

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 may be 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.

Washington County Schools vary Widely on Breakfast Participation by Low-income Students: Findings of Survey by Local Hunger Council

The Hunger Council of Washington County, comprised of local leaders and policy makers, is dedicated to reducing childhood hunger in the County. Concerned that childhood hunger rates are increasing in Vermont and recognizing that school meals are a critical source of nutrition for children, the Council surveyed all the public schools in Washington County about their school meal programs.

The Council was gratified to learn that all public schools in Washington County offer both school breakfast and lunch. However, the participation rates by students in these meal programs vary widely among the schools. Breakfast participation by low-income students ranges from a low of 14% at one small rural elementary school to a high of 60% in another similar school. The survey found that breakfast participation increased significantly when schools offered breakfast in the classroom at snack time. Another finding is that students eligible for free or reduced price meals were more apt to participate in breakfast when there is a higher percentage of low income students in the school.

The survey asked questions about enrollment procedures in free/reduced price meals and whether support was given to parents with low literacy to help them fill out the applications. The Council determined that schools could do more to increase free/reduced enrollment by encouraging all parents - not just par-

ents who believe they are eligible - to return the applications and by providing help completing applications.

The Council was very impressed with the dedication of school food service directors and with the quality of some of the programs. In 23 of the 26 public schools, local products were incorporated into the meals programs. The survey found that more than half of the meal programs were supported with local funds. Recognizing that school meals are a critical source of nutrition for students, Council members are working with communities to increase access to summer meal programs with enrichment activities.

For a copy of the "Best Practices in Vermont School Meals" or information on school meal participation at your school, please contact the Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger (VTCECH) at dkeeney@vtnohunger.org or 802-865-0255. The Hunger Council of Washington County was convened by VTCECH with support from the Northfield Savings Bank. 🚗

Ginny Burley,
School Board Chair of U32

Dorigen Keeney,
Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger

Vermont Supreme Court Rules in School Standard of Care Case

The Vermont Supreme Court issued an important opinion on school district and school employee liability in late July. The Court's decision in Janice Edson v. Barre Supervisory Union #61 provides insight into the "standard of care" schools are expected to apply in situations involving student safety.

The case that the Court reviewed was a tragic one involving the murder of a student who had left school grounds during the school day. It was widely reported by the news media when it occurred in 2000. Because it is important to understand the factual basis for the Court's decision, the Court's summary of the facts appears in its entirety below.

"DeAndra Florucci began her second year at Spaulding High School in the fall of 2000. She was fifteen years old and had a history of truancy and drug abuse. On the morning of October 25, she arrived at school with a note from her mother excusing her from class for an 11:30 doctor's appointment. Her friend, a student from another school, was "shadowing" her at school that day.

While DeAndra and her friend were at the doctor's appointment, Donald Baumgardner, a nonstudent, entered the high school looking for DeAndra. At the main office, he asked to see her and was told that he could leave a note for her. After filling out a student-message form, Baumgardner exited the building. Shortly thereafter, an assistant principal noticed Baumgardner entering through the vocational center entrance at the rear of the school. The assistant principal asked why he was still at the school, and Baumgardner answered that he was waiting to see if his note was delivered to DeAndra. The assistant principal told Baumgardner that he had to leave and escorted him toward the main exit. While the assistant principal was walking Baumgardner toward the exit, the bell rang, indicating a class change, and the halls filled with students. The influx of students diverted the assistant principal's attention, leaving Baumgardner unaccompanied.

As Baumgardner was approaching the main exit, DeAndra and her friend returned to school from the doctor's appointment. The three ran into one another in the school lobby and began to talk. The assistant principal approached the group and asked DeAndra if the conversation was friendly; she replied that it was. The assistant principal then instructed DeAndra and her friend to return to class and directed Baumgardner to leave the school. Upon realizing that DeAndra had returned from an early dismissal, the assistant principal also instructed her to check in with guidance office. DeAndra responded that she needed something from her locker and walked in that direction. Unbeknownst to the assistant principal, DeAndra failed to check in with the guidance office, and instead left school with her friend and Baumgardner through the rear exit.

As they walked away from the school, Baumgardner told DeAndra that an acquaintance of theirs, Dana Martin, wanted to speak with her at his house. She agreed to accompany Baumgardner there, and left her friend to wait on some steps as they headed toward Martin's home. DeAndra did not return, however, and the police were eventually notified. DeAndra's body was subsequently found under a bridge in Plainfield. Martin confessed to sexually assaulting and murdering DeAndra, acknowledging that he had conceived the crime sometime late the night before or early the same morning."

