

April 23rd, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Chris Young and I have been a principal in Vermont for 22 years, all of which have been spent in the Northeast Kingdom. I am also a graduate of North Country Union High School, as are both of my children. Further, both of my parents taught for a combined 50 years at North Country, and both of my grandparents were teachers, one at Barton Academy and one at Derby Academy. Suffice it to say that my family and I are rooted in and committed to Vermont's education system. This is why I am compelled to share my deep concerns about the process that has resulted in the confirmation for Ms. Saunders as the top educational official in the state of Vermont.

I have no doubt that Ms. Saunders is a wonderful person and a committed educator, and I appreciate her efforts to learn about Vermont's educational landscape. I do have questions for the Senate to consider regarding whether the State Board of Education and the Governor have done right by Vermonters in bringing Ms. Saunders to the Senate for confirmation.

- Does the Senate believe that the selection process reflected the values of Vermonters and our commitment to public education?
- Does the Senate believe that Ms. Saunders will be able to lead our state through the myriad urgent and complicated issues that we are facing?
- Is the Senate aware of the ways in which Ms. Saunders' experience stood out from other candidates and led the State Board of Education and the Governor to believe that she is the best choice for this critical position?

Ultimately, it is the Senate's responsibility to fill cabinet positions with qualified and capable people who reflect the values of Vermonters. I urge you to ask difficult questions, do your due diligence, and ensure that the next Secretary of Education is ready and able to lead our state through incredibly challenging, complex, and critical times. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Young
Principal, NCUHS