

From the Board Room

A newsletter for members of the Vermont School Boards Association, 2 Prospect Street, Suite #4, Montpelier VT 05602
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Articles printed represent diverse points of view and maybe controversial in nature. It is the belief of the Association that the democratic process functions best through discussions which challenge and stimulate thinking on the part of the reader. Therefore, materials published present the ideas/beliefs of those who write them and are not necessarily the views or policies of the VSBA unless so stated. This newsletter is distributed at no charge to all members of the Association. Contact the Association by calling 802-223-3580.

Annual Regional Meetings Featured Discussion on Act 82, Delivery of Education

By David Cyprian

VSBA staff members once again hit the road in September to host regional meetings across Vermont. These free gatherings provided an opportunity for board members to meet colleagues from around their region and share regional concerns, to discuss statewide issues with VSBA staff, and to elect regional officers to the Board of Directors and Resolutions Committee. Overall, the meetings were a definite success this year with a full slate of issues eliciting discussion, including a spirited dialogue around Act 82, and a probable record attendance set at the Windham/Windsor regional meetings in Southeast Vermont.

Associate Director Winton Goodrich anchored the evenings' proceedings, and explained the implications of Vermont's new law on required supervisory union bargaining. Executive Director John Nelson presented on challenges facing

local boards including rising energy costs, declining school enrollments, and the impact of poverty on student achievement. I presented on the implications of Act 82 for local school boards.

VSBA President Peter Herman introduced the Delivery Document and elicited comment on it from the membership. The Delivery Document is a sweeping new vision for the future of education delivery in Vermont that is the product of a working group of



Herman at the Southeast meeting.

some VSBA Board members and others. Its presentation has coincided with the State Board of Education's Transformation of Education initiative, both of which seek to reexamine the role of schools and learning in the 21st century. For more information on the Delivery Document, check out Peter's column on page 2.

REGIONAL continued on page 5

VSBA/VSA Conference
October 30-31
See page 12 & 13

Delivery Document Reviewed at Regional Meetings

By Peter Herman, VSBA President

As many VSBA members know, a small group of the membership, most but not all of whom are on the VSBA Board, have created what is called the "Delivery Document," a proposal to revamp our current school system with a focus on student learning. Let me be very clear that this is not a proposal made by the VSBA Board or by the VSBA – it is entirely independent of the Association at this time. The VSBA Board did review it and suggested that it be discussed at the regional meetings and at the Annual Conference. The Board was not asked to, and did not, however accept or approve the recommendations.

Part of the impetus for Delivery came from two other efforts, the Transformation Document of the State Board of Education and the governance based recommendations of the Education/Business Roundtable committee. Both addressed education reform, but the Delivery group felt that Transformation was too general and did not provide any idea of how the recommendations might play out in schools. The EBR report in its latest incarnation is almost entirely concerned with governance of the education system at the state level. Both are works in progress, and the latest version of Transformation has more specifics. It is entirely possible that some of the concepts in Delivery will be incorporated into subsequent Transformation interactions.

Unlike Transformation, which looks to change, but retain, the current system, the Delivery group began with the as-

sumption that a new design might not include any component of what now exists – not boards, not districts, not teachers, not even schools. The proposal is based on two basic premises: first that the only thing that matters in student learning, and how it is achieved is largely irrelevant. Second, that to achieve improved learning, students must have a much larger say in the what, where, when, and how of their education. At the operating level, learning can and should take place wherever students feel comfortable and passionate about it. At what we now call high school age, most learning will be project based and learners might seldom or never be in a "school" building. The learning environment will be the community and, by utilizing technology, the whole world. The role of adults will be to act as mentors and coaches for the learners,

"The role of adults will be to act as mentors and coaches for the learners, ensuring that they address their learning in a rigorous way."

ensuring that they address their learning in a rigorous way. Some of these adults will undoubtedly be those who currently serve as teachers, but some may be parents, employers, or simply community members with appropriate knowledge and skills. Learning may be independent or in groups,

"...students must have a much larger say in the what, where, when, and how of their education."

some of which will be very similar to what we now call "classes." Entry to this open environment will be through a primary learning period in which young learners are expected to become competent in the basic skills necessary for future learning, including reading, arithmetic, communications, and social skills.

A number of VSBA members who participated in the Regional Meetings have commented

on the proposal though e-mails to the VSBA office. These have been routed to me as your president and the de facto spokesperson for Delivery, and I have tried to respond to all of them. Most respondents have been surprised that we moved so boldly and are supportive of the broad concepts, although a number noted correctly that much more thought needs to be given to implementation and how this will play out. Some questioned specific areas like special education or college admissions, and some are concerned that the broad curriculum now in place would not be required. A few thought that the whole idea was crazy, mostly because they were concerned that students were not mature enough to be given so much control over what they learned.

The next opportunity for participation in this on going effort will be at the Annual Meeting, and I urge all board members to attend. 🚌

Facebook, States Collaborate on Child Internet Safety

by Jessica L. Spears

Facebook, the popular social networking Web site, will add more than 40 new safeguards to protect users from sexual predators and cyberbullies. This move is a result of a recent agreement between Facebook and 49 state attorneys general, including Vermont's.

Facebook also is participating in an industry-wide Internet Safety Technical Task Force devoted to developing age and identity verification software.

The new safeguards may protect students from dangers posed by commercial social-networking Web sites.

