

**COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL OF VT  
STATE EDUCATION ANNUAL BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, March 7, 2007  
Montpelier Lodge of Elks**

State Board Members Present: Dwight Davis, Richard Fraser, Blanche Kelley, Dave Luce & Albert Pearce

State Board Members Absent: Don Messier, John Stewart & Wilma Paronto

Local Advisory Members Present: Rutland: June Atwood, Rita Rhinehart; Waterbury: Val Vincent; St. Johnsbury: Carroll Collins, Springfield: Eleanor Arno, Roland Stoodley, Marsha Towns & Kathryn Poston

Administration Present: Rob Hofmann, Robert Lucenti, Stephan LaTulippe, Mary Koen, Maureen McIntyre

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

*1. Welcome & Introductions:*

Albert “Chuck” Pearce welcomed everyone to the State Board of Education’s Annual Board Meeting. He had everyone introduce themselves and tell which local advisory board they served on and why they were inspired to serve.

*2. New England Association of Schools & Colleges Accreditation Update:*

Bob Lucenti shared the testimony he gave before the NEASC Commission, which included the school’s history and the foundation from which it was built. The foundation was built on volunteerism. When he was hired to direct the Education Program in Corrections in 1984, there were only six sites, no education wings or buildings and less than a half dozen teachers. The focus of the program was library services, assessments and the GED program. He knew he needed help, but there was no school board or parents. He decided to attend a meeting of the Vermont Retired Teacher’s Association to ask for their help. It worked and the VRTA began volunteering, forming local advisory boards and became our community advocates for the school and the students. In July 2003, legislation was passed which gave the school a statewide advisory board with members appointed by the Governor.

Now, we’ve just received accreditation from the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC). Bob shared the testimony he gave before the NEASC Commission, which included this history. Our volunteers, Boards, offenders, faculty and legislators all worked together to create the school.

NEASC gave the school exemplary ratings for four of the standards. The major commendations are:

- The school's dedication to its admirable mission of serving those whom other academic and civic institutions can or will no longer serve.
- The commitment, enthusiasm, courage and energy devoted by faculty and administrators to meeting their students' present and future needs.
- The skill demonstrated by faculty and administrators in meeting the needs of a diverse population in a variety of settings.
- The effective information management systems devised by the Community High School to serve students, teachers, and administrators throughout complex, varied environments.
- The very positive atmosphere of mutual respect and shared commitment that is evident throughout the entire Community High School.

NEASC also made major recommendations. They recommend that the Community High School do the following:

- Develop a procedure to ensure curriculum continuity, improving the identification of student needs and the transition of students from one campus to another without delay or disruption of academic programs.
- Complete the definition and integration of core concepts as specified by the Vermont state standards for each academic discipline into the curricula and syllabi as soon as possible and explore ways of assessing student understanding, including longitudinal tracking.
- **Clarify the role, the selection process, and the orientation of board members for both the State Advisory Board and the Local Advisory boards so that these boards can be most effective in suggesting policy and in advocating the mission of the school.**
- Consider adding an assistant principal and formulate a transition plan for leadership of the organization.

One of the recommendations is for Standard 2, which is Governance. It is the one in bold. This is on our afternoon agenda. We will have a group discussion and ask for members' input.

There were a few questions by some of the board members. One was how is the Superintendent's position of CHSVT determined and what interaction does this position have with the Department of Education's State Board of Education. The CHSVT Superintendent position is in Statute, Title 28 §120, section c) Program Supervision. The Commissioner of Corrections shall appoint an Education Supervisor to coordinate and supervise the Education Program. We are suppose to meet with the Department of Education State Board annually. However, we have not yet been able to get on their agenda. Instead, we have sent all the State Education Board members the Annual Report for the CHSVT.

Another question was whether workforce readiness will be imbedded in some tech credits? The answer was yes, which will include the Habits of Mind curriculum.

Someone asked what the Correctional Officer role was in assuring students attend school. Bob responded that long ago, one of our veteran Board members, Beryle Gardner, would always request that the facility superintendent attend the local advisory board meetings. During the meetings, she would request that the officers assure the students attend school and requested that the guards act as “parents”. She helped to redefine the role of the Correctional Officer, as someone who would support education for the inmates.

