

**VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Montpelier Room, Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center, 100 State Street, Montpelier**  
**April 19, 2011**

***Approved MINUTES***

Present: Board Members: Fayneese Miller, Chair; Kathy Larsen, Vice-chair; Judy Livingston; Stephan Morse; Robert Kelley; Elizabeth Strano; Don Collins; Sean Marie Oller; Bill Mathis

DOE: Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner; Mark Oettinger; Jill Remick; Carol King; Deputy Commissioner Rae Ann Knopf; CFO Bill Talbott; Vaughn Altemus; Ken Remsen; Marta Cambra; Gail Taylor; Pat Fitzsimmons

Others: Mill Moore, VISA; David Cyprian, VSBA VSA VSA; Ken Page, VPA; Stephen Dale, VSBA; Martha Allen, VTNEA; Susan Jensen, VSBPE; Susan Ohanian, Citizen; Laurie Gossens, Michele Fagan, Washington south SU; Wayne Segear, Dr. Robert Letovsky, Chittenden East SU; Tom Gallagher, George Carpenter, Battenkill Valley SU; Joel Baird, Burlington Free Press; Ken Remsen, Mount Mansfield UHS Board

**Preliminaries**

**Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance**

Fayneese Miller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Item B: Roll Call and Introductions**

Chair, Board members, introduced themselves, as did others in attendance.

**Item D: Public to be Heard**

Susan O'Hanian, citizen, spoke to the Board about the Common Core and the assessments that are expected to be administered under those standards.

**Item C: Announcements, Board Member Updates**

Vice-chair Larsen reported on the recent Northeast regional conference about the Common Core standards she attended with Rae Ann Knopf and Sean-Marie Oller. She also recently attended the Transformation in Education Conference as part of the state's work with the New England Secondary School Consortium. Four Vermont schools also presented at the event.

Chair Miller noted she attended the National Association of State Boards of Education/Council of Chief State School Officers meeting at the end of March with Commissioner Vilaseca and Deputy Commissioner Rae Ann Knopf.

Miller also reported that she will be testifying in House Government Operations Wednesday. Commissioner Vilaseca noted that there will be a joint hearing today at 2:30 p.m. in Room 11 on H. 440, the bill that would create an Agency of Education and change the composition of the State Board. Members questioned if there truly was a Secretary, there would not be a need for

a State Board. **Motion:** Stephan Morse moved to add to the Board's H.440 position statement: that if there is a governor-appointed secretary, there would be no need for a Board at all and recommend elimination of the State Board of Education. Larsen questioned what about the bill would improve outcomes for students. She asked for perspective from Stephen Dale, VSBA, and Ken Page, VPA. Mathis asked if they could invite the Governor to a meeting. Collins seconded the motion. Morse noted that the way the current bill is written, the duties of the Board are not delineated, but they can assume the Board will have weakened responsibility. The motion was approved 7-1 (Larsen).

Miller noted the push to reauthorize ESEA as part of the discussion with Arne Duncan. The Board further discussed the continued focus on students who are not being served. Commissioner Vilaseca explained current law and the expected pieces of reauthorization, and what they can expect if NCLB continues or if ESEA is reauthorized with changes.

Oller noted that the recent Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) release that said that 72 percent of Vermont schools are not making progress is an example of what is not right with the current system. Many of these schools are in fact making progress. Chair Miller noted Duncan did say he wanted money set aside for rural states. Vilaseca noted the requirements for the Longitudinal Data System; even though Vermont did not receive the federal grant, such a system is still required to be in place. He said Duncan has said he has lost faith in the local administrators. Mathis noted that the local administrators have lost faith in the federal DOE as well. Chair Miller noted that the state and the nation need to focus on what is being done well.

#### **Item E: Commissioner's Update**

Commissioner Vilaseca reported on the recent release of the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations, and that this is not the only measure of success in our schools. He also mentioned the Small Schools report the department recently published as required in Act 153, the requirement of which was to outline how to reduce the small schools support grants to schools. He said those grants send a mixed message when compared to the encouragement of consolidation under Act 153. He noted there are some impediments to implementation (of Act 153) and there should be changes to make it more effective. Board members asked for an Act 153 item on the May agenda to talk about implementation impediments and challenges.

#### **Item F: Legislative Update/Legislative Priorities** (Armando Vilaseca, Bill Talbott, Mark Oettinger, Rae Ann Knopf, Jill Remick)

General Counsel Oettinger spoke to the Board about S. 100, the miscellaneous education bill, which includes dual enrollment, driver education and the school food program. Miller noted that when she speaks to committees, she mentions that there is a capacity (lack of staff) and funding issue at the DOE, and there should not be further reports or requirements added. Vilaseca agreed and noted that perhaps the Board could back his positions to push back to the federal level as well. Oettinger outlined the other current education-related bills in the Legislature.

Talbott also noted the Miscellaneous Tax bill which includes a study by the DOE and other agencies.

Knopf noted that the language about “capacity” needs to be much more specific so that it does not reflect on the Department’s ability and expertise. The term “insufficient staff to carry out these studies” and so on are more helpful.

## **Action Items**

### **Item G: Consent Agenda**

**Motion:** Sean-Marie Oller moved, seconded by Stephan Morse, to approve the consent agenda, with comment.

- 1. Minutes of March 15, 2010 SBE Meeting**
- 2. Renewal of General and Special Education Independent School Approval** (Pat Pallas Gray; Mike Mulcahy)
  - INSPIRE, Brattleboro, VT; ages 7-21

The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

**Item H: Chittenden East RED Request** (Mark Oettinger, Vaughn Altemus; Dr. Robert Letovsky, John Alberghini, Chittenden East SU)

General Counsel Oettinger opened the discussion and explained the RED process as outlined under Act 153. Robert Letovsky, Chair of the study committee, led the presentation on the process, the issues, and the outcomes of this RED request. This is the first R.E.D. request to come before the State Board of Education. The Chittenden East Supervisory Union covers the town school districts of Bolton, Huntington, Jericho, Richmond and Underhill. It also covers Underhill Incorporated School District and Mt. Mansfield UHSD#17 (the latter of which covers all of the involved town school districts). It is anticipated that CESU voters will consider the formation of this unified union district (R.E.D.) in June and if approved, this will result in the elimination of all the above school districts and the creation of a single entity with one common board and administration.