You can read the agreement between Facebook and the state attorneys general, called the Joint Statement on Key Principles of Social Networking Sites Safety, on the Ohio attorney general's Web site at www.ag.state.oh.us/press/08/05/pr080508.asp.

Among the safeguards, Facebook has agreed to remove groups whose comments or images suggest they involve incest, pedophilia, bullying or other inappropriate content. The site will also implement features that can isolate the profiles of under-18 Facebook users from adult Facebook users. Users under 18 can choose to block all users older than 18 from viewing their profile, and no adult users will be allowed to

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VSBIT MULTI-LINE INTERMUNICIPAL SCHOOL PROGRAM

by Joe Zimmerman, VSBIT Director

VSBIT Corner

Established in 2004 by 25 "core members," the VSBIT Multi-line Intermunicipal School Program (<http://www.vorbit.org/htm/multiline.cfm>) presently has a membership of 35 supervisory unions and/or stand alone school districts. This Program is owned by its member schools and managed by VSBIT staff with extensive knowledge of pooling and property/casualty coverage. This non-profit program exists solely to meet the needs of its member schools and its sole objective is to help districts protect their resources through a comprehensive program of risk management.

The Multi-line program provides schools with group purchasing power, stability and top quality coverage in addition to offering the following benefits of membership:

Long Term Price Stability/Affordability

Peaks and valleys of the traditional insurance marketplace are eliminated.

Member Owned/Controlled

Members share program surplus and assist in developing coverage and related services.

Tailored Loss Control

Training and other risk management activities are designed specifically for Vermont schools.

Collaborative Claims Management

Claims are adjusted in partnership with each member.

Panel of Attorneys

VSBIT's panel of defense attorneys are experts in Vermont school law and are poised to proactively help you through employment and general liability issues.

Resource Center


Program staff is always available to answer questions, provide guidance, offer advice, research issues and assist in many other ways.

Miscellaneous Services

Building appraisals, contract review, tailored claim reports, and more.

Overview of Program Coverage:

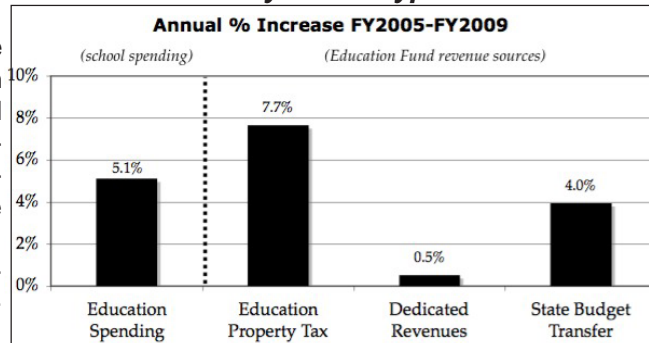
- ◆ Property (including earthquake and flood and boiler & Machinery (equipment breakdown)
- ◆ Inland Marine
- ◆ Crime
- ◆ Automobile Liability and Physical Damage
- ◆ General Liability, School Board Legal Liability, and optional Excess Liability (optional)
- ◆ Workers' Compensation/Employers Liability
- ◆ Catastrophic Student Accident Coverage

For more information contact the VSBIT Multi Line office at 223-6132 

Why Do Property Tax Increases Exceed Increases in Education Spending?

By David Cyprian

As the graphic depicts, since Act 68 was implemented in fiscal year 2005, the annual increase in education spending has been 5.1% but education property taxes have increased by 7.7% annually, excluding “income sensitivity” payments returned to taxpayers.



Because both of these revenue sources have increased less than education spending, the property tax must cover the difference, and therefore increase more than education spending in a given year. Unless policymakers in Montpelier adjust the formulas for providing the Education Fund with dedicated revenues and State budget monies, education spending increases in the 4-5% range will likely continue to cause property tax increases that are significantly larger. 🚗

The main reason is that other sources of revenue for the Education Fund have not been maintained at levels needed to keep property taxes increases commensurate with increases in spending. Vermont law requires certain tax receipts (including portions of the sales & use tax, the motor vehicle purchase &

use tax, and Vermont lottery profits) to be deposited into the Education Fund. These “dedicated revenues” have seen almost no growth since 2005 (0.5% annually). Also, Vermont annually deposits funds from the regular State budget into the Education Fund, and this transfer has increased by only 4% annually since 2005.

Data Sources: Joint Fiscal Office, VT Dept. of Education. FY2009 figures are best available estimates.

Twenty-three School Board Members Running for Legislature

As local civic leaders, school board members often wear more than one hat in service to their community. Board members sometimes also wish to play a role as a leader on state and local issues outside of their school district. During the 2007-2008 legislative biennium, six members of the Senate and twelve members of the House of Representatives were either current or former school board members. Experience as a school board member can certainly help a legislator evaluate bills; not only those directly related to schools, but also those that might have indirect impacts on school operations. 23 current school board members are running for the State Legislature this year, including the following two members of the VSBA’s Board of Directors.

Lucy Ramsay

Ramsay of Berkshire, recently elected as president of the Franklin-Lamoille

VSBA region, is running as a Democrat for a seat in the House, in the Franklin-6 district. Ramsay serves as chair of both the Berkshire Elementary school board and the Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union board. She is a freelance administrative assistant working through an agency.

