

# **Slate Valley Unified Union School District**

Serving the communities of Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Orwell, and West Haven



## **2020-2021 Annual Report & Proposed Budget 2021-2022**

For this report and additional information, visit the  
Slate Valley Unified Union School District website:

[www.SlateValleyUnified.org](http://www.SlateValleyUnified.org)

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**District Officers**

Moderator.....Cecelia Hunt, Fair Haven  
Clerk.....Elisabeth MacKay, Castleton  
Treasurer.....Suzanne Dechame, Fair Haven

**Board of Directors****Benson**

Patricia Beaumont.....patricia.beaumont@svuvt.org  
Rebecca Spears.....rebecca.spears@svuvt.org  
Rebeckah St. Peter.....rebeckah.stpeter@svuvt.org

**Castleton**

Julie Finnegan.....julie.finnegan@svuvt.org  
Toni Lobdell.....toni.lobdell@svuvt.org  
Timothy Smith, Chair.....timothy.smith@svuvt.org

**Fair Haven**

Mike Bache.....michael.bache@svuvt.org  
Tara Buxton, Clerk.....tara.buxton@svuvt.org  
Richard Wilson.....richard.wilson@svuvt.org

**Hubbardton**

Joshua Hardt.....joshua.hardt@svuvt.org  
Christine Pouliot.....christine.pouliot@svuvt.org  
Open Seat

**Orwell**

Glen Cousineau.....glen.cousineau@svuvt.org  
Peter Stone, Vice Chair.....peter.stone@svuvt.org  
John Wurzbacher.....john.wurzbacher@svuvt.org

**West Haven**

Angela Charron.....angela.charron@svuvt.org  
Tanya Tolchin.....tanya.tolchin@svuvt.org  
Open Seat

**Administration**

Superintendent of Schools.....Brooke Olsen-Farrell  
Director of Special Services.....Kristin Benway  
Director of Operations.....Christopher Cole  
Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment.....Casey O'Meara  
Director of Finance.....Cheryl Scarzello  
BVS Principal.....Amy Roy  
CES/ CVS Principal.....Kim Prehoda  
CES/ CVS Assistant Principal.....Ben Worthing  
CES/ CVS Director of Special Education .....Bonnie Lenihan  
FHGS Principal.....Deborah Infurna  
FHGS Assistant Principal.....Jennefer Paquette  
FHGS Director of Special Education.....Rebecca Armitage  
FHUHS Principal.....Phil Hall  
FHUHS Assistant Principal.....Kate Leathe  
FHUHS Director of Special Education.....Margaret Hayward  
OVS Principal.....Patrick Walters

**W A R N I N G**  
**ANNUAL MEETING**  
**SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
(Towns of Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Orwell, West Haven)

**FEBRUARY 22, 2021**

The legal voters of the Slate Valley Unified Union School District (SVUUSD) consisting of the towns of Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Orwell and West Haven are hereby warned and notified to meet remotely on Monday, February 22, 2021 at 7:00 PM to conduct the following business:

***VIRTUALLY CONNECT BY GOING TO [meet.google.com/yjx-xnzo-dpq](https://meet.google.com/yjx-xnzo-dpq)***  
***OR BY CALLING (US) +1 402-337-4387 PIN: 505 127 437#***

Article 1: To hear the Board of School Directors of the SVUUSD present its estimate of expenses for the ensuing year.

The meeting shall then be recessed to Tuesday, March 2, 2021 for the purpose of voting on the following articles at the usual polling places in the member districts by Australian ballot, said ballots being brought to Fair Haven Union High School Cafeteria following the closing of the polls in the member districts where they will be commingled and counted by the Board of Civil Authority of the constituent districts.

The Town polls will be opened as follows:

Town of Benson	10:00 AM - 7:00 PM	Benson Community Hall
Town of Castleton	8:00 AM - 7:00 PM	Castleton Fire Station
Town of Fair Haven	10:00 AM - 7:00 PM	American Legion Post 49
Town of Hubbardton	10:00 AM - 7:00 PM	Hubbardton Town Office
Town of Orwell	10:00 AM - 7:00 PM	Orwell Town Hall
Town of West Haven	10:00 AM - 7:00 PM	West Haven Town Hall

Article 2: To elect the following officers to serve from their election and qualification until March following the election and qualification of their successors:

- A. School Director, Benson for a term of three (3) years
- B. School Director, Castleton for a term of three (3) years
- C. School Director, Fair Haven for a term of three (3) years
- D. School Director, Hubbardton for a term of three (3) years
- E. School Director, Orwell for a term of three (3) years
- F. School Director, West Haven for a term of three (3) years
- G. School Director, Benson for a term of two (2) years of three (3) years
- H. School Director, Hubbardton for a term of two (2) years of three (3) years

Article 3: To elect the following officers to serve from their election and qualification until the next Annual District Meeting of 2022 following the election and qualification of their successors:

- A. Moderator
- B. Clerk
- C. Treasurer

Article 4: Shall the voters approve the following compensation to be paid to Slate Valley Unified Union School District Officers?

- A. School Directors - \$1,200 per person per year
- B. School Board Chair - \$1,500 per year
- C. Treasurer - \$1,200 per year

Article 5: Shall the voters authorize the Slate Valley Unified Union School District to borrow money pending receipt of payments from the State Education Fund or Town Tax Funds by the issuance of its notes or orders payable not later than one year from date provided, however, that the Slate Valley Unified Union School District is authorized by Vermont Statutes to borrow sufficient funds to meet pending obligations?

Article 6: Shall the voters of the School District authorize a transfer from the general fund surplus balance in the amount of \$882,500 to the capital improvements and repairs reserve fund?

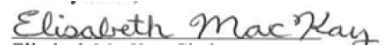
Article 7: Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend Twenty-Six Million Two Hundred Eighty Thousand Three Hundred Eighty-Five Dollars \$26,280,385 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$16,483.20 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 0.55% greater than spending for the current year.

Dated at Fair Haven, Vermont  
January 25, 2021

Received and Recorded  
January 25, 2021



Timothy Smith, Chairman  
Slate Valley Unified Union School



Elisabeth MacKay, Clerk  
Slate Valley Unified Union School

## **SVUUSD Annual Meeting Minutes**

February 24, 2020

Fair Haven Union High School

7:00 p.m.

Administration Present: Brooke Olsen-Farrell-Superintendent; Casey O'Meara-Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment; Kris Benway-Director of Special Services; Chris Cole-Director of Operations; Cheryl Scarzello-Director of Finance

SVUUSD Board Members Present: Rebeckah St. Peter, Tim Smith, Tara Buxton, Dave Carpenter, Angela Charron, Mike Bache, Josh Hardt, Peter Stone, Tanya Tolchin, Toni Lobdell, Amy Munger, Julie Finnegan, Glen Cousineau, Rick Wilson, and Pat Beaumont.

Local Administration Present: Jason Rasco-FHUHS Principal, Kate Leathe-FHUHS Assistant Principal, Margaret Hayward-FHUHS Director of Special Education, Deb Infurna-FHGS Principal, Jennefer Paquette-FHGS Assistant Principal, Kim Prehoda-CES/CVS Principal, Bonnie Lenihan-CES/CVS Director of Special Education, Phil Hall-CES/CVS Assistant Principal, Patrick Walters-OVS Principal, Amy Roy-BVS Principal.

