

State Board of Education

Draft Meeting Minutes

Virtual via Teams Teleconference

Call in #: 1-802-828-7667

Conference ID:446 011 833#

Date: August 9, 2023

Present:

State Board Members (SBE): Jennifer Samuelson, Chair; Tammy Kolbe, Vice Chair; Kim Gleason; Jenna O'Farrell, Aaliyah Wilburn, Grey Fearon, Mohamedou Diop, Tom Lovett, Heather Bouchey and Lyle Jepson (joined at 9:26 a.m.).

Agency of Education (AOE): Andrew Prowten, Lindsey Hedges, Ted Fisher, J. Deborah Ormsbee, Pat Pallas-Gray, Josh Souliere, Suzanne Sprague, Maureen Gaidys.

Others: Logan Chalmers, Media Factory; Sarah Buxton, SBE Attorney; Don Tinney, Jay Nichols, Ethan Latour, Mill Moore, Sue Ceglowski, Gary Blodgett, Expeditionary School at Black River (ESBR); Aziza Malik, Champlain Elementary School; Courtney Poquette, Winooski Middle and High School; Lindsey Cox, Winooski Middle and High School; Judith Pullinen, ESBR; Harry Chaucer, ESBR; Nerissa Edwards, ESBR; Tom Payeur, Marissa (no last name provided), and Alison Novak.

Item A: Call to Order, Roll Call and Amendments to the Agenda

Chair Samuelson called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. and asked for a roll call. There were no amendments to the agenda.

Item B: Public to be Heard

Chair Samuelson asked if there were any members of the public who wished to be heard. No members of the public responded, but there were also some technical difficulties. Chair Samuelson said she would revisit this item later when these difficulties were resolved.

Item C: Review and Approve July 19, 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes

Lovett moved to approve the [meeting minutes from July 19, 2023](#); Gleason seconded. There was no discussion. Chair Samuelson called the vote; the vote passed unanimously.

Item D: Board Announcements

There were no announcements.

Item E: Secretary's Update

Interim Secretary Bouchey focused her update on the impact of the July 9 flood on schools

and communities. She reported that 10 schools across the state have had major flooding damage and 14 have reported minor damage. She spoke about how this emergency is felt acutely in some places and not felt as much in other places. It is anticipated that all public schools will open on time; there are some independent schools that might not be able to do so. The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) is now on standby. AOE is working with 211 data and merging that with America Red Cross (ARC) data to locate students and families and identify homeless students and will share that data with districts so they can be prepared. There are some vulnerable families who are wary of state partners and that is causing concern and challenges to keep these families safe. AOE is also working with Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA) and partners to assess the needs of superintendents and if schools can be used to reach out to families. There will be a comprehensive communications packet sent to schools detailing available resources. She spoke about homeless students being able to remain in their home district, which requires schools to coordinate transportation to and from the home district.

There was discussion on identifying displaced students/families, regional Community Assistance Programs (CAPs) and Parent Child Centers (PCC) and sharing that resource with superintendents, impact on mental health, telehealth resources, and the impact of flood on AOE staff.

Item B: Public to be Heard

Chair Samuelson asked again if there were any members of the public to be heard. There were none.

Chair Samuelson moved Item L, due to technical issues with Item F.

Item L: Future Meeting Planning

Gleason suggested inviting Amanda Garces, Act 1 Advisory Group co-chair, to present on the proposed social equity standards that have been submitted to the SBE. Chair Samuelson spoke about the value of having in-person meetings for the SBE and for the public and the challenge of having good audio at such meetings. She suggested in-person meetings for the October and November meetings and said she is not available for the regular October SBE meeting (October 18) and, if possible, she would prefer to send out a Doodle poll (for the week of October 9 or October 23) to find an alternative date for that meeting. She also shared that there will be a Doodle poll for a Special SBE meeting on August 18, 2023 between 12-3PM.

There was discussion on pending independent school approvals, Education Quality Standards (EQS) Committee updates, Rule Series 2200 updates, and upcoming public hearings related to rules.

Item F: Legislative Update

Ted Fisher, Director of Communications and Legislative Affairs, and Lindsey Hedges, Policy Communications Specialist, provided [a Legislative summary for the State Board of Education](#) that included a summary of themes and reviewed the following bills passed: Act 29/School Safety, Act 55/Workforce, Act 64/ Universal Meals, Act 76/Childcare, Miscellaneous

Education Bill (home study and supervisory union/school district governance changes), Act 78/Budget (Independent School Approval Moratorium, School Construction Task Force, and Educator Workforce Provisions). Fisher reviewed the outlook for next year – updates to school safety, restraint and seclusion/school climate, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), school construction and student mental health.