Linda Waite-Simpson

Waite-Simpson of Essex Junction, recently reelected to her second term on the VSBA Board, is running as a Democrat for a seat in the House, in the Chittenden 6-2 district. She joined the Essex Junction School District Prudential Committee in 2003 and is currently serving as chair. Waite-Simpson’s work experience includes Director of Communications for a New York City non-profit association followed by a career in IT at a Fortune 500 company. Waite-Simpson is now a stay-at-home mom with her two daughters. She continues her IT work on

a contracted basis and also started a small baking business as well as an online antiques business.

Other current school board members who are running for the Legislature are listed below, along with his or her party affiliation, town of residence, and the district in which he or she is running. Incumbents are marked with an asterisk.

Scott Beaudin (R), Burlington, Chittenden 3-1

Peggy Burbo (R), Grand Isle, Grand Isle-Chittenden 1

Kevin “Coach” Christie (D), Hartford, Windsor 6-2

Agnes Cliff (R), South Burlington, Chittenden Senate

LEGISLATURE continued on page 5...

The Regional Meetings were particularly rewarding for me personally as I was able to interact with new and veteran board members around the State for the first time. My presentation on Act 82, the two-vote law, elicited many thoughtful questions and intelligent discussions among the attendees. Some of the two-vote issues that we uncovered or emphasized during the discussions included the extreme challenge for districts that tuition students, the challenges of special articles being disallowed for two-vote districts, and the differentiated strategies for passing school budgets for districts with Australian ballot and those with floor votes.



Executive Director John Nelson takes questions.

To view any of the Powerpoint slideshows that were presented at the regional meeting, click on the "Downloads" page at www.vtvsba.org.

Regionally elected officers will begin their terms in November. Those elected are listed below.

Regional Elections

Addison region

Kristin Bristow, President
Jane Low, Vice President
Bonita Bedard, Resolutions Rep.
Mark Perrin, Alt Reso. Rep.

Bennington-Rutland region

Ken Swierad, President
Ed Hemmer, Vice President
Chuck Piotrowski, Resolutions Rep.
Ray Mullineaux, Alt Reso. Rep.



Chittenden-Grand Isle region

Linda Waite-Simpson, President
G. Miller, Vice President
Grant Bush, Resolutions Rep.
Joan Lenes, Alt Reso. Rep.

Franklin-Lamoille region

Lucy Ramsay, President
Elaine Carpenter, Vice President
Kathy Gaston, Resolutions Rep.
Marie Race, Alt Reso. Rep.


Washington-Orange region

Ginny Burley, President
Ann Howard, Vice President
Angelo Odatto, Resolutions Rep.
Dick Kelley, Alt Reso. Rep.

Windham region

Russ Capron, President
Emily Long, Vice President
Dave Culver, Resolutions Rep.
Ruth Barton, Alt Reso. Rep.

Windsor region

Larry Kraft, President
Carl Groppe, Vice President
Sarah Dwyer, Resolutions Rep. 
Diana Chimbolo, Alt Reso. Rep.

Editor's Note:

The Caledonia/Essex/Orleans regional meeting was postponed and rescheduled for the VSA/VSBA Annual Fall Conference.

***Don Collins** (D), Swanton, Franklin Senate

Chip Conquest (D), Newbury, Orange-Caledonia 1

Peter J. Fagan (R), Rutland City, Rutland 5-1

Jonathan Goddard (D), Berlin, Washington 3-3

***Reginald R. Godin** (D), Milton, Chittenden 9

Lucien G. Gravel (R), Wolcott, Lamoille 2

Adam Greshin (I), Warren, Washington 1

***Martha Heath** (D), Westford, Chittenden 6-3

Douglas Isham (I), Winooski, Chittenden 3-6

***Willem Jewett** (D), Ripton, Addison 2

***Joan G. Lenes** (D), Shelburne, Chittenden 5-2

Laura Moore (D), Barre Town, Washington Senate

***Carolyn Partridge** (D), Windham, Windham 4

Melissa Pettersson (D), Derby, Orleans 1

John J. Pizzo (D), Barre Town, Washington 4

Tess Taylor (D), Barre City, Washington 3-2

George Till (D), Jericho, Chittenden 8 

Editor's Note: A sincere effort was made to identify all board members running for office. If we missed or misidentified anyone, please contact our office and let us know.

Champlain Valley Regional Convocation Features Speakers Pink, November

By David Cyprian

On August 22, over 3000 educators, administrators and school board members from the Champlain Valley region attended to a new back-to-school activity, a day-long Convocation featuring nationally recognized speakers at the Essex High School hockey rink. The convocation showcased the talented SPEAK chorus from Woodstock Union High School before offering the assembly lessons on the role of education in the 21st century.



Daniel Pink

Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind*, implored educators to recognize that the 21st century world their students will live and work in will require different skill sets and capacities than that of the late 20th century. He asserted that any task in the working world that could be described as “routine” will be outsourced overseas or replaced by technology in the coming years. For Pink, routine extends far beyond blue collar manufacturing jobs. For example, he showed how legal websites are offering consumers inexpensive services like will creation for a fraction of the cost attorneys charge.

Pink then explained that, in this environment, businesses look for two specific qualities in potential employees, other than the ability to think analytically. The first is to be able to be creative, recognize patterns and see the “big picture.” These right-brain functions will be increasingly important in a society where fewer and fewer American jobs involve routine, logical, left-brain thinking. The second quality employers seek is social skills like empathy and

humor, traits that allow individuals to work and excel in groups.

