

## State Board of Education

### Draft Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Place: Virtual Teams Meeting/Video/Teleconference**

**Call in #: 1-802-552-8456, Conference ID: 541 619 389#**

**Date: June 17, 2020**

#### **Present:**

**State Board Members (Board):** John Carroll, Chair; Jenna O'Farrell, Vice Chair; Peter Peltz, William Mathis, Kim Gleason, Sabina Brochu, Kathy Lavoie, Oliver Olsen, Dan French.

**Agency of Education (AOE):** Deborah Ormsbee, Suzanne Sprague, Maureen Gaidys.

**Others:** Allison Eastman, Bob Almeida, Wayne Gersen, Erika Christakis, Jeff Renard, Joan Cavallo, Jennifer Botzjorns, Amanda Garces, Mark Hage.

#### **Item A: Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions/Amendments to Agenda**

Chair Carroll called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. There was discussion on Brochu becoming a voting member in Courtois' absence. It was decided that Brochu would become a voting member effective July 1, 2020, when Courtois' term officially expired. Chair Carroll asked if there were amendments to the agenda. Olsen asked to have the Driver Education (DE) topic under Item F open to a vote even though it was listed as discussion. The Chair concurred.

#### **Item B: Consent Agenda/Board Announcements/Student Report**

##### Consent Agenda:

Gleason moved to approve the consent agenda; O'Farrell seconded. There was no discussion. The Chair called a roll call vote. The motion passed with Gleason, Lavoie, Mathis, O'Farrell, Olsen and Peltz voting in favor. The consent agenda consisted of the approval of the meeting minutes from the May 20, 2020 meeting.

##### Board Announcements:

Mathis shared that he spoke to the Tax Commission last week and it was good timing. Gleason expressed gratitude for how all schools celebrated graduation – students, administrators, parents, families and communities for being so creative and dedicated to honoring these graduates and making this milestone special. Peltz advised of a bill that would raise over \$6 million for installing proper ventilation systems in schools before reopening this fall. He added

that there was strong support and tight timeline. O'Farrell spoke about schools receiving funds to feed students through the summer.

#### Student Report:

Brochu spoke about working with Gleason to create a statewide student body where student leaders could access each other. This could prove beneficial and would assist Brochu in using this student body for information and allow for a more professional and comprehensive student report. With no July meeting scheduled, it will be the perfect time to work on this. Chair Carroll thanked Gleason and Brochu for their initiative. Additionally, he suggested reaching out to Jay Nichols, Vermont Principals' Association (VPA) or Sue Ceglowski, Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA). Brochu spoke about a [very inspirational speech given by Christel Tonoki, at Champlain Valley Union High School \(CVUHS\) graduation](#) that addressed racism and equality and was very powerful. She will forward this link to Board members.

#### **Item C: Public to be Heard**

Chair Carroll asked if there were members of the public to be heard.

Allison Eastman, Orwell: She's a mother of twin boys, who wanted to share her reality. They both have completed 4 of their 6 hours of in-car driving instruction and are not able to finish the course. Yankee Driving School in Rutland has a waiting list of 250 students. This becomes an equity issue; students are losing out. She asked the Board to address this incrementally. She expressed appreciation for the work of the AOE and Vermont Driver and Traffic Safety Educator Association (VDTSEA) but said that her children could drive a dump truck, a boat, and an ATV, but cannot get a driver's license. She asked the Board to deliberate and consider those who have completed some portion of the in-car instruction requirement. She continued that it is a social issue and said she has been told that it could be another year before their hours are completed which means her twins will be nearly 18 years old before they can drive to school together.

Bob Almeida, Orwell: Father whose daughter took DE first semester and is now a new driver, but he concurs with Eastman that there is an equity issue. It is important to appreciate the safety issues, but many of these kids have completed the classroom instruction and are prepared and should not have to wait another year. He asked the Board to put themselves in the young drivers' situation and think about the parents in rural communities and consider waiving some of the required in-car instruction hours.

#### **Item D: Board Statement on Equity and Racism**

Chair Carroll asked Gleason or Mathis to read their statement. Gleason read the [Board's statement on equity and racism](#). Mathis moved adoption of this statement and distribution to media and schools; Olsen seconded. There was discussion on adding socio-economic status, gender identity or expression, national origin, disability and color to the second paragraph. Mathis accepted this as a friendly amendment. There was continued discussion on citing the killing of Floyd as a single event and amending it in some way to be more expansive to reflect systemic issues. It was decided that this item would be held and revisited after lunch so that edits could be incorporated.