There was discussion on the moratorium of initial independent school approvals, division among parties/chambers on this topic, intent of moratorium is to have a broader conversation next year, litigation risks, pattern of different items included in the budget bill, moratorium applies only to new applications, impact of flooding on school construction, school construction task force, PCB mitigation, visitor management policy (Act 29) and impact on students, and local decision-making authority.

Item G: Rules Series 2200 Committee Update

Chair Samuelson recognized the good work of the Rule Series 2200 Committee and its legal counsel. She referenced materials that were sent late to SBE members: [Rule 2200 Marked Up Copy](#), [Rule 2200 Clean Copy](#), [Side-by-Side Comparison of Changes](#), and [High Level Questions to Consider related to Rule Series 2200 Committee Amendments](#). Chair Samuelson said there was no expectation that all these materials would be reviewed prior to this meeting. This information is also posted on the [SBE webpage](#) as part of the materials for this meeting.

Chair Samuelson shared her presentation titled, “[Rule Series 2200 Phase II Update](#)” and reviewed this with SBE members. She asked SBE members to review the information provided and email her directly with any questions by the morning of Monday, August 14, 2023. The Rule Series 2200 Committee will meet again on Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. and the plan is to have a Special SBE meeting on August 18, 2023 to vote on Rule Series 2200.

Buxton, attorney at Tarrant, Gillies, and Shems, introduced herself and walked through the [high level questions related to the Rule 2200 Series amendments](#) to help the SBE members think through the proposed changes and prepare to provide feedback on any issues of concern.

There was discussion on necessary changes due to shift in context, language taken from EQS, side-by-side includes notations, and future thinking language added. Chair Samuelson indicated that the intent is to have consistency between Rules Series 2000 and Rules Series 2200, and it would be helpful to have public comment for these two rules series overlap so that, if there are comments received in one rule series, they can be considered by the SBE the other rule series so that there will be parity between the two sets of rules. The Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules (ICAR) is scheduled to meet September 11, 2023 and materials are required to be submitted to ICAR two weeks in advance. A Doodle poll is forthcoming for a Special SBE meeting on August 18, 2023 between 12-3PM and this meeting will be warned for a vote of the SBE Rules Series 2200. Chair Samuelson noted that a lot of the language is familiar, and the Rule 2200 Committee is in agreement on these rules. She thanked the Committee for their hard work and dedication. Gleason noted that there were some items in the parking lot and offered that if SBE members found inconsistencies to raise those for the Committee as they look to inform future legislation.

Chair Samuelson called a 5-minute recess at 11:06 a.m. and reconvened at 11:14 a.m.

Item H: Teacher of the Year (TOY)

Chair Samuelson said the TOY presentations are a highlight for the SBE and she thanked the three candidates for joining the SBE. She reminded members that they had received a scoring rubric to be used while listening to each candidate's presentation.

Andrew Prowten, Assistant Director, Education Quality Division, acknowledged that there were over 50 teachers nominated, 30 applications, and over 9 interviews conducted to get to this point in the process. It was an incredibly competitive year. He recognized three Honorable Mention TOY candidates: Karen Witalec-Krupa, BFA Fairfax; Kelly Mills, Hannaford Career Center; and Linda Alvarez, Windham Regional Career Center.

Prowten asked the TOY candidates to introduce themselves.

Aziza Malik, Champlain Elementary School: spoke about starting as a farm-based/environmental educator at Shelburne Farms who transitioned to public school 15 years ago, the challenges of Vermont and how we come together in times of struggle with hope and unity, these same ideas apply to our educational future, place-based education which addresses natural/social/cultural interests, how it makes connections, breaks down barriers and creates inclusive communities, her project "Celebrating our Roots", opportunities for curricular connections, "Grow Wild", benefits of school and city working together and sharing resources, nature based solutions to climate change, native tree nursery used in city restoration projects, students presented to city mayor, work featured at the UN Climate summit, and concepts have universal application.

Courtney Poquette, Winooski Middle and High School: spoke about how she teaches business and personal finance, as a child grew up facing financial obstacles, entered this profession through peer review, raises money for student trips to NYC, true passion is financial literacy and equitable access to this education, worked with seniors to secure scholarships, how some students also have to think about higher education costs and balance this with working and earning money, closing the racial wealth gap, that her students were featured in a national documentary titled, "The Most Important Class You Never Had", loves her work and the opportunities it presents, has expanded focus beyond classroom (VTJumpStart and teaches graduate course at Champlain College), strives to elevate student voices and empowers teachers to bring these discussions into their classrooms.

