

Central Vermont Unified Union School District Board Meeting

Monday, December 4, 2017

6:00 pm

Brown Public Library, Northfield, VT

Agenda

1. Roll Call 6:00 pm
2. Agenda Revision 6:01 pm
3. Public Participation 6:02 pm
4. Reports to the Board 6:05 pm
 - Superintendent
 - Chairperson
 - Committee Updates: Policy, Renaming the District, Community Outreach, Mission
5. Items for Board Action 6:20 pm
 - Approval of Minutes: 11/15/2017
6. New Business 6:25 pm
 - **Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements** *Receive Information, Possible Action*
Co-Director of School Transformation Michaela Martin will review a proposal and timeline for creating Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements for the CVUUSD.
 - **Principal Hiring** *Receive Information*
Principals Scott Lang and Jamie Kinnarney will share their experience with a shared leadership model practiced at the Northern and Southern campuses in Williamstown. Then Co-Director of School Transformation Michaela Martin will share the process and timeline for acquiring a highly qualified principal for Williamstown Middle High School.
7. FY19 Budget *Receive information, Discussion* 7:00 pm
Chair Peter Evans will offer his thoughts on Governor Scott's letter dated November 14, 2017.
Superintendent Bollard and Business Manager Chris Locarno will share a first look at the special education portion of the FY19 Budget Proposal including detailed descriptions of Bridges/ONWARD and food service.
8. Future Agenda Items 7:35 pm
 - Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements/Community Service - Renaming the School District
9. Adjournment 7:40 pm

Peter Evans, Chair
Central Vermont Unified Union School District

Susette L. Bollard, Superintendent, ONSU
Central Vermont Unified Union School District
Temporarily Assigned to ONSU by
Vermont State Board of Education

Next CVUUSD Meetings

Weds Dec 20 2017 6pm Williamstown Middle High School
Weds Jan 3 2018 6pm Brown Public Library in Northfield

Next CVSU Meeting
TBD

**Norms of Operation
for the
Central Vermont Unified Union School Board of Directors**

Adopted 11/06/2017

As a member of my local school board, I will remember that my primary concerns must be the educational welfare of the students in my district and excellent return on investment for taxpayers. I agree to conduct myself in accordance with the following commitments. I will:

Act within the scope of my official role:

- Recognize that a board member's responsibility is to see that schools are well run, but not to run them
- Act only as a member of the board and not assume any individual authority when the board is not in session, unless otherwise directed by the board
- Give no directives, as an individual board member, to any school administrator or employee, publicly or privately
- Avoid making commitments that may compromise the decision-making ability of the board or administrators
- Be sensitive to what is board work and what is the work of the Superintendent.

Uphold the highest ethical standards:

- Not receive anything of value, by contract or otherwise, from the school district or supervisory union unless it is received:
 - as a result of a contract accepted after a public bid
 - in public recognition of service or achievement
 - as a board stipend reimbursement or expense allowed by law for official duties performed as a member of such board;
- Not solicit or receive directly or indirectly any gift or compensation in return for making a recommendation or casting a vote;
- Agree to recuse and remove myself from board deliberation and votes when necessary to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest;

Respect my peers, my constituents, and confidentiality considerations:

- Foster a culture of respect for all ideas and points of view.
- Voice opinions respectfully and treat with respect other board members, administrators, school staff, and members of the public;
- Maintain confidentiality of information and discussion conducted in executive session and uphold applicable laws with respect to the confidentiality of student and employee information;
- Attend all regularly scheduled board meetings insofar as possible, arriving on time and prepared by reviewing documents provided in the board packet.
- Limit use of electronics to board business or emergencies; silence cell phones.

Central Vermont Unified Union School District Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 15, 2017
6:00 pm
Williamstown Middle High School

Minutes – Draft

1. **Roll Call**

Meeting called to order at 6:08 pm.

Board Members Present: Peter Evans (Chair), Rama Schneider (Vice Chair), Amanda Mills-Brown (Clerk), Horace Duke, Christine Motyka 6:22pm, Sophia Bennett, Mike Bailey, Marie Abare

Administration Present: Superintendent Susette Bollard

Others Present: Business Manager Chris Locarno, Co-Director of School Transformation Michaela Martin, Principal Wayne Howe, Principal Ryan Parkman, Principal Scott Lang, Principal Jamie Kinnarney, Student Kate Mascitti, Earl Everhart

2. **Agenda Revision**

Add Principals to Reports to Board.

