



Windham Southwest Supervisory Union Trailblazers in a Changing World

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
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Halifax

Readsboro

Searsburg

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Twin Valley Unified Union SD

Central Office Leadership Team Report

May 2023

Respectfully Submitted by:

- Barbara Anne Komons-Montroll, Superintendent
- Michael RobbGrieco, Director of Curriculum & Technology Integration
- Karen Atwood, Business Manager
- Troy McAllister, Director of Special Education

Kudos To

- Adam Bisson (WSWSU IT/Data Manager) and Curtis Carroll (IT, TV) for preparing school devices and technology for the new VTCAP state testing, and supporting our students and teachers to troubleshoot technical issues with the new platform.
- All WSWSU District Coordinators/Administrators (Mike RobbGrieco, Adam Bisson, Pam Bernardo, and Troy McAllister) for the new VTCAP state testing for leading and supporting school coordinators and test proctors (teachers) in this rollout.
- All school coordinators for supporting students and teachers in the new VTCAP state testing (all principals – Anna Roth, Andy Oyer, Robyn Oyer, Rebecca Fillion, Randy Lichtenwalner and Sandy Pentak; and their designees – Denise Piffard, TVMHS; Trish Appel and Angel Colford, TVES; Ashley Blevins, Readsboro; Layne Leary, Halifax, and Maya Miller & Madeline Levy, Stamford)
- All students who are giving their best effort on the new VTCAP state tests, for their adaptability and perseverance.

In the Know and Engaged (*professional meetings the Central Office Leadership Team attended*)

- Mike attended bi-weekly Wednesday AoE meetings about various grant management and continuous improvement topics.
- Mike and Adam attended weekly Thursday AoE/Cognia meetings where SU/District Administrators seek answers to questions about the new state summative assessment rollout.

- Troy attended AOE Special Education meetings to get updates and answers to myriad changes in special education this year and coming up for next year.
- Barbara Anne attended the survey design meeting with TVUUSD and the DOJ.
- Barbara Anne attended a PCB Policy Status Update with Representatives Peter Conlon and Erin Brady.
- Barbara Anne attended the TV policy committee meeting.
- Barbara Anne attended TV community engagement meetings.

Central Office Update

- Bill Binder has recently joined our office as our new HR Specialist:
 - Bill Binder is our new Human Resources Project Management Specialist. He has years of experience in administrative positions ranging from HR to Quality Assurance to Operations Management. Bill comes to our team from Dartmouth College where he worked in the Cancer Center as a Coordinator of several post-graduate programs.
- Terry Green will soon be joining us as our new Business Manager:
 - As our new Business Manager, Terry Green joins our team with thirty years' experience in Accounting & Business Administration. She has a strong and proven background in AP/AR, payroll and tax collection and preparation. Terry also has successfully obtained grants for Information Technology and has a sense for reducing costs. Most recently, Terry has been the Assistant Town Clerk for the Town of Rowe, MA.
- Contracts have been written and are in the process of being signed by board chairs.

Professional Development Provided to Our Teachers & Staff

- On Wednesday 4/12 during Trailblazer Hour, school-based teams used a common SU-wide agenda prepared by Pam Bernardo to apply the requirements of Act 173 for EST/MTSS/SPED Processes in examining their school's practices/system.
- On Wednesday 4/26, all WSWSU teachers and available staff met from 1:15 – 2:15pm for the third in a series of Trailblazer Hour sessions regarding Act 173 and EST/MTSS/SPED Processes. Led by Pam Bernardo (MTSS/EST Coordinator) and Troy, our third session engaged teachers in thinking through the process of identifying and documenting student struggles and needs through the EST and MTSS processes.
- On Wed. 5/3 during Trailblazer Hour, Pam Bernardo led all WSWSU teachers and available staff in a session on Inclusive Tier 1 (universal) Instruction using Differentiation.

Innovation Update

- All schools have begun VTCAP state testing, which will continue through the first week of June (with different grades/tests staggered through the window, and make ups).
 - Many technical issues have needed to be addressed at the state/platform level with the AoE and Cognia, including error messages interrupting or preventing testing despite our devices meeting all required specifications.
 - While awaiting technical support from AoE and Cognia, school and district coordinators have found workarounds by swapping devices and other means to ensure all students can access their state tests

- WWSU schools will administer new state summative assessments after April break through June 7 (extended) in ELA (grades 3-9), Math (grades 3-9) and Science (grades 5, 8, and 11).
- Teachers have been trained as test proctors, and have given students opportunities to use the Practice Test at the VTCAP/Cognia website before taking the state summative tests to allow them to get used to the computer based test (CBT).
- In a 5/4 memo to superintendents from Heather A. Bouchey, Interim Secretary of Education (VT AoE), Bouchey states:
 - **On technical challenges:** “many of the challenges experienced are due to the delays in the IT contracting process, which gave us a shorter runway for rolling out and testing the new system than originally contemplated. As with any new system, we will continue to identify bugs as we go along. Your willingness to test and provide quick feedback when problems arise has mitigated many issues... We deeply appreciate your hard work, patience, and collaboration. Your thoughts, ideas, and feedback are very valuable, and your engagement with us has greatly helped address issues”
 - **On test validity:** “we are hearing some concerns about potential impacts of the rollout on the validity of test results, or even concerns about the new assessment more generally. These assessments are closely aligned with Vermont standards and meet or exceed all psychometric standards for state summative assessments. We have read communications that purport otherwise, in particular about the Grade 9 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics assessments. I can state unequivocally that these claims are false. Further, we have seen nothing to undermine our confidence in the assessment results, but we are carefully monitoring results to ensure there are no systemic, statewide, or even regional patterns that indicate bias or inaccuracy of the assessment results... I recognize that opinions about summative standardized assessments differ, and it might be tempting to raise questions about assessment in light of the current technical challenges. We need to remember however, that these assessments do have a place in, and are a federally required aspect of, Vermont’s system for understanding student progress.”
 - **On results:** “We will, as we do every year, monitor the data closely to ensure that results are valid and reliable. We will also provide template communication materials for districts and schools to use in advance of assessment results going public”

Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

- The JEDI Team met on Thursday, May 4th. They are recommending to the administrators that an equity audit be conducted. More information to come!
- Planning is underway for Extended School Year (ESY) services for students with IEPs for the summer.

