

**Slate Valley Modified Unified Union School District 9/25/17**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**October 9, 2017, 2017**  
**Fair Haven Union High School ~ 6:30 p.m.**

Approved Minutes

Name	Role/Term	Town Representing	In Attendance
Kris Benway	Director of ARSU Spec Ed	ARSU	Yes
Jody Goodhue	Temp. Clerk/1 Year	Benson	Yes
David Renninger	Board Member/ 2 Year	Benson	Yes
Amy Munger	Board Member/3 Year	Benson	Yes
Toni Lobdell	Board Member/1 Year	Castleton	Yes
Liz Mackay	Board Member/2 Year	Castleton	yes
Julie Finnegan	Board Member/3 Year	Castleton	Yes
Shannon Baldwin	Board Member/1 Year	Hubbardton	Yes
Joshua Hardt	Board Member/2 Year	Hubbardton	Yes
Mike Fallis	Board Member;3 Year	Hubbardton	Yes
John Oakman	Board Member/1 Year	West Haven	Yes Appointed 9/11/17
Angela Charron	Board Member/2 Year	West Haven	Yes
Michael (Trevor) Ezzo	Board Member/3 Year	West Haven	Yes
Tara Buxton	Board Member/1 Year	Fair Haven	Yes
Michael Bache	Board Member/2 Year	Fair Haven	Yes
Roy L. Eckler	Board Member/3 Year	Fair Haven	Yes
Peter Stone	Board Member/1 Year	Orwell NMD (Non Member District)	yes
Glen Cousineau	Board Member/2 Year	Orwell NMD	Yes
David Carpenter	Board Member/3 Year	Orwell NMD	Yes
Brooke Olsen Farrell	Superintendent	Slate Valley MUUSD	Yes
Cheryl Scarzello	Business Manager	ARSU	Yes
Chris Cole	Technology Coordinator	ARSU	Yes
Sherri Nichols	Curriculum Coordinator	ARSU	Yes

Audience Attending: Linda Peltier, Bonnie Condit, Brett Blanchard, Kathleen Kilbourne; Katy Culp; Kevin Griffin, Deb Smith

**Pledge of Allegiance** - Board Chair M. Bache leads the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance to open the meeting.

1. **Call to Order - 6:30 p.m.:** Board Chair M. Bache called the 10/9/17 Regular Meeting to order at 6:43 pm.

2. **Approval of Agenda:** Board Chair asked for Board Permission to revise agenda to see the student presentation first. Angela Charron made the motion and it was seconded by Shannon Baldwin.
3. **Approval of Minutes of September 25, 2017:** Julie Finnegan recommended approving the minutes with no changes: This was seconded by Toni Lobdell. Afterwards Kathleen Kilbourne noted that her name was omitted from the attendance at the 9/25/17 list of audience members. This will be corrected.
4. **Public Comment: None**
5. **Correspondence: None**

6. **Student Presentation - Fair Haven Union High School Personalized Fitness Plan**

Student Presentation by: Sarah Ezzo and Joey Gannon and Mr. Beste PE Teacher.

Strava Presentation on their personal physical fitness presentation. Students were able to talk about inquiry and research and how they set and achieve goals, the reports that are generated and what they use the information for. The Board thanked the students for the informative presentation.

7. **Committee Reports:**

- a. **Finance:** Chair Trevor Ezzo gave an update on the budget process. He mentioned that the Finance committee looked at the skyrocketing budget implications for Special Education Costs in light of the increase of 33 new IEP move in's which were unbudgeted. He also discussed the news that the state had a 50,000,000 shortfall in education monies.

- i. **Budget Timeline: Timeline was handed out.** Cheryl weighed in on a recommendation for Tyler Technologies to provide professional services for implementation of a data management system as we convert business management services over to Slate Valley Modified Unified School District. Cheryl was requesting that the Board approve her recommendation to move forward with a contract with Tyler Tech who currently provided these services looking for a recommendation from the Board to approve a company to assist with these conversion tasks. The state is requiring us to change our account configurations. The proposal from Tyler Technologies is at a cost of \$53,912.00. Shannon Baldwin asked if we had researched other companies. Cheryl did not seek out other companies as we currently work with Tyler. Tyler Technologies' Infinited Visions platform is a web based system. All of the costs would come out of our transition grant. If the Board approves the use of this company, Cheryl would like to move forward with issuing them a contract because there is no data base for Slate Valley Modified Unified Union School District. David Carpenter made motion to approve Tyler Technologies, Shannon Baldwin seconded. Motion Carried.

