

Grand Isle Supervisory Union

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Superintendent's Report

February 1, 2017

CELEBRATION:

(January was School Board Recognition Month. This celebration is a day late, but sincere.)

Being a school board member requires hours of commitment each month and the responsibilities are enormous. On behalf of the employees of the Grand Isle Supervisory Union and all member districts, **THANK YOU** to each and every Board Member for your service to the island's students and communities. Your work is much appreciated.

ACT 46:

[The Vermont School Boards Association's Winter Newsletter](#) was mailed to all board members this week. Included in the newsletter are two articles related to Act 46. The first is a [Status Update on Act 46 Merger Votes](#) and the second is an editorial by Emily Simmons, VSBA Director of Legal and Policy Services asking, ["Will the Legislature Tweak Act 46 This Session"](#).

SWIFT UPDATE:

The Leadership Team is undertaking our second annual "District Capacity Assessment". The DCA is a tool to help the SU and member districts identify strengths and areas for priority in terms of Driver support for evidence informed work happening in the schools. This will be facilitated by Dr. Maura Hart, our Vermont Agency of Education SWIFT support person. Here is a complete SWIFT timeline for the SU:

By the end of February 2017:

- GISU District Capacity Assessment complete (DCA)

By the end of March 2017:

- All schools will have completed FIAs (internal progress monitoring tool regarding the implementation status of the SWIFT Framework)
- All schools will have completed Driver Best Practice tools (DBPT) (annual progress monitoring tool of the Drivers of Implementation Science)

By the end of May 2017:

- All schools will have completed a Data Snapshot

By the end of June 2017:

- All schools will have completed a Priority and Practice Planning (PPP) Tool so as to have a data informed action plan to implement and sustain -with ensured fidelity- evidence informed practices to achieve their current priorities

The information these tools provide serve as a basis for our Consolidated Federal Grant investments and professional development priorities, etc.

CURRICULM UPDATES:

At the January 16th In-Service we continued our focus on Trauma-Informed Practices with NFI and Dave Melnick. The teachers learned about neurological factors that impact students who have experienced trauma as well as some techniques for working with students when they are having difficulty in school. We will continue this strand in April when Dave returns and teachers will get to practice the techniques and plan strategies for students in need. In the afternoon, teachers had much needed time to talk with one another.

The Integrated Field Review/Educational Quality Review is on for this Thursday, February 2nd. We welcome 5 teams to the SU to interview and observe in our schools. In about 2-3 weeks, we will have a draft report from the AOE to review, comment on and send back for revisions.

On February 7th and 8th, the Administrative Team will be attending a two day conference where we will be learning about Instructional Coaching from Jim Knight, a renowned expert in this field. This directly aligns with our SU wide goal to build an instructional coaching service delivery plan for our SU.

Megan Grube, Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Technology, will be putting together two cross-SU groups to help drive the development of our identified SU priorities. The first is the Technology Committee. This committee will be the driving force in the development of our systems, structures and technological opportunities for our students. The second is the Curriculum Leadership Team. In partnership with Megan, this team will help inform the pedagogical focus for the SU and the professional learning opportunities that we provide for our teachers. The vision for this team is to improve communication and teacher voice in curriculum decisions.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Grand Isle Supervisory Union is still looking for a certified special educator to work at the Alburgh Community Education Center.

Below is a court case that could be significant to special education when decided.

Supreme Court to decide what level of education do public schools legally owe to students with disabilities? January 11:

The Supreme Court Wednesday seemed ready to increase the educational benefits the country's public schools owe to millions of children with disabilities, as the justices considered one of the most significant special-education cases to reach the high court in decades.

At issue is whether schools must provide disabled children "some" educational benefit — which several lower courts have interpreted to mean just more than trivial progress — or whether students legally deserve something more.

Most of the justices appeared to think the "some" benefit standard was less than what Congress envisioned.

But they also seemed to be struggling to come up with language for a higher standard that would be grounded in the law and clear enough to be meaningful and enforceable, but flexible enough to apply to children with widely varying levels and types of disabilities. During the hour-long oral argument, they grappled with the differences between various levels of educational benefit: “some,” “barely more than de minimis,” “significant,” “meaningful,” “appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances.” “What is frustrating about this case and this statute,” said Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., “is we have a blizzard of words.”

The plaintiff in the case, *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, is an autistic boy whose parents pulled him out of public school after his behavior deteriorated dramatically and he made what they said was almost no academic progress. They placed their son in private school, where he made rapid progress, and they sought reimbursement for tuition. They are entitled to that reimbursement if they can prove that the public school failed to provide a “free appropriate public education” under federal law. The child and his parents lost their case before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, which is among the majority of Circuit Courts of Appeals that subscribe to the “some” benefit standard. A minority of circuit courts have set higher expectations for schools, and the Supreme Court now has a chance to set a uniform standard for the nation.

ACT 166

The Agency of Education Early Childhood Team sent out an email on January 25, 2017 stating, the statewide Prekindergarten tuition rate for FY18 is \$3,178.00. The tuition rate for FY18 will be posted on the AOE website soon. The FY17 rate is \$3092.00.

HIGH SCHOOL

All first semester tuition invoices have been processed for individual school districts. An updated high school enrollment will be completed for March.

IMPORTANT DATES:

February 2- Integrated Field Review Pilot (all schools hosting site visits from the VT AoE)
February 27 – March 3- Winter Recess (No School)