Lindsey Cox, Winooski Middle and High School: spoke about the critical challenge of innovating the education system, reimagining the roles of educators, updating the systems to create more impactful environments, education workforce shortages coupled with rapid system changes, her experience with the I-Lab, teaches what students want to learn, allows students to pursue passions, real-world and community-based aspect increases relevance of learning, sense of purpose extends well beyond classroom walls, Partnership for Change, made many changes (design) at Winooski, always looking for improvements, designed an interim and long-term hybrid system for teaching and communication during pandemic, insight into education policy and funding, passion is and has always been helping others find

their passions, as TOY she would foster a collective conservation and inspire actionable change.

Prowten thanked all three candidates and opened it up to questions and comments. SBE members expressed appreciation and gratitude to the candidates for their contributions to public education in Vermont and their commitment and energy.

Item J: Expeditionary School at Black River (ESBR)

Chair Samuelson asked representatives from ESBR to address the SBE. Blodgett asked Pullinen and Chaucer to address the progress of ESBR. Pullinen said it has been busy stretch and spoke to [ESBR's bulleted list of progress](#). Chaucer expressed appreciation to AOE (Pallas-Gray and Ormsbee) and walked the SBE through the [Curriculum Framework Proposal and Related Professional Development](#). Pullinen spoke about [ESBR's Provision of Special Education Services with Two Rivers Supervisory Union](#).

There was discussion on confidence of positions pending approval, a typo under the fourth bullet where reference to staff is “new” and should have be “current”, ongoing lesson planning work, template for lesson plans, compliance with 2229 reflected in the provision for special education services agreement, individualized service plans (ISPs), goal to hire a special educator on site, no plans for remote instruction, entitlement of dual enrollment for juniors and seniors, assessment of college readiness, full understanding of requirements, and how ESBR accesses the dual enrollment system.

Chair Samuelson thanked the ESBR representatives and the time they spent on providing the SBE with information and joining the meeting today. Blodgett thanked Pallas-Gray and Ormsbee for meeting with ESBR twice a week to assist with this work.

Item K: Secretary Search Committee

Chair Samuelson referenced 3 V.S.A. §2702 and the [letter from Governor Scott requesting the initiation of a Secretary of Education search](#) and explained that the SBE is responsible for proposing no less than three candidates to the Governor, where the Governor makes the appointment of the Secretary of Education, with the advice and consent from the Senate.

There was discussion on the 8-week timeline referenced in the letter, flexibility with this deadline (no less than 8 weeks), budget for this search, reimbursement of advertising expenses, executive search firms, point people the SBE is working with, and administrative support from AOE.

Chair Samuelson moved that the State Board of Education establish a committee to conduct the search for a new Secretary of Education and to make recommendations to the Board for its selection of no fewer than three candidates to be proposed to the Governor. Kolbe seconded. There was no discussion. Chair Samuelson called the vote. The vote passed unanimously.

Chair Samuelson further moved that the State Board of Education authorize its Chair to appoint members to the Secretary Search Committee. Kolbe seconded. There was no discussion. Chair Samuelson called the vote. The vote passed unanimously.

Chair Samuelson appointed Jepson, O'Farrell, and herself to serve on this Committee.

Item M: Act 173 Follow-Up

Interim Secretary Bouchey said she did not receive any questions following the email that went out after the last meeting around this item. Kolbe asked about the [Act 173 Report](#) that identified an ongoing issue with Maintenance of Effort (MOE) calculation and stated that AOE still imposing more stringent requirements than the federal requirements is significant as it is a clear barrier in implementing the intent of Act 173. Interim Secretary Bouchey suggested bringing in AOE fiscal staff to address these detailed questions and understand the issue better. There was discussion on also addressing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and remedying the inconsistencies of MTSS, inviting Meagan Roy (or another person) to join the Education Quality Standards (EQS) Committee at an upcoming meeting, District Quality Standards (DQS), professional development (PD), AOE as direct provider of PD, capacity, and funding.

Gleason asked about a status update on independent school approvals completed to be approved to receive public tuition. Interim Secretary Bouchey said the Independent School team has been focused on meeting with, guiding and providing technical assistance to schools who are planning to provide services for the first time. She noted that the majority of schools have already been providing special education services and are not affected by the changes to Rule Series 2200 that became effective on July 1st there is only a small number of independent schools that need assistance to ensure that they comply with the changes. She will have the independent school team provide a robust update at the next meeting. This team has been focused on ensuring that aschools have what they need. There was discussion on meeting the standards of eligibility to receive public tuition, small number of schools who are affected, for the vast majority there are no changes, and adding this as an agenda item for next month since this topic was not part of the agenda for this meeting.

Item N: Public to be Heard

Chair Samuelson asked for members of the public to be heard. There were none.

Adjourn

Jepson moved to adjourn; Kolbe seconded. Chair Samuelson called the vote; the vote was unanimous, and the meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Maureen Gaidys.