

**Slate Valley Unified Union School District
Regular Meeting
September 16, 2019
Fair Haven Union High School
6:30 PM**

Approved Minutes

Name	Role/Term	Town Representing	In Attendance
Kris Benway	Director of Special Services	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Patti Beaumont	Board Member	Benson	X
Rebeckah St. Peter	Board Member	Benson (Appointed 4/8/19)	X
Amy Munger	Board Member	Benson	X
Toni Lobdell	Board Member	Castleton	X
Tim Smith	Board Member	Castleton	X
Julie Finnegan	Board Chair	Castleton--Board Chair	X
Vacant	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
Joshua Hardt	Board Member	Hubbardton	X
Vacant	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
Vacant	Board Member	West Haven 9/11/17	-
Angela Charron	Board Member	West Haven	X
Michael (Trevor) Ezzo	Board Member	West Haven	X
Tara Buxton	Board Member	Fair Haven	-
Mike Bache	Board Member	Fair Haven (Appointed 4//8/19)	X
Rick Wilson	Board Member	Fair Haven	-
Peter Stone	Board Member	Orwell NMD (Non Member District)	X
Glen Cousineau	Board Vice Chair	Orwell NMD -- Vice Chair	-
Dave Carpenter	Board Member	Orwell NMD	X
Brooke Olsen Farrell	Superintendent	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Cheryl Scarzello	Director of Finance	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Chris Cole	Director of Operations	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Casey O'Meara	Director of Curriculum I&A	Slate Valley UUSD	X

Audience Attending: Kim Lucci, Molly Clark, Jenna Ray, Peter Clark, Consultant, Tanya Tolchin
Pledge of Allegiance: Board Chair, Julie Finnegan led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Call to Order: Julie Finnegan called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Mike Bache made a motion to approve the agenda; this was seconded by Peter Stone with no additions. Motion carried by full Board.

Approval of SVUUSD Minutes of September 3, 2019: Angela Charron made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2019 Board Meeting; this was seconded by Mike Bache with one correction, Cheryl Scarzello was not marked in attendance; Motion was carried by full Board with noted correction.

Public Comments: None

Correspondence: None

Committee Reports:

- Finance Committee: Cheryl Scarzello explained Provision 2 to the Board. Provision 2 is one way to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students when the Supervisory Union doesn't meet the 40% criteria at all schools for Free and Reduced Lunch. Discussion ensued. At the last Board meeting we discussed that there were over \$8,000.00 in unpaid bills. Cheryl is looking for the support of the full Board to approve this based on last meetings interest in providing free lunch and breakfast to all students. Peter Stone made the motion to approve Provision 2 so that all students would have a free breakfast and lunch, this was seconded by Angela Charron; motion carried by the full Board. Cheryl explained the need to collect base information this year, and then advertise this service to our families and communities and it will likely commence some time mid October or by Nov. 1, 2019. Finance Committee also discussed the FY 20 Financial Statement Review. Cheryl wanted to recognize all of the Business Office Staff the incredibly hard work and diligence shown in switching over to the new system. Lastly we were handed out the Budget timeline/schedule for FY 21 budget process.
- Policy Committee:
Approve to adopt policies:
 - Policy C40, C44, C45 D30; Toni Lobdell made a motion to approve the policies listed, there was a clarifying question about who approved the animals; it is building Principals. Peter Stone seconded the motion; motion was carried by full Board.
- Slate Valley Innovation Committee:
Questions from Report
Questions from the SVUUSD Board Meeting:
 - Up until what option would the autonomous middle school no longer be viable?
 - Is there a potential partnership with Castleton University?
 - What is the legal relationship between SVUUSD and the town of Castleton regarding ownership of the Castleton Village School?
 - Will we be voting on bond language when we meet next month as a school board to determine what will be on the ballot in March?
 - Is SVUUSD prepared to move forward with the concept of a district middle school if the building bond is not approved by the school board and/or the voting public?
 - Would there be a way to include the deferred cost of building a middle school in the literature to emphasize the importance of making the decision now?
 - Are we designing spaces with the necessary resources to participate in 21st century learning in an appropriate manner for students?
 - Does the infrastructure support an innovative curriculum?
 - How much as we tried to get buy-in on this project?
 - Is there a cost saving between the two pod and three pod based on building costs and personal costs?
 - Does the Town Hall come down if we do the Orwell renovations?

