

## Vermont State Board of Education Monthly Report – September 2011

### *From the Board*

**Fairfax/Fletcher RED Planning Committee Report Approved** - On Tuesday, September 20, the State Board of Education unanimously approved the Fairfax/Fletcher Regional Education District (RED) Planning Committee's Report. Approval of this report allows the two towns to move forward with a November 8 vote in the two communities on the merger of the town school districts into a regional education district (RED). RED Planning committee chair Betsy Lesnikowski reported that the formation of the Regional Education District would result in the elimination of the Fletcher and Fairfax School Districts and the Bellows Free Academy Union District and the formation of a single entity with one common board and district administration. The primary justification for this proposal is an improved educational experience for Fairfax and Fletcher students. Potential savings in administrative costs, more efficient distribution of students and more flexible use of staff are also anticipated. The Franklin West Supervisory Union currently consists of the Fletcher, Fairfax and Georgia School Districts and the Bellows Free Academy Union District. In addition, the Georgia School district provided a letter stating while it chose not to participate in the RED formation because **it would result in a loss of school choice for its students**, it does support the RED formation for Fairfax and Fletcher and that it wanted to remain as a member of the Franklin West SU. (See [http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/board/packet\\_archives/2011/09-20/EDU-SBE\\_Item\\_F\\_RED\\_Approval\\_September\\_20\\_2011.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/board/packet_archives/2011/09-20/EDU-SBE_Item_F_RED_Approval_September_20_2011.pdf))

**NCLB Accountability Flexibility** - Deputy Commissioner Rae Ann Knopf distributed a letter, sent late in the afternoon on Monday, September 19, from Governor Shumlin and Commissioner Vilaseca to Education Secretary Arne Duncan in response to Duncan's request for information from states on flexibility from the NCLB accountability requirements. The letter was drafted following an August 18

meeting with stakeholders, meetings with smaller groups of individuals and discussions with governor's office staff members Susan Bartlett and Alex Maclean. Guidance from USED on waiver requests is expected to be released September 26<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup>. Knopf reported that she and two DOE staff members will be attending a meeting in Washington, DC September 28 and 29 to learn more about next steps with respect to the formal submission of a request to waive NCLB requirements. She will report findings upon return from that meeting.

**Strategic Plan Implementation: HS Transformation** – Rae Ann Knopf, John Fischer and Tom Alderman updated the Board regarding key secondary/post-secondary work in progress in relation to the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan. Specifically they addressed secondary and adult learning initiatives underway as defined in Goal 1, Education Leadership; Goal III, Instructional Practices and Learning Environments; Goal IV, PK-16 Partnerships; and Goal V, Policy and Governance, including work with the NESSC and League of Innovative Schools, the PreK-16 Council, Vermont post-secondary institutions and implementation of Act 144 (high school completion). Topics brought up by Board members included dual enrollment, flexible (and multiple) pathways and personal learning plans, the need for sustainable funding for dual enrollment, online learning and like initiatives. See [http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/board/packet\\_archives/2011/09-20/EDU-SBE\\_Item\\_H\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_Implementation\\_September\\_20\\_2011.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/board/packet_archives/2011/09-20/EDU-SBE_Item_H_Strategic_Plan_Implementation_September_20_2011.pdf)

### *From the Commissioner*

**Student Attendance Day Waiver Guidance for Schools Affected by Hurricane Irene:** The Commissioner and the State Board of Education urge all schools whose school year starting dates were affected by Hurricane Irene damage

to review their 2011-2012 school calendars as soon as possible in order to explore all reasonably available opportunities to re-schedule the days that were lost at the beginning of the school year. With winter fast approaching, and with no idea of how many (if any) snow days will be needed, it is too early in the school year for schools to be requesting waivers of the 175-day student attendance days. Waiver requests will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis after February 1, 2012, and careful consideration will be given to whether the affected schools acted diligently, and in a timely manner, in attempting to make up the missed days. In the cases of those schools affected by the hurricane, the requirement that waiver requests be submitted within 10 days of the incident will be waived. See SBE Rule 2300. Questions? Contact Carol King ([Carol.c.King@state.vt.us](mailto:Carol.c.King@state.vt.us); 828-5101)

**To view State Board of Education’s Monthly Reports:**  
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#monthly-reports>

**2011-2012 State Board of Education Meeting Dates:** October 18; November 15; December 20; January 17; February 21; March 20; April 17; May 15; June 19

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**NECAP Testing Window** - This fall’s NECAP testing window has been extended by one week - to November 1, 2011 - ***for schools whose starting date was affected by Hurricane Irene.*** The required assessments for this school year have been waived for one school. For more information on this process, contact Michael Hock ([Michael.Hock@state.vt.us](mailto:Michael.Hock@state.vt.us); (802) 828-3115).

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**For additional information on upcoming Department of Education sponsored events for Fall 2010,** visit <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/calendar.html>. The calendar is updated regularly.

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**For more information on the Vermont State Board of Education,** visit: <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/mainboard.html>.

**To view approved minutes of SBE meetings:** <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#approved>.