After lunch, Alan November challenged the assembled educators to embrace technology in the classroom. He explained that he commonly hears that schools do not know how to implement technology into the curriculum, particularly when students are often more comfortable with computers and electronics

than their educators. November’s message: take chances, and let the students show you how much they can do. An educator does not need to know the finer details of a specific technology for it to be a teaching tool. For example, he shared a website that allows students to make educational videos and publish them online. Educators need to know only the basics to lead their students to the website, and allow the kids to master the intricacies. 🚌

FACEBOOK continued from page 3

perform age-based profile searches on users under 18.

In light of increasing instances of cyberbullying of students, educators and parents can take comfort in Facebook’s agreement to provide a safer online experience for children. One of the main principles of the joint statement reads: “Educating parents, educators and children about safe and responsible social networking site use is also a necessary part of a safe Internet experience for children.”

Facebook will dedicate resources, including the site’s intent to engage in public service announcements, to convey information to parents and educators. Facebook also will promote free parental monitoring software on its site and explore the possibility of establishing a children’s e-mail registry. According to the statement, Facebook and the attorneys general will work together to support and enhance the ability of law enforcement officials to investigate and prosecute Internet crimes. 🚌

Jessica Spears is a policy specialist with the Ohio Association of School Boards. This article was adapted from the OASB newsletter.

The Vermont Association of Supervision & Curriculum Development Presents:

The Whole Child Series

Jim Moulton

Effective Technology Integration to Enhance Learning & Instruction

8:30 – 4:00 PM

Registration fee: \$120,
VTASCD Members: \$95

Two locations:

Thursday November 6, 2008
Holiday Inn – Rutland

Contact Wendy Clark at the Chittenden South Supervisory Union Office to register or for more information.

Phone: (802) 383-1234

E-mail: wclark@cssu.org 🚌

Friday, November 7, 2008

Doubletree Hotel – South Burlington

Newton School Teacher Named 2009 Vermont Teacher of the Year

By Jill Remick

Diana Leddy, a grade three, four and five teacher at The Newton School in South Strafford, was named by the State Board of Education as the 2009 Vermont Teacher of the Year.

As the 2009 recipients, Leddy will travel statewide and nationally visiting schools and working with teachers. In addition, she is Vermont's candidate for the National Teacher of the Year award, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers. She will also travel to Washington, D.C. this spring for a reception at the White House.

Leddy was presented with SMART Board™ equipment and software for her classroom, with software and materials going to each of the two finalists. In addition, the Department of Education donated \$5,000 towards classroom-related supplies and activities.

Leddy, a resident of Thetford Center, has been an educator at The Newton School since 2003. "After 27 years, being a teacher still challenges and fascinates me," she wrote in her nomination packet. "I want to refine the continually evolving vision that I have of a quality classroom, and to experiment with new tools that bring me closer to that ideal. I bring the understanding that real growth often involves the painful questioning of long-held assumptions and the ability to let go of old ways."

Leddy has been active in advocating for statewide literacy for over a decade. She worked on statewide teams to develop Vermont's Primary Benchmarks for Writing, and to plan and lead Vermont's first Primary Writing Network. She worked on Department of Education teams with other educators to develop the Vermont Grade Expectations in writing, and on item review for

the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), in grades three through eight. She worked with area teachers to create standards-based units and curricula in reading, writing, science and social studies. She also serves on the school's action planning committee, and she helped found the Vermont Writing Collaborative.

Also honored were:

- ◆ Alternate Kathryn Grace, a literacy and special education teacher at Founders Memorial in Essex Junction.
- ◆ Finalists Sandra Frizzell, an English teacher at North Country Union High School and Dr. Jonathan Rice, a science teacher at Green Mountain Union High School. 🚌

Editor's Note: Jill Remick is the Communications Director for the Department of Education.



Ginny Burley Named Afterschool Ambassador

The Afterschool Alliance last month announced the selection of Ginny Burley of Community Connections to serve as a 2008-2009 Afterschool Ambassador. She is one of just 18 local leaders from 15 states selected for the honor. Each Ambassador will continue directing or supporting a local afterschool program while also serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term organizing public events, communicating with policy makers, and building support for afterschool programs. Burley also serves on the U32 High School board and on the VSBA's Board of Directors as the Washington-Orange regional president.

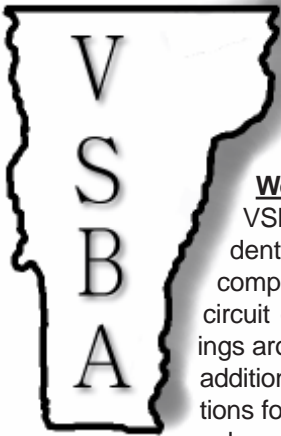
"Afterschool programs keep children safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families," said Afterschool Al-

liance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Americans strongly support afterschool programs but there aren't nearly enough to meet the need, and rising fuel prices and tight budgets at all levels of government are putting financial pressure on the programs we have. In her work as an Afterschool Ambassador, Ginny Burley will bring energy and talent to the task of spreading the word about the need to make afterschool programs available to all families that need them. I look forward to working with her to build support for afterschool among parents, business and community leaders, lawmakers, and the media. We are proud to have Ginny on our team."