- ii. **Priorities:** For SVMUUSD to come in as close to zero increase as possible. Administrative team is working hard to collaborate to bring equity of programming to all schools. The Superintendent is hoping to have recommendations for staffing for next year, by the October 23, 2017 Slate Valley Modified Unified Union School Board Meeting. Brooke and Cheryl talk about a potential \$.08 increase to the tax base even coming in with a zero increase to our local budgets. This is due in part to the \$50,000,000 shortfall of the state in education.

- b. **Personnel:** Have not met yet

- c. **Policy:** Have not met since last SVMUUSD meeting.

- d. **Building and Grounds - Building Walkthrough of Fair Haven High School:** Most of the SVMUUSD Board members did a tour of FHUHS to get a sense of the shape of the building, as Board members will need to begin prioritizing the work over the next few years. Shannon Baldwin asked Principal Blanchard if his Chief of Maintenance has a five or ten year plan; he indicated he knew Mark Cassidy had some priorities. Angela Charron asked Principal Blanchard if he had priorities and areas he would like to see improved on. He listed multiple things:

- Roofs
- Boilers
- Broken tiles in the floor and replace ceiling tiles
- Reconfigure the traffic patterns at the school
- Reconfigure and give facelift to the front entrance
- Sports Fields, etc.

Cheryl Scarzello said she would like to see a professional company hired to visit each building and prioritize the needed work who could report to the Building and Grounds committees for budgeting purposes.

- e. **Negotiations:** Superintendent Farrell hopes that all schools ratify the Support Staff Agreement tomorrow evenings. The new Negotiating Team has already had two meetings.

## 8. **Central Office Reports**

### **Superintendent's Report**

September was an extremely busy month focused on the transition from the local board structure to becoming a new entity. Our leadership team has been focused on defining shifting roles and responsibilities and identifying priorities moving forward for our new configuration.

This will be an exciting year to be in ARSU as we look at the opportunities that are before us and at the same time it will be a difficult year as we begin to build budgets that have some impossible constraints. FY19 is promising to bring with it a 47 million dollar deficit in the education fund and the strong recommendation that budgets are level funded. What makes this even more difficult than usual is the fact that we are going into a merger that is supposed to realize savings and increased opportunities for all of our students. School board members and the leadership team will have to work closely together to prioritize for the next school year.

The school year got off to a good start! It is always great to see the positive things that are happening in our schools. At all of our Slate Valley Board Meetings there will be student presentations that focus on personalization of learning. The new Slate Valley Board will also be conducting walk-throughs in all of the buildings to get a sense of the structures/facilities that currently exist. There has been a concerted effort at all levels to come together and move forward as a cohesive unit.

### **Curriculum and Staff Development Coordinator**

September and October have seen a great amount of collaboration throughout the district. Sub committees from the Administrative Team have been looking for efficiencies and opportunities that highlight our unification priorities. Grade level teams have been focusing on proficiency based learning practices, reporting consistency, and writing instruction.

Teachers are clearly identifying what every child should know and be able to do in each subject area and grade level, aligned with state, national, and local standards. These learning targets clearly articulate what students should know, understand, and be able to do for each unit of study. As students work through the learning targets towards proficiency, there is continuous monitoring of progress and additional support targeted to those who need it through our multi-tiered system of supports and personalized learning. As grade level teams work together, they prioritize standards into specific learning targets which become the basis for instruction and assessment; common assessments are designed to help students meet specific learning targets which are checked for proficiency and reviewed to ensure that what is being measured within the assessment actually measures the learning targets.

While habits of work such as being respectful to others, level of effort, social behavior, attendance, and completing tasks on time are seen as important characteristics of student success, these qualities do not provide evidence of what a student knows, understands, or can do, with reference to the learning targets in a class. In a proficiency based system, habits of work are reported separately from academic grades and students receive feedback on these habits throughout the year. A change that has been embraced by the grade level teams and Administrative Team has been around Habits of Work. The team has aligned the previous 17 behaviors to 5 that encompass each school's Positive

Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) language: Positive Attitude, Work Ethic, Responsibility, Respect, and Self Control. We have also created a district-wide PBIS team that shares strategies, resources, and is reviewing our processes and expectation to ensure our teachers have a variety of strategies to support students.