3. **Public Participation**

None

4. **Reports to the Board**

- Superintendent – Hiring Process
- Chairperson
- Principals

5. **Items for Board Action**

• **Approval of Minutes 11/06/2017**

Under Old Business (#6) - Norms; after "Seconded by Horace Duke" replace "Motion carries" with "Motion to amend carries". After "to approve the document" change "with edits" to "as amended". Under New Business (#8) - Process for Developing Policy; change "Superintendent or her designee" with "Superintendent or designee".

Motion made by Sophia Bennett and seconded by Mike Bailey to accept the minutes as corrected. Motion unanimously carries.

6. **FY19 Budget**

Superintendent Bollard and Business Manager Chris Locarno shared a first look at the special education portion of the FY19 Budget Proposal.

7. **New Business**

• **Student Members**

Williamstown School Board student member Kate Mascetti shared the structure of the Williamstown Middle High School Leadership Co-op and the selection process for school board

membership. Kate suggested that the CVUUSD Board include 2 students from Northfield Middle High School and 2 students from Williamstown Middle High School.

- **Renaming the School District**

Superintendent Bollard shared a process for renaming the school district.

Motion made by Peter Evans and seconded by Sophia Bennett to charge a sub-committee with the responsibility of creating a process for renaming the school district by the second meeting in January. The subcommittee members are Peter Evans, Marie Abare and Christine Motyka.

Motion unanimously carries.

- **Community Outreach**

The board discussed strategies for community outreach with regard to budget development.

The Central Vermont Unified Union School District Board of Directors now creates a subcommittee (consisting of Peter Evans and Rama Schneider) to be known as "Public Outreach and Input Committee"; a subcommittee of the floor board. This committee's initial charge is to provide a means of public input that is convenient to the District's residents, students and staff. So moved Mike Bailey. Seconded by Sophia Bennett. Motion unanimously carries.

- **Hiring Process**

Co-Director of School Transformation Michaela Martin proposed a hiring process to be used by the CVUUSD when looking to hire professional staff. Motion made by Mike Bailey and seconded by Sophia Bennett to accept the process as presented. Motion unanimously carries.

8. **Future Agenda Items**

Nothing new added.

9. **Adjournment**

Motion made by Mike Bailey and seconded by Rama Schneider to adjourn meeting at 8:06 pm.

Motion unanimously carries.

**Central Vermont Unified Union School District
Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements
Timeline**

December 2017

Communicate Timeline

- School Board
- Teachers
- Community

January- August 2018

1. **Teachers representing their colleagues in Northfield and Williamstown would meet once a month to revise Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements and Performance Indicators PreK-12:**

- Transferable Skills
- English Language Arts
- Global Studies
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical Education
- Health
- Visual & Performing Arts

2. **Administration will work with teachers representing school Leadership Teams to determine:**

- Verification of criteria for demonstration of student proficiency in each area
- Reporting student progress
 - Student Profile (Graduation Profile, Transcript)
 - Frequency
 - Scoring Criteria

3. **CVUUSD Board will review work completed and possible adoption at a board meeting in May.**

4. **Early Release/Staff Meetings/June Inservice/Summer Work**

- Align units of study, seminars and courses to new Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements
- Revise PrK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 scales for reporting student progress

5. **Communication Plan**

- Schools will communicate with families
- Supervisory Union will communicate on web site

6. **Full Implementation PreK-12- 2018-2019**

Distributed Leadership Model
Administrative Structure

Vision: To create a leadership model that supports the PreK-12 concept throughout the two campuses of the Williamstown Schools and to establish a shared administrative presence that supports a collaborative approach of instructional leadership that best meets the needs of our students, staff, faculty and school community.