## Item E: Secretary's Report

Chair Carroll invited Secretary French to address the Board. Secretary French said he expected to be present most of the day, but that he needed to step out for Governor's press conference at 11:00 a.m. He spoke about the COVID-19 response – and explained that the cornerstone of the AOE's work has been around reopening schools in the fall. AOE is working with the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) to create public health guidance to support this work. He expects it to be published June 17 or early June 18. Districts will then embark on a planning process to reopen schools for in-person instruction with the expectation that schools will need to maintain the ability to provide remote learning. There is a lot of work to do to improve remote learning and to expand districts' capacity to use in-person instruction, remote learning or a hybrid approach. Once this guidance is published, there will be financial needs to implement the guidance. School nurses and their needs for space to separate afflicted/symptomatic students, will need to be addressed by most districts. Another financial priority is continuing to feed students through the summer. Food programs have been operating since the state of emergency was declared and these districts are now running out of resources. He asked for questions. There were none.

## Item F: AOE Updates

### Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) 2019 Results

SBAC results were released June 15 as part of the Annual Snapshot rollout. Results point to a trend like that of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) - with some students doing ok and other more marginalized groups continuing to decline. Chair Carroll asked what has changed to make the reports finally available. Secretary French explained that the AOE's ability to report is based on collecting information from districts. AOE has launched a new data collection system and this past summer was the second year of using this system. Districts were required to report by July. Burlington School District didn't report until December. Data quality review was delayed until then and that process typically takes three months. The AOE was in a good place prior to COVID-19, but this caused additional delays. Secretary French continued that the Annual Snapshot was also released and that some reporting protocols had many new domains that needed to be provisioned, so that involved extensive work.

There were questions/discussion on proficiency scores in math vs. English Language Arts (ELA), national trends of students scoring lower in math, knowing why proficiency levels vary, cross-sectional or longitudinal data, data for two different groups of students, not tracking individual student performance but curriculum, suppression of data, math curriculum includes literacy components, comprehension of ELA vs. math in the general public, data available is not instructive, national data shows Vermont's service to the disadvantaged is comparatively poor and the need to understand this, needing data to show the distribution of proficiency better/differently, teachers and administrators having more granular specifics on data, important to acknowledge a political misuse of data (all schools previously labeled as failing under No Child Left Behind (NCLB)), SBAC also provides interim assessment for teachers to gain feedback on instruction, empowering school boards to use this data in decision making for organizational improvement, 18-month old data doesn't tell enough, expected turnaround of results for next year, using town hall-style meetings with district data administrators statewide,

that AOE has a Request for Information (RFI) for a statewide Student Information System (SIS) to solve issues of vertical reporting, back end is an important piece of the bottleneck, AOE is working on issues of cascading suppression effect, [VT Education Dashboard](#) shows more granular data, and that AOE has more work to do from a communications standpoint to see what data would be more useful.

### Drivers Education Waiver

Chair Carroll asked for a status update and Secretary French summarized that the waiver request was withdrawn. Olsen asked why the request was withdrawn. Secretary French said the waiver was requested two months ago and it was a live issue then. At that time, the Board didn't hear from all involved parties and decided to table the request. The direction given was to go forth and collaborate. That was done with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and that has been very labor intensive as it is a complex regulatory area. A second waiver request was produced internally with a narrow focus on seniors and when this was presented to Chair Carroll, Secretary French said there was still more work and more collaboration needed. Subsequently, there was more reopening, DMV is now testing and there are other provisions to expand testing capabilities and use private providers. As revisited, Secretary French said the teachers don't see a waiver as necessary now since systems are coming back on. He continued that he has heard from parents. VPA is opposed to a waiver request, Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA) is supportive. Secretary French said he decided to withdraw his request because as systems come back online, the problem could be resolved without a waiver.

There was discussion on capacity restraints and granting AOE limited authority or flexibility. Chair Carroll clarified that since the waiver request was withdrawn and this was only warned as a discussion item, that no action on this would be taken at this meeting. He said this issue can be brought back later with appropriate preparation. There was discussion on guidance being unclear about having two people in a car, needing a video in the car, expense to districts, capacity extended by the DMV for driver educators to offer driver's tests, transportation to jobs, and that backlog is a significant concern.