The lawsuit that followed was based on the assertion of DeAndra's mother that Spaulding had been negligent in its supervision of DeAndra, and that its omissions led directly to DeAndra's sexual assault and murder. The Supreme Court upheld a lower court finding that Spaulding did not owe a duty of supervision to DeAndra under the circumstances, and therefore was not answerable to DeAndra's estate in a "wrongful death" action.

The reasoning of the Court is significant in that it both defines the standard of care applicable in this case and makes clear that, although Spaulding was not responsible in this case, it clearly might have been had the factual situation been different.

The key factor that absolved Spaulding from legal responsibility in this case was, according to the Supreme Court, that Vermont's statutory standard of care for schools "requires schools to protect students only from foreseeable risks... (N)onetheless, where school administrators or teachers fail to exercise ordinary care in supervising students, they may be held liable to the extent their acts or omissions are the proximate cause of a student's injury."

Discussing this conclusion further, the Court made clear that "...there exist

(Continued on page 6...)

Website Promotes Civic Mission of Schools

The Civic Mission of Schools website is up and running, with a new series of school profiles on its database, Civic Learning Online. The profiles are a great way to see how principals, superintendents, and teachers can put civic learning at the heart of school reform. Public, charter, small-school, rural, urban... the profiles help make the case for civic learning in a range of settings, and they offer practical ideas for educators and advocates on how to make systemic, school- and district-wide change.

Additional updates also appear on the website, including a page on student journalism, position papers on NCLB, and information on new programs and priorities.

The website address is www.civicmissionofschools.org/. 


Vermont Hosts Guests from Uzbekistan

From September 6 - 27, 2007, Project Harmony, an international nonprofit organization based in Waitsfield, Vermont is hosting ten men and women from the former Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan, who are participating in a CommunityConnections program sponsored by USAID and administered by World Learning. During their stay in Vermont, these education professionals are receiving training and learning about our educational systems from a diverse array of education representatives. Project Harmony is grateful to have the support of the Vermont School Board Association, the Vermont Superintendents Association, the Vermont Principal's Association and the Vermont Department of Education in planning for this group.

Specifically, the purpose of this program is to introduce our Uzbek guests

to the concept of school boards and school governance in order to promote the establishment and stimulate the activation of school boards in Uzbekistan. This group is also hoping to gain information on how active community involvement in school life contributes to the improvement of the school environment and student's learning achievements.

For more information about this program, please contact Renee Berrian at (802) 496-4545 / (800) 545-7734 or via email at renee@projectharmony.org.

Additional information about Project Harmony and the Central Asian country of Uzbekistan is available at www.projectharmony.org and <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html> 



School Leaders Share A Vision Through Books

By Winton Goodrich, VSBA Associate Director

Do you want to create a school vision that is in sync with rapidly changing education, globalization, and employment trends? Boards of education and administrators that focus on a shared vision can move education change at a much faster pace. One way of getting the board and administrative team on the same page is to get them all reading the same research and information together. School leaders in Vermont and around the country are using "Book Clubs" to create progressive learning communities. Here are three highly acclaimed books that school leaders are reading together:

[The World Is Flat](#), Tom Friedman
[A Whole New Mind](#), Daniel Pink
[Good to Great for Social Sectors](#), Jim Collins

Spend some time this fall either listening to these books on an IPOD/MP3 player or reading hardcopy the old-fashioned way. Reflect with your fellow school leaders about the impact the concepts espoused by these books may have on education in your district.



To... Vermont School Board Member
Cc...
Subject: Newsletter

Prefer to Receive this newsletter by E-mail?
If you receive this newsletter by mail, but would prefer to access it through e-mail, please send your name, school district and e-mail address to Mary Gilbert at mgilbert@vtsba.org

Past Issues
View past issues of the Boardroom on the VSBA website (www.vtsba.org click Newsletters)

Employment Skills and Workforce Training Resources for All Students

By: Greg Voorheis, Vermont Department of Labor

Editor's Note: The following article identifies valuable workforce education and training resources that the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) can provide to students in your school. Please share this article with your district administrators. For more information, contact Greg Voorheis, Vermont Department of Labor, Senior Grant Manager, at greg.voorheis@state.vt.us.

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) has multiple programs that help youth explore the world of work and learn about the myriad of occupations that they can pursue. Providing youth with these opportunities enables them to successfully transition to adulthood.

For years, VDOL has served low income, at risk youth through the federal Workforce Investment Act (currently), the Job Training Partnership Act (in the 80s), the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (in the 70s), and the Manpower Demonstration Act (in the 60s.) These programs have funded activities such as skill assessment, mentoring, classroom training, summer employment opportunities, work experience and on-the-job training. Support services have also been available to provide such things as appropriate clothing for work, help with transportation, child care and health services support.

