

Grand Isle Supervisory Union

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Superintendent's Report

November 1, 2015

Board Information:

- Frequent questions have been raised about the multiple telecommunications services being billed to districts and the SU. We worked with our Erate Consultant, Phil Hyjek, to prepare a brief summary of the current GISU telecommunication services:
 - Alburgh is party to a contract with Fairpoint for Centrex telephone services. This contract expires June 30, 2017. Alburgh also has a contract with Fairpoint for DSL Internet services that expires June 30, 2017. This contract costs the district approximately \$3,600.00 per year.
 - Grand Isle receives telephone services from BCN. This service is on a month-2-month basis and costs approximately \$3,600 per year.
 - Isle La Motte is party to a contract with Fairpoint for Centrex telephone services. This contract expires June 30, 2017. This contract costs approximately \$550.00 per year.
 - Folsom is party to three year contract with Fairpoint all expiring on June 30, 2017. Contract #1 is for Centrex telephone services. Contract #2 is for POTS (plain old telephone service) most likely a dedicated line for an alarm. Contract #3 is for Integrated Services for Digital Network (**ISDN**). In aggregate these contracts cost the district approximately \$6,900.00 per year.
 - North Hero has a contract with Fairpoint for Centrex telephone services. The Fairpoint contract expires on June 30, 2017. North Hero also receives POTS from Level 3 on a month-2-month basis. These services cost the district approximately \$4,100.00 per year.
 - GISU has numerous telecommunication contracts. GISU is party to a contract with Fairpoint for Centrex telephone services. This contract expires June 30, 2017. GISU receives long distance services from BCN on a month-2-month basis. GISU also receives POTS from Level 3 on a month-2-month basis. Cellular services are provided on a month-2-month basis from AT&T. Telephone services cost approximately \$11,500.00 per year. In addition GISU purchases Internet bandwidth on a month-2-month basis from Comcast at a yearly cost of \$6,300.00. Finally, there is a fiber maintenance contract with Level 3 that terminates December 30, 2033. The maintenance agreement costs \$7,800.00 and is not eligible for eRate reimbursement.
 - The E-rate program provides discounts on certain services and products that are essential for classrooms and libraries to receive voice, video, and data communications. The amount of the discount depends on the level of poverty and location of the school or library receiving service. The discount ranges from 20% to 90% of the cost of eligible services.

- To be eligible to receive discounts, a school or library must meet certain eligibility criteria. In general elementary and secondary schools are eligible to receive discounts--including many private schools and religious schools.
- Once we have a clear picture of the GISU eRate subsidy, I will report out on where we stand. Currently we are anticipating approximately \$20,000 in revenue from eRate.

Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction:

- Our ACT 230 Grant for the current school year has been awarded. We will be receiving \$6500 to help the district bring a team to the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Conference at Killington, next summer.
- Our “Innovation Grant” to support our work with students via Google Tools for Schools to create Personal Learning Plans with targeted professional development for teachers and a Chromebook for their use, has passed the initial phases of approval. The feedback from the Agency of Education is that the grant was well written, reached all points, included excellent data points and has moved to the final round for final approval.
- The centerpiece of our professional learning in October has been our work with Elizabeth Moore exploring our new Reading Units of Study K-5. The Lucy Calkins Reading Workshop approach to reading instruction that Elizabeth has worked to develop is highly personalized, meeting students at their individual instructional levels. This teaching model uses conferencing, performance assessments and learning progressions to accelerate progress, provides literacy rich content and instruction, and authentically helps students move up the ladder of text complexity. In October, Beth worked with all of our K-5 teachers in real time in the schools and classrooms, modeling the lesson structure and approach, responding authentically to students, listening to teachers’ questions, and helping us shape a rich literacy program that will universally delivered across our schools. Lisa Italiano and Rebecca Cardone from the Green Mountain Writing Project will further support this work as our year progresses.
- An important goal for this year is to formalize our curriculum frameworks across all subjects and grades. This work is off to an excellent start with our K-5 literacy curriculum leadership team, with representation from all schools and grade levels. We will continue working on curriculum frameworks through the year, and expect to complete this work by July 1.
- Our October 30th in-service day featured two outstanding presenters for our teachers. First, Charlie Appelstein presented his workshop on responding effectively to the changing needs of our students. His training, “There’s No Such thing As a Bad Kid,” addressed proactive responses to students with challenges. Kristin Gehsmann also joined us on the 30th, for a second and final training with her on *Words Their Way*, a Developmental Language Program for teacher K-5. This training was resoundingly requested by our teachers last year and supports universal expectations across the supervisory union. Participants report that the workshops were excellent and much appreciated by them.
- An important systemic initiative is the formation of a GISU data team. This team, including administrators, AoE school improvement coordinator, SWIFT coach, selected teacher leaders, and support staff will work together to orchestrate effective and sustainable systems for using our data to informed effect. Our first meeting was October 28th, where we began framing out our schedule and a multi-year work plan. The objective for this team is to build capacity and sustainability with data systems, inclusive of data collection and reflecting on data to inform our practices.