Suggestions:

Create an appendix for the terms used in the document.

Casey O'Meara will be contacted to see what the intent was as he took the Questions down regarding the Innovation report.

Child Find: Kris Benway presented the Agency of Education's Findings for our district for 2018-2019, they are always reporting one year behind. ARSU/Slate Valley faired very well on the indicators they were assessing us on. There were three indicators during this time frame that we were asked to report out on, Indicator 11, which is the Child Find Evaluation Timeline. On this indicator ARSU achieved a score of 97%, outstanding performance on this indicator. On Indicator 12-Part C to Part B Transitions for we achieved a score of 100%. On Indicator 13-Post Secondary Transitions a score of 100% was earned. ARSU passed with flying colors. Kris thanked all of the Special Ed Staff for their diligent attention to detail and compliance factors. The Board also thanked them and commented on a good job by all.

Job Description - Teacher Leader: Brooke mentioned that in the board packet there was a new job description for Teacher Leaders. This is not a new position but one that had not had an official job description before now. Angela Charron made a motion to approve the job description for Teacher Leaders and Peter Stone seconded this. Motion was carried by the full Board.

Board Seat Vacancy: Brooke noted that there had been three board seat vacancies, one for West Haven and two for Hubbardton. We have a guest in the audience that has expressed interest in the West Haven seat. Tanya Torchin was introduced by Brooke and was asked to tell a bit about herself and her interest in a seat on the Board. She indicated she had been in West Haven for about a year and a half. She has children in our school system and has been following the Board activity and has been impressed. She would like an opportunity to be part of this and has the time to devote to the position. She has a background in fundraising and in grant writing. Angela Charron made a motion to nominate Tanya to the vacant West Haven position and Peter Stone seconded this. Motion was approved by the full Board. Once she has completed the necessary paperwork she can join the next Board meeting. Welcome aboard Tanya!

Central Office Report:

Superintendent's Report

I want to thank our students, parents and staff for a good opening to school! It is very exciting to be up running for another great year!

On the opening day in-service we reminded our staff of our Mission/Vision:

District Mission: We are dedicated to the academic excellence of every student by empowering them with the means for the successful completion of standards, and by challenging them to be productive members of our global society. We are committed to a comprehensive system of support to assure that each student has the opportunity to develop the skills and talents necessary for college and career readiness.

District Vision: All students are engaged in rigorous, authentic, experiential, individualized learning that is supported or accelerated to ensure that they meet or exceed standards.

Our Students are curious and creative learners who succeed through personal initiative and sustained effort to reach high academic goals. They are critical thinkers and learners who seek knowledge and possess technological competence and collaborative skills. Our students embrace diversity and culture, act responsibly, and contribute to our community.

Our Educators believe in providing for the social, emotional, and academic needs of every child so that they feel connected, safe, and respected. They are committed to offering a challenging and engaging atmosphere in which all members of the school community can learn and grow.

Our Families and Community are integral to the success of our students and schools. Families are active, engaged, and welcomed partners in their child's education. Our community is passionate about equitable educational outcomes for all students.

Our Schools offer an enriched learning environment and a comprehensive system of supports to address the needs of the whole child.

In addition, we spoke with staff regarding the foci for this year in working to achieve our vision and fulfill our mission. We continue our focus in 3 areas: Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment, Social Emotional Learning and Operations. As a Leadership Team we are in the process of refining 5 year goals that we would like to present to the school board at the end of October for feedback. These will be used in the revision of our 5 year Strategic Plan.

We are also in the early stages of looking at the implementation of Act 173. This act is the single biggest piece of legislation to come out of Montpelier. It shifts the funding mechanism for special education from a reimbursement system to a block grant by 2025. This new model aims to simplify administration of funds at both state and local levels and align with priorities put forth as a result of the District Management Group report and UVM's Study of Vermont State Funding for Special Education. There will be much more to come on this topic in the coming months.