During this past legislative session, Act 46 (commonly referred to as H.433) was passed that expands the career development opportunities offered to youth through VDOL. An Internship Program was created to allow secondary and post-secondary students opportunities to experience first-hand real life working. These experiences place students with employers for a prescribed period of time and enable them to apply skills they have learned in their classrooms. Interns are often paid wages by the employers but can, under limited circumstances, receive financial stipends if they qualify. Often internships result in academic credit students can use toward getting a high school diploma or a college degree.

Another program made possible through Act 46 is a Career Exploration Program for students in grades 7 through 12. Programs funded under this section of the new act will increase career awareness opportunities for students while exposing them to a variety of career options. These programs will involve employers, connect with school curricula and produce measurable results. Academic credit may also be earned as a result of the students' successful participation.

A third program specifically designed for youth under Act 46 is the Alternative and Intensive Vocational/Academic Program. This program will provide students options to earn credit towards a high school degree by participating in technical education learning opportunities. Both in-school youth and out-of-school youth pursuing a high school diploma will be eligible to participate. Another career awareness project under development is the Vermont Career Gateway Project. This is a special federally funded project to create a web-based portal for learning about careers and the academics required to pursue them. VDOL, in partnership with the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, the Department of Education, the state's Workforce Development Council, the state's School Guidance Counselors, and others is working on this project with New Breed Marketing. The site is under construction, however you may visit the beta version at: www.vtcareergateway.org Please feel free to share feedback to sally.redpath@state.vt.us. Shortly, more information will be shared on this exciting portal and over the next year teachers, counselors and others will be trained on how to maximize its use especially as a tool for career development activities that align with the Vermont Framework of Standards.

VDOL is working in partnership with many agencies and departments to develop a Youth Vision. The on-going challenge is to maximize the use of limited resources when serving youth.

The reality is that many agencies, departments and nonprofit corporations all provide services to youth; the goal of developing a Youth Vision is to coordinate these services so that we can eliminate duplication and maximize the use of resources that are available.

Finally, each summer, special efforts are made to provide youth with employment opportunities. In all cases, VDOL staff try to align these summer activities with a year-round plan of support and growth. This involves connecting the summer jobs to school activities and on-going exposure to the world of work and careers. Approximately 250 youth are participating this summer. They are paid training wages and work with employers all over the state. VDOL staff work directly with youth in these activities and VDOL supports many of the services provided by the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Linking Learning to Life, Smokey House Center, Sunrise Family Resource Center, and The Tutorial Center which partners with UVM's Horticultural Program.

A healthy Vermont economy depends on providing current career information and opportunities for work experience to our youth. VDOL is not alone in this important work. We have many partners throughout Vermont state government including Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Children and Families, Corrections and many others. And we have many other non-state partners some of which have been already mentioned. Yes, it does take a "village to raise a child." But, most importantly, it takes a "vision" to raise a child in a healthy way which enables that young person to make informed, career choices as they transition from youth to adulthood.

Over the coming months, we will share individual stories of the journeys our youth are taking in this unending process of transition. 🚌

School Board Professional Development

Workshops on DVD

The VSBA now offers all of our workshops on DVD. The VIT sessions are chapterized by topic. Choose the chapters you need to learn. We appreciate the limited time school board members have. Learn what you need to know.

The following workshops are currently available (with the chapters)

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PART II *November 22, 2005*

- 1-Review of Part I
- 2-Agency Fees
- 3-HRA & Insurance
- 4-Hot Topics
- 5-Bargaining Techniques
- 6-Collaborative vs. Traditional
- 7-Regional Negotiations
- 8-Confidentiality
- 9-Impasse Procedures
- 10-Teacher Retirement
- 11-Salary Schedules
- 12-Lower Income Teachers
- 13-"Cost" of a Teacher
- 14-Merit Pay

DEVELOPING THE BUDGET *October 2006*

In process—available soon—order now!

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES & RELATIONSHIPS *Spring 2006*

- 1-VSBA Overview
- 2-New Board Members
- 3-Complaint Resolution
- 4-Term Glossary
- 5-School Board Law
- 6-Policy
- 7-Types of Board Meetings
- 8-Agendas
- 9-School Board Code
- 10-Personnel Relations
- 11-Community Relations
- 12-Conflict of Interest
- 13-Working at a School
- 14-Board Communications
- 15-Negotiations
- 16-Budgets & Act 68

SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR *May 2006*

- 1-Executive Session
- 2-Minutes
- 3-Code of Conduct
- 4-Electronic Communication
- 5-Roles
- 6-The Law
- 7-Personnel Issues
- 8-Board Goals & Strategic Plan
- 9-Media
- 10-Managing Meetings
- 11-Meeting Effectiveness
- 12-Board Retreats
- 13-Encourage Competitive Elections
- 14-Communication
- 15-Micromanaging vs. Info Gathering
- 16-Veteran Advice

Time to Think About Budget Development!