Others Present (that signed the attendance sheet): Liz MacKay, John Lulek, Lynn Stack, Ceil Hunt, Jack Helm, Lane DePaul, Julius Riemersma, Ken Flowers, Michael Jakubowski, Laura Jakubowski, Paul A. Stone, Debbie Rosmus, Steve Rosmus, Ray Pentowski, Marilyn Pentowski, Scott Lobdell, Mike Alexander, Curtis Hier, Deb Alexander, Judy Gevry, Armand Gevery, Naomi Garbo, John Wurzbacher, John Burke, Diavid Hassebrook, Janet Morey, Dawn Curtes, Sheri Grabowski, Pat Clarke, Rick Grabowski, Bekah Parent, Joe Bystry, Sharon Fletcher, Steve Jamus, Mike Audet, Jean Audet, Diane Spangenberg, Tom Spangenberg, Will Dodge, Jim Sabatasd, Matt Thomas, Karla Ramey, Michael Finnegan, Eric Ramey, Ann Marie Mahar, Alan Wolmuth, Robert Murphy, Nancy Mark, Laura Desjardins, Daniel Forcier, Pat Dierchsen, Carl Ruby, Lynn Gee, Nancy Ruby, Laurie Kamuda, Kathy Maher, Joanne Riley, Terry Riley, Bryce Taylor, Robert Paul, Mike Stannard, Wayne Hall, Lynn Austin, Tim ??, Nedra Boutwell, Todd Boutwell, Raegan Colburn, and some others that didn't sign the attendance sheet.

The annual meeting of the Slate Valley Unified Union School District was called to order by Ceil Hunt at 7:00 PM on February 24, 2020. The meeting was held in the band room at the Fair Haven Union High School.

### **Article 1: Election of Officers**

- a. Moderator: At 7:03 Julie Finnegan moved to elect Ceil Hunt as moderator. Seconded by Toni Lobdell. Motion carried. Ceil Hunt will be the moderator for the 2021 annual meeting.
- b. Clerk: Julie Finnegan moved to elect Liz MacKay as clerk. Seconded by Peter Stone. Motion carried. Liz MacKay will be the clerk for the 2021 annual meeting.
- c. Treasurer: John Luluk moved to elect Suzanne Dechame as treasurer. Seconded by Julie Finnegan. Motion passed. Suzanne Dechame will be the treasurer for the 2021 annual meeting.

### **Article 2:**

At 7:05 Ken Flowers moved to hear and act upon the reports of School District Officers. Seconded by David Carpenter. Discussion included some mistakes on page 11 and 12 in the annual report. Curt Hier moved to amend the reports to correct the FY21 Proposed Budget dates to 7/1/20 on pages 11 and 12. Seconded Ken Flowers. The amendment passed. The motion as amended carried.

### **Article 3:**

At 7:07 Laura Jakubowski moved to approve the annual salaries for the School Directors and other elected officers of the school district. Seconded by Ken Flowers. There was no discussion. The motion carried.

Article 4:

At 7:08 Ken Flowers moved that the voters of the school district authorize the board of school directors to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenues for the next fiscal year. Seconded by Dave Carpenter. There was a question by Curt Hier asking if this had anything to do with the bond and the answer was no. The motion passed.

Article 5:

At 7:10 Ken Flowers moved to have the board of school directors present the proposed school budget for the ensuing year. Seconded by John Burke. The motion carried. School Board Chairman Julie Finnegan presented the key points of the proposed budget to the audience.

Question by John Wurzbacher: Is there money in the budget for repairs?

Answer: Yes.

Question by John Burke: Can you explain Universal breakfast and lunch?

Answer: The School Board decided that it would be best for all children. It came about due to a change in the tax laws that caused a decrease in family eligibility but the need was still present.

Question by Ken Flowers: What percent of students eat breakfast at school?

Answer: Not sure.

Question by Deb Alexander: What is the impact of the staffing changes?

Answer: The addition of support staff will create equality.

Question by Mike Alexander: How are you reducing thirteen positions over three years?

Answer: It's mostly coming from attrition (retirements) and also a result of a decline in our student population.

Question by Mike Alexander: How does our cost of \$16,663.02 per equalized pupil compare to nearby districts?

Answer: We don't have that information but can find out and provide it.

Question by Dawn Curtes: How do you get the income adjustment for Hubbardton? (It's misleading.)

Answer: The information is provided by the state. It has to do with the percent of taxpayers that pay based on their income.

Article 6: There was no other business for the business portion of the meeting. The remainder of the minutes will reflect the discussion of the ballot questions (Articles 7-11) that will be voted on by Australian ballot on March 3, 2020.

Article 7:

At 7:36 Ken Flowers read Article 7 into the record. Shall the voters of the School District approve the school board to expend \$26,623,041, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$16,663.02 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 3.50% higher than spending for the current year.

Question by Tom Spangenberg: Is there enough money in the budget to fix the boiler?

Answer: There is not enough money in our annual budget to fix the boiler. There were more questions by Curt Hier and Richard Grabowski about the boiler.

Answers about the boiler: About 100K was spent last year and about 50K this year on repairs. The problems have been going on for quite some time and it may be 3-5 million dollars for a whole new heating system.

Article 8:

At 7:45 Ken Flowers, Moderator read Article 8 into the record. Shall the voters of the School District authorize a transfer from the general fund surplus balance in the amount of \$200,000 to the capital improvements and repairs reserve fund?

There were no questions.

Article 9:

At 7:44 Ken Flowers, moderator read Article 9 into the record. To elect six (6) school directors each for three-year (3) terms to serve on the School District's Board of School Directors:

One (1) school director who is a resident of Benson.

One (1) school director who is a resident of Castleton.

One (1) school director who is a resident of Fair Haven.

One (1) school director who is a resident of Hubbardton.

One (1) school director who is a resident of Orwell.

One (1) school director who is a resident of West Haven.

There were no questions.

Article 10:

At 7:45 Ken Flowers, Moderator read Article 10 into the record. To elect four (4) school directors to fill the remaining two (2) years of three (3) year terms to serve on the School District's Board of School

Directors:

One (1) school director who is a resident of Benson.

One (1) school director who is a resident of Fair Haven.

One (1) school director who is a resident of Hubbardton.

One (1) school director who is a resident of West Haven.

There were no questions.

Article 11:

At 7:45 Ken Flowers, Moderator read Article 11 into the record. To elect one (1) school director who is a resident of Benson to fill the remaining one (1) year of a three (3) year term on the School District's Board of School Directors.

There were no questions.

The annual meeting of the Slate Valley Unified Union School District adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Liz MacKay



## **Superintendent's Report**

This has been a year like no other to say the least. The Pandemic has reshaped everything we know as a society and a school system. This report will look different from past years in that we don't have the typical data to share with you. In fact, school looks much different due to the pandemic. We have worked tirelessly in Slate Valley to ensure that our students have in-person learning opportunities to the greatest extent possible. As such we have had to redesign everything that we do to comply with health and safety standards from the CDC and State of Vermont. I am so proud of our staff, students and community for their support and flexibility.

Standardized testing did not happen in 2020 and remains uncertain for 2021. While we don't have new testing data to share, I can tell you our students and teachers are working hard on academic growth with an emphasis on building strong relationships with each other as well as the community.

Additionally, the district is continuing to embark on a reorganization plan. Over the last 10 years the district's enrollment has decreased by 20%, yet we still operate the same number of buildings which in turn requires similar staffing models. We have been able to reduce approximately 19 positions in the last 3 years, but in order to adjust further, address wide-spread infrastructure needs, and ensure that all of our students have access to high quality learning opportunities, we must look at things differently.

The district's reorganization plan was announced this fall and includes a realignment of schools within Slate Valley. On December 7th, the school board voted to make Benson Village School a PreK-6 school beginning July 1, 2021. The upcoming 7th/8th graders will have school choice to the other schools within the district with transportation provided by the district.

