

State Board of Education

Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Place: Virtual Teams Meeting/Video/Teleconference
Barre City Place, Room 435, 219 North Main Street, Barre, VT 05641
Call in #: 1-802-552-8456, Conference ID: 812 652 701#
Date: August 18, 2021

Present:

State Board Members (SBE): Oliver Olsen, Chair; Jennifer Samuelson, Vice-Chair; Kim Gleason; Jenna O'Farrell; Angelita Peña; Tom Lovett; Lyle Jepson; Patrick Brown; Gabrielle Lucci; and, Daniel French.

Agency of Education (AOE): Emily Simmons, Maureen Gaidys, Suzanne Sprague.

Others: Mark Oettinger, Esq., Montroll, Backus & Oettinger, P.C.

Item A: Call to Order/Roll Call/Amendments to the Agenda

Chair Olsen called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. There were no amendments to the agenda.

Item B: Welcome New Board Members

Chair Olsen welcomed new Board member Patrick Brown. He was read the Oath of Office and Affirmation of Allegiance. Chair Olsen welcomed new student Board member Gabrielle Lucci.

Item C: Public to Be Heard

None

Item D: Consent Agenda

Jepson moved to approve the consent agenda which consisted of the meeting minutes from July 21, 2021 and the closure of the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (ACPHS). Samuelson seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The vote passed.

Item E: Board Announcements

O'Farrell spoke about the student-led Vermont Listen Up Project.

Chair Olsen said that Secretary French advised him that due to increased commitments on AOE staff, all subcommittees will be required to take their own meeting minutes. AOE will continue to provide administrative support including scheduling meetings, warning meetings and posting meeting materials to the web site.

Item F: Student Report

Peña said that students are anxious about school beginning again and are worried about the lack of information received pertaining to the new school year.

Lucci agreed that she and her peers are experiencing similar difficulties.

Item G: Secretary's Report

Secretary French updated the Board on the Advisory Memorandum that was sent to schools in advance of the first day of school; vaccination clinics for 12-18 year-olds; contact tracing; Surveillance Testing Program; and, the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the bidding process on assessments.

Item H: Mill School Appeal

Secretary French recused himself from the discussion.

Vice Chair Samuelson made the following motion:

"I move that we enter a Deliberative Session to consider the Proposed Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Recommended Order that was prepared for the Board by our Hearing Officer, George K. Belcher, in In Re: The Mill School Rate Petition for Declaratory Ruling."

Lovett seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously. The Board entered Deliberative Session at 9:20 a.m. The Board rejoined the public meeting at 10:07 a.m.

Oettinger and Simmons briefly addressed the Board.

Chair Olsen asked the Board to rejoin the recessed Deliberative Session at 10:24 a.m. The Board rejoined the public meeting at 10:46 a.m.

Vice Chair Samuelson made the following motion:

"At this time, I move that the Board formally adopt, in its entirety and without amendment, the Proposed Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Recommended Order that was prepared for the Board by our Hearing Officer, George K. Belcher, in In Re: The Mill School Rate Petition for Declaratory Ruling."

Jepson seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Item J: Rules Series 2200 Subcommittee Update

Vice Chair Samuelson provided an update on the committee's work to date which includes updating new Rule 2227; adding a new Rule 2227.12; updating Rule 2243.3; and, amending Rule 2223 to include the Association of Independent School in New England (AISNE) as a recognized accrediting agency. The first public hearing on the rules is scheduled for August 26th. The subcommittee will update the full Board what is heard during the public hearings.

Item K: Proposed Revisions to SBE Rule Series 7000

Simmons reviewed proposed revisions to Rule Series 7000 which included repealing Rule 7320 effective July 1, 2024 (or on a different date subsequently set out in adopted rule or statute) and repealing all other rules in the 7000 series, effective 15 days after the amendment's adoption per 3 V.S.A. §845.

Item L: SBE/AOE Roles and Responsibilities Subcommittee Update

Chair Olsen said the subcommittee has met and identified 6 areas needing focus. The subcommittee will meet again in September. Chair Olsen will update the Board again at its retreat.

Chair Olsen called for recess at 11:08 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 11:16 a.m.

Item M: Independent School Approvals and Renewals

Chair Olsen reviewed the State Board of Education process for approving independent school approvals and renewals. He would like to strengthen the process. Secretary French agreed and will add more conditions in his recommendations to the Board.

Item N: Supervisory Union Boundary Update

Secretary French provided an update on the status of Ripton and Westminster. He said Westminster should be coming before the Board at its September meeting. He will have a recommendation on Ripton at the September meeting.

Item P: Equity Work

Secretary French reviewed the AOE's work on equity. He highlighted the Hazing, Harassment and Bullying Prevention Advisory Council (HHB), Act 1 Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group and Act 35 Task Force on Equitable and Inclusive School Environments.

Item Q: Update on testimony before Pupil Weighting Task Force

Secretary French reviewed the charge of the task force which pertains to funding based on pupil weights. He said funding touches many areas and that pupil weights do not translate to greater funding and there is a need to review the Education Quality Standards. Chair Olsen reviewed his testimony on the Education Quality Standards. He said the Board could mediate conversations on the topic to help forge consensus. Gleason said that her testimony echoed Chair Olsen's and the Board's power to convene could be useful. She stated it was important to get the weights right.

Item R: SBE Agenda and Work Plan

Potential topics for the September meeting include construction aid; overview of policy issues; lessons learned during the pandemic; update on Career and Technical Education; update from the Rule Series 2200 subcommittee; and, the lack of teachers for new American students in Burlington and Winooski.

Adjourn

Vice Chair Samuelson moved to adjourn; Lovett seconded. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 12:22 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Suzanne Sprague