Since 2001, Community Connections has been serving the children and families of Berlin, Calais, East Montpe-

lier, Middlesex, Montpelier, and Worcester with before- and afterschool programs for youth ages pre-k to 12; mentoring; prevention programs; dropout prevention and alternative diploma. Burley has been Director since the very beginning. Community Connections serves more than 1,000 Central Vermont youth every year. 🚌

Editor's Note: The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. It is not affiliated with the VSBA. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.



VSBA Around Vermont

By Winton Goodrich, VSBA Associate Director

Workshops

VSBA staff and president, Peter Herman, completed the annual circuit of regional meetings around Vermont. In addition to hosting elections for regional officers and resolutions committee, workshops were presented on topics including the delivery of education, current and future legislative initiatives, implications of Act 82 two-vote budget passage, and supervisory union negotiations.

I worked with the **Lamoille Union HS** board to help them begin developing leadership assumptions and goals. This process will continue later this month.

Supervisory Union Collaboration

I facilitated a meeting between school leaders from **St. Johnsbury, Caledonia Central SU**, and **Monroe, NH** as they discussed possible management and governance collaboration options. The process was precipitated by the pending retirement of the Monroe superintendent and that district's need to access professional development and central office administrative functions.

Strategic Planning

The Caledonia Central Supervisory Union strategic planning process in **Walden, Danville**, and **Barnet** continue. Marty Jacobs, VSBA consultant, is leading the planning process that precedes hosting community forums in each town.

I will begin working with **Georgia Elementary School** leaders to facilitate a similar strategic planning process in that district.

Technical Assistance for Boards that Govern AYP Compliance Districts

One of my goals this year is to provide information and resources for districts that are identified as in need of assistance under NCLB AYP compliance regulations. The plan is for VSBA staff to meet periodically with Dept. of Education AYP consultants to align school leader resources with VSBA board development materials. The priority is to work with the eleven school boards that govern school districts which have been identified for AYP non-compliance for four or more years. I work with the **Bennington Elementary Board** later in October with this focus in mind.

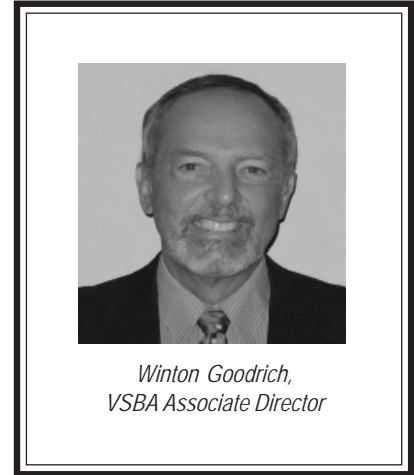
VSBA Governance Studies

I am wrapping up the **Hartland/Hartford** phase I governance study that explored the benefits and challenges to both districts if Hartland discontinues high school choice and creates either a union district or a joint contract school with Hartford. The short story here is the reverse of what one may assume; Hartford gains high school students and diminishes their cost per pupil—the Hartland Elementary budget increases and would be a likely candidate for the Act 82 split vote distinction.

I continue to work with **Whitingham** and **Wilmington** (Twin Valley Joint Contract School) as they focus on a facilities bond vote in March 2009.

I am working with Tom O'Brien, Addison Northwest superintendent and governance consultant, on the **Pittsfield** governance study committee. This study explores the financial and school quality benefits and challenges to Pittsfield if this district, which currently does not operate a school, were to discontinue school choice and create a governance relationship with another district in the region.

Laura Soares has completed a phase I governance study for **Underhill, Underhill ID**, and **Jericho**. She pre-



Winton Goodrich,
VSBA Associate Director

sented study findings to school leaders. The next step is to proceed to phase II of the governance study.

I met with the **Rochester** board to discuss a possible resolution to promote a tuition designation option at the VSBA annual meeting.

I presented information about Act 68 and governance study options to a future options sub-committee of the **Morgan School Board**.

Ray Proulx and I facilitated a community forum on future options for the **Plymouth Elementary School**. Options included possible collaboration or consolidation with neighboring districts.

I worked with Laura Soares and John Nelson to present governance roles and responsibilities for a Vermont Superintendents Association new superintendents professional development series.

Policy Governance

Laura Soares continues to facilitate a Policy Governance implementation process with the Hartford School District and is working with Robin Scheu to do the same for the entire Orange South-

VSBA continued on page 13

Tips for Effective Board Members and Chairs

Advice for new board members:

- ◆ **Listen.** You can learn a lot from your colleagues on the board, administrators, staff, parents, community members, and students.
- ◆ **Read your board policies.** These documents are the board's way of communicating the direction for the superintendent and the school system.
- ◆ **Don't take it personally.** At times your colleagues, parents, or the public may passionately disagree with your vote.
- ◆ **Keep up to date on educational issues.** By staying informed, you will have more confidence that your decisions are in the best interest of the students in your district.
- ◆ **Learn the difference between governance and operations.** Some new board members unknowingly cause the board to micromanage the school system because they have not learned their governing role.

- ◆ **Seek professional development training.** The VSBA strives to keep its members up to date on best policies and practices for boards at the annual VSA/VSBA Conference, at VSBA workshops, in this newsletter, and online at www.vtvsba.org.

