

Budget Message from the State Board of Education (FY18 Draft)

In 2013, the Vermont legislature created an Agency of Education and assigned the State Board of Education, education policy authority. In addition, the legislature assigned the board the implementation of Act 46, the state-wide education governance law.

This mandate has resulted in the greatest governance changes since 1892. Around the state, regional “study committees” are exploring new administrative structures. By mid-2016, substantial progress has been made with the Board approving approximately one-fourth of the anticipated new structures. The task will become progressively more demanding as the more difficult arrangements are outstanding.

The new law recognized the Board would require independent staffing. At that time, a section was added to law (16 VSA 161) stating the “Board shall be supported by adequate staff.” To date, no funding for State Board of Education staff has been allocated.

In addition, the legislature has also established new initiatives (in particular, dual enrollments, preK-education). Earlier legislated obligations also remain such as state achievement standards, leadership, staffing, curriculum, independent schools, adult education, technology and the like. The new federal education law also will require massive work investments. Recently added state programs also require attention; in particular, the dual-authority and financial arrangements in the early education law.

The State Board is requesting an additional \$250,000 for three staff positions to enable the Board to carry out its legislatively required duties.

The State Board of Education continues to work effectively with the Agency, the Legislature and all our partners. But the agency’s budget is down 40% since 2008 and the number of positions has been reduced from _____ to _____. Thus, the success of legislated programs is threatened by inadequate investments.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the State Board of Education,