

VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Executive Board Room, Capitol Plaza Hotel & Conference Center, 100 State Street, Montpelier
August 9, 2011

The State Board of Education shall sustain a vision of high skills, creative thinking, and love of knowledge and learning for every student by setting education policy that ensures student achievement in a safe and healthy learning environment.

Approved MINUTES

Present

Board Members: Chair Fayneese Miller; Stephan Morse; Vice-chair Kathy Larsen; Elizabeth Strano; Sean-Marie Oller; Don Collins; Bill Mathis, via phone for the a.m. portion of the meeting; Judy Livingston (arrived at 10:40 a.m.)

DOE Staff: Commissioner Armando Vilaseca; Deputy Commissioner Rae Ann Knopf; CFO Bill Talbott; Jill Remick; Carol King; Jesse Moorman; Travis Van Alstyne

Other: Governor Peter Shumlin; Sherry Gile, VT-NEA; Martha Allen, VT-NEA; Brad Hull, NASBE; Peter Hirschfeld, Vermont Press Bureau; Stephen Dale, VSBA; Jeff Francis, VSA; Gina Bullard, WCAX; Lisa Rathke, AP; Josh Larkin, VT Digger; Bob Kinzel, VPR; Alex McLean, Governor's Office

Preliminaries

Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance

Fayneese Miller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Item B: Roll Call and Introductions

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

Item C: Announcements, Board Member Updates

Chair Fayneese Miller noted that she is meeting regularly with the Governor's Education Liaison Susan Bartlett to ensure collaboration and open communication. They discussed data, early education, alignment of work and other major topics during their most recent meeting.

Vice-chair Kathy Larsen reported that she, Sean-Marie Oller and Bill Mathis attended parts of the Vermont Principals Association conference.

Mathis (via phone) reported that he is attending a national conference of state legislatures meeting in San Antonio.

Oller noted she and Mathis attended the mid-July National Association of State Boards of Education new board members conference.

Chair Miller also noted the CCSSO Summer Institute was held in Stowe and Miller provided a welcome. It was also attended by Commissioner Vilaseca, Deputy Commissioner Rae Ann Knopf and Communications Director Jill Remick.

Item D: Public to be Heard

No one asked to speak at this time.

Action Items

Item E: Consent Agenda

Motion: Oller moved, seconded by Elizabeth Strano, to approve the Consent Agenda with comment.

1. Minutes of June 27-28, 2011 SBE Meeting

2. Independent School Actions (pat Pallas Gray, Mike Mulcahy)

Renewal of General Independent School Approval:

- Mt. Mansfield Winter Academy, Stowe; grades 8-12
- Okemo Mountain School, Ludlow; grades 5-12

Renewal of General and Special Education Independent School Approval:

- bellcate School, Essex; ages 12-21
- The Caledonia School, St. Johnsbury; grades 9-12
- Camp E-Wen-Akee (Eckerd Foundation), Benson; ages 12-18, grades 7-12
- Connecticut River Academy, Bradford; grades 1-12
- Sheldon Academy, Rutland; ages 6-18, grades 1-12
- Soar Learning Center, St. Albans Bay; grades K-12

Renewal of Tutorial Approval:

- Valley Vista, Bradford; ages 13-18

Amendments for Approved Schools:

- Killington Mountain School, Killington; adding a school-year program
- The Stevens School, Lyndon; changing the school's name

NEAS&C Accreditation Acknowledgement:

- Mater Christi School, Burlington; grades K-8
- Mount St. Joseph Academy, Rutland; grades 9-12
- St. Michael's School, Brattleboro; grades K-8

Approved School Closure Acknowledgement:

- Green Mountain Christian School, Rutland; closed June 2010

3. Waiver of State Board of Education Rule 2603(8): Burlington School District and Lamoille North Supervisory Union (Cambridge Elementary School) Mark Oettinger, Manuela Fonseca

Morse requested clarifying information on the waiver request for the 90-day requirement for the community needs assessment for pre-school programming in the Burlington SD and the Lamoille North SU (Cambridge

Elementary School). DOE Counsel Jesse Moorman explained the item to the Board. The motion carried 5-0. (Note: Strano is now the voting student member).

Item G: Discussion with Governor Peter Shumlin

Prior to his arrival, Chair Miller asked that this be a conversation with the Governor, and that this be an opportunity to share the work of the Board and the Department. She noted the decision for Vermont to adopt the Common Core as an example of the work of the Board and Department is moving forward with for Vermont students. She also noted the recent announcement from the U.S. Department of Education regarding waivers for No Child Left Behind accountability. She wants to ensure the Board's agenda is consistent with the priorities of the Governor.

Governor Shumlin joined the Board meeting. Chair Miller welcomed him to the meeting. He spoke about the opportunity to take a great education system and make it better. He noted the number of employers he speaks with note that they cannot find the qualified workers they need to get the work done.

He noted some things he hopes can happen in the Legislature this upcoming session. He recently spoke with Secretary Duncan about the NCLB waiver request. We want standards, we want measurements, but two things are killing Vermont's education: students from poverty and English Language Learners are not being measured in their progression adequately. NCLB is not expected to be reauthorized with this Congress, so the NCLB waivers are being made available to states. He said in the next 20 days they will send a waiver request to Secretary Duncan. First is to ensure we are held to the 2009 levels for accountability determinations. Second, a standardized measurement system that better suits Vermont. We should be looking at the NECAP, a portfolio system, and some Capstone or other individual demonstration of achievement outside of standardized tests. He does not want to get rid of assessment system, just wants a system that better measures individual student progress in the classroom versus measuring students as a block.