- **ACT 77:** On June 6, 2013 Governor Peter Shumlin signed the Flexible Pathways bill (see full link) which provides for:
 - Expansion of the existing Statewide Dual Enrollment Program
 - Expansion of the Early College Programs
 - Increased access to work-based learning
 - Increased virtual/blended learning opportunities
 - Increased access to Career and Technical Education (CTE)
 - Implementation of Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs)
 - Currently, all 7th graders in the GUSI must be implementing PLPs. We have offered Professional Development to all middle level teachers and guidance counselors and have embarked on this work in the schools.
- We are gearing up for year two of Smarter Balanced Assessments, making preparations for the launching of our summative standardized tests in the spring and learning the online reporting system to locate and utilize specific data for our schools.

Special Education:

- Beth Hemingway, Director of Student Support Service for Grand Isle Supervisory Union, has been selected by the National SWIFT Center to serve as a member of a national task force for the Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) Centers future work. The force will be identifying promising strategies for partner states, districts and schools to transform whole educational system to support all students in the general education curriculum to be college and career ready. The will identify ways to empower parents and engage other caring adults in improving the overall life and educational outcomes of students with disabilities.
- The US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs' 2012 funding of SWIFT supports implementation of this in five states. Therefore, SWIFT is assembling a national task force to:
 - Explore policy, funding, and accountability structures
 - Effectively address the academic needs of students with extensive support needs
 - Minimize the need for separate educational environments
- Beth leaves for the University of Kansas on November 2, 2015 to begin her service with the SWIFT Better Together task force.
- The Special Education Service plan for the Grand Isle Supervisory Union has been submitted and represents a decrease in spending for FY17 of \$253,024 or 7.44%.

Business Office:

- Auditors were in the Central Office during the week of October 19th and again the following week. Final numbers should be available soon. All in all, the audit appeared to go well.
- We are continuing the FY 17 budget work which entails meeting with principals, creating salary and benefit spreadsheets to be used for not only budgeting purposes but also for negotiations.
- Our FY 15 federal grants and processes were approved by the Agency of Education, which means we can now get the remaining FY 15 funds that were outstanding and can submit FY 16 reports for reimbursement.
- The Vermont AoE has decided to open up our FY 16 federal funds and is giving us a 15% advance on those funds.
- All payroll reports, 941's and quarterly reports were due at the end of October and were submitted on time.

- October 31st is the end of the first trimester for special education expenditures so we will begin work on the Special Education Expenditure Reports which are due November 15th.
- We are awaiting the act 46 financial models to help us address and answer “virtual” budgeting questions and concerns throughout the ACT 46 Committee work and process.
- We continue to process payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable, reconcile bank statements, and prepare budget to actuals for board meetings.

Links:

- **The complete text to ACT 77, Full text of the law requiring all secondary students to have Personal Learning Plans and having “flexible pathways for completing proficiency based graduation requirements by 2020.** <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2014/Acts/ACT077.pdf>
- **Link to the site for Math Curriculum being used to meet the standards in the Common Core for Mathematics** <https://www.engageny.org/mathematics>
- **Vermont has adopted The Next Generation Science Standards for all science instruction in our public schools. For now, Vermont will continue with the NECAP science assessment each spring. We are awaiting work from the Agency of Education regarding when the assessment will change. Here is the full site for the Next Generation Science Standards** <http://www.nextgenscience.org/>
- **Link to the full Common Core Standards** <http://education.vermont.gov/common-core>