The Preparing the School Budget Workshop will take place on October 8th from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at VIT sites statewide.

This may be one of the toughest budget development seasons ever, given soaring energy and health care costs. Join school leaders from around Vermont to refine your knowledge and skills in school budget development. Dr. Brent Kay, Superintendent, Orange South-

west Supervisory Union and Brad James, School Finance Manager, Vermont Department of Education, will help guide school leaders on the mechanics of budget development and budget management under the complexity of Act 68.

Agenda includes:

- Preparing budget development groundwork
- Understanding key cost drivers
- Using a budget development interactive template

- Linking budget development to Act 68 Action Plan priorities
- Connecting long range strategic planning with budget development
- Full budget disclosure – grants and other revenues
- Understand what to look for on monthly expenditure and revenue reports
- Common Level of Appraisal
- Key Communicators Group
- Getting the public on your side before you need them

Preregistration for Developing Your Budget
at www.vtvsba.org or 800-244-8722

VIT sites may be found at www.vitlink.org

Cost: \$35.00/Supervisory Union

CVU Teacher Wins Top Award

A Vermont AP biology teacher was named the winner of the National Teacher of the Year Siemens Awards for Advanced Placement. Each year one teacher from a pool of over 15-thousand schools is selected. Mr. David Ely has worked at Champlain Valley Union High School in Vermont since 1979. During his tenure, more than 750 students have taken the national exam, with 98 percent receiving qualifying scores and 450 receiving a five.

These academic achievements are remarkable in and of itself. But it is what Mr. Ely chose to do with the award money that I think will touch the hearts of your readers. He gave it away!

For five of the past nine summers, Mr. Ely has trekked to Costa Rica with groups of up to 30 of his AP Biology students. As a biologist, he feels compelled to pursue biodiversity studies abroad, and serve the local community. This year, he traveled with family and friends to Kenya and visited three schools. When traveling, Mr. Ely makes a point to deliver necessary supplies to children, and this year, in addition to purchasing school supplies, he used his Siemens award money to give a

most unusual gift to a school run by women disowned by their tribe—a cow. “In this part of Africa, wealth is measured by the number of livestock you own,” says Mr. Ely. The school will receive the cow in the fall.

Attached to this email is a news release with more details about Mr. Ely’s award. We have pictures available at your request.

David Ely’s generosity and his accomplishments make for a great story. The 63 year old teacher has won numerous awards over the years including the Presidential Award in the Excellence of Science Teaching and the Distinguished Teacher Award White House Commission on Scholars. On a side note, you may be interested to know that Mr. Ely is the 15th child in a family of 18.

The Siemens Awards for Advanced Placement are designed to promote excellence in math, science and technology education. The program celebrates high school students who excel in AP science and math courses, as well as teachers and schools who are leading the nation in participation and performance in AP science and math courses. 🚌

(...Continued from page 2)

circumstances under which a school might be held liable for negligent supervision even where a student leaves school grounds voluntarily and without permission...” In this case, the Court determined “...Spaulding did not have the requisite knowledge or notice of DeAndrea’s premeditated murder to bring it within the realm of the foreseeable.” Citing Vermont’s “duty of care” statute that applies to schools, the Court held that “(I)n dealing with children, the duty of ordinary care must include consideration of (children’s) inability to protect themselves, and their childish indiscretions, instincts and impulses. Thus, a school district might be held liable where a six-year-old leaves school unattended, darts into the road and is severely injured, precisely because the reasonably prudent person would foresee that a child of such tender years lacks the discretion to stop and look both ways before crossing the road. Here, on the other hand, Spaulding was no more or less likely to anticipate, much less prevent, DeAndrea’s brutal assault and murder because she was a fifteen year old with a history of truancy and drug abuse. Under the circumstances of this case, nothing short of continuous, immediate supervision would have prevented DeAndrea from voluntarily leaving school and going to Martin’s home. Vermont schools are neither equipped nor expected to provide such constant supervision to students, even those with a troubled history.”

In an important concurring opinion, the Court’s Chief Justice made clear that the actions of Spaulding in this case would not have absolved it from responsibility under different circumstances. “Our holding rests purely on the lack of foreseeability of (the harms that befell DeAndrea) and this opinion in no way endorses Spaulding’s actions with respect to Baumgardner. That school officials took steps to facilitate contact between Baumgardner, a stranger to the school, and DeAndrea, a young and troubled student, without inquiring into his identity, relationship to DeAndrea, or purpose in making contact, seems a questionable practice at best. As a general matter, I have no doubt that the safety of students like DeAndrea would be enhanced by a more probing visitor policy than the one carried out here. I also do not doubt that, under different facts, similar laxity in attendance or visitor policy might form the basis for school liability.” 🚌

2007 VSA/VSBA Conference on the web

The VSA/VSBA conference information can be found on the website. The link was emailed to the 1,100 email addresses we have for the 1,400 school board members. A link can also be found on our homepage www.vtvsba.org.