Effective board chairs should have the skills to do the following:

- ◆ **Lead and focus.** Build a team around key areas of agreement that move the district forward in pursuit of its mission.
- ◆ **Encourage.** Facilitate open deliberation and sharing ideas as the board weighs decisions. Be friendly and responsive to others; accept others' contributions.
- ◆ **Mediate.** Identify areas of compromise, recognize differences of opinion and ideas, and conciliate. Work to diffuse conflict and repair tension.
- ◆ **Monitor.** Make sure all board members participate. Limit discus-

sion by those who dominate. Keep the discussion on the issue.

- ◆ **Set standards.** Promote professionalism, facilitate the board in establishing rules of conduct, model ethical behavior, and ensure adherence to open meetings laws and other policies.
- ◆ **Seek information.** Foresee and ask for relevant information the board needs to make good decisions.
- ◆ **Clarify and summarize.** Probe, restate, define discussions and identify points of agreement. Bring out important points and identify the next steps.
- ◆ **Test.** Check to see if the board is ready to take action.
- ◆ **Be a navigator,** planner, organizer, communicator, interpreter, confidant, liaison, conscience, caretaker, troubleshooter and more.



Portions of this article were adapted from school board association newsletters in Alabama and Iowa.

Secretary Spellings Proposes "Education Indicators"

Just as the media report on economic indicators, Education Week reports, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spellings has proposed five leading educational indicators: overall achievement; the size of the gap in achievement between minority and white students; the high school drop-out rate; the college-readiness rate; and the college-completion rate. Spellings said that when applied to the 7½ years President Bush has been in office, the overall index has increased, but she conceded some indicators have been stagnant. The overall index has increased because of growth in student achievement and progress in closing the test-score gap between whites and

minorities. Progress on those indicators is determined by scores on the National Assessment of Educational

Progress. Spellings attributes the achievement gains to the No Child Left Behind Act.

	US (2000)	US (2007)
% Proficient in Math & Reading	25%	33%
% of black and Hispanic as proficient as whites	23%	35%
Four-year graduation cohort	72%	74%
College Readiness	42%	42%
% of 25-34 year olds with Bachelors degree	29%	31%

This article has been reprinted with permission from the NSBA's Legal Clips service.

Five Proposed New Resolutions for Association to Consider

One important piece of business that occurs every year at the VSBA's annual business meeting is to adopt or reject proposed resolutions for the Association. Adopted resolutions guide the work of the VSBA, and the message of individual resolutions carry the weight of having been considered and approved by the full Association membership. The annual business meeting occurs as part of the VSA/VSBA Annual Fall Conference, to be held this year October 30th and 31st at the Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee. The business meeting is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 30th.

Some resolutions are proposed by individual school boards across Vermont, and then are considered by the VSBA Resolutions Committee. The chair of the Resolutions Committee is VSBA 1st Vice President Kalee Roberts. Other Resolutions Committee members are elected at each regional meeting in September annually. The Committee also submits its own resolutions each year. Next, the VSBA Board of Directors considers each resolution approved by the Resolutions Committee and chooses whether to recommend that the membership approve or reject each resolution. This year, five new resolutions are proposed, and the Board has voted to recommend approval of four of the five. The proposed resolutions are as follows.

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION: School Directors' Terms

Submitted by: **Mt. Abraham U.H.S. Board**

Whereas: Much of the work performed by a school board is related to the budgetary process and the education fiscal calendar runs from July 1 to June 30;

And Whereas: A new school board director has a great deal of information

to learn and absorb, particularly with regard to budgetary matters;

Be It Resolved: After the election of school board directors is held on Town Meeting Day, the term for board directors would begin on July 1st. This would allow a period of training between March and July 1st and directors' terms would match the budget cycle.

(VSBA Board Recommendation: Do Not Pass)

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION: High School Completion

Submitted by: **VSBA Resolutions Committee**

Whereas: Act 176 of 2006 established a High School Completion program whereby individuals between the ages of 16 and 22, who have not completed high school and are not enrolled in a public school, may gain credit toward high school graduation by completing graduation education plans developed by approved providers of adult basic education and participating approved independent and public high schools,

And Whereas: The High School Completion program has had the effect of greater collaboration between high schools, approved programs and students at risk of not graduating from high school,

And Whereas: Approximately 134 students (in FY 2008) have gained high school diplomas through the High School Completion program, and

Whereas: The requirement that funding for individuals participating in graduation plans through the High School Completion program be limited to individuals who are not enrolled in school has had the unintended result of some students dropping out of high school in

order to receive services from approved providers

Be It Resolved: The VSBA encourages the General Assembly to amend Section 1049a(1) of Title 16 by eliminating the requirement that graduation education plans be available only to individuals not enrolled in public schools.

(VSBA Board Recommendation: Pass)

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION: Four-day school week

Submitted by: **VSBA Resolutions Committee**

Whereas: Rising energy and food prices are adding cost pressures to school districts across Vermont;

And Whereas: A recent survey of school administrators found that 15% of districts nationwide are considering adopting, and 3% of districts have adopted, a four-day school week;

And Whereas: School districts currently operating under a four-day week are almost exclusively small and rural;

And Whereas: Some education experts are concerned that a four-day week may have negative effects on learning and retention;

And Whereas: Research findings show that four day school weeks present particular challenges for elementary students, who may find longer classroom hours difficult;

And Whereas: Research further shows that cost savings from four day school weeks are often less than expected, yielding minimal reductions in property taxes

RESOLUTIONS continued on page 11

Be It Resolved: The Legislature should direct the Commissioner of Education to make available assistance to districts that wish to consider the financial and academic effects of adopting a four-day school week in their local community.

