

AOE Testimony: Education Policy Initiatives

Testimony To: House Committee on Education

Respectfully Submitted by: Daniel M. French, Ed.D., Secretary of Education

Date: January 7, 2019

Education Policy Initiatives in Vermont

There are a significant number of education policy initiatives in various stages of implementation, affecting Vermont school districts in a variety of ways. They include:

- Act 77 of 2013 (flexible pathways)
- Act 166 of 2014 (universal prekindergarten)
- Act 46 of 2015 (school governance consolidation)
- Act 173 of 2018 (reform and restructuring of special education practice and funding)
- Act 66 of 2019 (lead in schools testing and remediation)

AOE Response to Education Policy Initiatives

Beginning in 2019, the agency began tracking activities on major policy initiatives through a [Policy Work Plan](#) which gives public transparency to actions taken to implement education legislation in Vermont.

Activities in Response to Act 173

The agency is fully engaged in providing support to Vermont School Districts as they adjust to Act 173 of 2018. This includes a series of technical guidance documents around specific areas the agency has identified as key to success of Act 173 at the district level. Each of these is linked to a current State Board Rule of the Education Quality Standards (Series 2100) or state statute:

- *SBE Rule 2120.6. Curriculum Coordination*
- *SBE Rule 2121.3. Needs Based Professional Learning*
- *SBE Rule 2123.2. Development and Implementation of Local Comprehensive Assessment System*
- *16 V.S.A. § 2902. Tiered system of supports and educational support team*

To date, the agency has published the following technical guidance documents in the areas listed above:

- [Developing Systems to Support the Success of All Students](#) (summary of the technical guidance series) – August 2019
- [Educational Support Teams in School District Systems](#) – October 2019
- [Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems in School District Systems](#) – December 2019

Forthcoming technical guidance documents will be published in the near future:

- Needs Based Professional Learning
- Coordinated Curriculum

Additionally, the General Assembly appropriated funds to the agency for use implementing the provisions of Act 173. The [Cost Activity Timeline](#) outlines the specifics of this spending.

AOE Capacity

In the autumn of 2019, the agency adopted a new purpose statement after a period of focused work to reconsider and develop the agency's role in the current context of the Vermont education system. The purpose statement reads as follows:

"The Agency of Education implements state and federal laws, policies, and regulations to ensure all Vermont learners have equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities. The Agency accomplishes this mission through the provision of its leadership, support, and oversight of Vermont's public education system."

*By **leadership**, we mean developing a shared statewide vision and defining expectations for Vermont's education system in order to achieve coherent, consistent understanding of policy and implementation at the local level.*

*By **support**, we mean providing professional learning opportunities and technical assistance so that stakeholders are able to meet legal requirements, ensure fiscal accountability, and make data-informed decisions.*

*By **oversight** we mean data collection and monitoring to verify that state and federal resources are used appropriately and effectively, to build and sustain a high-quality education system, and ensure Vermonters' right to access high quality learning opportunities.*

Overview of AOE Staffing

[Agency of Education Organization Chart](#)

[AOE Leadership Team](#)