Jason Rasco and I will be traveling to the National Threat Assessment Conference in Richmond, Virginia in the beginning of November to present on the Threat Assessment process and averting a school threat. We presented this past July at the Virginia School Safety Conference on Averted School

Threats to over 1500 law enforcement officers and school administrators. All expenses are paid by the state of Virginia and in addition we are allowed to attend the full conference free of charge. This has been a great opportunity to expand resources for our district and a chance to give back to the school/law enforcement community.

Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Slate Valley Unified Union School District (SVUUSD) is partnering with Northeastern University to develop expertise in Experiential Learning (ExL), and to later examine how the pedagogy manifests student motivation and engagement in learning. In pursuit of *SLATE* (Student Learning Achieved Through Engagement), Northeastern University (NEU) will facilitate professional development in support of SVUUSD's vision to have "All students are engaged in rigorous, authentic, experiential, individualized learning that is supported or accelerated to ensure that they meet or exceed standards."

Five SVUUSD educators attended a three day NExT summer conference in Boston in 2019 to build their own networks of ExL practitioners. To begin building teacher capacity at each grade level/content area the five attendants from NExT plus the Director of Curriculum will participate in the first module of a self-paced EXL certificate. The first ExL module to be offered in year one, Experiential Learning Theory and Practice, will provide theory to develop curriculum, instruction and assessment in ExL. These six participants will organize PLCs through Instructional Vision Team meetings, as opportunities for reflection in conjunction with scheduled district-wide professional development.

Literature and research on Experiential Learning brings to light that if the focus of teaching and learning is on having the learner actively engaged in the process of in depth understanding of what is being learned, ExL is the best choice. For more information on Experiential Learning and SVUUSD's work to date, please see the links below.

- [Slate Valley Unified School District-Curriculum-Experiential Learning](#)
- [SVUUSD @ NExT 2019](#)

Article from the NExT summer conference in Boston from 2019-[When NExT Is Now](#)

Director of Operations

The last few weeks we have devoted many resources to finalizing the installation of our new phone systems in the district schools. We're currently working to troubleshoot and implement some agreed upon changes now that end users have had the chance to start using the system that will look to improve the workflows. We've recently submitted the information required to schedule E911 compliance test calls in order to get certified by the State of Vermont and will be conducting those tests in the next few weeks.

Director of Finance

The audit team from RHR Smith and Company was in the office for the week of August 19th doing their field work. Since Addison Rutland SU received \$1,878,207 in federal funds in FY19, we were required to also have a Single Audit. A Single Audit is required when an entity expends \$750,000 or more in federal funds, grants or awards. The purpose of the Single Audit is to provide assurance to the federal government that the use of federal funds has been in compliance with federal laws and regulations. The Single Audit also includes an examination of the financial records related to federal funds and when completed is submitted to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse. Once all the audit reports for Addison Rutland, Slate Valley and Orwell have been issued I will be presenting them to the Board.

In May the IRS released a draft of the new Form W-4 for 2020. The new form reflects changes made by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which took place last year. The form eliminates the use of withholding allowances. The IRS is not requiring that existing employees complete a new form, which means our accounting software will need to be updated to accommodate both the old and new method of calculating tax withholding for employees. We are waiting to hear from PowerSchool as to how eFinancePlus will be modified to allow for these changes.

With the first payroll in September, we have now fully incorporated all aspects of our complicated payroll into eFinanacePlus (eFP). I am still working on fully understanding all the entries that the system makes, but all of our employees are getting paid accurately and on time. Not all districts in the state that implemented eFP have been successful with their payroll processing. Once again I give all the credit to the hardworking Business Office staff that have worked diligently since January on implementation of eFP.

Director of Special Services

One of the ways that we address social emotional learning in our schools is through the use of Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS). Vermont Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (VTPBIS) is a state-wide effort designed to help school teams form a proactive, school-wide, systems approach to improving social and academic competence for all students. Schools in Vermont are engaged in using a formal system of positive behavioral supports in their schools. Involved schools who implement PBIS with fidelity and integrity see a dramatic decrease in the number of behavior problems experienced in their schools. All of the schools within Slate Valley are identified as PBIS schools.