### 3. Commissioner Rob Hofmann Update:

Commissioner Hofmann spoke of the excitement by everyone including the Governor, our Legislators and Senators, our Boards, Volunteers and the overall Department of Corrections, regarding the NEASC accreditation. He spoke of how the CHSVT flourishes in a bizarre environment of Corrections. He thanked the board members for all their effort, work and advocacy.

### 4. Review of the CHSVT's Action Plan:

Bob Lucenti reviewed the school's Action Plan with the Board members.

The Action Plan is for School Improvement. We have eight boxes on the Action Plan form. One box is for the Standard, another is for the combined Self-Study and the NEASC Recommendation. Another box is to write who this recommendation is assigned to. For example, the Board, the Administration, the Faculty, a CHSVT Committee, etc.. Another box is for The Recommendation as a Goal Statement (observable and measurable). Then, you have a box for the Action Step, one for who will be Responsible, one for the Timeline and the final box is for Evidence of Completion.

### 5. Special Education Update:

Mary Koen gave an overview of special education services within the CHSVT. At least fifty percent of students, under the age of 22, were once eligible for special education services. CHSVT does have a continuum of services for students with disabilities. This is offered through the Educational Support System (ESS) or Section 504. Section 504 refers to federal law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability. We define our ESS by outlining a variety of offerings, which include multi level and small group instruction, assigned classes tailored to student interest and strengths, individual graduation plans, basic skills for reading, writing and math, and behavioral. Section 504 is developed when students with disabilities needs may not be met by the ESS.

The strength of the CHSVT's ESS is that the percentage of students requiring special services is lower than in publicly operated schools. Even though we start with fifty percent of our students being special education eligible, after reassessment and child find

activities, we normally have less than ten percent of active special education students on any given day. We are moving to a regional staffing model with full time special educators only in our largest facilities.

Our plans are to have two full time special educators in Newport. One regional position in the Northwest area will cover the St. Albans Probation & Parole campus, the Burlington Probation & Parole campus, the Northwest State Correctional facility and the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility. We will have a part time special educator at the Caledonia Work Camp, and one full time special educator to cover the Northeast Regional Correctional Facility, the Barre Probation & Parole campus, and the St. Johnsbury Probation & Parole campus. A full time special educator will cover the Southwest region which includes the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility, the Rutland Probation & Parole campus and the Bennington Probation & Parole campus. A current special education position will cover the Southeast State Correctional Facility, the Dale Correctional Facility, the White River Probation & Parole Campus and Valley Vista. We will have two full time positions at the Southern State Correctional Facility, and one of these positions will cover the Brattleboro Probation & Parole campus. This is a total of eight and a half special education positions.

6. NEASC's Standards for Accreditation, Standard 2 (Governance):

One of the major recommendations by the NEASC Visiting Committee was to:

Clarify the role, the selection process, and the orientation of board members for both the State Advisory Board and the Local Advisory boards so that these boards can be most effective in suggesting policy and in advocating the mission of the school.

This recommendation is under Standard 2 (Governance).

The board members in attendance were asked to split into groups to discuss five questions, which relate to this major recommendation.

The questions are:

- Should the local boards have supervision of the implementation of the independent school policies set by the State Board for the local campuses?
- Should the role of local boards be to advise the education team and the State Board of issues within the school at the local campus?
- Shall local boards oversee selection and orientation of local board members? Shall the State Board coordinate and/or oversee the selection of members for the local board?
- Shall the local advisory boards recommend school policy to the State Education Board?
- What input and support would local advisory boards need or want from the State Board?

There was a “CHSVT Local Advisory Boards” guideline provided to use as a tool for the groups to write their responses. This document is attached.

Once this task was completed, each group reported out. Much discussion and debate occurred. It was felt that more time and input was needed to work on this major recommendation, so it was suggested another meeting be scheduled to continue with this. It was determined that the June 6, 2007 State Education Board meeting should be devoted to continue the work on this recommendation. All local board members will be invited to attend the June 6<sup>th</sup>, meeting so all board members can participate. We will send these minutes to all local board chairs with a note expressing the importance of the June 6<sup>th</sup>, meeting. It was also determined that we will follow up by sending a notice out to all local advisory board member inviting them to attend.

**Dwight Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Eleanor Arno seconded the motion. The motion was called. It passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen McIntyre