

**February 17, 2015**

*The state of Vermont is a national and international leader in education. From exceptional teachers and visionary leadership to creative instruction and leading-edge assessment, Vermont enjoys a highly regarded educational system which serves as a model for other states and schools.*

**Approved MINUTES**

**Legislative Coffee**

The State Board of Education met with members of the Legislature in Room 10 of the State House from 8:15 AM – 9:30 AM prior to convening their meeting at the Capitol Plaza. The meeting generated valuable discussion about the SBE’s vision for education in Vermont and how they can work with the members of the Legislature to make that vision a reality.

Attending: Stephan Morse, Sean-Marie Oller, Krista Huling, Morgan MacIver, Dylan McAllister, William Mathis, Mark Perrin, Stacy Weinberger, Rebecca Holcombe, Perry Thompson, Jill Remick, Larry Cupoli, Tim Jermin, Gail Conley, Ken Page, Jeff Francis, Nicole Mace, Steve Date, Scott Beck, Emily Long, Martha Allen, Bernard Juskiewicz, Steven John, Peter Peltz, Ann Manwaring, Dave Sharpe, Kevin Christie, Sarah Buxton, Lawrence Cupoli

**State Board of Education Meeting**

**Present**

**State Board of Education (SBE):**

Stephan Morse, Chair; Sean-Marie Oller, Vice Chair; Krista Huling; Morgan MacIver (left at 1:00 PM); Dylan McAllister; William Mathis; Mark Perrin; Stacy Weinberger; Rebecca Holcombe

**Agency of Education (AOE):**

Jill Remick, Cindy Moran, Karin Edwards, Perry Thompson

**Others:**

David Young, Superintendent, South Burlington SD; Gail Conley; Ken Page, VPA; Jeff Francis, VSA; Steve Dale, VSBA; Julie Longchamp, VT-NEA; Charles Phillips, VSBPE & Montpelier School Board; Aly Richards, Governor Shumlin’s office; Julie Coffee, Building Bright Futures

**Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call**

Chair Stephan Morse called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance; he reminded those in attendance to sign the attendance sheet. The members of the SBE then introduced themselves.

He congratulated Mathis and Huling on being reappointed for a full 6-year term to the SBE by Governor Shumlin. He announced that the Governor had named Peter Peltz to the SBE for a 6-year term, as well. Margaret MacLean's term on the Board will be expiring at the end of the month; a commendation thanking her for her service will be taken up at the end of the meeting.

**Item B: Public to be Heard** (Items not on the day's agenda)

Gail Conley, a retired superintendent, talked about his time as superintendent and how he used to work to develop solutions to problems that were caused by the Legislature. He expressed his hope that the Legislature would listen to the concerns being expressed by the AOE and offer the Agency the support it needs to educate Vermont's students.

Jeff Francis said that he appreciated all the work the Secretary has been doing to explain the state of the State's education system. He noted that the issues are known: the cost, quality and structure of the educational delivery system in Vermont have become unwieldy. He said that if Vermont waits another ten years to address these problems then they will become much worse than they currently are. He urged the SBE to, as much as it can, make sure the General Assembly stays on course to take real, positive action this year.

**Item C: Consent Agenda**

**Motion:** Oller moved to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Huling seconded.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Specifically, the items on the Consent Agenda were:

- Minutes of January 20, 2015, SBE Meeting

**Updates**

**Item D: Board Members' Announcements & Student Representatives' Emails**

Huling talked about a meeting she'd had with Nancy Lavarney from the Vermont Commission on Women and noted she would be attending a meeting in Massachusetts in the coming month.

MacIver said that she and McAllister are part of a dual enrollment class at the Community College of Vermont. She also said that Twinfield Union School is creating some PSA to play on the radio, which should be on the air by the end of March.

Mathis talked about NASBE and the reauthorization of the ESEA, which has begun to move ahead quickly.

Holcombe said she had been to Washington, DC, recently and had met with congressional staff and conveyed Vermont's concerns about the appropriate use of assessments. Another area of concern are federal 21C resources, which are the sole source of funding for afterschool and summer learning. Both are essential methods for fighting the opportunity gap.

There were no emails to the Student Representatives' email account in the past month.

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

No Report.