This year, at the PBIS Leadership Forum in Killington on October 10, 2019 the Castleton Elementary School, Castleton Village School, Fair Haven Grade School and Fair Haven Union High School will be recognized for reaching Merit status and will receive ribbons as recognition for their efforts. In order to achieve this status the schools demonstrated evidence of:

- Implementing Universal PBIS with fidelity (measured as 70% on the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) or 80% on the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET));
- Using behavior data (Big 7 data) within a problem-solving framework to improve student outcomes; and
- Completing the annual Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) to help plan/revise implementation.

Benson Village School will be recognized for having earned Exemplar status during the 2018-2019 school year and will be awarded a ribbon and a letter of recognition from the VT Agency of Education. In addition to meeting the criteria cited above, Benson Village School has demonstrated sustained fidelity of implementing Universal PBIS as demonstrated by two consecutive years of Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) at 70% or 80% on the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) and the sustained implementation has had positive effects on their academic and behavioral data. Congratulations to all the schools on their efforts!

The AOE has produced an [Overview of Special Education Funding Changes](#). This is a chart outlining changes to the Special Education funding system of Act 173 by fiscal year given the one-year delay to help SUs/SDs understand the timeline for changes over the next five years. As a result of the delay, we will be crafting a service plan outlining the anticipated costs in Special Education for FY 21 that will help guide our budget development.

Tim Smith had a question regarding Kris Benway's report on Act 173. He asked if the ultimate goal of this Act was to reduce costs and increase efficiency? The answer is yes.

Other Business: Julie Finnegan, Board Chair shared a written letter with the Board from John Gallo asking for the Board to reconsider his unpaid leave on the opening day of school as he took his child to the first day of college. Brooke said this request was coming for the board as she does not have to authority to act outside of the Master Agreement which states that a personal day cannot be taken on the first or last day of school. Brooke also shared that she approved the day without pay for 7 others, the same as she had done for Mr. Gallo. None of the others were asking for the Board to reconsider. Trevor Ezzo made the motion to let the Superintendent's decision stand, there would be no reconsideration to pay for that personal day. He was afforded the personal time needed to accompany his child. This was seconded by David Carpenter. Motion was carried by the full Board.

Warrants:

- Trevor Ezzo made a motion to approve Slate Valley Total Payments in the amount of \$2,269,401.08, this was seconded by Peter Stone and motion was carried by the full Board.
- Trevor Ezzo made a motion to approve the Capital Reserve Fund amount of \$12,982.00, this was seconded by Toni Lobdell; motion carried by full Board.
- Trevor Ezzo made a motion to approve the Food Service bills in the amount of \$75,657.35, this was seconded by Peter Stone; motion was carried by full Board.
- Trevor Ezzo made a motion to approve the Grants in the amount of \$64,477.26, this was seconded by Peter Stone; motion was carried by the full Board

Executive Session - if needed: Brooke indicated a need for 2 Executive Sessions.

Mike Bache made a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter with the Superintendent present at 7:48 p.m. Angela Charron seconded this motion. Board moved into Executive Session. Trevor Ezzo made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:59pm and to enforce the stipulations in the Master Agreement section 13.10 in relation to the request made by former employee Fabio Caetano. Mike Bache seconded. Motion was carried by the full board.

Peter Stone made a motion to move into Executive Session #2 at 8:00 pm, this was seconded by Mike Bache for a student matter. Trevor Ezzo made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:02 pm with a motion to approve the transfer request of student 209310 action taken.

Agenda Building:

- Develop budget
- Principal's Report
- Student Presentation??

Adjournment: Toni Lobdell made a motion to adjourn at 8:03 pm. This was seconded by David Carpenter.

Respectfully Submitted
Bonnie Lenihan

SVUUSD Board Meeting - Sept. 30, 2019 -BVS -6:30 PM
SV Building & Grounds Committee/Policy Committee Mtgs. - Sept. 30, 2019 - BVS 5:30 pm