Chair Carroll called a 5-minute recess at 10:25 a.m. Chair called reconvened at 10:32 a.m.

### Status of Independent School Renewals

This item was not addressed as presenters (Item G) were waiting.

## **Item G: Presentations and Conversation - "Lessons Learned – Navigating to the New Normal"**

Chair Carroll introduced the presenters: Wayne Gersen, Erika Christakis, Jeff Renard, Joan Cavallo, and Jennifer Botzjorns. He said he would start with Cavallo and end with Botzjorns.

Joan Cavallo, principal, St. Albans City School, introduced herself and said she would speak to [her summary of thoughts on lessons learned from COVID-19 and navigating to the 'New Normal.'](#) She has been so impressed with how fast remote learning has moved and how well it has been handled. She says everyone has learned a lot and stayed positive and that everyone will be more organized by fall and have some boundaries so that there will be personal time.

Her teachers have a system that was designed around collaboration and it needs to be consistent for parents as they are asked to step into the role of educator. This was done well in the last three months and will be done much better in the fall. Presently, during in-service, they are working to find a way to do more synchronized work. There is a need to communicate more around family engagement. Her district swapped out typical conference days for in-service days as parents were more involved than ever though the pandemic. Parents have a better understanding of their kids learning now. Her school is a high-poverty school and participates in the [Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\)](#). The first thing they did was use busses to distribute food. Summer feeding always drops off because of lack of flexibility; eliminating these federal regulations has helped to keep hungry kids fed. This summer they will have a mobile site, a food hotspot. What has worked best is that when all else fails, teachers went to students; every single student has been seen by an educator during this remote learning period. Remote learning has worked well for some kids, it has taken away the anxiety associated with traditional school. Remote learning only environment would be appropriate for some. Kids should not be afraid to come to school, and they can be served remotely.

Cavallo spoke about some of the challenges: equity issues were magnified, food insecurities, not being in a room together and feeling connected and hearing from 8<sup>th</sup> graders that they missed their connection with others. It was clear that teachers and students really need each other; they maintained contact with respect to social distancing and it worked well. Teachers with their own children at home were very torn and this was a challenge. Designing next year for remote learning, will make in-person teaching a pleasure. The plan is to train parents up front as partners. She will continue to teach students to be independent and keep families engaged.

Wayne Gersen, former superintendent of the Dresden School District, introduced himself and expressed appreciation for the opportunity. He said his presentation will speak about his new model, [Network Schools](#) and offer some underlying premises and assumptions, a description of the model, why this might be an opportune time, and will close with a question for the Board to consider. Our current education model was designed in the 1920s; reopening schools presents an opportunity to do things differently. Operational premises: social distancing will be in place, some facilities will need upgrades, more access to school nurses, changes in scheduled and transportation, and money will be scarce. Educational assumptions: Act 77 defines the direction for Vermont and needs to be supported, and since this assumed that learning was constant and time was variable it made sense to move from to age-based to non-graded schools, the fixed calendar could disappear as the notion of time constraints was vanishing as a by-product. Online will continue in some shape or form and it might make sense to house younger students all day and offer flexible schedules to older students. Schools will need to provide laptops; homes would need stable internet and teachers will need additional training in distance learning. Learning gaps and mental health issues will need to be addressed. Schools are networked with parents and horizontally with other community resources. There will be a need for more before and after school childcare with the reopening of the economy. Schools might need to serve that function in some places and might need to provide more social/emotional resources as well. Schools might want to link with libraries, museums, police departments, etc. It would also be helpful for agencies to share their data to help support students and families. Schools need to be linked on a personal level and need an adult who serves students as a mentor/life coach. It is important to make connections with learning partners in the community. A networked model also needs political links, such as formal Memorandums of Understanding



(MOUs) with VDH, Department of Children and Families (DCF), police, etc. and articulation agreements with post-secondary institutions. Towns would determine the scope of services in each school. He spoke about the tiers in his statement paper and detailed how they would work. He acknowledged that some of these shifts seem daunting. Before schools reopen, the Vermont Department of Health must be consulted, and there will be a need to increase individual instruction due to learning gaps. There must be a way to support working parents (teachers included) and roles and responsibilities of most school employees should be refined, employee groups should meet to discuss the issues and the collapsing revenue stream and increase communication with parents. Act 77 moved away from the factory model, but the underlying structure still exists. The network school model would replace this old framework with a new one as anticipated in Act 77.