Supportive Actions:

- To share in supervision and evaluation responsibilities of all faculty/staff PreK-12
- To share responsibilities in the facilitation of the PreK-12 school-based leadership teams
- To work collaboratively to develop and implement a PreK-12 continuum of supports both academically and socially/emotionally
- To consult regularly on issues of instruction and assessment, PreK - 12
- To share responsibilities in the analysis and reporting of K-12 student achievement
- To assume responsibilities as the building level administrator when and if the primary building administrator is unavailable
- To support each other in the administrative coverage of school events PreK-12
- To share in the oversight, development and implementation of the PreK-12 budget
- To share responsibilities in the oversight of transportation services for the PreK-12 district

**Timeline & Process for
Central Vermont Unified Union School District
Williamstown Principal/ Shared Leadership Search
Winter 2017-2018**

1. Superintendent assigns facilitator for search committee.
2. Facilitator submits Advertisement on December 7th-**Deadline December 27, 2017**
3. Engage faculty, staff and school board about the needs and qualities desired in the next Principal.
4. Solicit volunteers for search committee.

A representative from:

- WMHS- 6-9 Team
- WMHS-10-12 Team
- PreK-12 Allied Arts
- PreK-12 Student Support Team
- PreK-12 Support Staff
- Williamstown Elementary Teacher

2 Student School Board Members

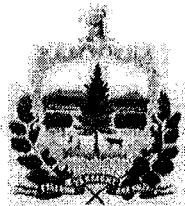
1 Board Member

2 Parents

Anyone interested in serving on the committee should submit a letter or email to facilitator explaining why they would be an asset to the committee by **December 15th. Superintendent and facilitator will determine make up of team.**

1. Central office administration will review applications and forward qualified candidates to the committee by January 2.
2. Search committee will review resumes January 2-5 at ONSU Office.
3. Search committee meets on January 8th at WMHS to decide who to interview the weeks of January 15 or January 22nd and finalize questions.
4. Site visits scheduled to Northern/Southern Campuses and ONSU the week of January 29th/ February 5th.
5. Central office administrators will conduct reference checks.'
6. Search committee reconvenes to review site visits, reference checks and feedback on February 12th..
7. Bring forward 2 finalists to CVUUSD on February 21st.

PHILIP B. SCOTT
Governor



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

November 14, 2017

Dear Education Leaders:

This is a long letter, but I hope you'll take time to read and reflect on it, and offer your own thoughts in return.

Vermont's education system is central to growing the economy, making Vermont more affordable and protecting the most vulnerable. But, as I detail below, we have pressing challenges. In this letter, I've proposed several ideas to address those challenges that I urge you to seriously consider as you enter the budget cycle.

I also want to hear your ideas. That's why I will host an Education Summit in December, so we can continue this discussion and work together to build the best education system in America, in a way that recognizes the urgent need to address the crisis of affordability and how it impacts the opportunities we are able to provide our children.

The Vision: Building the Best Education System in America

In my Inaugural Address, I shared a vision for a more innovative and unified education system that sets higher standards, and turns Vermont into an education destination for families. I believe we can reach these goals within existing resources, but only if we are willing to act boldly.

I want to work with you to revitalize the system, so our kids have more opportunities to thrive, our teachers are empowered to innovate, and you can spend more time on nurturing educational opportunities.

With a new approach in our PreK-12 system, we can continue our transformation to a cradle to career continuum of learning that understands the capacity to invest more in early care and learning and that higher education adds value for our kids, teachers, schools, communities and economy.

The Challenges for Vermont: 6-3-1

There are three numbers that literally keep me up at night: six, three and one. Every day when we wake up, on average, there are six fewer workers in our workforce, three fewer kids in our K-12 schools, and nearly one baby born exposed to opiates. Every. Single. Day.

We *must* reverse these trends – and we can, if we face our challenges head on, put areas of disagreement aside, and work together. Reversing these trends is not going to happen overnight – but every minute we delay, the challenge compounds, Vermont gets less affordable for families and businesses and we lose more capacity to provide our children with greater opportunities.

During the first 10 months of my Administration, we have rethought processes and developed a strategic plan with clearly defined goals and measurable indicators – all focused on growing the economy, making Vermont more affordable, and protecting the most vulnerable. Reversing the 6-3-1 trends will restore our economic foundation and generate the growth and tax revenue we need to invest in our children, as well as other priorities.

