

March 7, 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.

State Board of Education
Special Legislative Subcommittee Conference Call Meeting
Draft Minutes

Present:

State Board of Education Legislative Subcommittee Members: Peter Peltz, William Mathis, Krista Huling, John Carroll.

Agency of Education (AOE): Suzanne Sprague

Others: None.

Item A: Call to Order

Chair Peltz called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m.

Item C: Amendments to Agenda

There were no amendments to the agenda.

D: Approve February 7, 2018 Draft Minutes

Huling moved to approve the February 26th meeting minutes; Mathis seconded. The vote passed and the minutes were approved.

Item B: Sign In for Guests/Callers

No guests were present.

Item E: Update on H.794

Huling shared that she provided testimony and listened to other testimony to the House Education Committee on H.794. She said she commended the House Education Committee for trying to create equity for all students and acknowledged that the State Board of Education shares its commitment. Huling shared recommendations on the bill, which included training on implicit bias, and agreed that training should have taken place with Act 77. Additionally, Huling voiced concern that there was no reference to the State Board of Education what-so-ever in H.794 which is the body that adopts standards under current legislation and it is required under 16 V.S.A. § 261. Huling added that she said that the vital results have been replaced with standards that are proficiency-based and the proposed legislation, as written, is a departure from the adopted standards.

Huling said that curriculum to include ethnic studies was already in place under EQS and taught under Global Citizenship and under transferrable skills. She explained that curriculum, per legislation, is created at the local level and this topic could be implemented. Huling shared a concern regarding the time line of 18 months being too short and that a 5-year plan is preferable. She recommended resolving conflict between existing state and federal law which is confusing in the language. Huling said Deputy Secretary Fowler's testimony referenced other states that have done the work of approving standards for bias. Huling said that resources are the greatest concern and wondered if the AOE would be able to implement and was curious about the cost implications.

Huling added that Deputy Secretary Fowler was concerned about unfunded work and that the AOE had not discussed the proposed legislation with the people that wrote the bill to get it in line with current policy and resources. Huling said that the House Education Committee wants the proposed legislation to pass. She added that some people shared their concern about curriculum and that the proposed legislation is a departure from current legislation, even if they support the intent. Huling said it would be confusing that some curriculum would be created at the state level while others would be at the local level.

Peltz asked Huling if there have been any changes to the legislation. Huling said it remains as introduced. Carroll wondered if Senate Education would approve the legislation. Huling said that some House Education representatives were skeptical. She continued that the State Board needs clarification from the legislature because with Act 77 both flexibility and multiple pathways were implemented. She said with H.794 one class will be created and it calls to question how standards are adopted and how curriculum is created. Huling wondered what makes a subject worthy to be mandated by the state and the rest to remain a local decision.

Carroll said that H.794 represents a profound change in state policy that curriculum is determined at the local level and standards are determined at the state-wide level. He suggested that Mathis and Peltz write a position paper which emphasizes philosophical concerns about changing a longstanding policy and superimposing from the top and creating an advisory committee to the State Board. Mathis said that the board can create an advisory committee at any time. Carroll suggested it be included in the legislation. Mathis wondered if the people who wrote the bill have enough weight and clout to get it passed.

Huling said that Deputy Secretary Fowler said in her testimony that by introducing the bill a conversation was started and that other states have researched standards and done well. She said that a big concern is that how the curriculum is taught can be biased. Huling said there may be a misunderstanding regarding curriculum and adopting standards and that a review of the process should be included in the position paper.

Huling said that Representative Sharpe, Chair of the House Education Committee, wants a statement from the full board. She continued that it needs to be voted on at the next State Board of Education meeting. Huling said that Representative Sharpe, additionally requested a statement from the State Board of Education on a citizenship test being a graduation requirement. Huling said the test is not

created by Vermont but by the federal Department of Immigration. Representative Sharpe said to Huling that there are enough sponsors to pass the House.

Peltz and Huling volunteered to draft a statement. Mathis asked that the statement mention that assessments are the state's responsibility and are not a local decision. Huling asked Mathis to supply her with references to actual legislation to tease out how the proposal contradicts existing statute. Carroll asked that mention of the long standing tradition of curriculum being a local decision be included in the statement. Discussion followed on cost, timeline, tradition and history.

Huling agreed to send a rough draft on H.794 and citizenship test to all subcommittee members for comment.

Item F: Town Meeting Day Results

Peltz asked for any updates on school budget defeats. Huling shared the districts where the budget vote failed.

Item G: Legislative Update - Haley Jones

This item was skipped.

Item H: Other

Huling said there is not a lot going on in the Education Committees and is worried about last minute legislation. She continued that the focus is on ethnic studies, PreK and civics. Huling said that special education funding and the funding formula bills are slow moving. Huling asked if the subcommittee should schedule meetings in anticipation of legislation moving quickly so the State Board can react in the appropriate amount of time. Mathis said to create a tentative schedule and cancel the meetings that are not needed. Carroll asked that meetings be scheduled in the 1st and 2nd week after the State Board meetings so the subcommittee can be prepared to present at the next full State Board meeting. Discussion followed on high stakes testing, crossover and last minute legislation. Huling asked Mathis to draft a statement piece on assessments. Additional discussion followed on the miscellaneous education bill.

Item I: Adjourn

Carroll moved to adjourn; Huling seconded. The vote to adjourn was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Suzanne Sprague.