(VSBA Board Recommendation: Pass)
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PROPOSED RESOLUTION: Alternate Supervisory Union Board Members

Submitted By: **VSBA Resolutions Committee**

Whereas: Current law requires each school board with more than three members to elect three of its board members to represent and act for the district at supervisory union board meetings, and

Whereas: This method of selecting supervisory union board members does not allow a school board to appoint alternates to represent the board when an elected representative is unable to attend a supervisory board meeting, and

Whereas: The inability to appoint alternates to supervisory union boards results in boards being under-represented at supervisory union board meetings

Be It Resolved: The VSBA encourages the General Assembly to amend Section 266 of Title 16 by providing for the appointment by member school boards of alternate representatives to supervisory union boards.

(VSBA Board Recommendation: Pass)
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PROPOSED RESOLUTION: Growth Models

Submitted By: **VSBA Resolutions Committee**

Whereas: The Federal No Child Left Behind Act gives schools credit for the percent of students achieving the state's "proficient" level, regardless of how far individual students have progressed to reach proficiency, and


And Whereas: Expanding the proficient view of achievement by recognizing that some students have much further to go to reach proficiency would enable schools to use test results to address learning needs of individual students, and

And Whereas: Utilization of growth model measurements reveal the amount of each student's academic progress between two points in time and produce a more accurate picture of school and well as student achievement, and

And Whereas: The U.S. Department of Education, recognizing the potential of growth model measures, has allowed nine states to develop pilot growth model assessment systems, and

And Whereas: Results from the pilot states will provide information that Vermont and other states can use to develop their own growth model assessment measures

Be It Resolved: The VSBA urges the State Board of Education and Department of Education to actively pursue opportunities to determine whether a growth model approach to NCLBA testing would benefit Vermont students and produce more accurate measures of school success, and should implement a growth model system that will produce those results.

(VSBA Board Recommendation: Pass)


A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute's Annual Youth Congress


Trickery, Trolling and Threats: Recognizing and Responding to Cyberbullying

**November 6, 2008
7:45 am to 1:00 pm**

**Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center
Montpelier**

Please note that there is no cost to participants to attend the event; however individuals and school must pre-register to attend.

As recently as 2007, more than four out of ten teens ranging in age from 13 to 17 report that they have experienced some form of cyberbullying during the last year. The impact of cyberbullying is far reaching – victims and their families are left devastated, cyberbullies often remain anonymous and free to continue their hateful behaviors, and the safety of the school communities is compromised. To address these is-

ssues, workshop participants will examine the nature and impact of cyberbullying, explore its connections to bias-motivated behaviors and online activities, and develop action steps that will empower them and other members of their school communities to take a stand against cyberbullying and foster a culture of e-safety. 

Editor's note: This conference is not affiliated with the VSBA.

VSA/VSBA Conference October 30 & 31 Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee Draft Agenda

Thursday, October 30, 2008

- 8:30 **Registration**
 9:15 **Conference Welcome**
 9:30 **Conference Keynote: Student Aspirations**, Russ Quaglia, Ph.D.
 10:30 **Break**
 10:50 **Student Aspirations Discussion** (continued)
 1:15 **Workshop Strands**
 Building and Sustaining Public School & Child Care Partnerships for Pre-K
 Legal and Practical Implications of Bargaining as a Supervisory Union
 Policy Governance Networking
 Hunger in Vermont Children: Why School Meals Are So Important and How to Increase Participation
 2:30 **Break**
 2:45 **Workshop Strands**
 "The Pathway to Friendship" by Students from the Center for Respectful Schools of the Vermont Peace Academy
 Assisting Parents to be a Positive Member of Their Child's Educational Team
 Strategies for Improving Academic Performance with Students in Poverty
 Turning Conflict and Generational Differences Into Creative Leadership.
 4:00 **Vermont School Board Insurance Trust Annual Meeting**
 4:30 **VSBA Annual Meeting and VSA Fall Business Meeting**
 6:45 **VSBIT Reception**
 7:15 **Dinner**

Friday, October 31, 2008

- 7:30 **Registration**
 7:30 **Aspiring Superintendents Breakfast**
 8:30 **Welcome and Student Performance**
 9:00 **Keynote and Follow-Up Dialogue - Fate of Public Education**, Dr. Gene V Glass
 10:30 **Break**
 10:45 **Workshop Strands**
 What Does "Farm to School" Mean for Your Communities
 Basics of Policy Governance
 Focusing Board Development on Improving Student Achievement
 International Baccalaureate and Breaking Ranks
 12:15 **Luncheon – VSBA Leadership Award**
 1:45 **General Session: Education Reform in Vermont: Local and State Perspectives on What is Needed and What is Possible.**
 3:00 **Adjourn**

Workshop Descriptions

Building and Sustaining Public School & Child Care Partnerships for Pre-K - *An overview of how the VCPC project provides resources for communities to establish, strengthen and sustain high quality preschool experiences for 3 and 4 year olds that qualify for public education funding while ensuring collaborative planning that involves families, the public schools, child care providers, other early education service providers, and community members.*

Legal and Practical Implications of Bargaining as a Supervisory Union – *An explanation of when bargaining is legally required to occur on a supervisory union wide basis, a discussion of whether it is advisable even when it's not required and different methods for doing so.*

Turning Conflict and Generational Differences Into Creative Leadership – *Take home valuable strategies to smooth out the rough spots in your leadership team dynamics and learn new techniques for dealing with difficult people and disparate generational values.*

Hunger in Vermont Children: Why School Meals Are So Important and How to Increase Participation - *An overview of the New England Dairy & Food Council's tools and resources for expanding/alternative breakfast for helping children improve their health, academic performance, behavior and more, to reach their maximum potential. I also will be sharing steps to success with starting an expanding or alternative breakfast program in a school district and how as a school administrator one can help. Joanne*

WORKSHOPS continued on page 13

Heidkamp will review the effects of hunger and malnutrition in children, the extent of the problem in Vermont and some solutions, including access and quality of school meals.