**Motion:** Sean-Marie Oller moved, seconded by Stephan Morse, that the State Board find that the proposed formation of the Chittenden East Unified Union School District is in the best interests of the students, the state, and the school districts involved, and that the State Board therefore vote to approve the attached report of the Chittenden East Supervisory Union Unified Union School District Planning Committee, as agreed upon on April 7, 2011. The motion was approved unanimously (8-0).

**Item I: Battenkill Valley SU Timeline Request** (Armando Vilaseca, Mark Oettinger; Tom Gallagher, George Carpenter, Battenkill Valley SU)

Tom Gallagher of Battenkill Valley SU explained to the Board their current position, asking the Board to extend their deadline to two years so they can explore a RED study with Southwest Vermont SU. Board members questioned the length of the extension, and Livingston noted that there was legislation already proposed to extend their deadline.

**Motion:** Kathy Larsen moved, seconded by Robert Kelley, that the State Board grant the requested extension of time, from 6-1-2011 to 6-1-2013, to allow the Battenkill Valley Supervisory Union and its

member districts to participate in an Act 153 Regional Education District (R.E.D.) Study (with the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union and its member districts). the motion passed 7-0-1 (Oller abstained).

**Motion:** Judy Livingston moved, seconded by Stephan Morse, that the Board stipulate that a status report be provided to the State Board as of or before April 18, 2012. The motion passed 7-0-1 (Oller abstained).

**Item J: Washington South SU Timeline Request** (Armando Vilaseca, Mark Oettinger; Michele Fagan, Laurie Gossens, WSSU)

Michele Fagan spoke to the Board about the Washington South SU's request for a timeline extension is to have time to pursue the RED discussion for their SU as well. Laurie Gossens will take over as the new superintendent in July, and this timeline would then be in line with the two-year superintendent appointment.

**Motion:** Kathy Larsen moved, seconded by Robert Kelley, that the State Board of Education grant an extension, from June 1, 2012 to January 25, 2013, to allow the Washington South Supervisory Union and its member districts (Northfield, Roxbury) additional time to consider merging with another supervisory union or forming a Regional Education District (R.E.D.) with other districts. That the Board stipulate that the Washington South Supervisory Union Board provide a status report as of or before January 25, 2012. the motion passed unanimously (8-0).

The Board broke for lunch.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **Item K: Vermont Teacher Effectiveness Task Force**

Rae Ann Knopf, Marta Cambra, and Martha Allen (President, Vermont NEA) spoke to the Board about the Vermont Teacher Effectiveness Task Force. This Task Force was convened as part of meeting ARRA requirements but more so in moving the agenda of Transformation and Innovation forward in Vermont. This is a joint effort between the DOE and VT-NEA with Marta Cambra and Martha Allen as the coordinators of this project. The Task Force will move a positive agenda forward with the intent of streamlining and connecting other initiatives within the state, including but not limited to: the SBE Strategic Plan; the VSBPE Action Plan; the Common Core initiative; and the ETS Tier II licensing project. It is anticipated that the Task Force will develop a research-based document that recognizes what is best for Vermont's public school students through effective strategies used by educators and leaders

The Board commended the joint work of the Department and the Vermont NEA on this project.

#### **Item L: Updates**

##### **AYP Determinations:**

Rae Ann Knopf presented to the Board information about Adequate Yearly Progress determinations under the No Child Left Behind Act. The Board discussed strategies for communicating about the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the issues they and the department are dealing with. Chair Miller suggested the Board plan what they want to discuss with the Governor if he does come to a future meeting. She also

suggested the Board write Op Eds. Knopf suggested the Board needs a marketing/communications plan.

### **Common Core State Standards**

Deputy Commissioner Knopf, Director of Standards and Assessment Gail Taylor, and Assistant Director Pat Fitzsimmons presented an update on the Common Core Standards to the Board. Larsen and Oller also attended NASBE's Northeast regional conference on Common Core as State Board members. They explained the current work with Common Core they are doing with Vermont educators, and that Vermont is a member of the governing board of the national Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium with other states. They also discussed the collaboration and communication tool, which is currently in the process of getting a contract with a vendor. Taylor mentioned the next meeting of Vermont's common core Implementation team on May 18.

### **Item N: Future Agendas (Board members; Carol King)**

The May meeting will be held at Otter Valley Union High School which is Board member Robert Kelley's school. Potential agenda items include; Commissioner's Update, Legislative Update, Windsor Northwest SU Plan, NESSC Update, Act 153 Update, LDS discussion.

The commissioner will send a draft letter for the governor to send to USED Secretary Arne Duncan regarding the reauthorization of ESEA and NCLBA.

### **Item M: Commissioner's Evaluation (Board)**

**Motion:** At 2:35 p.m., Bill Mathis moved, seconded by Sean-Marie Oller, that the Board go into executive session to discussion the commissioner's evaluation process. The Board came out of executive session at 2:47 p.m. No action was taken.

### **Adjourn**

**Motion:** At 2:50 p.m., Sean-Marie Oller moved, seconded by Stephan Morse, to adjourn the April 19, 2011 meeting of the State Board of Education. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Minutes recorded by Jill Remick  
Minutes prepared by Carol King