Gersen's closing question for the Board: If you could start from ground zero to create a model for public education that would support the goals of Act 77, would that group students in age cohorts, evaluate students based on speed of curriculum, limit hours, close school completely in the summer, limit the mission of the school to education in curricular areas or broaden it? He encouraged the Board to think from ground zero to replace the 1920s model for education.

Erika Christakis, an early childhood educator, preschool teacher and center director, educational consultant; college instructor, introduced herself. She concurred almost 100% with those who presented ahead of her and said [her presentation](#) would focus on issues not yet mentioned. She said it is important to recognize that this pandemic has somewhat amplified pressures that already existed and have been growing on small children. Childhood is in some ways imperiled and mental health is challenged. Mental health and behavioral problems are amplified by the pandemic. One example is the effect of screen time, and the notion that the needs of young children are often out of sync with older children. Older children did better, but synchronous learning is sub-par; young children need to physically move bodies and interact physically with others. Young children learn to speak, listen, read and communicate through observation and play. Teachers wearing masks will affect how young children learn (expressions, forming words and sounds). We need to think about the developmental issues of young kids when they return to school and the impact of these developmental challenges. Christakis spoke about the results of a study of a state funded pre-kindergarten (PreK) program in Tennessee. The cohort did well in kindergarten, but by 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade lagged. The point/theory was that PreK is very emotionally draining and young students are burnt out by 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. In some ways, early childhood is in peril. There are studies that show changes in children's resilience over the years and the lack of face-to-face communication contributes to that. We need personal interaction. Biologically, childhood has not changed, but contextually it has changed dramatically. Some kids have taken well to this and some have been quite challenged. There are unique challenges in each age group and the developmental perspective should not be limited to only younger kids. The 1920 agrarian style of learning is not developmentally firm. Communication and empowering of families are important. This is a shift that can be difficult for educators, but in these new times, we need to think more flexibly about the locus of learning. Along with prioritizing the needs of young kids, we really need to focus on children with special needs. The reality is that we need to become flexible thinkers with learning goals and academic objectives. The most important thing we can do is foster a shared mission, trust and respect. Above all, being honest about what is known and not known

is important and requires some shifts. She hopes that we can rise to the challenge of meeting the developmental needs of kids.

Jeff Renard introduced himself. He thanked the Board and acknowledged the wisdom of previous presenters. He gave some background on his experience which started in Career Technical Education (CTE). He spoke about non-verbal students, students with social anxiety, and individualized options offered to students. Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC) started with a Title IID grant in 2009, which allowed for training 14 teachers in collaboration with Marlboro College Graduate School. Those original teachers felt so strongly that the methodology was so different that VTVLC worked with AOE to create an on-line teaching specialist (OTS) endorsement. As a response to there being no training available on this, VTVLC created the Northeast Online Teaching Institute in collaboration with Castleton University. It is a very substantial undertaking and it takes about 8 months for a seasoned educator to complete. VTVLC was created to offer greater availability of courses, increased accessibility of offerings (scheduling conflicts) and personal approach/accommodation (flexibility for learning). A learning ecosystem provides a broad array of data to inform teaching and allows support of students on an individual level. VTVLC teaching partners facilitate at least one class and in exchange their school gets an allotment (50) of spaces in the program. VTVLC serves about 1,000 students; some are full-time, and some take only one course. Most offerings align with a traditional school schedule; they also allow flexible programs which include on-demand courses (can enroll on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of any month) and can accelerate or slow the pace up to six months. They provide year-round offerings and now offer PASS (personalized assessment of student standards), an on-demand class that is totally self-designed. VTVLC works with public schools, independent schools, homestudy students, CTE students, and adult learners. They rely on school counselors and educators for identifying student needs and support.

VTVLC knew that teachers were going to need a lot of support and they worked with AOE to create an online mini course of transitioning from school to home-based teaching and setting parameters/boundaries. They have had over 1,800 educators complete that workshop and content is reviewed daily. The Northeast Online Teaching Institute offers trainings on remote assessment, modifying student accommodations, and best practices about academic integrity and set them up to be accessed by educators either asynchronously (700 educators have completed this) or through a facilitated program.

