

Jerome Shedd 4/22/15

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April 22, 2015

Vermont Senate Education Committee

Chair Cummings, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee on the important legislation you are crafting, which I wholeheartedly support. The views expressed here are my own.

I am a seventh-generation Vermonter who taught in public schools in New York State for 33 years. I have been a school board member in Vermont for the past ten years.

The Senate ^{encourages} version of H. 361, while leaving the door open for necessary exceptions, ~~appears to contain~~ exactly the right remedy for our current school governance issues: *one board for each superintendent, generally designed locally, eventually designed by the Secretary of Education where necessary.*

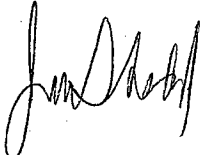
The Senate version also removes punitive spending caps - a very wise move. Short-term caps can only lead to cuts in vital programs. The long view in this bill will allow local boards to get to that sweet spot in staff-to-student ratio that benefits students and taxpayers alike.

Keep in mind that this bill would merely foster the same school board consolidation for elementary schools that Vermont has long had for secondary schools.

I can tell you from experience that the Supervisory Union structure, which in our case means nine steering wheels on one school bus, constantly gets in the way of board members trying to represent our community and properly govern our school system. The accompanying change in governance consolidation can do.

In 1892 this legislature made it possible for a town could have only one school district. It was a very unpopular law, but there were school districts with six or seven students, and it needed to be done for them. It is time for the legislature to act with courage once again. Vermont cannot move education into the 21st century with a school governance structure from the 19th century.

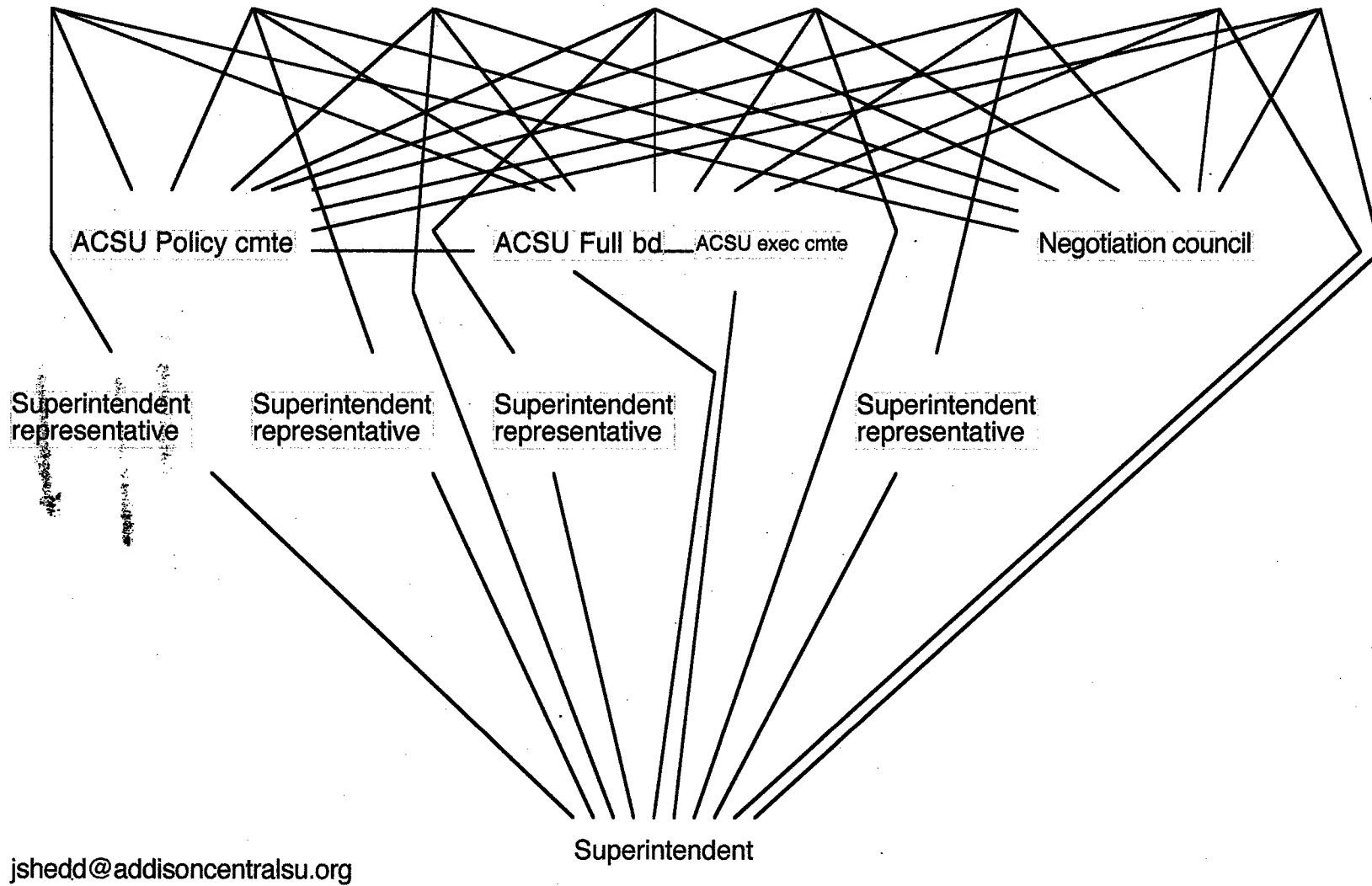
Sincerely,



Jerome Shedd

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school board

Superintendent