Working with the Legislature, we took some important steps to change our trajectory, but much work is needed to achieve operational efficiency, long-term cost containment and investments that spur economic growth. Most notably, the State Fiscal Year 2018 budget was balanced without raising any taxes or fees for the first time in memory. Difficult decisions were required, but the current budget ensures state spending, including education spending, is not growing faster than our economy or wages – while making critical investments in people and the economy.

The Challenges for School Boards: Your Work is Increasingly Complex & More Important than Ever

Every year, you undertake the difficult work of balancing school budgets while supporting high-quality opportunities for kids. Since Vermont moved to a statewide funding formula under Acts 60 and 68, Montpelier has asked you to do more and more, making the annual balancing act between the operational costs, education priorities of local schools and the capacity of taxpayers more demanding and disjointed.

You've also faced budget caps and contemplated district consolidation. It's been difficult, but towns across the state have come together to evaluate enhanced opportunities for students while identifying financial savings. This is a necessary step to create the financial capacity for crucial investments in more academic opportunities through greater economies of scale.

In addition to our demographic and budget challenges, our substance abuse epidemic, coupled with rapid advancements in technology that require new skillsets, have placed new demands on our system and our educators.

You are facing significant obstacles and making difficult decisions, but you have shown we can make progress. Given the economic and affordability challenges we continue to face, however, I am asking you to work with me and the Legislature to do more, faster.

The fact is, our ability – as a state and locally – to make additional investments in education and support stronger outcomes for students is dependent on the more efficient use of existing resources. As the 6-3-1 trends demonstrate, we cannot afford to wait. Your work is more important than ever before.

The Opportunity: Structural Reform & Strategic Budgeting Can Help Reverse 6-3-1

Our education system is a powerful tool for recruiting more working-age families – the people who pay taxes, buy goods and services, and put kids in our schools. As we've shown in the state budget, it is possible – and essential – to align spending with growth in wages and the economy, while still making strategic reforms and investments that increase the quality of education.

Early projections for State Fiscal Year 2019 show that we will start with a deficit in the statewide Education Fund that, if left unaddressed, could increase property taxes by about \$80 million. Part of this deficit is structural; part of it is based on anticipated increases in local spending. While a consensus forecast process with the Legislature will determine the final deficit in January, it is only fair that you have this information as early as possible to understand the reality of what we're facing.

For nearly two decades we have heard the calls from Vermonters for property tax relief, yet every year we raise millions more in taxes to educate fewer students, and watch as you struggle to preserve essential academic services. In fact, per pupil education costs – which is how we calculate property tax rates – have grown faster than healthcare costs on average over the past ten years. That's even more surprising when you consider healthcare utilization is *increasing* while utilization of our education system is *decreasing*.

So why do we see rising per pupil education costs (reflected in higher property taxes) with declining student populations? The root of the problem is an education infrastructure built and staffed to educate well over 120,000 students, despite having only 80,000 today. Every dollar we spend on underutilized space, or on staff-to-student ratios that are unacceptably low, is a dollar that's not being spent on a child.

Three years ago, the Legislature passed Act 46 to address rising per pupil costs within Vermont's education system and to expand educational opportunities by creating more efficient governance systems. As we enter the final phase of Act 46 this summer, we should be looking for every opportunity to fulfill the goals of this legislation in the areas that have yet to merge. In addition, we must now make structural changes that complement what many of you have already accomplished.

The Imperative: We Must Contain Spending Growth & Innovate

To make Vermont more affordable, and grow the economy, we must live within our means at all

levels of government. For this reason, I have asked all Executive Branch agencies and departments to propose level-funded budgets. At the end of the day, I will not support any legislation that authorizes state spending to grow faster than the rate of growth in the economy and wages. We estimate the growth rate calculation – average state economic and wage growth over the past six years – to be 2.5% and expect confirmation from the state economist in early December.

We need to establish the same boundaries for per pupil spending across the state. If we have the courage to innovate and the resolve to follow through, this standard **does not** have to result in cuts to programming for kids and, in fact, can increase academic opportunities.

I acknowledge that one size does not fit all, but if your student count is declining, districts should do *everything* possible – including consolidation of grades and schools, or other innovations – to lower per pupil expenditures. Alternatively, if student count is increasing, you should not allow per pupil spending to increase more than the Growth Rate Calculation I will apply to State spending.