“The Pathway to Friendship” by Students from the Center for Respectful Schools of the Vermont Peace Academy – A program trainer will provide an overview of the program and student facilitators will lead a focus group and describe how this program has influenced them.

Assisting Parents to be a Positive Member of Their Child’s Educational Team – Speakers will provide practical, down-to-earth communication techniques which help parents and schools work together to achieve success for all children.

Strategies for Improving Academic Performance with Students in Poverty – Speakers will discuss the affect of poverty on student achievement and strategies school leaders can take to help all children learn.

Policy Governance Networking – A networking opportunity for board members and administrators currently implementing Policy Governance. Here’s your chance to talk to other PG districts leaders and learn from each others’ successes and challenges.

Vermont School Board Insurance Trust (VSBIT) Annual Meeting - VSBIT will start by conducting its Annual Meeting, which includes the election of board members as needed. After the business part of the meeting, VSBIT staff will review current programs and answer related questions. This is a great opportunity for school board members and superintendents to meet VSBIT staff and become more familiar with each VSBIT program and service.


What Does “Farm to School” Mean for Your Communities - Participants will leave feeling more enthusiastic

about what farm to school programs might mean to their school communities, knowing more about how Vermont FEED works, how it evolved, and how it helps schools to advance their goals for students and staff. With a better understanding of the links between farm to school programs, student health and academic achievement, and economic vitality for Vermont and for sustainable agriculture in the state.

Basics of Policy Governance - Board members from districts implementing and operating under the Policy Governance Model will share their district’s experiences to date and answer questions from workshop participants.

Focusing Board Development on Improving Student Achievement – The workshop focuses on connecting school board goals with the Act 68 action plan and aligning resources, energy, and strategies to help schools meet NCLBA compliance targets. The prime directive is to help the entire team in working toward a common mission of improving student achievement.

International Baccalaureate and Breaking Ranks – The International Baccalaureate (IB) offers high quality worldwide programs of international education to students aged 3 to 19. Breaking Ranks is a program that engages principals, teacher leaders, and the entire school community in reforming the American high school into an academically rigorous, personalized learning environment that is improved through collaborative leadership.

General Session - Education Reform in Vermont: Local and State Perspectives on What is Needed and What is Possible - Panelists with various perspectives on the most pressing challenges facing Vermont as it attempts to meet the 21st century needs of its students and its communities will discuss education reform proposals under consideration at state and local levels. This session will provide opportunities to ask questions and express views on who should be responsible for planning and implementing changes in Vermont schools. 

west Supervisory Union. Laura presented the PG concept to the **Essex Jct. Prudential Board** over the summer. We will continue to help this district explore a variety of governance options.

Val Gardner has contracted through the VSBA to facilitate implementation of Policy Governance for the **Essex Town School Board**.

Laura Soares and Val Gardner facilitated a superintendents’ networking meeting at the VSBA office earlier this month. Another networking session will be held at the annual conference for districts that have or are implementing Policy Governance processes.


Other district leaders continue to express interest in implementing Policy Governance.

Superintendent Searches

Charlie Usher, VSBA search consultant, and I met with board members from Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union to present VSBA search services.

I continue to work with the **Washington Northeast Supervisory Union** as they consider governance options related to their upcoming superintendent search process.

The VSBA will support a number of superintendent searches this fall to fill interim positions from last year’s search processes.

The VSBA and VSA will host an aspiring superintendent breakfast at the annual conference. The goal is to encourage current school leaders to become qualified candidates and apply for future superintendent job openings in Vermont. 

Registration/Reservation SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ONLY

VSBA/VSA Annual Conference Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee VT October 30 & 31

This may be completed on-line at www.vtvsba.org

Step 1

Fax 802-223-0098

Registrant Name: _____

Daytime Phone : _____

School Board/District: _____

Email Address: _____

Registration Fee: \$50.00/person

- Attending Friday
- Attending Thursday



Step 2

Staying Overnight

Call 802-333-4311

LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE

Please call the Lake Morey Resort for reservations.
The reservation DEADLINE is October 15.

One Night Conference package: (per person)
Includes Thursday night's lodging, one full breakfast,
two lunches, one dinner, all taxes and services charges
included.

Single ___ Standard-\$163.00 ___ Deluxe-\$180.00
Double ___ Standard-\$142/pp ___ Deluxe-\$160.00

(\$100 deposit required)

Commuting

Fax 802-223-0098

Qty		Subtotals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday Lunch	\$28.00 _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday Dinner	\$36.00 _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday Breakfast	\$15.00 _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday Lunch	\$28.00 _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian Meal Selection	

Prices include tax and tip Totals _____