Concerns: additional supports needed for teachers, teachers will need to work with fluid parameters and combine strategies, the online teacher needs a well-versed understanding of methodologies and how to leverage technology; that is a huge undertaking. These courses typically involve an entire development team; here we have teachers curating content and this is huge expectation of educators. We need greater statewide broadband, teacher training/coaching, more OTS endorsements, increased choices, and preparation for next year is exponential. Renard quoted from a study from the [National Coalition for Public School Options](#): 72% of parents believe COVID-19 will close schools in fall/winter, 70% are concerned sending their kids back to school, 59% feel their child is at risk of contracting COVID-19, and 43% are willing to switch to full-time online school.

Jennifer Botzojorns, Kingdom East School District (KESD) superintendent, thanked the Board, introduced herself and gave background on her district. She said her themes of equity and

community are layered in the comments among the divided categories (students, faculty/staff, parents, school leaders, and general community). Students: are resilient and several students struggled in the classroom and ended up teaching other students online and assisting their teachers with technology. She spoke about the challenges of videoconferencing in different age groups (younger kids get right up in the camera and older students turn it off). That coupled with broadband issues create challenges. It is important to have a routine and keep a connection. Her district deployed electronic devices to all children through 8<sup>th</sup> grade; 30% of kids had really poor internet access. She asked 7<sup>th</sup> graders to present to the school board on their experience with remote learning and wanted to share a link to that presentation, but there were technical difficulties. One of the 7<sup>th</sup> graders (Vincent) surveyed students and shared those results with the KESD board. Challenges were mostly technological, and lack of human contact and benefits were flexibility and increased independence. Parents were surveyed and reported about 1/3 were doing great, about half said they were doing ok and 25% were really struggling. There was a lot of good information collected in this survey and many modifications resulted from it. Staff/Faculty: She said many teachers were teaching and connecting in parking lots. There was a map of telecommunications for faculty and staff and learned that 65 hot spots were needed but only two had cell service; equity was a significant concern. Vincent surveyed 220 6-8 graders and got 70 responses. About 1/3 said they learned more during the pandemic, but they had internet access. Botzojorns spoke about the distribution of free flip phones with prepaid minutes to address equity issues. Her staff has rallied; the hardest for many was the children with whom they could not connect and knowing and worrying about that. This caused a lot of anxiety for the adults. KESD worked hard on making connections vs. focusing on data and performance. Community: KESD served 1,500 meals daily via school busses; this provided additional connections. Met regularly with a regional team (social services, emergency management, hospitals, etc.) to assess what was needed. A homeless shelter was set up at an empty Lyndon Institute dorm; there were high needs and people responded. A number of parents could not assist with the remote learning, it was too much. One message emphasized through all this was not to panic - children are learning, maybe not what is in the textbook, or what was intended, but they are learning important stuff and coming out of this we need to understand that they are experiencing valuable learning.

Chair Carroll thanked the presenters and acknowledged how important it was to hear from folks who are typically in the schools and close to the new remote learning situation. He asked for comments and questions. There were questions/comments on keeping community, maintaining relationships and engagement, being thoughtful about internet access and lack thereof, network model and practical issues associated with this, disengagement of students, opportunity for individualization, importance of how topics are introduced to students, deeper connections with families, schools accounting for only about 10% of learning, support of families and their partnerships, supplementing the needs of families, schools and social services, asking too much of schools/educators, and what schools delivered in 1950 vs. today.

Chair Carroll thanked the presenters and challenged Board members with next steps. He acknowledged the granularity, the forward thinking, and thanked the presenters for an inspiring and provocative discussion.

Chair Carroll adjourned for lunch to reconvene just before 1:00 p.m. Chair Carroll reconvened at 1:05 p.m.



