad public engagement process. The target audience for QA is all Vermonters; that process will be launched in the spring and there will be plenty of opportunity for further dialog. There were questions about how special education will merge with this process and if we elevate some areas, will there be other areas that will become secondary or tertiary by default. Secretary French said formal written comment should be provided to him by January 31, 2023. The plan is to finalize internally with editing by February 7, 2023.

Item D: Public to be Heard

There were none.

Adjourn

Lovett moved to adjourn; Kolbe seconded. The vote was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 1:39 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Maureen Gaidys.