In May of 2020 the school board will vote on whether or not to realign the remainder of the schools within Slate Valley for July 1, 2022. If the vote is successful 7th and 8th graders will move to the high school campus for the fall of 2022. Castleton Elementary, Fair Haven Grade and Orwell Village all join Benson Village as PreK-6 schools. This will leave Castleton Village School vacant. This school will either be educationally repurposed or the board will vote to take the matter to the voters of Castleton and Hubbardton for school closure consideration.

We know change can be bittersweet and that there will be a grieving process of our communities. However, our current situation is not sustainable and something must change in order to continue to offer our students the educational opportunities they need to be successful.

While it has been a difficult time in our community it is also an exciting time to be in the Slate Valley Unified School District, we have a great future ahead of us. It is my great honor to serve as your superintendent. Thank you for your continued support as we strive to do our very best for all of our children.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brooke Olsen-Farrell  
Superintendent

## **SVUUSD Board's Report**

The primary responsibility of the School Board is to assemble a budget that best utilizes the available resources of the community that provide the highest quality, most equitable education for our students.

Over the course of previous cycles, the Board has trimmed all available excess from the budget with hope that it becomes acceptable to voters. Through experience, we have learned that you simply cannot cut your way to a successful budget without negatively affecting student services. For the Board to continue to lower the cost of education in a meaningful way, we must fundamentally change the way in which we utilize our facilities. Slate Valley is not unlike most districts in Vermont that continue to see a decline in student population. This decrease is a result of many factors, most outside our immediate control, and include; an aging population, static economic growth, increased vocational and early-college opportunities for students, and a generally more competitive environment amongst area schools.

One of the benefits afforded by our recent consolidation into Slate Valley, is the opportunity to reconfigure our schools to best address declining student population. Bringing our 7th and 8th grade students together at the high school will create the critical mass of students necessary to offer more robust programming and give kids more opportunity to pursue their interests in sports, music, arts & culture, science & technology, and the great outdoors. This reconfiguration will also allow the District to better utilize our facilities, prioritize infrastructure needs, and manage declining student population.

We are a small, close knit community. I am very proud of how all school administration, teachers and staff, families, and most especially students have come together, through collective sacrifice and compromise, to meet the challenges of this pandemic head on. While we are very mindful of the economic uncertainty created by the pandemic, we can also see clearly the educational needs of our students continue to grow. This proposed reconfiguration realizes both primary goals of the School Board; to best utilize hard-earned tax payer money, and to provide the highest quality education possible. We thank the community for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tim Smith  
Board Chair

## FY22 Proposed Budget Information

### FY22 Budget Objectives

- Support Social Emotional Learning
- Address Previously Deferred Building Maintenance
- Plan for District Middle School Reconfiguration
- Provide Educational Equity for All Students
- Continue Creating Efficiencies Districtwide
- Provide Value to Taxpayers

### FY22 Staffing Changes:

- Total Reductions: 7.5 FTE
  - Reduction of 10.5 FTE (Direct Instruction and Support Staff)
  - Addition of 3 FTE (Student Support, Athletic Director Districtwide)

**Total Reductions in Staff over 4 Years: 22.65 FTE**

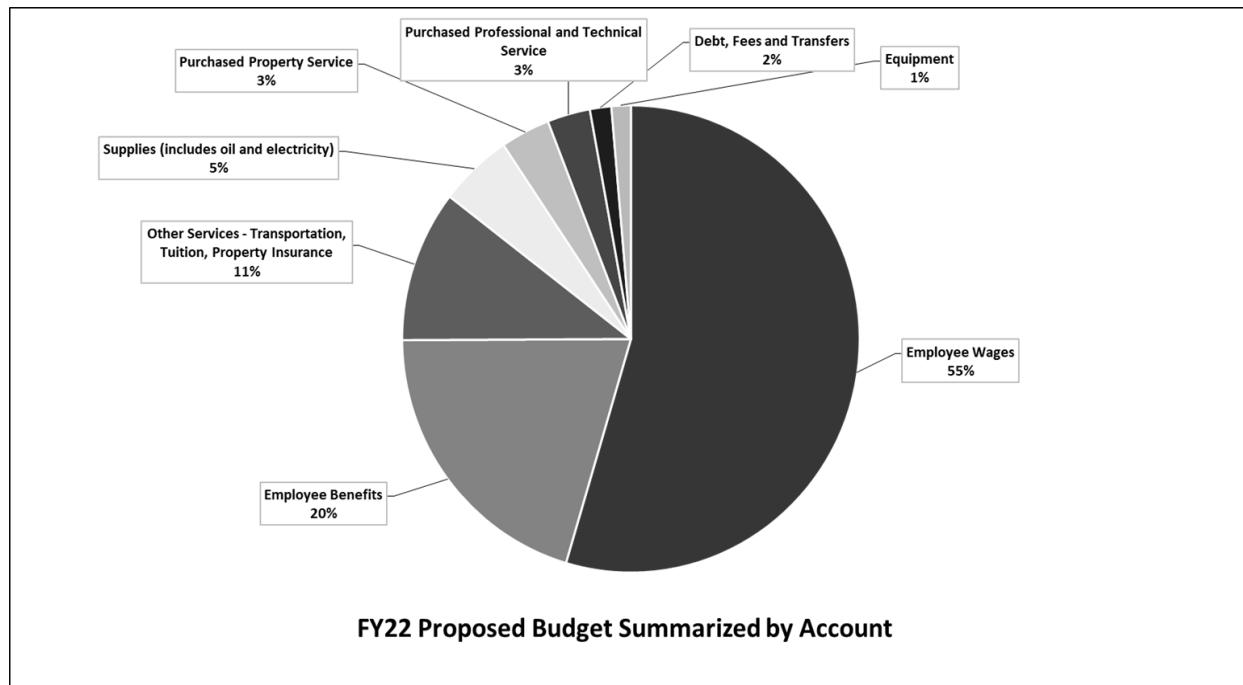
SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT				
Revenue Summary				
FY22 Budget				
		FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed Budget	Change
		7/1/20 thru 6/30/21	7/1/21 thru 6/30/22	Increase(Decrease)
OFFSETTING REVENUES:				
Local				
	Gate Receipts	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -
	Elementary Tuition	45,000	30,000	(15,000)
	Secondary Tuition	-	-	-
	Prior Year Surplus	1,019,000	1,799,336	780,336
	Indirect Fees Charged To Federal Grants	30,000	30,000	-
	Interest Earned	30,000	30,000	-
	Other Revenues-Rentals	-	-	-
State				
	Special Education			
	Early Childhood Special Ed Block Grant	108,362	111,122	2,760
	Main Block Grant	507,892	511,904	4,012
	Intensive Reimbursement	2,256,545	2,091,738	(164,807)
	Extraordinary Needs Reimbursement	-	24,000	24,000
	State Placed Reimbursement	195,000	22,000	(173,000)
	Transportation			
	State Aid For Transportation	410,000	373,750	(36,250)
	Vocational Ed Transportation Aid	50,000	55,000	5,000
	Reimbursement For Drivers Ed	6,000	6,000	-
	Other			
	Merger Support Grant	116,435	116,435	-
	SUBTOTAL OFFSETTING REVENUES	\$ 4,794,234	\$ 5,221,285	\$ 427,051
	State Education Spending Grant	21,312,812	20,766,113	(546,699)
	State To Tech Center On Behalf Of The District	295,540	292,987	(2,553)
	TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 26,402,586	\$ 26,280,385	\$ (122,201)

SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT				
FY22 Proposed Budget Summarized by Functional Area				
Function	Description of Functional Area	FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed Budget	Change
		7/1/20 thru 6/30/21	7/1/21 thru 6/30/22	Increase(Decrease)
1100	Regular Direct Instructional Programs	\$ 9,425,239	\$ 9,355,512	\$ (69,727)
1200	Special EducationDirect Instructional Programs	4,070,509	3,752,982	(317,527)
1400	Athletic Programs	467,431	496,878	29,447
1500	Cocurricular Programs	93,065	90,321	(2,744)
2120	Guidance Services	716,519	756,135	39,616
2132	School Nurse Services	541,370	551,719	10,349
2140	Psychological Services	522,614	511,786	(10,828)
2150	Speech and Other Therapy Services	322,953	267,935	(55,018)
2160	Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Vision	222,908	136,279	(86,629)
2190	Other Student Services	34,263	160,477	126,214
2210	Improvement of Instruction	297,040	325,384	28,344
2220	Library Services	287,620	297,911	10,291
2230	Instruction Related Technology	560,271	571,920	11,649
2311	School Board and Legal Services	143,875	123,331	(20,544)
2320	Superintendent's Office	307,076	315,310	8,234
2410	School Administration	1,843,635	1,868,818	25,183
2490	Special Education Administration	424,380	432,946	8,566
2500	Other Central Services	214,115	212,916	(1,199)
2510	Fiscal Services	575,405	569,659	(5,746)
2580	Districtwide Technology Services	495,021	512,562	17,541
2600	Buildings and Grounds	2,423,606	2,365,455	(58,151)
4700	Building Improvements	529,500	600,000	70,500
2660	Security and Safety	214,635	228,763	14,128
2700	Transportation	1,410,800	1,403,000	(7,800)
3100	Food Service Programs	106,800	243,500	136,700
5000	Debt Service	151,942	128,900	(23,042)
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$ 26,402,592</b>	<b>\$ 26,280,399</b>	<b>\$ (122,193)</b>

Expenditure Budget Comparison to Prior Years			
Comparison to FY21			
FY22 Proposed Budget	FY21 Budget	\$ Change	% Change
\$26,280,385	\$26,402,586	\$122,201 decrease	0.46% decrease

Comparison to FY20			
FY22 Proposed Budget	FY20 Budget	\$ Change	% Change
\$26,280,385	\$26,493,638	\$213,253 decrease	0.80% decrease

Education Spending Per Equalized Pupil		
FY22 Proposed	FY21	Percent Change
\$16,483.20	\$16,393.68	0.55% increase



### Homestead Tax Rate:

The Tax Commissioner in his annual letter to the legislature, recommended a yield based on “statutorily prescribed parameters” at \$10,763. In his letter he noted that the Administration is committed to “mitigating the impacts on property taxpayers” due to the COVID 19 pandemic. In FY21 the Legislature wanted to send a similar message when it set the yield in May 2020 at \$10,998. The Legislature said at that time that the issues with the Education Fund due to COVID 19 would not be borne by taxpayers. In order to provide tax rate estimates for FY22 Slate Valley had made the decision to use \$10,998 for the yield. This amount is same as the FY21 yield and reflective of improved revenue projections for the State of Vermont which positively affect the education fund. Based on the state’s education funding formula and using a yield of \$10,998, the estimated equalized homestead tax rate is \$1.4987 (per \$100 of property value) for SVUUSD. The district will still be eligible for an Act 46 incentive in FY22 of \$0.02. When the incentive is applied to the equalized tax rate it becomes \$1.4787. Actual tax rates are further adjusted for each town’s common level of appraisal (CLA). The tax rate is estimated until such time as the legislature sets the yield.

FY22 <i>Estimated</i> Equalized Tax Rate			
FY22	FY21	Change in Equalized Tax Rate	
\$1.4787	\$1.4506	\$0.0281	1.94%

<b>Town</b>	<b><i>FY22 Estimated</i> Equalized Tax Rate</b>	<b>CLA (Common Level of Appraisal)</b>	<b><i>FY22 Estimated</i> Homestead Tax Rate</b>
Benson	\$1.4787	99.29%	\$1.4893
Castleton	\$1.4787	93.74%	\$1.5775
Fair Haven	\$1.4787	110.98%	\$1.3324
Hubbardton	\$1.4787	95.47%	\$1.5489
Orwell	\$1.4787	98.70%	\$1.4982
West Haven	\$1.4787	96.57%	\$1.5313

### **Income Sensitivity:**

Some taxpayers pay their education property taxes based on household income. The FY22 household income cap percentage is 2.57%. In FY21 it was 2.36%. The following are the percent of homestead taxpayers by town that paid their property taxes based on income in tax year 2020.

<b>Town</b>	<b>% Based on Income</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>% Based on Income</b>
Benson	59.7%	Hubbardton	74.4%
Castleton	69.1%	Orwell	75.7%
Fair Haven	69.1%	West Haven	80.5%

### **Auditor's Reports**

The firm of RHR Smith & Company of Buxton, Maine was engaged to complete the annual audit of the financial statements of the governmental activities, any business type activities, any discretely presented component units, any major fund, and any aggregate remaining fund information, including the related notes to the financial statements which collectively comprise the basic financial statements of the Slate Valley Unified Union School District as of and for the year ending June 30, 2020.

The audits include the financial statements for the of the school district's non-major governmental, non-major enterprise, and fiduciary funds for the same period. The audit report includes Management's Discussion and Analysis, fund balances and budget to actual comparison information for the year ended June 30, 2020.

RHR Smith & Company has stated that the audit was conducted in accordance with auditing standards that require them to plan and perform the audit in order to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

The audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements that collectively comprise the Slate Valley Unified Union School District basic financial statements.

A copy of the annual audit can be obtained by contacting the Slate Valley Unified Union School District at 33 Mechanic Street, Fair Haven, VT or by visiting the website at <http://www.slatevalleyunified.org>.

