

June 27, 2018

- Strategic Goals: (1) Ensure that Vermont's public education system operates within the framework of high expectations for every learner and ensure that there is equity in opportunity for all.*
- (2) Ensure that the public education system is stable, efficient, and responsive to changes and ever-changing population needs, economic and 21st century issues.*

Draft Minutes – Retreat Day 1

Present:

State Board of Education (SBE): Krista Huling, Chair; William Mathis, Vice Chair; Stacy Weinberger, Mark Perrin; Peter Peltz; John O'Keefe; Callahan Beck; John Carroll; Heather Bouchey; and Oliver Olsen (via phone).

Agency of Education (AOE): Haley Jones, Molly Bachman, Amy Fowler, Donna Russo-Savage, Emily Simmons, Maureen Gaidys.

Others: Jeff Francis, VSA; Ben Chiappinelli, Franklin West Supervisory Union; Nicole Mace, VT School Boards Association.

Chair Huling opened the retreat at 2:25 p.m.

Item A: State Plan – Review and analyze more in-depth overview of traditional UHSDs, MUUSDs and NMEDs and USDs with unlike members.

Donna Russo-Savage shared her Power Point presentation with the group. Chair Huling reminded the group that there were 43 decision points to decide on and that this could become very time consuming. She asked that when the Board breaks into smaller groups that they think about what and where they need more information. There was discussion on hearing from merged districts, criticism for not hearing about what worked, situations where orders are issued but are contingent on the town's decisions, special circumstances, and limits of authority.

The Board divided into their respective regions –northern, central and southern. Russo-Savage explained that the purpose of these working sessions was to decide which need to be heard from and for which you have enough information.

Item B: State Plan – Continue discussion of State Plan in Regional

The regional groups regrouped at 3:58 p.m. Huling asked for what information was needed and stated that they did not need another presentation of their Act 49 report.

Information suggested:

- What are you most proud of and how could you bring that to other schools?
- Is there anything that you want to emulate or admire?
- What is your biggest fear?
- What would be a good aspect and a negative impact of a merger? Would invite the SU Board and ask if they did an opportunity audit of items listed in EQS.

The north group saw this as an adjudication and anticipated what they did not want to hear:

- Tell us why school A is better than School B? Because our mission is to ensure all students get the better school.
- We are special.
- What in Act 46 supports the Board not accepting the Secretary's State Plan?
- Why is it impossible and why is it impractical?

Chair Huling reiterated that the questions need to be clear, so that the Board can be efficient because there will not be time to run over on these discussions. She encouraged the Board to think about how much time and the questions that they wanted to have answered.

Carroll suggested that by default, they start with accepting the Secretary's recommendation unless they can persuade otherwise and force them to explain why it is not possible or practical.

There was discussion on being consistent, making exceptions, using the same questions for each region, chart of Board vs. town vote to see difference between system leadership and the town, evolution of leadership, being specific about who has the authority to speak, focusing on positive questions, limiting and focusing the content, not spending the whole day hearing cases, dividing the groups and hearing testimony all day and reporting back, that testimony states they "may hear testimony," a different kind of mechanism, being upfront about where the Board stands, risk that any public proceeding will be a hearing and that anyone who wants to speak will get to do so, that busses of attendees will be coming, urgent need to manage expectations, need for crowd control, various options for limiting time and public participation was offered, publishing the rules for this ahead of time, having the Board break into smaller groups to hear assigned testimony separately (so that more time can be given), who are we communicating with in the communities, the impossible task of limiting content of public comments, fire codes that need to be adhered to, and the ability vs. requirement to take testimony.

Russo-Savage committed to coming up with a list of what needs to be considered in the next two or three meetings and what groups might be coming to these meetings. Russo-Savage will group these differently for tomorrow so that the Board can better work through them. Chair Huling asked Board members to think about the structure of these meetings - what is required, what is tangible and how that all might be put together because we cannot give every proposal an hour of time/testimony. Additionally, there might be a need to make some decisions on who to take testimony from, as some are complicated.

Chair Huling introduced guests from National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) – Kristen Amundson, President, and Robert Hull, Vice President, who would join the second day of the Board retreat.

Chair Huling adjourned Day 1 of the retreat at 4:50 p.m. Carroll reminded the Board that no Board business should be conducted with this group until the group reconvenes tomorrow.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Maureen Gaidys.
