

**House Education Committee Testimony  
Jacquelyne Wilson, Asst. Superintendent  
Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union  
February 27, 2014**

**BACKGROUND**

- Asst. Superintendent for the Bennington Rutland Supervisory Union since July 1, 2013. For the two previous years I was the BRSU Curriculum Director. My current position includes both curriculum director responsibilities for the entire BRSU and superintendent responsibilities for the Mountain Towns RED and the Winhall School District.
- Prior to my current role, I was the Principal of Manchester Elementary Middle School for seven years, and Assistant Principal for two. I also taught middle level at MEMS for seven years. From 2003 to 2005 I was the Principal of Main Street Middle School, in Montpelier, VT.

Stepping out of a single school environment, and into a role that exposes me to all six of our schools, has allowed me to see the wide diversity in educational experiences that exist for our children. I've observed significant differences in teaching practices, curriculum implementation, expectations for student learning, and definitions of proficiency - just within our supervisory union.

For the past three years, in my role as an Asst. Superintendent/Curriculum Director, I've been focused on creating networks of learning, for both our teachers and principals. We believe that a lateral networking approach is critical to meet the demands of new standards and to create learning environments that engage all our students. We are focused on curriculum development models that are fluid and responsive, and the identification and implementation of high leverage learning practices and opportunities for all our students. Quality instruction, curriculum, and student opportunity should not be school dependent.

**COMMENTS**

I fully support the House Education Committee's commitment to a single district approach, and believe that it will enhance student learning opportunities, and eventually lead to improved student outcomes. My beliefs are based on the work that I have done over the past three years in my current role, and by my experiences as a principal prior to that. At the BRSU, we have committed ourselves to developing a personalized system of learning, that supports all learners, and we know we can only accomplish that by working together. Connecting our professionals, tapping into their expertise, and creating new solutions is at the core of my work. Coming together, to accomplish all that we need to accomplish for today's children is absolutely necessary. As a result of our work:

- Single grade level teachers, in small schools, no longer feel isolated. They are connected to a team of grade level teachers across the BRSU.
- We have identified high leverage learning practices that are implemented in all the schools (personal learning plans and e-portfolios).
- Teachers are becoming the designers. Innovative learning practices are developed by a smaller team of teachers, and these ideas are then tested in the field. All teachers then have an opportunity to revise and improve the practice.

- Teachers, as members of a horizontal grade level team, are exposed to student learning beyond their classroom. There have been many ahas! Teachers assumptions regarding what a child is capable of have been challenged, and beliefs have shifted.
- Teachers are sharing their practice. This was not the case when we started but their willingness to share has grown significantly in just a year's time.
- We've learned that innovation arises in the most unexpected places.

#### Necessary Supports

- Teachers need to be connected via technology. Face-to-face also plays an important role, but the ability to connect with one another, at any time, is critical.
- Principals and teachers need easy access to student performance data.
- To share and develop curriculum, educators need access to a Learning Management System.
- Principals in individual schools must share a common vision and must consistently model commitment to high leverage practices/activities.