Approaches to achieving these spending targets will vary across the state, and my Administration is committed to working with you to develop a range of tools to support and accelerate innovation. These tools will reflect the diversity of the challenges you face and give you the latitude that you need to make changes that will help your districts be the very best they can be.

Members of my staff are refining proposals to share at the Education Summit we will host in mid-December with legislators and representatives from the School Board's Association, Superintendent's Association, Principals Association, Vermont-NEA, Council of Special Education Administrators as well as representatives from Vermont's independent schools, pre-kindergarten community and state colleges and universities. Invites to the summit will go out next week.

In addition, Secretary Holcombe has already issued guidance on ratios, and we will continue to look for ways to support school boards as they utilize staff attrition to facilitate the reforms we know are necessary.

Other concepts under consideration include:

- Changes to help Vermonters better understand the link between local budgets and tax rates when they vote on their school budgets;
- Examination of the timing of budget votes;
- Capital incentives for consolidating schools;
- State and local incentives to help manage staff attrition and achieve favorable ratios;
- Statewide policies to help sustainably plan for staffing costs;
- Regional pilot proposals to reduce regulations and promote innovation; and
- Rationalizing special education rate setting.

Education Leaders
November 14, 2017
Page Five

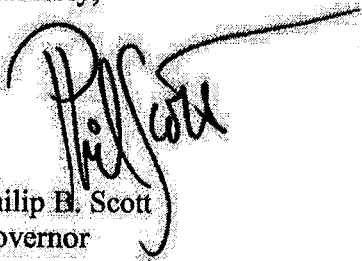
I look forward to hearing your ideas as well. Your knowledge and experience in this area is invaluable and any thoughts or proposals you would like us to consider, please email them to: ethan.latour@vermont.gov

Let's Keep the Dialogue Going

The only way Vermont can afford to create the best cradle to career education system in the country – one that will draw more working families to Vermont and reverse 6-3-1 – is to make far better use of existing resources.

I am optimistic we can find common ground – and I offer my personal commitment to doing so. I look forward to collaborating on this urgent and important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Scott", with a long horizontal line extending from the top of the signature.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

PBS/kp

NORTHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

DECEMBER 2017

NSD Goal 1: Provide high quality instruction in every classroom

Northfield Elementary School sent parents this past Friday a report card that tied to proficiency based graduation requirements, this allows us to better communicate a child's growth with the expectations of the school district. These graduation proficiencies are broken down into smaller performance indicators, which are grouped into grade clusters for grades K, 1 and 2 and grades 3, 4 and 5. Learning targets are taught in a child's classroom daily and these targets are the individual skills which instruction and activities are focused on.

The report card communicates how each student is performing in their grade level for each of the performance indicators. NES Staff have worked to define proficiency for each performance indicator for each of the elementary grades. On the report card parents will see these levels of scoring for each graduation proficiency: Beginning, Approaching, Proficient and Exemplary. We would expect that each child will be proficient at the end of the year in most areas, but not necessarily in the first trimester.

Teachers have also included additional information about how each child is doing on specific learning targets (or skills) for that grade level. This document will answer many parent questions about the specifics of their child's progress. An informational session was held in co-operation with NES Parent Group in November, which may be presented again if there is enough parent interest.

Classroom observation in K-5 classrooms are focused on how K-5 expectations for Mathematics and English Language Arts instruction are being implemented. Teachers are scored against criteria that addresses planning, classroom environment, instruction and professional responsibilities. The instructional part of the evaluation addresses questioning techniques, student engagement, designing coherent instruction and assessment.

NSD Goal 2: Promote Positive Responsibility

The fifth grade classrooms are using the Circle of Courage program to reinforce positive character and action. During a recent in-service day select staff were trained in how to de-escalate students who are upset and not in control of their words and/or actions. A local developmental trauma expert came to NES to work with these staff members and helped to develop supports for students most in need.

This past month NES students assembled in front of the Veteran's Place and presented tokens of our appreciation to the Veteran's for their service. Also, some small groups of students made and sold trinkets to raise money for a student in need at NES.

After students recently saw and heard the Vermont Symphony Orchestra musicians demonstrate percussion instruments, NES band members grabbed drums and sat in front of the student body to perform. This impromptu drum fest led to NES students dancing in the gym and forming a conga line.