<b>District:</b> Slate Valley UUSD		<b>U062</b>			Homestead tax rate per \$10,998 of spending per equalized pupil
<b>SU:</b> Addison - Rutland		Rutland County	Property dollar equivalent yield	<b>10,998</b>	<b>1.00</b>
		Income dollar equivalent yield per 2.0% of household income		<b>12,825</b>	
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY2019</b>	<b>FY2020</b>	<b>FY2021</b>	<b>FY2022</b>	
1. Adopted or warned union district budget (including special programs and full technical center expenditures)	-	\$26,493,638	\$26,402,586	\$26,280,385	1.
2. plus Sum of separately warned articles passed at union district meeting	-	-	-	-	2.
3. Adopted or warned union district budget plus articles	-	\$26,493,638	\$26,402,586	\$26,280,385	3.
4. plus Obligation to a Regional Technical Center School District if any	-	-	-	-	4.
5. plus Prior year deficit repayment of deficit	-	-	-	-	5.
6. Total Union Budget	-	\$26,493,638	\$26,402,586	\$26,280,385	6.
7. S.U. assessment (included in union budget) - informational data	-	-	-	-	7.
8. Prior year deficit reduction (if included in union expenditure budget) - informational data	-	-	-	-	8.
<b>Revenues</b>					
9. Union revenues (categorical grants, donations, tuitions, surplus, federal, etc.)	-	\$4,620,700	\$4,794,164	\$5,221,285	9.
10. Total offsetting union revenues	-	\$4,620,700	\$4,794,164	\$5,221,285	10.
11. Education Spending	-	\$21,872,938	\$21,608,422	\$21,059,100	11.
12. Slate Valley UUSD equalized pupils	-	1,362.21	1,318.09	1,277.61	12.
<b>Education Spending per Equalized Pupil</b>					
13. Less net eligible construction costs (or P&I) per equalized pupil	-	\$16,056.95	\$16,393.74	\$16,483.20	13.
14. Less share of SpEd costs in excess of \$50,000 for an individual (per eggup)	-	\$65.63	\$62.17	-	14.
15. Less amount of deficit if deficit is SOLELY attributable to tuitions paid to public schools for grades the district does not operate for new students who moved to the district after the budget was passed (per eggup)	-	\$0.83	-	-	15.
16. Less SpEd costs if excess is solely attributable to new SpEd spending if district has 20 or fewer equalized pupils (per eggup)	-	-	-	-	16.
17. Estimated costs of new students after census period (per eggup)	-	-	-	-	17.
18. Total tuitions if tuitioning ALL K-12 unless electorate has approved tuitions greater than average announced tuition (per eggup)	-	-	-	-	18.
19. Less planning costs for merger of small schools (per eggup)	-	-	-	-	19.
20. Teacher retirement assessment for new members of Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System on or after July 1, 2015 (per eggup)	-	-	-	-	20.
21. Excess spending threshold	-	\$17,816.00	\$18,311.00	\$18,756.00	21.
22. plus Excess Spending per Equalized Pupil over threshold (if any)	+	-	-	-	22.
23. Per pupil figure used for calculating District Equalized Tax Rate	-	\$16,057	\$16,394	\$16,483.20	23.
24. Union spending adjustment (minimum of 100%)	-	150.798%	149.061%	149.875%	24.
25. Anticipated equalized union homestead tax rate to be prorated [\$16,483.20 ÷ (\$10,998 ÷ \$1.00)]	-	\$1.4480	\$1.4506	\$1.4987	25.
<b>Prorated homestead union tax rates for members of Slate Valley UUSD</b>					
T017 Benson	1.3772	1.4480	1.4506	1.4787	100.00%
T042 Castleton	1.4616	1.4480	1.4506	1.4787	100.00%
T073 Fair Haven	1.3772	1.4480	1.4506	1.4787	100.00%
T098 Hubbardton	1.4985	1.4480	1.4506	1.4787	100.00%
T148 Orwell	1.5387	1.4618	1.4506	1.4787	100.00%
T233 West Haven	1.3181	1.3840	1.4506	1.4787	100.00%
	-	-	-	-	0.00%
	-	-	-	-	0.00%
	-	-	-	-	0.00%
	-	-	-	-	0.00%
	-	-	-	-	0.00%
27. Anticipated income cap percent to be prorated from Slate Valley UUSD [(\$16,483.20 ÷ \$12,825) × 2.00%]	0.00%	2.36%	2.36%	2.57%	27.
<b>Prorated union income cap percentage for members of Slate Valley UUSD</b>					
T017 Benson	2.32%	2.36%	2.36%	2.57%	100.00%
T042 Castleton	2.47%	2.36%	2.36%	2.57%	100.00%
T073 Fair Haven	2.33%	2.36%	2.36%	2.57%	100.00%
T098 Hubbardton	2.54%	2.41%	2.36%	2.57%	100.00%
T148 Orwell	2.53%	2.38%	2.36%	2.57%	100.00%
T233 West Haven	2.18%	2.25%	2.36%	2.57%	100.00%
	-	-	-	-	0.00%
	-	-	-	-	0.00%
	-	-	-	-	0.00%
	-	-	-	-	0.00%
	-	-	-	-	0.00%

- Following current statute, the Tax Commissioner recommended a property yield of \$10,763 for every \$1.00 of homestead tax per \$100 of equalized property value. The Tax Commissioner also recommended an income yield of \$12,825 for a base income percent of 2.0% and a non-residential tax rate of \$1.73. New and updated data will likely change the proposed property and income yields and perhaps the non-residential rate. *Slate Valley UUSD is using a property yield to estimate tax rates that is halfway between the FY21 yield set by the legislature and the amount recommended by the Tax Commissioner.*

- Final figures for FY22 will be set by the Legislature during the legislative session and approved by the Governor.

- The base income percentage cap is 2.0%.

## Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment's Report

The 2019-2020 school year was demanding.

On April 1, 2020 I asked Slate Valley educators, staff and administrators to consider the following:

Be FLEXIBLE with deadlines for ourselves, and our students. Thinking about deadlines requires greater empathy for when work is “turned in”. Please let your administrators and school counselors know who is “missing” from your classes so that they can follow up with those not “present” and who is not “turning in” work. Focus on PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE before providing any summatives. In fact, if a student is close to “meeting” your expectations through practice, consider that a summative.

Be UNDERSTANDING with your assessment of student work. Students do not have the benefit of the support they might normally have in school.

Determine what is MOST ESSENTIAL at your grade level, or in your content area, to be worked on during this time of remote/distance learning. Reference any work located in these KUDs (FHU Curriculum Document, Middle School Curriculum Document, Elementary School Curriculum Document) and/or reach out to your grade level/content area partners, myself, or an instructional coach for support and assistance if you are unsure what is most essential.

With the utmost respect and gratitude for all you have done, try to really step back for a week and don't concern yourselves with the 1 hour of work per day K-5 and 1 hour of work per class 6-12. If you are considering the amount of time per day, frame a week of a total of 30 minutes K-5, and 30 minutes per subject 6-12 each day. OR, think of “teaching”, providing content and assignments, 2 days a week and answering questions/connecting with students 3 days a week.

The 2020 school year ended in June, but “pandemic teaching” did not. Slate Valley educators spent June, July, and August reflecting, learning, and planning for social distanced in-person, remote, and hybrid learning. Student social/emotional wellbeing is the priority for the 2020-2021 school year. The focus was, and still is, to meet the needs of individual students by creating meaningful connections.

Individualizing learning, meeting a learner where he or she is, emotionally and academically, guides the 2020-2021 school year.

Individualizing learning is not a product nor a curriculum, it is a philosophy and approach that transcends teaching strategies. Technology helps educators learn about their students, but only an educator has the knowledge and understanding to individualize learning.

Slate Valley educators identified curricular expectations in June, and reviewed this work again in September, identifying what to facilitate and assess during the 2020-2021 school year.

During the 2020-2021 school year, assessment of student progress relating to the CCSS, NGSS and GE's and local curriculum expectations continued through the following:

### Formative Assessments

Student Demonstrations- (Assessment activities conducted within each classroom.)

Standardized Assessments- (e.g., VTSA, SBAC, NWEA, FitnessGram)

Summative Assessments- (Curriculum Performance Tasks)

The state of Vermont did not administer SBAC, VTSA, FitnessGram during the spring of 2020. As a result, there is no new student performance data to report.

Respectfully submitted,

Casey O'Meara

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment



## **Director of Special Services' Report**

Slate Valley is committed to a comprehensive system of support to ensure each student has the opportunity to develop the skills and talents necessary for college and career readiness. We know that high quality, effective classroom instruction, in conjunction with accommodations, and the ability to access a continuum of academic, behavioral, and social/emotional supports are essential for ensuring the success of ALL learners in Slate Valley. The COVID-19 world-wide pandemic has certainly impacted the way in which we conduct the business of education but our goals and ideals have remained the same. We strive to meet the needs of all students by gaining an understanding of where they are at, where they aim to go in the future and to support each student in developing an effective plan for learning that will allow them to achieve their goals. We have had to adjust our schedules, routines, and practices but our commitment to our students and their goals remains unchanged.