The webpage includes links to:

- * School Board Registration and Commuter Meal Reservation
- * Hotel Reservations-DEADLINE October 15
- * Agenda & Workshop Descriptions
- * Keynote Speakers
- * VSBA Bylaws
- * VSBA Current Resolutions
- * Proposed Resolutions

A School Board's Leadership Dilemma and Opportunity...

Growing Your Own: A 21st Century Leadership Model

The fact that so many school districts in Vermont and across the country are experiencing a shortage of qualified school principals suggests that school boards may want to “grow their own.” The problem of leadership is serious: Survey results from the National Associations’ of Elementary and Secondary School Principals verify this shortage. Their report finds that “regardless of the schools’ grade levels and whether they were rural, suburban or urban”, a labor pool shortage is prevalent in all areas. The Upper Valley Teacher Institute (UVTI), an independent nonprofit organization that has for forty years prepared adults for new careers as teachers, is ready to help Vermont and New Hampshire districts develop new school leaders from within.

A Need for More “Home-Grown Principals”?

Often, as principals retire or move on to other districts, school boards and school administrators have a strong sense that they already have potential leaders in their midst. These may be exceptional teachers or guidance counselors who have proven their talents in working with students, colleagues, and citizens but who are understandably reluctant to leave the classroom to enroll in traditional, course-based programs. But supposing they could learn essential theory and gain broad perspective while serving as an apprentice to the current “mentor” principal? That’s the idea behind PRN, the Principal Residency Network which has joined with UVTI in a competency-based approach to leadership.

Leadership in 21st Century schools requires that our school leaders experience schoolhouse-based reflective learning opportunities grounded in relevant competencies. Such competencies turn traditional leadership prep programs on their head—instead of focusing on course syllabi and “inputs,” they focus on “outcomes” and results. This change of focus is revolutionizing the preparation of educators at all levels. For school principals, it means helping them and the communities they serve to:

- ◆ develop a long-range, strategic vision of high quality, cost effective schools;
- ◆ provide instructional leadership to enhance achievement of core skills and a zest for learning among students, staff, and school board members;
- ◆ practice a management style that is personal, flexible, collaborative and efficient;
- ◆ build public support for school excellence in a time of changing demographics and public skepticism regarding school effectiveness; and
- ◆ demonstrate moral courage so that leaders do right by all our children.

These five competency areas define the [PRN@UVTI](#). Within these general areas, candidates for school leadership (called “Aspiring Principals”) must demonstrate that they can perform well in 25 specific competencies, ranging from budget preparation to teacher evaluation to facilities management. Throughout New England, PRN has had ten years of success in creating new principals ready to move with foresight to meet 21st Century challenges. UVTI is expanding PRN in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Western Massachusetts.

How can Principal Residency Network help your School Board Grow Your Own?

In 1998 Dr. Dennis Littky, co-founder and co-director of the educational company The Big Picture Company, created the Principal Residency Network in response to overwhelming evidence that many school districts and boards around the country were experiencing a shortage of qualified principals, and also discovering that traditional training programs were lacking in authentic schoolhouse experiences. In Dr. Littky’s words, “I watched teachers take courses that had little connection with the work they would be doing as principal. There was a gulf between theory and practice, between course-based preparation and the complexities of actually leading something consequential in the life of a school.”

PRN is an ideal melding of theory and practice and places a heavy emphasis on Aspiring Principals developing their educational effectiveness under the guidance of a Mentor Principal. Just experiencing is not enough; however, PRN participants must become reflective practitioners who are able to act with moral courage, promote collaborative work, encourage a culture of life-long learning, and commit to getting quality results.

PRN has been designed so that school boards and districts can play a role in the aspiring principal’s training and help identify elements that support your rigorous work currently underway. The school’s and district’s framework for learning and accompanying professional development can be built into the program through the aspiring principal’s Learning Plan. The program continues to build an authentic curriculum around in-school stewardship, monthly cohort meetings and workshops that are relevant and responsive to the needs of the aspiring principal and the mentor principal, too, and the entire school community.