NSD Goal 3: Analyze and utilize data to inform and design high quality instruction

A staff member trained in behavioral analysis has provided information that is helping classroom teachers and other staff develop supports for at risk students. The goal of these support plans is to enable students to focus on learning, and less on what is happening outside of school.

Upcoming Events

12/5	5:30	Northfield Promise Community meets about pre-school playground project at NMHS
12/5	6:30	The movie Resilience and a panel of local officials will be presenting at NMHS
12/6	9:20	5 th grade kick off for the Starbase Program
12/6	6:00	Northfield Rotary Holiday Dinner
12/12	6:30	NES PTNO Meeting
12/14	6:30	NES December Concert at the NMHS Auditorium

Williamstown Elementary School

Jamie Kinnarney

Principal

Mitch Smoller

Co-Coordinator of Student Support

Michele Blanchard

PreK-12 School Home Coordinator

Phone: 802-433-6653

Fax: 802-433-6266



Williamstown Middle High School

Scott Lang

Principal

Jessica Poe

Co-Coordinator of Student Support

Derek Howard

Coordinator of Student Wellness
and Activities

Phone: 802-433-5350

Fax: 802-433-1037

Williamstown Schools

Preparing students to be lifelong learners

December, 2017

Williamstown Elementary School

CVUUSD Board Report

Goal #1: Multi-Tiered System of Supports

The ONSU will support schools in sustaining a MTSS that:

- *supports responsive, differentiated instruction/intervention that is informed by student data and ongoing monitoring of student growth both in academics and social/emotional;*
- *supports a rigorous learning environment while helping students make connections based on interests to support multiple pathways for learning;*
- *supports the integration of Personal Learning Plans, Flexible Pathways and alternative programming to better meet the needs of our students.*

We continue to meet in data teams to progress monitor interventions and supports. I'm confident that all students are receiving appropriate supports at this time and strong data informed universal instruction. Therefore, I'm expecting significant growth across the grades during December's universal assessments (Track my Progress) in both English Language Arts and Math. Mr. Lang and I will be prepared to share the grades K-8 data during the January Williamstown School District board meeting.

We continue to have visitors from surrounding supervisory unions visit our campus to learn more about our comprehensive MTSS. We were pleased to host several members of the South Royalton School on November 15th. This visit focused on our social/emotional support system. We also expect visitors from Champlain Elementary School later this month. The visits are a testament to the accomplishments realized since the initial commitment that was made in the fall of 2013, when we committed ourselves in creating a highly functioning system that was responsive, efficient, and responsible for greater achievement/learning. I'm pleased to report that we've accomplished a great deal over the past four years, but also acknowledge that there is still work to be completed. To this end, we continue to tweak the system in order to improve upon the outcomes that were originally defined. I'm proud of our work, and confident that we will continue to demonstrate steady growth.

Goal #2: Goal 2- Proficiency Based Learning

ONSU will support the development and implementation of a PreK-12 conceptual Framework and Core Principles for Proficiency Based Learning to our comprehensive MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) including:

- *Habits & Traits/ Transferable Skills*
- *Graduation Proficiencies (Content Area Standards)*
- *Performance Indicators*
- *Learning Intentions*
- *Assessments*
- *Reporting system to reflect proficiency based learning*

The Capstone Project is well underway, and all students have been paired with a mentor. The mentors serve as the instructional experts in the chosen area of study. All fifth graders will have a defined essential question by the end of this

Respect ❖ Responsibility ❖ Recognition
We are Respectful ❖ We are Responsible ❖ We are Safe ❖ We are Learners

Williamstown Elementary School

Jamie Kinnarney

Principal

Mitch Smoller

Co-Coordinator of Student Support

Michele Blanchard

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Williamstown Middle High School

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Co-Coordinator of Student Support

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Williamstown Schools

Preparing students to be lifelong learners

week, and complete their initial research prior to the December break. We will have Connor Cyrus, WCAX news reporter here on December 5th to meet with all fifth graders. The guest lecture will focus on interview techniques, and how to ask open ended questions. This aligns to the graduation proficiencies of effective speaking/listening, and also serves our students well when collecting first-person research on their topics of study. The project continues to be a highlight for our 5th grade students, and I'm confident that their final projects will be nothing less than impressive.