### **Item F: Legislative Committee Report**

Although discussed after Item L, the summary of that discussion appears here for consistency with the published Agenda.

The SBE discussed its take on the bills currently being discussed in the Legislature in order to develop a consensus so that responses that reflect the opinions of the SBE could be given to the Legislature quickly if and when necessary.

The Board was clear that they are eager to work with the Agency to implement the changes being considered by the Legislature. Staffing, both of the AOE and the SBE, could be an impediment to implementation, a fact that will be included in the memo Mathis will compile and send to both the House and Senate Education Committees as well as Aly Richards in the Governor's office. The memo will also contain a summary of the SBE's positions on the various issues as they exist in the current version of the education bills.

There was concern expressed that one version of this year's education bill puts the SBE in the position of accepting, or not, decisions made by voters in local districts. The feeling was that the SBE should be involved in crafting a plan for local voters to consider. Holcombe said that the greatest chance of any change being accepted by local voters would involve a large degree of community involvement in the months leading up to the vote. There was discussion about a realistic time frame for requiring districts to consider governance changes and what range of governance options should be allowed as options.

The small schools grant and hold harmless (phantom student) provisions were also discussed. The intent of the Legislature seems to be to phase them both out except in cases of geographic necessity for the former and leaving a one-year provision for the latter to smooth out any year-to-year changes in student population.

The SBE was generally in favor of the current language of the other major provisions in the bills (moratorium on new legislation, more transparent ballot language for school budget votes, and allowing a superintendent to make employment decisions regarding principals).

### **Item G: Secretary's Report**

Holcombe reported the AOE had presented its budget last week. There were two main issues: one related to the potential repurposing of grant money to support additional positions at the Agency to support implementing PreK (she noted that Act 166 provides more funding for PreK than the grants did) and the other pertaining to a review of funding sources at the Agency. She discussed the new rules regarding licensing and the online licensing system. The Agency was considering increasing some licensing fees to offset a loss in revenue that will be caused by the implementation of the new licensing rules. To help create more savings in the Agency, careful attention is being paid to what the Agency needs to do versus what it might like to do; focusing on its core mission will be key to the Agency's continued success.

Morse asked about the state's projected \$118MM budget shortfall. Holcombe explained that is why the AOE is looking at everything it does to determine what it is required to do and then focus on what it might like to do if it has sufficient resources.

Discussion continued regarding the Educational Quality Standards and whether the visitation teams would visit individual schools. Holcombe explained that the teams will target Supervisory Union-level visits; the AOE does not currently have the capacity to perform Educational Quality Reviews at each school.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **Item H: Let's Grow Kids**

This item was not discussed and will be added back onto an Agenda at a later date.

#### **Item I: PreK Rulemaking: Status Update**

Holcombe reported that not much had changed since the previous month. The final details of the initial PreK rules continue to be fine-tuned. A more detailed update should be available at the March meeting.

#### **Item J: Governor's Education Agenda**

Richards reviewed the Governor's Education Agenda. She reviewed the specific proposals and the overarching commitment to improving equity and quality. The governor has also proposed a moratorium on legislation that would add new costs to education. She discussed the small schools grant and making construction aid available for schools that have adopted some form of governance change. The governor's proposals would also enhance the authority of the SBE regarding redistricting schools and the SBE would play a major role in the overall plan for changing school governance models in Vermont. She noted both the Senate and the House Education Committees had drafted bills that used the governor's education agenda as a starting point. Morse noted that he saw the House's version of the bill taking the stronger approach to governance reform. Richards said the SBE has been very helpful and she looks forward to continuing to work with the SBE, as well as the Agency.

Dale talked about some of the proposals being discussed regarding governance, specifically a model known as integrated PreK-12 systems, which he described in detail. Francis added that Vermont has equity in funding for education but not in educational opportunities. He said two of the more persistent roadblocks to significant reform is a perceived threat to small schools (often identified as the crux of their respective individual communities) as well as a perceived threat to historic school choice. One challenge that must be overcome is how to mitigate the perception that school choice may be lost.