Writing can be difficult to teach if you do not have information or training to teach it successfully. Teachers have expressed that they are looking for more ideas/methods to teach writing. Last year, the ELA team went through a wide variety of programs to see what was out there. The ELA team favored the "Writing Revolution" writing templates and handbook for teachers to use in grades K-12 (this was the only program K-12). We will be looking at sections of the book during our grade level release times this year. The utilization of the same resources and language for all teachers will allow for consistency across the district in writing. We believe this will be beneficial for new teachers and also provide veteran teachers with more methods to approach writing through the various writing genres and free writing at each grade level.

Finally, we have discussed a structure for teachers to help with accurately reflecting student learning through report card comments. Comments will provide additional information about the student's level of achievement. In combination with the assigned grade, it will give the parent/guardian a picture of what the student has accomplished over the course of the term and the areas he/she may need to continue to work on in the future.

### **Director of Special Services**

#### **SPECIAL SERVICES UPDATE:**

Special Services has been busy working to complete the hiring of positions needed to support the identified students in ARSU. The child count has grown from 227 students as of July 1st to 260 as of October 2, 2017; a 15% increase in our IEP student count. Many new students have arrived with IEP service plans that call for instructional assistants or special service providers to implement the programs. We are working hard to evaluate these needs and, when appropriate, to find qualified personnel for these positions. There is a shortage of qualified applicants for these positions that is being experienced throughout the region.

We often speak of the collaborations that take place between the schools and our community providers to meet the needs of our students and staff. I want to share two examples of such collaboration that took place last week for the early release day. Representatives from CHCRR were contracted to provide First Aid training for our early childhood teachers and support staff, nurses and health education teachers; more than 20 ARSU staff were trained and received their First Aid certification.

Additionally, representatives from Rutland Mental Health and Rutland Regional Medical Center were present to conduct training and share resources on the Columbia Suicide Risk Screening Protocol. This session involved our school based clinicians and guidance counselors. In addition to the shared training, the three agencies were able to discuss ideas and plan follow up activities aimed to better meet the needs of our students and families. We are grateful that we have community partners that recognize the diverse needs and who are willing to collaborate and share limited resources.

#### **UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL UPDATE:**

We are excited to announce the addition of two more partnership programs for preschool. This month we have initiated formal agreements with Champlain Valley Headstart and the Poultney PreK at the request of ARSU families. This brings our total number of partnerships to thirteen. In March of 2017, we were awarded a 2-year grant from the Vermont Community Preschool Collaborative. The purpose of the grant allocation is to strengthen the collaboration between ARSU and the UPK partner programs. We have seen substantial growth in the number of students that are participating in UPK in ARSU in the last 12 months. We are very excited about this growth and proud of the strength and variety of programming options that are available to our families. However, with this growth comes the need for more coordination and outreach to ensure that all of our children and

families will continue to have access to high quality preschool opportunities and that we are able to effectively support our partner providers with access to high quality professional development and training to meet the needs of all learners. This year, Sara Mason (our ECSE/UPK teacher at BVS) will be serving as the Partnership Coordinator for ARSU for 10 hours per week and will working with our UPK partners to ascertain their needs as well as the needs of the families. We look forward to the possibility of offering some additional opportunities to our families in the future.

### **Information Technology Coordinator**

The month of September has been busy for the technology department with the opening of school. We have been working on getting teachers settled into their classrooms with devices and the systems they use to manage their classrooms. Devices have been set up and distributed for students throughout the district in support of our 1:1 program. Our technology integration staff continue to work with staff on many different projects, including working through the fall administration of the MAPS assessment in grades K-10. We are also continuing the planning towards becoming E911 compliant in each of our school buildings.

### **Director of Finance**

The Business Office continues to be very focused on payroll and benefits. With the late ratification of master agreements comes a lot of work for payroll to calculate retroactive pay adjustments and to make changes in the payroll system. Open enrollment began on September 15<sup>th</sup> for teachers and non-union staff. As soon as the support staff agreement is ratified we will begin open enrollment for unionized support staff. All health insurance enrollment information must be into VEHI by November 15<sup>th</sup>. The new VEHI plans offer employees many options which results in many questions from staff. Fortunately we are back to being fully staffed.