Our recent experiential learning days were a great success! We will once again be providing students with choice and hands-on learning prior to the December break. I'm hopeful that we will also have Mandarin as an offering during our December experiential learning days due to the recent partnership formed with Claire Zhu of GMCE. I'll have an update for the Williamstown School District board in January regarding the status of us hosting Chinese exchange students.

The first trimester concluded on November 21st. Therefore, parent/guardian conferences will occur over the next two weeks. This will be the first interaction with the newly designed graduation proficiency profiles. As aforementioned, the report card was revised last spring in an effort to better communicate developmental proficiency of the defined ONSU graduation proficiencies in both foundational knowledge and the Habits and Traits of All Learners.

Goal #3: High Quality Professional Performance

Our expectations for professional performance will include:

- *a culture of excellence*
- *high expectations*
- *focus on continuous improvement.*

We will begin analyzing school-wide achievement data over the next several months in an effort to begin the revision of our continuous improvement plan tasks. There are already a few areas that suggest improvement is warranted. I look forward to working with the team in an effort to define the areas of concern, and to plan appropriate steps to address them.

I want to invite you to attend either or both of our winter concerts. The grades K-2 concert is on December 12th and the grades 3-5 is on December 13th. Both of the concerts begin at 6:00 in the W.E.S. gymnasium.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Kinnarney

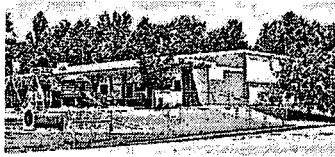
Principal

Respect ❖ Responsibility ❖ Recognition
We are Respectful ❖ We are Responsible ❖ We are Safe ❖ We are Learners

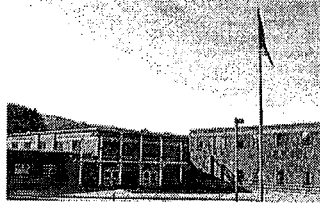
Central Vermont Unified Union School District



Northfield Elementary Campus



Williamstown Elementary Campus



Northfield Middle High Campus



Williamstown Middle High Campus

Central Vermont UUSD Board of Directors Superintendent's Report December 4, 2017

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving and are gathering energy for the rest of the holiday season. With the holidays comes the budget development crunch but we are on track and hoping for a minimal amount of stress. Monday will be the first night of two that will include regular education as the budget focus. There have been several meetings that have addressed a variety of staffing issues and we are closing in on what we will recommend.

Attorneys Scott Cameron and Patricia Turley and I met informally with the head negotiators of the two teacher and two support staff associations. We discussed different ways we might organize and approach the task of negotiating new contracts, as well as some confusing portions of the law that will need to be clarified early on. We meet with both negotiating councils on Monday, December 18th to set ground rules and dates for future talks. As I mentioned in my CVSU report, we are hoping for a reasonably quick decision from the courts regarding negotiating in open session after hearing arguments on December 12th.

Yesterday administrators across the state received an email from Secretary of Education Rebecca Holcombe that included her op-ed entitled *Proficiency-Based Learning Beneficial for Students*. I have included it in the packet as it is a nice introduction to Director of School Transformation Michaela Martin's presentation.

Vice-chair Rama Schneider was kind enough to help the Williamstown and Northfield Town Clerks clarify their roles and responsibilities as clerk and treasurer respectively with regard to the CVUUSD annual meeting in March. My office will be in close contact with them after the first of the year in preparation for the budget vote.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all on Monday at the Brown Public Library in Northfield. Remember the WSSU meeting starts at 5PM and the CVUUSD meeting begins at 6PM.

Have a great weekend.

Respectfully submitted,
Susette L. Bollard, Superintendent of Schools
Serving the Towns of Williamstown, Washington and Orange, and
the Central Vermont UUSD and Orange Washington UUSD
for the transitional period



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Opinion: Proficiency-Based Learning Beneficial for Students

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A recent opinion piece from a Fair Haven Union High School teacher argued we should rid the state of proficiency-based learning and grading systems to “let teachers teach.”