The Special Services team throughout Slate Valley works in collaboration with the building leadership and local support teams to ensure that a continuum of services and programming is available to support ALL students in pursuit of their goals. This is accomplished through the oversight of Special Education for students ages 3-21, including specialized instruction, physical therapy, occupational therapy, school psychology, speech and language therapy, school counseling and School Based Medicaid Program Services; as well as support of Section 504 protections and accommodations in each school. The Special Services office also serves as the liaison for McKinney-Vento Act for the Education of Homeless Youth and those experiencing transitional housing issues, coordinates the assessment and instructional services for English Language Learners and the Migrant Education Program, supports home-school coordination efforts, and supervises the implementation of the Universal Preschool Programs and partnerships.

Special Education Services are provided to eligible students with disabilities between the ages of three (3) and twenty-one (21). Students who are deemed eligible for special education have been evaluated and identified as having a disability that adversely affects their education and a team has determined the need for specially designed instruction to address the unique learning needs of the child. The criteria for special education is defined by Federal and State regulations as required through the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Throughout the schools of Slate Valley, we are currently serving 209 identified students in special education; 23 students in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and 173 students in kindergarten through grade 12. This number reflects 16% of our K-12 population. We have three alternative programs that serve the elementary grades and both in-house and off-site alternative programming options for high school students. We work diligently to create educational opportunities within our schools that will meet the unique needs of all types of learners so that we may maintain students in our local community.

In Slate Valley we understand that early education and early intervention are essential to ensuring that our children come to kindergarten ready to learn. Slate Valley supports a variety of programs designed to ensure that all children from our district have access to high quality early learning experiences that will equip them with the pre-academic, social and emotional skills that will provide the greatest promise for their success in kindergarten and beyond. We provide Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Services within our district boundaries to eligible students ages three to five as prescribed in a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Through Act 166, Vermont's Universal Preschool legislation, we operate three preschool classroom sites hosted at Benson Village School, Castleton Elementary School and Fair Haven Grade School and offer five different class options. In these programs we provide high quality early education experiences to our three and four-year-olds (and five-year-olds that have not yet reached kindergarten age). In addition, we hold twelve preschool partnership agreements with private providers throughout Addison and Rutland Counties to allow our families as many flexible options, as possible. We are currently serving 56 students in our SV preschool classrooms and have 38 children/families accessing private partnership programs.

Though the school year has brought some unforeseen challenges, our students have shown remarkable cooperation, flexibility and resilience. We are very thankful for their ability to do what needs to be done to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all so that we can continue to enjoy in-person learning. We are appreciative of the support of our Slate Valley families in these efforts and thank you sincerely for your commitment to our kids, our schools and our communities.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kristin H. Benway  
Director of Special Services

## **Benson Village School Principal's Report**

### **School Climate**

Benson Village School met the challenge of the COVID pandemic head on in March of this past year. From those first few unsettled weeks in the spring to the in-person/ masterful remote capabilities that I witness every day, our staff has risen to an occasion that came with no guidebook. The school continues to work hand in hand with our families and community members to maintain a safe and healthy environment that sees our students thriving. Our school nurse, Ashley Casey, has done an exceptional job of maneuvering the ever changing guidelines and being the central figure for information and support with all things COVID related. BVS continues its exemplar school status through the Vermont Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), real-time conflict resolution and attention to social emotional well-being through the delivery of academics.

Benson Village School will see a change in the reconfiguration to a PreK - 6th grade for the 2021 -22 school year. We are honored to be the pilot for Slate Valley on this new pathway for our district schools. It is with excitement that we move forward and continue to put learners first in our collaboration as a merged district. As I often post on social media, you can see the smiles behind the masks of our BVS family and it is this sense of resilience and hope that speaks the most to our school climate.



### **Curriculum and Professional Development**

BVS continues directly addressing the needs for instructional improvements even amidst COVID. We have adopted the Bridges math program focused on delivery of instruction through the growth mindset utilizing 3-dimensional to 2-dimensional to written expressions. Mrs. Thurston and Mrs. Sturtevant have entered their second year with the Vermont Mathematics Initiative and deliver incredible math learning to grades K - 3rd. Mrs. Schuyler, our middle grades math teacher, has brought her Growth Mindset Professional Development directly to her students to create a vibrant and accessible experience around mathematics. Mr. Muller continues to build ELA and World History through literature and research evidenced through student projects. The BVS Pre K program moved to a 2 day a week format with our students participating in a 5-hour multi-age schedule. This extended day has promoted greater adaptability and resilience to the unique guidelines associated with being the youngest members of our school community during COVID.

### **Physical Plant**

The pandemic has brought necessary changes to the Benson School building in the addition of an isolation room, ventilation updates, moving the PreK room back to its original footprint and adding an AC unit. The middle school science closet was culled and revamped to be multi-use storage and classrooms were reimagined for physical distancing. The Benson building's exterior classroom doors have proven multi functional allowing for direct access to outdoor learning, eliminating students from passing in the common hallway, and continued being direct exit points in the event of a school threat. The kitchen stove and hood system have been updated with a contained fire suppression system. The annual summer cleaning and routine maintenance was completed and the school was ready to welcome staff and students on September 8th. A final collection of accumulated classroom supplies was made and was added to the central supply in the

attic. Once again, the students of BVS did not need to bring any of their own supplies, including water bottles, for the 2020-21 school year. The general supply line was reduced for a second year in a row.

### **Point of pride/celebrations**

Benson Village School was one of 14 schools from the 166 participating schools across Vermont to receive VTPBIS Recognition for extending PBIS to students and families during the COVID-19 school closure. We are so proud to have attained this recognition as our mission was to put students and families first throughout our closure and focus equally on social and emotional needs alongside continued educational outreach.

As principal of BVS, my biggest point of pride and celebration is the phenomenal staff I am honored to work with. No one anticipates something like what we've been through this past year. There are no professional development courses, workshops or seminars on how to lead when facing a worldwide pandemic. I have learned invaluable lessons since March and they all center around how to unify folks for a collective purpose, in this case, keeping everyone safe, healthy and part of the school community. There are not enough accolades to apply to all of the folks here at BVS that have worked tirelessly to exemplify what it means to serve a community. I frequently add the hashtags #GOBEARS, #BVS and #BenStrong to our Facebook page posts and never have they meant so much. We are a small but mighty school and our commitment to offer rich academics while fostering the whole learner has never been more prominent.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Amy Roy  
Principal

## **Castleton Elementary and Village School Principal's Report**

### **School Climate**

This year, Slate Valley schools have placed a high priority on ensuring school climate is positive and welcoming to students returning after learning remotely during the last trimester of last school year. The pandemic has surely brought its share of challenges, but at Castleton Elementary and Castleton Village, we have embraced those challenges and focused on our student's social and emotional health as the first priority. School staff worked on building strong relationships with students as the key to moving forward into academics. Relationship building is something that comes quite naturally to our educators, as it is always at the core of all we do.

Our PBIS systems serve as the framework for supporting students in a very positive way. This system is always a work-in-progress, responding to student needs and data. This year, we have had to adjust how we recognize student achievements and have moved to various virtual options. We have found, while we wish we could be in-person, virtual can also work. Assemblies recognizing students have been virtual. Classroom-based celebrations also have been more present this year, as staying in our safe groups has been critical.



### **Curriculum and Professional Development**

Social and emotional curriculum has taken on renewed importance this year. While we have always focused on this, especially in the first several weeks of school, this year, it has extended beyond the typical timeframe. Slate Valley schools use the Second Step curriculum to support this development in our students.

Outdoor learning has taken off this year, especially at Castleton Elementary School. Our students have thrived in this hands-on and personalized learning environment. Teachers have worked hard to integrate curriculum to cover all content areas.

Grade level curriculum work has typically been done during early release and in-service days. This year, we have not had those days, so we have had to be more creative. This work is still being done, with the support of district coaches and in the virtual platform. The CES/CVS Leadership team is also working on curriculum, particularly for the outdoor classroom.