Do you anticipate an opening in school leadership in the near future? Do you want to groom someone from within your district, such as an outstanding teacher, to become ready to take over? As school boards and district leaders explore a variety of options in recruiting outstanding school leaders, [PRN@UVTI](#) may be just the answer. Through PRN, school districts build on the progress they have made, while enhancing the role of some of their most dedicated and talented local educators. For more information, please contact:



Shirley Richardson, 802-535-4110 or email her at srichardson@uvti.org. To learn more about the history & conceptual background, please contact Tom McGuire at tom@loftedu.com.

For more information about UVTI & its competency-based licensure for teachers & principals, please contact Rob Fried at rfried@uvti.org or visit our website: www.uvti.org for brochure, program materials, and application.

State Seeks Input on Vermont's Energy Future

Vermont wants your help in shaping the future mix of electricity sources for the state. Five evening public workshops will be held in locations throughout the state this fall. You can attend the workshop closest to you. These workshops were authorized by the Vermont Legislature, endorsed by the Governor, and spearheaded by the Department of Public Service. The locations, dates, and times are listed below.


The Workshops are free but registration is required. The goal of the workshops is to gather informed and thoughtful citizen and ratepayer input for the State and its electric utilities as they make decisions about how and where Vermont obtains its electric power for the coming decades. In 2012, contracts providing for two-thirds of the

state's electric power begin to expire. This leaves the future source of Vermont's electricity open for discussion and examination.

Choices about the future will have to be made and will weigh trade-offs among cost, reliability, environmental impact, large and small scale generation, and in versus out-of-state sources. All workshops will begin at 5:30 p.m. with light dinner fare and a prompt start at 6 p.m. and end around 10. During the workshops there will be a brief presentation, small group facilitated discussions, a chance to ask questions to a panel of experts, keypad polling to register your preferences and opinions, and an open mike at the end to record any additional thoughts you might have. The regional workshops will be held on the following dates in the following locations:

- ◆ **Oct. 3, 2007** St. Johnsbury Elementary School
- ◆ **Oct. 17, 2007** South Burlington High School
- ◆ **Oct. 18, 2007** Montpelier Elks Club, Montpelier, VT
- ◆ **Oct. 29, 2007** Dean Technical Center, Springfield, VT
- ◆ **Oct. 30, 2007** Rutland Intermediate School, Rutland, VT

Please register and attend the workshop closest to you. To ensure broad and diverse participation from across the state, participants may only register for one workshop.

For problems with registration or any other specific questions, please call [Susan Rivo](#) at the Department of Public Service at 1-800-622-4496 (in-state) or 802-828-2332. 


2007 Conference VSBIT Annual Meeting

VSBIT Corner

On November 1, 2007, at the Vermont School Boards and Vermont Superintendents Associations Annual Fall Conference, VSBIT will hold its Annual Meeting. The meeting will take place in the late afternoon. Check the official agenda for the time and location.

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 to meet VSBIT staff and become more familiar with each VSBIT Program and service. Some of VSBIT's programs and services are listed below:

Multi-Line Intermunicipal School Program
School Management Resource Center
Health Promotion and Wellness
VEHI Dental and LTD Programs

Unemployment Program
VEHI Health Program
VSBIT Website
On-Site training/workshops 

U.S. Supreme Court Decides Student Speech Case: Emphasizes School's Right to Prohibit Pro-Drug Messages

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that public school officials may restrict student speech at a school event when the speech is reasonably viewed as promoting illegal drug use. The case arose when students at Juneau-Douglas High School in Juneau, Alaska, were released to watch the Olympic torch pass by the school at a event that was school-sanctioned and supervised, but not required. Student Joe Frederick and some other individuals held up a banner across the street from the school that read "Bong Hits 4 Jesus."

Principal Deborah Morse directed them to take down the banner, which she confiscated, and then suspended Frederick. He sued, claiming his First Amendment rights had been violated. A U.S. district court held that Ms. Morse "had the authority, if not the obligation, to stop such messages at a school-sanctioned activity." The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit reversed, holding that the school failed to show a "risk of substantial disruption within the meaning of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Cnty. Sch. Dist.* The Supreme Court reversed the Ninth Circuit. Chief Justice Roberts authored the Court's opinion, which was joined by Justices Scalia, Kennedy, Thomas, and Alito.

The Court found that Ms. Morse's interpretation of the banner as conveying a pro-drug message was "plainly a reasonable one."

The Court distilled two basic principles from its previous rulings on student speech: first, students' free speech rights are construed "in light of the special characteristics of the school environment," and second, "the mode of analysis set forth in *Tinker* (the 1969 Supreme Court decision allowing students to express opposition to the Vietnam War by wearing black armbands to school) is not absolute" or

"the only basis for restricting student speech."