I can’t comment on how individual teachers, schools, or districts chose to interpret or implement the State Board of Education’s requirement that our schools move to “proficiency-based learning.” However, the piece seems to misunderstand the logic and research related to proficiency approaches to instruction, as well as the responsibility of districts with respect to standards. In Vermont, by statute, curriculum and instruction are local responsibilities, and success depends on the skill and judgment of those who develop and implement curriculum in each classroom in each school.

Any discussion of proficiency-based approaches needs to consider the research that led the Board to adopt and the legislature to endorse this approach four years ago.

Proficiency-based approaches are driven by three basic principles. First, when we can tell students clearly and specifically what we expect them to learn, they are more likely to learn it. When students don't know what “quality” looks like, it’s hard to meet the standard.

Second, practice helps us get better, whether we are playing baseball, learning how to play the trombone, figuring out how to create a 3D scale model using trigonometry and a 3D printer, or learning how to write a persuasive letter to a legislator or state official to advocate for a statutory change.

Third, giving students the specific feedback they need and the opportunity for additional practice helps them to develop and demonstrate these same skills. Some people are lucky enough to grow up in environments where these skills are cultivated and reinforced regularly. Some young people with great potential are not so lucky. As a state without enough skilled workers to power economic growth, we can’t afford to leave the potential of these Vermonters undeveloped.

Of course, some teachers have always focused on these principles, even in so-called “traditional” grading environments. I was not in office for the development of the Education Quality Standards, but I suspect the intent was to encourage more teachers to focus on mastery, rather than simply moving students on to the next topic, whether

they learned the material or not. Certainly, employers have expressed concern about the idea of promoting students regardless of whether skills were mastered.

Mastery matters. If you don't master number sense before moving on to fractions, you struggle to understand fractions. If you don't understand fractions, you struggle with algebra. If you can't do algebra, you will struggle in any STEM-related career. The students who walk through our doors vary widely in their interests, levels of skill and home support, but we are responsible for doing all we can to ensure they learn as much as they can, as well as they can, while they are in our care.

I don't love the jargon of education, because sometimes it confuses as much as it informs. Proficiency-based approaches are well developed and supported by research that dates back to the 70's. Benjamin Bloom piloted and evaluated "mastery-based" approaches that involved breaking learning into clear and defined units of learning, and assessing students just after they taught, to verify what they learned. In his model, if students can't demonstrate mastery, they immediately get remediation and practice and try again, so that learning gaps don't grow and compound. Bloom reasoned that giving children a second chance to succeed would increase their motivation, and subsequent research proved him right.

Bloom realized that some students would be quicker to demonstrate mastery, and he recommended these students be allowed to move on to other learning in an individualized way. As Thomas Guskey explains, "Enrichment activities give these students exciting opportunities to broaden and expand their learning." With careful personalization, high performing students are also appropriately challenged.

Proficiency-based approaches ensure that students who want to improve have the specific feedback they need to actually do better. As one student who was struggling told us, in traditional grading systems, "you're never given much information besides you just got a lower grade, but if you do proficiencies and you get a lower proficiency score, it tells you exactly what parts you are lower on and what parts you did really well, and I really appreciate that." Our students want to learn and thrive; we need to give them the means to do so.

Proficiency-based approaches don't need to – and should not – constrain students to whom mastery comes quickly, any more than traditional systems should require students to take a course that presents content they have already mastered. Across the state, students have taken advantage of extension and enrichment opportunities to pursue independent and student-driven application of learning, often by taking their work into their communities. In some cases, enrichment has led to work-based learning

and internships, which in turn, has led to an enduring interest in a subject field or new career.

Good education depends on a skilled and purposeful teacher, who structures what happens in the classroom in ways that challenge all students – both those who struggle and those who don't—to achieve more and aspire higher than they did before walking in the door. These teachers take guidance and standards, and adapt them to their unique contexts and their students' needs. It takes time and practice for any new tool to be developed and used with skill.

One of the biggest risks we face as a state is the belief that every challenge requires a change in policy. If we change the game for teachers every few years, they are compelled to spend all their time on changing direction, and never are able or allowed to spend time getting good at doing what they care about most: teaching well. No policy is perfect, but as a state, we count on the professional expertise of our teachers to take the tools we give them, and make them robust and powerful in their individual classrooms.

I encourage you to [learn more about proficiency-based learning](#) and how it will benefit students.