#### **Item K: Special Education Discussion**

Holcombe introduced State Director of Special Education Cindy Moran. Moran thanked the SBE for the opportunity to address them and began by describing her background as well as the duties of her current position. She works to bring teams together from different agencies and organizations across the state to make sure that students with disabilities are not treated like exceptions, but rather like someone who belongs to a system. The ultimate goal is to help these

students graduate and to make sure they do so with self-advocacy skills. Furthermore, she works with schools to find ways to support students without putting them on an IEP unless they truly need to be. She also discussed the required reporting to the federal government regarding special education. The federal government wants to see improved outcomes for students throughout the state. She noted that Vermont's population of kids with emotional disabilities is the highest in the nation, double the national average, at 16%. There is much work to be done to determine the cause of this and how to bring that percentage down. It is more often a mental health issue than an educational one; however, the issue tends to manifest itself in the educational world.

### **Lunch**

The meeting recessed for lunch from 12:45 – 1:35 PM.

### **Action Items**

#### **Item L: Designation of New Military Compact Member**

Holcombe said she was thrilled to nominate David Young to fill this position. She explained he has had a strong career in education in Vermont and also has a history of military service, making him an excellent candidate for the position. She noted that the person in this position works to ensure children of military families do not have to worry about their education during times of transition by keeping the educational process as seamless as possible.

Young thanked the SBE for considering him for this position and for allowing him the opportunity to speak to them. He explained that, while in the military, he was shocked to learn that so many combat troops were illiterate. He decided to return to education to help solve that problem. He said he would be happy to serve on the Military Compact Commission and looks forward to the chance to share details of it with his fellow superintendents.

**Motion:** Oller moved to appoint David Young as Vermont's compact commissioner to serve on the Interstate Commission on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, for a term of three years, to expire on February 17, 2018. Seconded by Perrin.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

#### **Item M: Strategic Plan-Looking Ahead**

This item will be discussed at the March meeting.

#### **Item N: Youth Education Alliance of Vermont Proposal**

McAllister distributed his proposal regarding the creation of a Youth Education Alliance in Vermont. Morse noted that one of the items in the proposal would involve a change to how student members of the SBE are selected. He suggested McAllister review his proposal and then put the topic back on the Agenda for March for additional discussion.

McAllister explained that he has been working with a former student representative on the Massachusetts State Board of Education using the Alliance in that state as a template for his proposal to create one in Vermont. The main goal being to hear more student voices and learn what students from around the state think about the issues affecting them. The other members

of the SBE will review the proposal, provide him with feedback, and he will present a revised version at the March meeting for additional discussion.

Thompson then read the language of a Commendation honoring Margaret MacLean for her service on the SBE:

Margaret MacLean received her B.A. in Education from the University of Keele in Cheshire, England in 1971 and her M.A. in Educational Leadership from Johnson State College in 1988. Shortly after receiving her B.A. she began her career in education as a fifth grade teacher at the Glenfield Primary School in bucolic Leicestershire, England. For the next 18 years Margaret taught at schools in Germany, Poland, the former Soviet Union, the Netherlands, Bulgaria and Vermont. Margaret was also Principal of the Peacham School from 1989-2004 and was named Vermont's Principal of the Year in 1996.

Since that time Margaret has served as the Professional Development Coordinator for the Rural School and Community Trust, a National Facilitator for the School Reform Initiative, and as Director of the Vermont Rural Partnership.

Since 2007 Margaret has been invited to present at educational conferences around the globe in such various places as Thailand, Kuwait, France, Panama, and Uganda to name only a few. In addition, Margaret has been a consultant for schools in numerous countries as well from Dakar to Denmark and from Brazil to Zambia, among many others.

An accomplished grant writer, Margaret has secured nearly \$3 million in grants over the years for various educational organizations.

In February 2013 Governor Peter Shumlin named Margaret to the Vermont State Board of Education where she has served with distinction.

Margaret's contributions to the wellbeing of Vermont's students and educational system have spanned more than 35 years. In recognition of her longstanding commitment to the education of Vermont's students and her work to improve the educational opportunities for not only Vermont students but students around the world, the Vermont State Board of Education hereby issues this Commendation to Margaret MacLean on this, the 17th day of February, 2015, and extends its gratitude for her hard work, dedication and devotion to education.

**Motion:** Oller moved to approve the MacLean Commendation. Seconded by Perrin.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

### **Adjourn**

**Motion:** Weinberger moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:50 PM. Seconded by Oller.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Minutes recorded and prepared by Perry H. Thompson