Next, I will be focusing on budgeting for our new entity, Slate Valley Unified. As many of you know we are already having conversations about budget priorities for FY19. We will also be migrating to new accounting software as of 7/1/2018. About 5 years ago Tyler Technology notified their Profund clients that the company would no longer support Profund at some point in the future and that they would not create new databases in Profund. Since we are merging as of 7/1/18 we will require a new database, which means we must upgrade to Infinite Visions the latest Tyler Technologies product. At the same time the State of Vermont Agency of Education has put out an RFP for a statewide accounting package. I am keeping my eye on both the statewide process as well as our need to have fully functioning accounting software as of 7/1/18. A significant portion of the implementation grant will go toward implementation and training for the new software.

#### **9. VMERS - Action: Vermont Mutual Employees Retirement System**

Cheryl Scarzello provided a multi-page handout about the current VMERS members and the proposed plans going forward for non-union, non-professional (non-licensed) staff. Discussion ensued about new hires under SVMUUSD being placed under Group B. Julie Finnegan made a motion for SVMUUSD to join plan B of the VMERS plan moving forward with new hires. Peter Stone seconded the motion. Further discussion ensued and Board members wanted to understand the full implication of costs needed to implement the proposed changes. Julie Finnegan made motion to withdraw her original motion. Peter Stone withdrew his second. Motion withdrawn. This topic will be tabled to the 10/23/17 meeting where Cheryl Scarzello will bring the costs of this plan recommendation.

#### **10. Central Office Relocation:**

Superintendent Farrell shared the plans that had been explored to utilize the current space on Main Street along with adjoining space and its associated costs. This however would still not be the property of the Supervisory Union. The existing space costs roughly \$50,000 per year to rent/utilities and the renovations would cost an additional \$237,000 to reconfigure. A second set of plans was drawn up to consider using a wing of the FHUHS for relocating the Central Office Staff to FHUHS. This renovation would have to be a bond vote and looks to be a projected renovation cost of \$293,000, but it would save the district \$50,000.00 a year in rental/utility costs for something that the district doesn't own. This was information provided to SVMUUSD Board Members. The ARSU Board voted to move forward with exploring the relocation to FHUHS. Tomorrow night the Fair Haven Union High School Board will vote on whether they would support relocation of the Central

Office to their campus. Discussion took place by several Board members that supported the Central Office moving to the high school campus. Julie Finnegan felt like it allowed for collaboration. Josh Hardt felt like it would impact climate/transparency. Others thought it positive to be in a school with students to be reminded of why we do the jobs we do in the name of students. On July 1, 2018 Slate Valley Modified Unified Union School district would take on the debt of this bond moving forward.

**11. Discussion - Transparency:**

Chairman Bache asked fellow Board members what their vision consisted of? Last meeting Josh Hardt said he would like to see the Board members taking an active role in their schools for example being present at Open House celebrations to take questions/feedback from community members. Chairman Bache asked what can we do to promote greater transparency and involvement from community members. Superintendent Farrell spoke about an outreach to community members that was done at her former district of Mill River. She talked about how the district hosted a personalized Learning Night where students were on hand to explain and present their PLP's. It was very well attended. Angela Charron and Toni Lobdell mentioned hosting Arts nights at the schools. Angela also mentioned it might be a good idea to invite community members into each building to tour and understand the shape of each school as we begin preparing budgets. Mike Fallis suggested making our schools more full service, offering courses in the evenings for the public; he thought this would be one way of bringing community members into our schools. Chairman Bache is looking at this as a brainstorming strategy of how we reach out to taxpayers to help them understand the new vision of SVMUUSD.

**12. Other Business: None**

**13. Agenda Building:**

- Cheryl to bring back cost implications of moving to VMERS Plan B for all new hires, as well as to project the costs should Benson Village employees should they opt to join the plan for the first time.
- Building Tour of Fair Haven Grade School - Walkthrough
- Student Presentation
- Review of Bylaws
- Review of draft Vision Statement for SVMUUSD
- Other items that arise.

**14. Executive Session - If Needed:** None required.

**15. Adjournment:** Roy Eckler made the motion to adjourn at 9:07 p.m.

**Next SVMUUSD Board Meeting~ October 23, 2017 ~ Fair Haven Grade School 6:30 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted, Bonnie Lenihan