In addition, the Court has applied a more relaxed standard to searches conducted in a school environment and "recognize[d] that deterring drug use by schoolchildren is an 'important—indeed, perhaps compelling' interest." Against this backdrop, the governmental interest in stopping student drug abuse allows schools to restrict student expression they reasonably regard as promoting illegal drug use.

However, the Court rejected the school district's call for a broader rule that the speech was "proscribable because it is plainly 'offensive'." The Court noted that the "concern here is not that [the student's] speech was offensive, but that it was reasonably viewed as promoting illegal drug use."

Two Justices agreed with the opinion only in so far as "(a) it goes no further than to hold that a public school may restrict speech that a reasonable observer would interpret as advocating illegal drug use and (b) it provides no support for any restriction of speech that can plausibly be interpreted as commenting on any political or social issue, including speech on issues such as 'the wisdom of the war on drugs or of legalizing marijuana for medicinal use.'"

In another concurring opinion, Justice Thomas wrote separately "to state my view that the standard set forth in *Tinker*, is without basis in the Constitution." He argued that in creating another "ad hoc" exception, "we continue to distance ourselves from *Tinker*, but we neither overrule it nor offer an explanation of when it operates and when it does not. ... I am afraid that our jurisprudence now says that students have a right to speak in schools except when they don't; a standard continually developed through litigation against local schools and their

administrators." He expressed concern about "judicial oversight of the day-to-day affairs of public schools" and their "judgment calls" about interference with discipline and appropriate discipline, concluding that "local school boards, not the courts, should determine what pedagogical interests are 'legitimate' and what rules 'reasonably relate to those interests.'"

Three dissenting Justices argued that the school's interest could not "justify disciplining Frederick for his attempt to make an ambiguous statement to a television audience simply because it contained an oblique reference to drugs." Rather, the "First Amendment protects student speech if the message itself neither violates a permissible rule nor expressly advocates conduct that is illegal and harmful to students."

Editor's Note: Earlier in this judicial term, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review the decision of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in *Guiles v. Marineau*, the case involving a t-shirt worn by a student at the Williamstown (Vermont) Middle School. By refusing to take the *Guiles* case, the Supreme Court let stand the decision of the Appeals Court that school officials were justified in requiring a student to remove a t-shirt with uncomplimentary references to President Bush, including portrayals of cocaine and alcohol. The Second Circuit Court upheld disciplinary action against the student in part because, in the Court's opinion, the t-shirt in question delivered an anti-drug message and was primarily political in nature, requiring that school officials show a threat of "substantial disruption" of the educational process before prohibiting primarily political expressions by students. This distinguishes the *Guiles* opinion from that of the Supreme Court in the Juneau, Alaska case, where the message of the banner was found to be a pro-drug message. 🚌

2007 VSA/VSBA Conference Keynote Speakers

Alan November



Alan November is the keynote speaker and workshop presenter at the Annual Conference on Thursday, November 1st.

Alan November is recognized internationally as a leader in education technology. He began his career as an

oceanography teacher and dorm counselor at an island reform school for boys in Boston Harbor. He has been a director of an alternative high school, computer coordinator, technology consultant, and university lecturer. As practitioner, designer, and author, Alan has guided schools, government organizations and industry leaders as they plan to improve quality with technology.

Alan is well known for applying his humor and wit to inspire us to think about applying technology to improve learning. His areas of expertise include information and communication technology, planning across the curriculum, staff development, long-range planning, building learning communities and leadership development. He has delivered keynote presentations and workshops in all fifty states, in every province in Canada, and throughout the UK, Europe and Asia.

Alan was named one of the nation's fifteen most influential thinkers of the decade by Classroom Computer Learning Magazine. In 2001, he was named one of eight educators to provide leadership into the future by the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse. His writing includes dozens of articles and the best-selling book, *Empowering Students with Technology*. Alan was co-founder of the Stanford Institute for Educational Leadership Through Technology and is most proud of being selected as one of the original five national Christa McAuliffe Educators. 🚌



Dr. Jerry Johnson is Policy Research and Analysis Manager for The Rural School and Community Trust, a national nonprofit organization addressing the crucial relationship between good schools and thriving rural communities. As an educator, he has been a high school principal and has taught English, Journalism, and Political Science at the high school and postsecondary level. His current academic position is in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy

Studies at Eastern Kentucky University, where he is an assistant professor and director of advanced graduate studies.