The district's technology team has gone above and beyond this year, in response to the virtual learning platform. They have offered an abundance of professional development opportunities to our staff. Our staff has responded and has learned an incredible amount of new technology tools as a result of these opportunities.

Other professional development has included trauma-informed work and learning in the online platform. Castleton University offered a course this fall called Building Relationships During Online Learning, and Castleton teachers made up more than half the students in the class! In addition, two of our three administrators also attended this class. We will be taking what we learned there and expanding it to the building level.

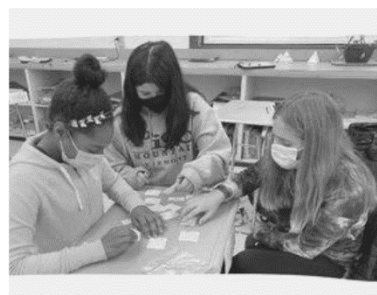
### **Physical Plant**

Both Castleton schools had renovations done this past summer, as did all Slate Valley schools, to build isolation rooms required in response to the pandemic. These renovations gave us the opportunity to look at space configuration at Castleton Village School. This led to moving the assistant principal's office which provided more privacy and a larger space. Also, the front office was moved to the entrance of the building, enhancing security in addition to ensuring health checks are done at the first point of contact.

Ventilation requirements were also examined and we found our systems exceeded requirements for safety around COVID. Another issue addressed this year was the intense work of designing classroom space with the required space in the classroom, again, in response to COVID concerns. Both of our buildings were able to meet these requirements. Additional cleaning has also been critical, and those new methods have been instituted as well. We thank the entire district maintenance and custodial staff for working so hard to ensure our safety!

### **Points of Pride/Celebrations**

We have much to celebrate this year! There are many changes we made in response to the pandemic that we will certainly keep, moving forward. One of these changes is arrival and dismissal procedures. Arrival at both schools has been much more personal and we have found it so beneficial to see families and students right when they arrive at school. We have also found that being outside at Castleton Elementary has made dismissal smoother.



Outdoor learning has been a great way for our students to receive personalized learning and have hands-on educational opportunities. The tools we have purchased to support outdoor learning will continue to be used to support this learning in future school years.

Virtual assemblies have been a hit. While they do not replace in-person assemblies, they do enable us to share assemblies with folks who might not always be able to attend an in-person event. This gives us a wider arena in which to celebrate student achievement.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize our strong, amazing community! Parents, families, and community members have been unbelievably supportive during this stressful time. Our school staff has been touched by and are very appreciative of the support given to us. We know we could not have had such a successful start to the new school year without this support! I am blessed to serve as your principal and be a part of this community.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kim E. Prehoda  
Principal

## **Fair Haven Grade School Principal's Report**

### **Climate**

A pandemic can have a significant impact on the climate and culture of a school and community. We at FHGS have worked hard to stay the course supporting the social, emotional and academic needs of students through in-person learning. We began the year offering a meet and greet opportunity for families PreK through grade 5, prior to the first day of school. Teachers scheduled outdoor visits with students and families while following all safety precautions. These meetings paved the way for a successful return to school. Our middle school team also provided a virtual open house opportunity for families. Through Google Meets families could see the learning environment and ask questions about curriculum and in-person learning practices.

As a district, we focused on the social emotional wellness of students for the first few weeks of school. Taking this time to connect with students, establish relationships, acknowledge the losses from our school shutdown and remote learning last spring and prepare for the potential of remote learning again, all have paid dividends. Students are happy to be in school. We have stable attendance, and significantly reduced tardiness and behavior referrals. Faculty and staff appreciate the opportunities to work in-person with our students and will continue to do what it takes to keep everyone healthy, safe and in school.



### **Curriculum and Professional Development**

FHGS faculty have discovered innovative ways to utilize technology to support student learning and family engagement. Teachers have creatively used Google Classroom, SeeSaw, Bitmoji Classroom, Classroom Dojo, and Google Meets, just to name a few, to support in-person student learning as well as to prepare students for remote learning if the need arises. Part of the preparation included practicing a “remote day” while in school so students could experience the process. The middle school teachers even had students create “how-to videos” so they had a resource to refer back to and use to teach their families how to use various online platforms and tools. These platforms have also made it possible for families to be connected to what is happening in the classroom. For example, we offered virtual parent teacher conferences which produced the highest participation rates ever.

Amidst the COVID restrictions, teachers have been creative in planning and implementing content instruction, targeted interventions, and experiential learning opportunities. We have embedded school wide instructional themes of kindness, gratitude and community. Special Educators and 504 coordinators worked with families to

amend each student IEP and 504 plan to align with the modified instructional day and to include contingency plans to allow for a smooth and quick transition to remote learning if the need arises.

### **Physical Plant**

The FHGS building is in great shape. Our work this year has been focused on the implementation of COVID guidelines. We renovated our nursing services area to include a quarantine room with separate ventilation. We replaced classroom tables with desks and floor markings to support the physical distancing requirements.

The grounds of our school were made into as many outdoor classroom spaces as possible. We installed sunscreens for protection and a variety of outdoor seating options. We are in the beginning stages of developing outdoor learning spaces on our property behind Dollar General. We have met with the Department of Environmental Conservation Watershed Management Division to learn about the property and the options for use given the wetland classification. The land has been surveyed and in the spring we will move forward working with students to develop a long-range plan.

### **Points of Pride/Celebrations**

Our biggest success is the fact that we have been able to provide in-person learning for as long as we have during this pandemic. Our faculty and staff worked hard to change and implement 30+ systems and routines in our school to accommodate guidelines, suggestions and mandates from Governor Scott, VT Department of Health and the VT Agency of Education. Our students are some of the most fortunate students in the world right now, given many children have yet to return to full time, in-person learning world-wide.

We are so proud of our nursing team for their hard work managing and implementing the health guidance, supporting students, families and staff during this pandemic.

It has been “all hands on deck” every day, with many taking on roles outside of their typical duties, such as health screeners, bus monitors, traffic controllers, cleaners, delivering meals to classrooms, cleaning and sterilizing, moving classrooms, rearranging for additional distance, etc. We are so proud of our entire faculty and staff!

Our teachers’ commitment to continued professional development and implementation of experiential learning in order to provide students with engaging and innovative learning opportunities.

Year two of student-led conferences in grades 5-8, where students take ownership of their personalized learning plan, showcase their work and share learning experiences and goals with their family.

Our continued work with the implementation of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework as a proactive, school-wide, systems approach to improving social and academic competence for all students.

Our middle school student voice group has participated in a training of the trainers workshop by the organization, Up for Learning. In this training students learned how to review data and how to run a data review session with their peers. This group will be reviewing Youth Risk Behavior Survey data with peers and developing a student driven action plan to address areas of concern for our students. Through youth leadership, partnerships with adults, action research, and peer and community engagement, our students not only experience personal growth and build their capacity for future civic engagement, but also effect sustainable change in youth behavior, community and school culture.

Our collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club, which provides quality after school care for children ages 5 - 12. The club supports our students by embedding our PBIS framework, providing academic support and social emotional learning. The Boys and Girls Club is so popular this year, there is a waiting list for enrollment! Finally, I am so very proud to serve as the Principal of Fair Haven Grade School and to support the students and families of this community. This year has been challenging, to say the least. However, the community's continued support and gratitude is greatly appreciated by all of us.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deborah A. Infurna  
Principal

## Fair Haven Union High School Principal's Report

We began the 2020-2021 school year at Fair Haven Union High School with a necessary focus on the safety, health, and well-being of our students. Our hybrid model with students attending school in-person every other day in combination with the move to a 4-period block schedule has allowed us to minimize the mixing of students and has cut down on hallway traffic during transition times. I applaud our staff, students, families, and communities for pulling together to allow us to safely open our schools this fall. We look forward to the day that we can welcome all of our students back to school each and every day.



