

Central Office Leadership Team Report

December 2009

Superintendent of Schools – Elaine Pinckney

Chief Operations Officer – Bob Mason

Director of Human Resources – Cindy Koenemann-Warren

Director of Student Support Services – Fran Williams

Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Coordinator – Molly McClaskey

Director of Network Services – Mike Kanfer

Director of Finance – Mike Nadeau

Kudos

CSSU and its member schools raised over \$14,000. For the United Way Campaign this year. This was the first year that the effort was organized at the SU level. Participation ranged from 7% - 20%. Thanks to Wendy Clark and Tammy Anthony for spearheading the campaign.

Gabby Ribeiro, WCS, earned finalist distinction in the Anti-Defamation League's 25th Anniversary Art Contest

CVU athletic teams – field hockey, girls' and boys' soccer, boys' and girls' X-country, and football – kudos for all making it to the finals, several earning Champion honors.

Board Chairs

Much discussion around decoupling teacher and administrator salaries.

Reviewed algorithm used for figuring transportation and technology assessments for this budget cycle and compared impact on individual schools with prior methodology.

Discussion about legal requirement to take community input at board meetings and when in the board meeting this must happen (Elaine is following up on this).

Discussion around legal parameter related to Executive Sessions. Elaine will provide board chairs with the statutory language and the Opinion of Opinions from the Sec'y of State.

21st Century Work Plan

The Central Office Leadership Team is working on articulation and assessment of 21st Century Learning. The four core areas are: Digital Age Literacy, Inventive Thinking (intellectual capital), Interactive Communication (social and personal skills), and Quality, State-of-the-Art Results. They are developing a matrix for each area that defines the skills/learnings, and the Vermont Framework areas connected to each. Teachers and principals will then work together to assess when and by whom each skill is currently being implemented and assessed.

Comprehension Tool Kit Training - Literacy Coordinators worked with the Director of Curriculum to design two local training sessions, one for teachers of grades K-2 and the other for teachers of grades 3-6. The Comprehension Tool Kit is a rich set of resources developed by the well known authors of Strategies That Work, Anne Goudvis and Stephanie Harvey. Their work has raised awareness of reading comprehension strategy instruction throughout the country and addresses the importance of intentional comprehension instruction, K-12. The Tool Kit is full of specific mini lessons for each strategy and includes leveled reading texts for instruction and student practice. The training sessions on November 5th were well attended by teachers throughout CSSU. Literacy

Coordinators presented along with several classroom teachers who modeled lessons for the participants.

The annual **Vermont ASCD Conference** occurred on November 17th with keynote Bernajean Porter, a renowned teacher, presenter, and expert on 21st Century Learning. Her overarching belief that “technology empowers both learners and teachers to engage in a partnership that can bring fundamental differences to today’s classrooms” was the basis of our day. Bernajean made the case for change, for instruction that prepares students for participation in a global market place, and for more attention on ‘Rigor’ as well as a new kind of learning, thinking, and problem solving. In her words, “you can’t dress up thin thinking!” She described a fast changing world, one where the number of text messages made in a single day exceeds the population on the planet, a world where information doubles every 18 to 24 months, where by 2010 it will double every 72 hours, where the subject one teaches in the fall has 33% more content available by spring, and a world in which people entering the work force will change careers an average of fourteen times. She suggests that schools need momentum and “change hardiness”, guided by strong leadership in order to create a culture of inquiry and collaboration. The afternoon was devoted to what 21st Century Learning actually looks like. Porter points out that change toward 21st Century Learning has three phases: the **literacy phase** in which educators are learning to use hardware and technology tools, the **adapting phase** where technology is used to teach and deliver content in the same way it had been without technology and the pedagogy remains the same. Lastly, teachers reach the **transforming phase** in which a lesson reaches beyond the existing content and use of technology, requiring collaboration, team decision making, innovation, problem solving, synthesis of ideas, inference, questioning, and willingness to make mistakes. Those of us in the audience evaluated lessons to determine what phase of implementation the teacher had reached. It was a day of big thinking. Those of us from CSSU had invigorating conversation about the 21st Century work we have undertaken.