Dr. Johnson's scholarly work includes more than 30 articles, book chapters, monographs, commissioned reports, and juried and invited presentations. His research has been cited in school funding litigation and legislation, and he has testified before state legislative committees and presented research at the U.S. Capitol. His research interests include rural education, educational equity and achievement gap issues, the effects of school and district size on student achievement, rural demography (especially, rural poverty and demographic changes related to race and ethnicity in rural places), and school finance litigation. 🚌

Building Learning Communities

– Keynote Address Thursday

We now have tools to build and strengthen our learning communities. We have the opportunity to provide our students with authentic assessment relationships over the web that can help dramatically improve student motivation. We can take advantage of the communication tools the Internet provides, such as blogs, Instant Messenger, video conference or email. Research suggests many students are more willing to ask for help and accept criticism when they are online.

What the Research Says About Rural Education in America

- Keynote Address Friday

This presentation will provide a broad overview of research findings about key factors influencing the effectiveness of rural education. Following the overview, we'll draw on current data to consider the context and status of rural education in Vermont, relating characteristics of the state's public schools and districts to the research literature and making comparisons with rural schools and districts in other states. Results of the data review will be used to suggest that there are educational virtues in rural Vermont that should be intentionally supported and sustained by policymakers.

VSA/VSBA Conference November 2 Capitol Plaza, Montpelier



Agendas

Thursday, November 1, 2007

- 8:30 Registration & Continental Breakfast begins
- 10:45 Keynote Address - **Building Learning Communities** - Alan November
- 12:00 Luncheon – Remarks and Recognition of Conference Partners
- 1:15 **Cultivating a World-Class Work Ethic** Workshop
- 2:45 Commissioner Richard Cate – **Conversation with the Commissioner**
- 3:45 VSBIT Annual Meeting
- 4:15 VSBA Annual Meeting
VSA Fall Business Meeting
- 6:30 VSBIT Reception
- 7:15 Dinner

Friday, November 2, 2007

- 7:30 Breakfast & Registration
- 8:30 Welcome and Recognition of Conference Partners
- 9:00 Keynote Presentation – **What the Research Says About the Effectiveness of Rural Education in America**, Dr. Jerry Johnson, University of Eastern Kentucky
- 10:00 **Rural Education Research and the Vermont Policy Context: What Does Consolidation Really Bring?**, Dr. Jerry Johnson
- 11:00 Workshops
 - a. **Policy Governance Networking: Progress Report and Opportunities for Interested District Leaders**
 - b. **What’s Working for Wellness in Schools?**
 - c. **Highlighting New VSBA Model Policies and Procedures**
 - d. **Negotiating a Single, Supervisory Union Teacher Contract**
 - e. **Superintendent Evaluation and Board Self-Assessment**
- 12:15 Luncheon – Recognition of Conference Partners
- 1:45 **Perspective of on the 2007 Legis. Leaders and What is Anticipated in the Upcoming Session** - Janet Ancel and Don Collins
- 3:00 Adjourn

Workshops

Cultivating a World-Class Work Ethic

Thursday 1:15 pm

In an economy where global outsourcing is commonplace, students must be prepared to participate in an increasingly competitive job market. In many ways they are in competition with bright energetic, hardworking students from all over the world. In this workshop Alan discusses some of the ways we can empower our students, help them build a strong work ethic and develop self-directed learning skills. We should not underestimate what our students are capable of achieving.

Rural Education Research and the Vermont Policy Context: What Does Consolidation Really Bring?

Friday 10:00 am

In this interactive session, we’ll work to develop more explicitly the links between research-based conclusions about effective rural education and the current educational policy context in Vermont. Attentive to the Vermont context, we’ll narrow our focus to look closely at policy issues relevant to school and school district consolidation. Specifically, we’ll review the research literature investigating the influence of school and district size on student achievement outcomes; we’ll consider the extent to which cost savings have (and have not) been realized in states that have sought increased fiscal efficiency through consolidation; we’ll look at how district consolidation has served as a shoehorn to school consolidation in these states; and we’ll explore the implications of consolidation for local governance and the well-being of rural communities.

What’s Working for Wellness in Schools?

Friday 11:00 am - Noon

A team from Vermont’s Action for Healthy Kids will present highlights from their 2007-2008 goals and objectives with a focus on the new “Healthy Schools Resource: Nutrition and Physical Activity.” A panel composed of administrators in schools where wellness is working will share examples of how easy it is to integrate nutrition, physical activity and wellness across the curriculum and throughout the school day.

Registration /Reservation SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ONLY

Vermont School Boards Association 2007 Conference November 1&2

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 802-223-5252 Fax 229-5427

LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE

Please call the Capitol Plaza 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 \$201.00

_____ Double (2 bed) \$161.00/pp

(Single room overnight no meals - \$92.65)

Commuting

Fax 802-223-0098

Qty		Subtotals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday Lunch	\$26.00 _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday Dinner	\$35.00 _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday Breakfast	\$16.00 _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday Lunch	\$26.00 _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian Meal Selection	
<i>Prices include tax and tip</i>		Totals _____