### Curriculum and Professional Development

Much of our building-based professional development at the high school this year has centered around best practices for remote teaching. Our educators have moved their curriculums online to provide access for students regardless of their physical location. Our Instructional Vision team at the high school led a Professional Learning Community (PLC) session with our entire teaching staff in November which was a success. This session focused on providing opportunities for staff to share successes from virtual teaching experiences thus far this year.

Our educators continue to have a strong presence in the graduate and continuing education courses at our local Castleton University including the Ethics in Leadership course that is instructed by our very own Dr. Edward Wilkin. Members of our Instructional Vision team attended a summer course through the Experiential Teaching and Learning program at Northeastern University.

### Physical Plant

We began the year in a spotless building with shiny, freshly waxed floors and new LED lighting. The building and grounds staff has done an incredible job not only in preparing our building for the school year but in maintaining an extremely high level of cleanliness throughout the year and helping us to keep our building safe during a pandemic. A new banker's window was installed in the front office to help us in our attempt to minimize visitors in our building. New doors have been installed to make the Blackbox Theatre a more welcoming classroom space as it is serving as our art room this year. The FHU tiles in the athletic wing were rearranged to be legible as students walk down the hall from either end.

New cafeteria tables have been ordered as we plan for a grand re-opening of our cafeteria in the fall of 2021. Working with the Abbey Group, we have plans for digital signage and a larger selection of breakfast and lunch options. The final stage of the ropes course project has been scheduled for April which will include a climbing wall. We look forward to watching our students use the full ropes course this Spring.

### School Climate

Our student council group is able to boast that they were the first FHU student group to run Slaterbration during a worldwide pandemic. One of our largest concerns at the beginning of the year was the emotional state of our students as they returned to a school year with extremely limited activities. They have done an incredible job not only in persevering through school days where they cannot gather with each other but in finding ways to plan fun activities that are also safe. The hallway decorations and dress-up days during Slaterbration lifted the spirits of our entire school community.

We are deliberately taking steps to make our school and the systems within it more restorative in nature. Mrs. Hoyer has started running circles with TA groups. Circles are activities that allow all members of the class community to positively contribute to important discussions. We have planned a two-day showing of the film

The First Time which addresses the lack of connection that adolescents often face. This film and the corresponding TA activities will serve as a jumping-off point to continue to build community within our school.

We are happy to inform you that our behavior referrals are down significantly from last year. Our students have stepped up during this pandemic, and have done a great job at following our expectation to be Safe, Respectful, and Responsible throughout the school day.

### **Points of Pride**

136 students were honored for making the Principal's list at our Quarter 1 Awards Ceremony.

The SVL fall sports awards are littered with FHU student-athletes. The Varsity Girls Soccer team featured five first-team selections, one second-team selection and Coach of the Year. The Field Hockey team featured two first-team selections and one second-team selection. The Cross Country team featured one first-team selection and the Varsity Boys Soccer team featured four second-team selections.

This fall, two students have led service projects through our REAL (Real, Experiential, Authentic Learning) course. One project was a collection for homeless folks in our area and the other was a collection for local animal shelters.

Isabella Carrara, a junior at Fair Haven Union High School, has been nominated for the Congress of Future Medical Leaders.

Our School Librarian, Deborah Ehler-Hansen, was awarded the 2020 VSLA Service Award for her leadership with the Vermont School Librarian Association.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Phil Hall  
Principal

### **Orwell Village School Principal's Report**

Orwell Village School continues to be guided by the belief that our involvement in our students' well-being and preparation for our global society doesn't end with proficient communication, critical thinking, and collaboration. We care deeply about each and every one of our students and instill in them essential life skills such as empathy, compassion, and kindness. We also strive to cultivate each child's ability to develop into productive members of our society, to lay the foundation for fuller, richer lives, and to give them the guidance to become good men and women.

Orwell Village School is blessed to have strong, dedicated teachers who make learning come alive for our children. We've answered the call to excellence by providing rigorous academics through a challenging curriculum. We have developed a philosophy that takes pride in delivering quality education for our students and endeavors to support "family values." Our school climate is highly conducive to accelerated learning while being safe, clean, caring, and well-organized. And we have a level of parent and community involvement and support like no other.

### **School Climate**

OVS teachers went above and beyond to welcome students back to the classroom in September. Focused on a celebration of being together again providing a joyful transition to school after a very long layoff.

We are finding that our philosophy and practice of restorative justice has been so beneficial to our return to school this fall. As Evans & Vaandering explain, this restorative approach is based on "relationships rather than rules, people rather than policies, honoring capacity rather than evaluating ability, creating meaning rather than imposing knowledge, asking rather than telling, and well-being rather than merit-based success." This restorative approach pulls people together, rather than push people apart. We are building a strong community, strong character, and trusting relationships.

Along with the combination of our work on PBIS, character development, and a keen focus on our Monthly Spotlight Values we are building strong relationships and fostering a safe environment for all of our children to thrive.





### **Curriculum & Professional Development**

Curious, passionate, talented, and creative students reside in our Primary Wing, guided by expert teachers who use their wealth of expertise and enthusiasm to create a dynamic learning environment. We care deeply for our students and begin building those life skills such as empathy, compassion, and kindness in these early grades. Opportunities flourish for them mentally, physically, artistically, and socially amid the backdrop of our intimate school culture. There are no barriers here at Orwell Village School. Rather, endless possibilities abound that support our children's interests, talents, and future goals.

Our Middle School is structured to enhance the intellectual and social development of our young adolescents along the lines of *Turning Points 2000*. That is to enable each and every Orwell Village School Middle School student to think creatively, to identify and solve meaningful problems, to communicate and work well with others, and to develop the base of factual knowledge and skills that is the foundation for these "higher-order" capacities. We are focused on cultivating our children's ability to develop into productive members of society, to lay the foundation for fuller, richer lives, and to give them the guidance to become good men and women. Our middle school students also reside in a dynamic learning environment, where they are encouraged to learn about and discover their individual passions and interests.

### **Physical Plant**

We continue to strive to create and maintain an attractive, comfortable, and safe environment that is conducive to cultivating each child's ability to develop into productive members of our society, to lay the foundation for fuller, richer lives, and to give them the guidance to become good men and women. We also strive to accomplish this in a manner that meets both the academic as well as the Orwell community needs.

We have been working to prolong the useful life of all equipment, buildings, and their contents. Past investments into our building's heating and ventilation system have helped to control proper airflow during the pandemic. We are also planning on upgrading the town hall bathrooms and locker rooms, kitchen counters, and installing a lift to ensure handicap compliance.

### **OVS Pride - Celebrating Student Learning**

- Our students and staff are happy to be coming to school.
- We are providing a safe environment for our students where we laugh and find joy in the little things.
- We have a very low absentee rate for students and staff alike.
- The staff has leaned on each other and persevered through remote learning in the spring and in-person learning this fall.
- We have been able to complete summative assessments that demonstrate student growth.
- The middle school team has preserved as much of our middle school model as possible during the pandemic with weekly class "Cool Cats", outside activities in the classrooms, and PE 3x a week.
- Read 180 is a new successful intervention.
- Remote parent-teacher conferences have been very successful.
- We have been awarded an \$800.00 Otter Creek Audubon Society (OCAS) grant to support our outdoor learning spaces.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Patrick Walters  
Principal