Facilities

- Facility Condition Assessment with Energy Audit
Site visits completed for TVMHS, Halifax, Stamford, and Readsboro
Upcoming site visit TVES June 2nd
- Continuing with LED lighting projects

- We are currently accepting bids for Cabinet Unit Heaters replacement at TVMHS
- TVES expecting results from latest PCB testing on 5/11

Technology Update

- Work is complete on our Spring AoE data submission - We successfully Certified our submission after verifying and updating our student and staff data.
- Our Summer AoE submission window has opened. This submission contains additional data such as student discipline.
- We are receiving quotes to procure 75 student chromebooks through Emergency Connectivity funding, with the deadline to use the \$18,900 by August 29, 2023.
- The Federal Civil Rights Data Collection window for school year 2021-2022 opens on May 15, 2023 .

Policy Update

There are a number of new required policies that you will be seeing coming in front of your district boards this month since your budget season comes to an end. Feel free to review these samples below.

- **[Policy Tracker](#)**
 - [C2 Student Alcohol & Drugs](#)
 - [C4 English Learners](#)
 - [C15 Student Conduct & Discipline](#)
 - [E1 Parent & Family Engagement](#)
 - [Exit Interview Policies](#) (for those districts who have not approved of it yet)

Board Negotiations Committee Update

- Staff Negotiations are still underway

Vermont School Boards Association Resources

Welcome to Your First Year Journey on Your School Board

~~May 8, 2023~~ | May 15, 2023

The journey begins with a series of two webinar sessions on May 8 and May 15 from 5:00pm until 7:00pm created exclusively for newly elected and newly appointed school board members. Join VSBA staff and state experts as we grapple with defining the work of school boards and their members, including governance issues, policy, the role of the board, expectations, financial basics, and board operations.

The First Year Journey sessions will be conducted virtually in 2023. There is no cost to attend, and we encourage all new members to register and attend both sessions. As soon as the VSBA staff are notified of new school board members they are mailed a copy of The Essential Work of Vermont School Boards. This book will be referenced substantially throughout this series. If you have not received one as a new school board member, please contact our office.

[REGISTER HERE](#) (Free)

Zoom Forum: Board Chairs & Vice Chairs May 19, 2023

We are convening a meeting for current board chairs and vice chairs on Friday, May 19 at 9:00am. The intent is to discuss common challenges and opportunities. You may be interested in sharing questions or suggestions for navigating uncertainties, running effective meetings, receiving public comments, or other aspects of your role. Come prepared to contribute and learn. This networking will not be recorded. Please register if you can attend live. Participation will be limited to the first 40 registrants.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

How to Make the Most of a Summer Board Retreat May 30, 2023

Does your board get bogged down in routine work at your regular business meetings throughout the year? A summer retreat is the perfect opportunity to step back and focus on the big picture. In this webinar we'll address the value of board self assessment, goal setting, and developing an annual work plan. We will also discuss how important it is for the board to have clear and agreed priorities written down. This can help give direction to the superintendent, assistant in their evaluation, and focus the system for improved student outcomes.

[REGISTER HERE](#) (Free)

The Opportunity of Governance Standards Webinar June 13, 2023

Recently adopted Governance Standards go into effect this year. They provide excellent guidance for boards to focus on the things that matter most—adopting a collaboratively developed vision with priorities for student success, working well

together as a team, and following transparent, predictable processes for the board's work. This webinar provides an introduction to the standards and highlights ways school boards can use these to their advantage. Expect specific insights and examples your board can apply to improve its work and your affect on student outcomes.

[REGISTER HERE](#) (Free)

Best Practices for Board Reports August 8, 2023

All boards receive reports from the superintendent, administrators and finance reports. In this webinar we will speak with those that prepare those reports and talk about items boards need to see in those reports. We will provide some best practice both written and oral reports. Consider what information the reports should include and what questions board members might have when receiving the reports. Discuss how this relates to board agendas and an ability to make sure the main thing is represented as the main thing in your board meetings.

[REGISTER HERE](#) (Free)

Proposed VSBA Resolutions September 5, 2023

VSBA Resolutions provide guidance to staff and the VSBA board when they are working in the legislature or developing programs and services for members. Learn about each VSBA resolution proposed for consideration for FY 2022 and understand the board's positions to establish your SU/SD position for voting at the Annual Meeting at Lake Morey on November 4. Resolutions are generated by member school district boards, the VSBA Board, and its Resolution Committee. The committee makes a recommendation to the full board of "pass", "do not pass", or "take no position" on each resolution. Then, one delegate from each VSBA-member SU/SD votes on all resolutions at the Annual Meeting.

[REGISTER HERE](#) (Free)

The Role of the School Board in Hearings October 3, 2023

The District has a lot at stake. Do have personal legal protection? What is a hearing and what responsibility do you, as a board member have in a hearing? What is Due Process in a student discipline or termination of an employee hearing? What Does and What Should the Board Know in Advance? The role of the administrator, the board members, and the board chair. Should the hearing be in open meeting or executive session? What are rules of evidence and burden of proof?

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Dates to Note

- Eboard - Wednesday, May 24, 2023
- Superboard - Wednesday, June 14, 2023