

Grand Isle Supervisory Union

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Superintendent's Report: July 21, 2015

Barbara Burrington

Welcome:

- The Isle La Motte School District has a new principal, Tom Tregan, from Chazey, NY. Tom recently retired as principal from Chazey Central School.

Changes in the Superintendent Board Report Format:

This report may look different than previous Superintendent Reports.

Moving forward, we will be offering one unified [Superintendent's] Report to all 5 local school boards. I am going to follow the process that Elaine Pinckney in Chittenden South SU, and Laurie Gossens in Washington South SU use to create their "Central Office Leadership Team Report" to the boards, each month. Our process will be as follows:

I will solicit topics from the Director of Curriculum, Director of Student Services and Business Manager on a regularly scheduled basis for inclusion in the report to boards. The goals will be to:

1. ensure that we are covering all the important topics and that there is ample information for board members, in advance of meetings, to submit questions, etc.,
2. represent good collaboration among the team and,
3. provide a unified focus of our planning and communication.
4. Information for the Report will include both quantitative and qualitative data (for example, the September Report will include the total enrollment for all secondary students per HS, per the GI School Board request for that information, etc. as well as a welcome to all new district hires).

Board Chairs:

- All Board Chairs were contacted by Andy Julow, GISU Chair, requesting individual boards discuss and vote on the formation of a study committee at their July meeting. (North Hero, ILM and Grand Isle have done this and recorded it in the Board Motions from their July meeting.) The goal is to have a joint session sometime in August to establish this committee and consider a budget Andy has followed up with the VSBA and they are willing to offer a consultant to guide the GISU through this part of the process.
- Andy Julow, Kristin Bowser, Louse Koss and I will be meeting with representatives from VSA, VSBA, VSBIT and the VT AoE on August 6th in Montpelier. This meeting is for questions focused on Act 46 as it pertains to specifically to the GISU. (This group was limited to 3 board members by organizers.)
- The Executive Committee is scheduled to meet on August 4, 2015. The complete agenda is being developed however; the primary driver behind this meeting is the establishment of my professional goals for 2015 – 2016.

Administrative Retreat:

- Principals from South Hero, Grand Isle, North Hero and Alburgh, along with Beth Hemingway, Director of Student Support, Elaine Pentaleri, Director Curriculum and Assessment and I, met on July 9th for a full day to discuss leadership, curriculum, instruction and assessment for 2015-2016. Additionally, we discussed open positions within the district, updating Local and District Action Plans and a “One Plan” process, as well as planning for in-service work for the upcoming year. We have two more days planned for August 11 & 12, including a half day to learn the new version of the Vermont Common Assessment Tool (VCAT).

ACT 46:

- ACT 46 Implementation Project: This is an initiative between the VSBA, VSBIT & VSA to ensure that Vermont’s public school communities have access to a range of high quality supports and services in order to achieve effective implementation of ACT 46 (i.e. technical assistance, including communications and group facilitation, education systems design, legal analysis, financial modeling, risk management and project management, etc.). *I have attached an informational sheet about the formation and function of this Project. Additionally, I have attached a copy of the slides from Steve Dale’s ACT 46 presentation on July 7, 2015.*
- Guidance on implementation is to avoid the impulse to act without first developing a cohesive and well-coordinated process. *(See attached document.)*

Consolidated Federal Grant:

- The 2016 CFG was successfully submitted on July 13, 2015.
- A new investment was added to the CFG in order to offer students in all 5 schools in the SU, after school learning opportunities. These efforts will be coordinated between and among schools and will be staffed by HQ Teachers from each school. This strategy, combined with providing Wellness / PBIS grant funded services to students *after* the school day, are steps to ensure that our students continue to have access to after school activities following the sequestration of our 21st Century Grant in May, 2015, as an outcome of the federal audit.

Special Education Consolidation:

- GISU must consolidate / create centralization of special education services as required by ACT 153 at the supervisory union level by July 1, 2016 (per waiver), with our next collective bargaining agreement. We must submit an update to the AoE by August 15, 2015, estimating a date by which we expect there to be a ratified agreement. (See link to full ACT.)
- Failure to comply with ACT 156 will result in a 5 cent surcharge on the tax-rate.

Federal Fiscal Monitoring Update:

- On Monday, May 4, 2015, Erin Finneran and Cassandra Ryan, fiscal monitors for the Vermont Agency of Education, conducted an on-site monitoring visit at GISU. The primary purpose of this audit was to determine whether the SU has a grants management system that allows it to meet federal and state fiscal requirements and has the required practices in place. They examined the internal controls and tested contracts, time and effort documentation, and grand expenditures for their compliance with grant requirements and cost principles.
- They found 6 areas that had to be addressed to be in compliance with federal requirements (i.e. Corrective Actions). These were to be completed and implemented as soon as possible.
- On May 5, 2015, the VT AoE sent notification to then Superintendent Phillips that “they were enforcing the suspension of payment of all federal funds from the VT Agency of Education to the GISU until such time as the Corrective Actions are sufficiently implemented”.

- In June, 2015, the GISU hired a new Business Manager, Lynne Carpenter, who has been working diligently with auditors to comply with the findings and improve all areas of business processes. A second monitoring visit is scheduled for July 27, 2015. *(See attached letter from Rebecca Holcombe.)*
- You will note that the Secretary's letter assumes that communication had been shared with GISU Board Chair, Andy Julow however, it was not and this breakdown in communication between the former Superintendent and the Board Chair was explained to Secretary Holcombe via phone conference on July 21, 2015.
- Central Office staff members are completing other concerns identified in the monitoring report dated May 18, 2015 (i.e. segregation of duties plan, organizational documentation, etc.)
- An extremely significant area of non-compliance, Missing Required Policies/Procedures, must be completed at the GISU Board Level. GISU Board Policies are outdated and incomplete and the SU has not updated its policies since 1989. I am working with Nicole Mace, VSBA General Counsel, to improve ALL required and recommended policies and practices that must be updated by the GISU. It is my goal to bring a draft of a new Policies and Procedures Manual to the Executive Committee meeting on August 4, 2015, and to warn a special Policy Committee meeting for full adoption of a final annotated Policy Manual as soon as possible, thereafter.
- I am working with Jeff Francis, Executive Director of the VSA, to work on all areas by which the SU functions and what we should be focusing on to make the GISU operationally excellent on behalf of the students and communities we serve.

Financial Management Questionnaire:

In December of 2014, all Vermont schools were directed to complete a "Financial Management Questionnaire". No schools within the GISU, or the GISU, completed this mandatory reporting form. This documentation must be completed / prepared by each school and signed by the Board Chair of that school, and returned to Lynne Carpenter ASAP.

Legislation: Links to summaries +/- reports

ACT 46- <http://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-act46-fact-sheet.pdf>

<http://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-act46-governance-changes.pdf>

ACT 156- http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU_Legislative_Report_Act156_of_2012.pdf

ACT 166-

http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDUEarly_Ed_Implementation_Guidance_on_Act_166_of_2014.pdf

Attached:

- Slides from Steve Dale's ACT 46 Presentation on July 7, 2015
- ACT 46 Implementation Project Information Sheet
- Monitoring Letter from Rebecca Holcombe
- AoE Financial Management Questionnaire