Chair Carroll moved to the Status of Independent School (IS) Renewals (part of Item F) and asked if Deborah Ormsbee, AOE was available. Ormsbee spoke about the summary report provided and that AOE was tasked with improving the IS approvals and reporting process and that has been completed. Chair Carroll clarified that he wanted to know how many IS are in the queue for renewal for the next 6-12 months. Ormsbee said prior to COVID-19 there were 6 site reviews (4 renewals, 2 initial approvals) and 17 other sites scheduled that had to be postponed. The IS team is looking to incorporate the remaining FY20 site visits with FY21 site visits; this is dependent on protocols from the Governor's Office and the decision of AOE leadership team. Chair Carroll spoke about wanting a list of schools, expiration date and when the report and recommendation is expected to be completed. Chair Carroll asked how many IS are operating outside of their approval period; Ormsbee said none. She cited State Board Rule 2222.5 and added that approval of a school completing a timely application acts as a place keeper and they are not considered expired until the intervening crisis is resolved, thus all schools are considered in good standing. Chair Carroll asked for status listing of IS whose expiration dates have passed or are expected to pass in the next 12 months. Gleason asked if Carroll was looking for something different than the report titled, "Independent School Program Approvals & Renewals Summary Report, FY20." Chair Carroll was not in receipt of the report provided by Ormsbee. Gleason asked if there were a listing of how many IS renewals would expire January 2021. Ormsbee will consult with the fiscal division and provide a list of any expirations in 2020. Mathis asked if there would be a time lag in getting this. Ormsbee said she would likely have it by June 18, 2020 and would have an addendum to the Board by that same date. Gleason suggested a checklist/template of what the site visits cover to aid in the Board's approval and perhaps be considered as part of the Consent agenda.

Chair Carroll asked if the Board was ready to revisit the Board statement on racism and equity. Gleason read the revised statement and noted changes. There was discussion on socioeconomic status, historically disadvantaged, other language, systemic racism, a vision for education and avoiding controversy. There was consensus to remove the first edit, accept the second and third edit and make an adjustment to the beginning of the third paragraph. Mathis' motion included requesting the AOE to distribute the [Board's statement on equity and racism](#) to schools, school boards and to the media. The Chair called the vote; the vote passed unanimously.

## **Item H: Chair's Report**

S.166 – Senate passed this legislation reforming some of the scope of the Board's authority and this bill has moved to the House Education committee and no action has been taken to date. The House Education Chair would like to see legislation passed, but there are other priorities. Chair Carroll asked if Secretary French had anything to add. Secretary French said most of legislative testimony had been on the financial aspects of responding to the state of emergency.

S.343 – Passed by both House and Senate; waiting to receive word from AOE (Cutler or Simmons) that it has been signed by the Governor. Once signed, Chair Carroll will distribute to stakeholders for feedback on how to best use the extended public comment period. S.343 also changes the schedule for implementation of IS rules. Once the Governor has signed this, we should ask AOE for a proposed schedule for IS rules. A firm calendar will be needed by late summer, as it is anticipated to be an arduous process.

The Mill School (TMS) – In November TMS requested that the Board hear its appeal for rate setting for special education services. The Board agreed to take on the appeal. AOE and TMS wanted to continue discussion and negotiations, which they did to no satisfactory avail. TMS wishes to proceed with an appeal. Independent counsel, George Belcher, was retained since AOE counsel cannot represent the Board. Belcher has provided a letter dated June 5 detailing three options: 1) entire Board can conduct a full hearing, 2) appoint a subcommittee of the Board with Belcher as a hearing officer and present a recommendation to the full Board to vote on, and 3) have Belcher conduct the hearing on behalf of the Board and make recommendation to the Board. He asked for input from the Board. There was discussion on other agencies using the third option and the third option adding the appropriate level of seriousness. Chair Carroll will convey the decision to use the third option to Belcher, to have him serve as hearing officer.

### **Item J: Future meetings, convenings, topics**

Chair Carroll confirmed that there is no meeting in July and that the annual retreat is scheduled for August and then normal monthly meetings resume starting in September, ideally in various locations around the state. He spoke to the positive morning conversation, the role of the Board, and sharing information with appropriate parties. There was discussion on the best decision to make as a state and a parent, sharing it with caution, being clear that the Board is not making a recommendation, producing a product from these presentations, identifying three or four themes and describing what was heard, two page piece that would summarize and quote from comments, distributing via VTDigger, keeping it concise, having a short broad-based statement and link to position papers, miraculous fact that the entire system changed over the course of a weekend, Continuity of Learning Task Force (AOE and VT education partners), survey with Comprehensive Center being considered, importance of having an avenue for capturing successes and what might be helpful moving forward, using what was heard today to think about the new normal.

Chair Carroll said we would revisit this after item K.