He also noted he wants to help with affordability for education spending, and thinks that the answer lies in the number of superintendencies in the state. He would like to come together in January to work to find ways to allow communities to find efficiencies in the administrative sector of their schools. He noted school choice is an obstacle, but they could be grandfathered in, and consider an approach that applies public school choice to a broader sector of schools, and combine that with schools that specialize in specific sectors of learning. He wants to drive students to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. He also wants to support getting kids who excel college credit within high school experience. Finally, he believes that different students learn differently if we have a system that ensures learning styles are discovered early. He wants every student to learn to their potential. By 4th grade, every student should read by the fourth grade level. He wants to work on early childhood education and support preschool education. Also, by 8th grade he wants students to be introduced to career options with visiting examples, and what level of education needed to achieve those careers. By senior year every student should participate in an internship, a cooperative or community project. Wants to use the AmeriCorps model to match with Chamber of Commerce and other resources in every community. Some schools already do this and it should be statewide. He wants Vermont to be

the Education State – access for every student to get the opportunity to succeed and reach their potential.

Chair Miller noted that she is thrilled to hear what he has laid out because they are very much in line with what the Board wants to do and will be doing through its Strategic Plan. Individual learning, opportunities for all, these are current Board initiatives.

She noted that the term “consolidation” is less to do with cost, but more to do with educational opportunities for students. Some students do not have access to the same level of access as those in other areas, such as internships or higher level courses.

Morse further addressed consolidation related to the opportunities for students in the smallest districts. Governor Shumlin clarified he does not want consolidation at the state level. He thinks superintendencies are where the money lies. He noted that some small schools do a better job of reaching their students than the larger ones and those decisions are best made at the local level. He also advocates that superintendents should utilize technology to communicate with their boards instead of attending every meeting. Chair Miller noted the importance of developing a system to determine student progress.

Miller also noted the DOE is creating a teacher evaluation system. She noted she is encouraged by his comments which are in line with the work they are doing. The Governor asked the Board to work with them in the next three weeks to get an interim measurement system that will work for Vermont and a final system that will work with Vermont. Deputy Commissioner Knopf noted that she felt this was something the DOE is already working on and the staff is able to do this, and they have examined what other states have done.

Livingston noted the issue of school choice is perennial, and some schools are trying to survive with fewer students. She said statewide school choice might be a way to keep those schools alive. He supports public school choice, but has concerns about parochial or private school choice. He thinks we could achieve statewide public school choice and grandfather in those existing choice agreements that include private schools and academies. He noted the movement of students from Brattleboro HS and Leland & Gray because of the strength in Dance and China, respectively. He noted the idea of magnet schools could solve that.

Morse asked about the Governor’s position on moving the Department to an Agency, as well as the proposal created an advisory board with constituency membership. The Board’s current position is that if they Board is changed it should be abolished. Governor Shumlin noted that education is the most important part of his cabinet and he should decide who heads up that agency. He disagrees with the notion that it politicizes it, for example, he appoints the DMV and AHS heads. He wants the education department to be implementing the policies of the Governor. He asked the Board to consider what the role of the Board would be. Morse countered that if the Governor is to manage the DOE, what do you need an advisory board for? Miller noted that the Governor has to approve the appointment of the Commissioner and the Governor’s office participated in the search and interview process for the sitting Commissioner. Governor Shumlin noted that that doesn’t happen unless there is a commissioner vacancy. He noted that this is not about individuals.

Mathis expressed concern about the short turnaround and how the Board could provide input. Morse noted that the Board needed to do the best they could to meet the request of the Governor. Commissioner Vilaseca noted this would be a framework, as Secretary Duncan said he will not release the parameters until September. **Motion:** Morse moved, seconded by Oller, that the Department be instructed to work with the Governor's office to develop an accountability waiver request for submission to the USDOE. Mathis cautioned that there may be parameters by USDOE that are not in line with Board philosophy (such as test-based teacher evaluations). Motion passed by voice vote by 7-0.

Strano said that parents and students feel pressure to meet this focus on standards. Miller responded that perhaps some of this pressure may actually deter students from aspiring beyond high school. Oller noted that graduation requirements need to be examined. Commissioner Vilaseca noted that higher education also needed to be aligning admissions requirements. Discussion continued about high school experiences and aligning the work of the Board with the Governor, such as dual enrollment (high school students taking and receiving credit for college level courses), our small student to staff ratio, the economy and federal funding. Livingston noted the Next Generation legislation which did provide funding for technical education and internships, but that funding is expected to sunset. The Board asked for an update on that funding in September by Director John Fischer and Knopf.

Adjourn

Motion: Morse moved, seconded by Livingston, to adjourn the regular meeting and to move to the planning session. The motion passed by voice vote (7-0).

Item F: Continue Annual Planning Meeting

Facilitated by NASBE Assistant Executive Director Brad Hull, Board members and senior department staff continued the June 27-28 work session, focusing on building an annual operations plan specific to the Board.

Minutes recorded by Jill Remick
Minutes prepared by Carol King