Teacher Negotiations Update

The meeting schedule is set. The board team will meet at least two times with the boards’ Chief Negotiator Attorney Scott Cameron of Zalinger, Cameron & Lambek of Montpelier. Scott has served in this capacity for the last two agreements. Additional information has been sent to negotiation team members, but please see the expected schedule below:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Board Team Work Session | Thursday, December 10th |
| Board Team Work Session | Monday, January 4th |
| Negotiation Session | Monday, January 11th |
| Negotiation Session | Monday, February 1st |
| Negotiation Session | Monday, February 15th |
| Negotiation Session | Monday, March 15th |
| Negotiation Session | Monday, March 22nd |
| Negotiation Session | Monday, April 5th |

We will be sure to include negotiation updates on local board agenda as needed to keep the board informed about the process.

Policy Update

Please see your agenda packet for a set of policies to adopt (discussed at your September board meetings) and a set of policies to discuss this month. In addition, going forward, we will use the CSSU board meeting to review questions so that CSSU board representatives can share that information locally where more substantive discussions regarding the options available to the boards will occur.

Supervision & Evaluation Committee Update

This committee and its subcommittees continue to meet. A survey will go out to teachers regarding the student feedback tool currently in use after the Thanksgiving break to see what, if any, changes should be made to the tool itself or in the administration of it. The system review subcommittee will begin its work in December and we are still on course to have the parent survey distributed in the spring.

PATH Wellness Update

CSSU continues to participate in the Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust (VSBIT) called the PATH to Wellness program. One component is a matching funds grant that enables each employee to earn money for participating in certain activities and the Supervisory Union receives matching funds in the form of a grant to use towards employee wellness programs. Over the years, the approved use of these matching funds has become more specific. To that end, the CSSU PATH to Wellness Committee drafted an action plan which was approved by VSBIT to provide an employee wellness program and to use the grant money to fund a coordinator position. We are excited to share that we have hired David Peckinpaugh as an Employee Wellness Program consultant for the 2009-2010 school year. He will spend time this year building the foundation of the program to be fully implemented next year. The position and the program are completely funded by the PATH to Wellness grant funds, and at this time has enough funding to go through the 2011-12 school year.

Budgets for 2010-2011

The process is in full swing with each of seven school boards into their second or third work meeting even before we get to December. Some relevant statewide data is already available namely:

- The base education amount used in calculating tax rates is held flat at \$8544 this year, in essence passing an additional 3-4% back to taxpayers
- The tax rate expectation from our friends in Montpelier is the statewide rate will go up 1-2 cents
- The NEEP (price index) has been fixed at 2.2%, added to the 1% in law; it will allow budgets to rise close to 3% on a per student basis before the two vote mechanism kicks in.

Baselines have been published and are in the hands of all board members.

| School | Baseline \$\$ | Baseline Increase \$\$ | Percent Increase |
|--------|---------------|------------------------|------------------|
| CVU HS | \$22,028,607 | \$998,820 | 4.75% |
| CSD | \$7,047,982 | -\$191,198 | -2.64% |
| HSD | \$7,969,320 | \$403,844 | 5.34% |
| SSD | \$11,844,052 | \$623,561 | 5.56% |
| WSD | \$16,494,947 | \$171,704 | 1.05% |
| STG SD | \$1,848,346 | -\$134,356 | -6.78% |

Facilities – CSSU/CSD/HSD

At CSSU the bus repaving project is substantially complete with November's warm weather allowing the contract to get all paving work done before the winter weather set in. The contractor has to come back in the spring to complete the landscaping called out in the spec and to resolve a quality issue with the slope of some of the paved area.

At Charlotte the bond passed and the board is waiting through the 30 days required by law before expenditures on the project can be made. They are beginning the process of contractor and clerk of the work selection in the meantime. At both Charlotte and Hinesburg we have been successful with

leveraging our relationship with local banks to get preferential placement of zero interest bonds in support of projects. We should be able to have the boards close on both deals in the mid December time frame.

At Hinesburg, the facility committee continues to meet with their architect to get the team of Contractor and Clerk in place. Both projects were intended to be bid in March for summer 2010 work.