### **Item K: The Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group (Working Group)**

Chair Carroll introduced Amanda Garces, Chair and Mark Hage, Vice Chair of the Working Group. This group will make recommendations to the Board and the General Assembly about changes in rules or guidelines. Garces, Director of Policy, Education and Outreach, Human Rights Commission, thanked the Board. Hage introduced himself – he resides in Montpelier and works with the Vermont Education Association (VT-NEA). Garces spoke about [Act 1 of 2019](#) being signed in January 2019 and that it took about 8 months to convene their first meeting. The group consists of 20 members and she detailed its composition. The charge is to look at educational standards (not curriculum), State Board rules and school board policies for inclusion of represented communities. The Working Group is an amazing team and they just submitted their work plan to the General Assembly. They subdivided into four workgroups; the standards committee has already started meeting. Other committees will work with community members and look at Board rules and seek recommendations for state polices attached to these standards. They are excited to do this work and are hoping to collaborate with the Board and have open engagement.

Hage reiterated that the Working Group's mandate is broad and exciting. Subcommittees are state education standards, VT education statutes, State Board rules, and public engagement to ensure responsiveness to short- and long-term needs. Their emphasis will be on a democratic, de-centralized process. The first report is due December 2020, and this will focus on recommended statutory changes consistent with Act 1 and findings from their review of Board rules and school board policies. A report will be due to the Board no later than June 2021 and this will focus on standards of performance and recommend updated and additional standards that recognize in statute the contributions and history of ethnic and social groups. The hope is that by this summer, the standards committee will have recommendations for the larger Working Group. The final report is due June 30, 2022 to the General Assembly with further recommended statutory changes and maybe other findings on Board/school district rules and training and appropriations recommendations. There were questions/discussion on interim process for schools/districts, heightened awareness for need for reform, four study groups, and the difference in process for Board adoption of standards vs. rules. Chair Carroll thanked Garces and Hage and invited them back for an update any time. Garces offered for any questions or feedback (from districts or otherwise) to be directed to her.

### **Item L: Other Business**

Chair Carroll circled back to next steps for follow-up on the presentations. He said one person could write a summary or he recommended that each Board member offer themes/comments that resonated individually and see what is produced. Olsen offered that email communication could be a collection but warned against using "reply all" and expressed concern about doing the work outside a publicly warned meeting. There was discussion on having a special meeting to address this before August, addressing the driver education issue at the same time, that August was too late for a driver education waiver, and confusion on how to proceed with a waiver that has been withdrawn by AOE. Secretary French said DMV and ACCD had confirmed that up to three people can be in the car and that communication was sent to the field earlier today. He added that the Board can waive its own rule without a recommendation from the Secretary. There was discussion on withdrawing or supporting a waiver and resolving the issue through public health guidance. Secretary French said he would have supported a waiver two months ago, when it was initially requested and he is supportive of a waiver today, especially with the public health conditions continuing to improve. Chair Carroll said the waiver was on the table and an SBE member needs only to take the motion off the table to put it back on the agenda. Mathis asked if this was a debatable motion. Chair Carroll warned that this issue would be very contentious and would take hours of conversation. There was discussion on acting sooner rather than later, communicating with school districts, a waiver that allows for the hours to be made up next school year, inconvenience is not universal, and uneasiness with saying this requirement is not necessary. Chair Carroll said if it came to a tie vote, he would vote in opposition. Discussion continued on the impact on equity, waiving up to 2 hours, parental sign-off, and the reality of paying driver educators outside the contract year. Chair Carroll said this could be added to an upcoming agenda if needed but that he wasn't going to spend any more time on this topic today.

Chair Carroll asked the Board if they were interested in hearing from parents about remote learning. He discussed visibility, participation, and convening times (suggested: two, 2-hour meetings with varied availability - Saturdays, lunchtime, evenings). There was discussion on

waiting for parental input before summarizing the presentations, two separate summaries, attendance of members, AOE support, parental perspective, promotion, diverse recruitment strategies, timing around summer vacation, apprehension around timing if there was another COVID-19 outbreak, desire to avoid a grousing session, that today's presentations were positive, parents represent classrooms not districts, disparities across the state, breadth and depth of parental engagement, 50 participants would be needed to be useful, virtual option might result in increased participation.

Chair Carroll said the topic would remain pending but encouraged members to reach out to him with any ideas, inspiration, etc. as he would like to send something to the Governor. He said there are different realities and these thoughts are worth communicating.

**Adjourn:**

Chair Carroll thanked the State Board members and adjourned the meeting at 3:13 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Maureen Gaidys.