

Vermont State Board of Education

Report to the Senate Education Committee

January 21, 2025

Report to the House Education Committee

January 22, 2025

SBE Membership: 16 V.S.A. §161

- Membership consists of:
 - Eight nonstudent members, with priority given to the selection of persons with a demonstrated commitment to ensuring quality education for Vermont students
 - Typically serve terms of six years beginning on March 1st of the year in the which the appointments are made
 - Two student members
 - Serve terms of two years beginning on July 1st of the year in which the appointments are made
 - Junior student member may not vote
 - Senior student member may vote
 - The Secretary of Education, who serves as a nonvoting member
- All members shall be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

State Board Membership

- **Jennifer Deck Samuelson, Chair** (2020 - 2/28/2026)
 - *Winhall*; Chair, Winhall School Board; Attorney at Law
- **Tammy Kolbe, Vice Chair** (2021 - 2/28/2027)
 - *Warren*; Principal Researcher at AIR; former UVM Associate Professor of Education Leadership and Policy Studies
- **Mohamed Diop** (2023 - 2/28/2029)
 - *Bristol*; Director, Multilingual Learner Programs, Winooski School District
- **Grey Fearon** (7/01/2023 - 6/30/2025)
 - *Panton*; Student Member; Senior, Vergennes Union High School
- **Kim Gleason** (2019 - 2/28/2025)
 - *Grand Isle*; Former Chair, Essex Westford School District (EWSD); former Treasurer, VSBA; substitute teacher, EWSD
- **Lyle Jepson** (2021 - 2/28/2027)
 - *Rutland*; former Director, Stafford Technical Center; former teacher and former Principal, Fair Haven Union High School
- **Tom Lovett** (2021 - 2/28/2027)
 - *Waterford*; teacher and former Head of School, St. Johnsbury Academy
- **Jenna O'Farrell** (2019 - 2/28/2025)
 - *St. Johnsbury*; former teacher, Assistant Principal, and Principal, St. Johnsbury School
- **Richard Werner** (2022 - 2/28/2030)
 - *East Dover*; Chair, Windham Central Supervisory Union; Chair, River Valleys School District
- **Caleb Greenwood** (7/01/2024 - 6/30/2026)
 - *Troy*; Student Member; Junior, Lake Region Union High School
- **Zoie Saunders, Secretary of Education**

Historic Relationship between AOE and SBE

Prior to 2012, SBE duties included:

- Selecting the Commissioner of Education
- Directing work of the Department of Education
- Directing policy and technical direction of the Department
 - Rulemaking
 - Developing regulations
- Supervising the Commissioner
 - Commissioner responsible for implementing rules and regulations adopted by the Board

Current Relationship between AOE and SBE

Act 98 of 2012:

- Established the Agency of Education
- Elevated the Commissioner to a cabinet-level Secretary of Education
 - Appointed by Governor
 - Reports directly to Governor
- SBE no longer responsible for overseeing AOE's policies, programs, or resources
- SBE still retains oversight with respect to rulemaking process
- AOE responsible for implementing rules and regulations adopted by the SBE

Unique Position of SBE

- Independent Board of Citizens
- Public Forum – All meetings are warned and open to the public
- Neutral Body
 - Act consistent with legislative intent
 - Advise the General Assembly when asked
- Quasi-Judicial Role
 - Example: rate appeals by therapeutic schools
 - Example: tuition appeals
- Organization/Adjustment of SUs/SDs pursuant to [16 V.S.A. §261](#)
- Authority to engage in rulemaking pursuant to [16 V.S.A. §164\(7\)](#)

Determining Our Work

- Statutes:

- Example: 16 V.S.A. §164 (State Board; general powers and duties)
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/16/003/00164>
- Example: 16 V.S.A. §165 (Education Quality Standards)
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/16/003/00165>

- Legislative Acts:

- Example: Act 46 (2015) (An act relating to making amendments to education funding, education spending, and education governance)
- Example: Act 173 (2018) (An act relating to enhancing the effectiveness, availability, and equity of services provided to students who require additional support)

- Rules

Executing our Work

- The Board shall be supported by adequate staff who shall report to the Board (16 V.S.A. §163(a))
- The Board shall meet monthly (16 V.S.A. §163(b))
 - Meetings are typically held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month
 - The Board typically meets in-person in April, May, September, and October
 - In-person meetings begin later to allow Board members and members of the public time to travel
 - In-person meetings may be held at the local school of a member whose term is expiring
 - Other meetings are typically held remotely and usually begin around 8:30am
- The Board shall also hold Special Meetings as required for the performance of its duties (16 V.S.A. §163(b))

Organization

- Leadership
 - Biennially, the Board selects its Chair (16 V.S.A. §161(3))
 - Biennially, the Board typically selects a Vice-Chair
- Committee Structure
 - Allows the Board to work more efficiently
 - Committees meet independent of full Board meetings
 - Committees bring recommendations to the full Board for its discussion and vote

Board Activities in 2024

11 monthly meetings

3 special meetings

27 committee meetings

EQS/SPS Committee

10 Meetings

Tammy Kolbe & Kim Gleason, Co-Chairs

Mohamed Diop

Grey Fearon

Rich Werner

Roles & Responsibilities Committee

3 Meetings

Jennifer Deck Samuelson, Co-Chair

Tammy Kolbe, Co-Chair

Mohamed Diop

Jenna O'Farrell

2200 Approvals Committee

5 Meetings

Tom Lovett, Chair

Lyle Jepson

Jenna O'Farrell

2200 Updates Committee

9 Meetings

Jennifer Deck Samuelson, Chair

Kim Gleason

Tom Lovett

Work Completed in 2024

- **Updating Rule Series 2000 - Education Quality Standards**
 - Establish the standards to ensure that all Vermont students are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality and are equitable, antiracist, culturally responsive, anti-discriminatory, and inclusive
 - Effective July 1, 2025
- **Updating Rule Series 2200 - Independent School Approvals**
 - Apply the principles and goals of Act 1 (2019) to independent schools and adopt the same substantive language as that used in Rule Series 2000
 - Introduce the requirement that independent schools, as a condition of their continued approval, must complete and submit annual assurances of their compliance with the rules
 - Provide a comprehensive framework of requirements that accrediting agencies must meet in order to be recognized by the Board
 - Require a method by which the Agency will evaluate whether a school is compliant with nondiscrimination requirements
 - Clarify the process by which accredited and non-accredited schools may apply for and receive approval and reapproval
 - Effective July 1, 2024, except that Rules 2223.3.3(b) (Instructional Strategies) and 2223.3.3(c)(1) (Curriculum Content) will take effect on July 1, 2025
- **Independent School Approvals and Reapprovals**
 - Approval of two post-secondary schools
 - Recognition of [three accrediting agencies](#)

Current Issues Facing the SBE

- Insufficient Resources to Meet Workflow Demands
 - FY24 SBE budget: \$70,708
 - Board members earn \$6.25/hour or \$50/meeting
 - No dedicated legal support
- As a result:
 - No funds to hire consultant to assist the Student Performance Standards Committee with its review of proposed standards for student performance to be adopted by the State Board of Education under 16 V.S.A. § 164(9)
 - No funds to hire attorney to assist with updates to rules, of which many have not been updated in decades
 - No funds to fully discharge statutory obligations

Legislative Requests

- General Resources for SBE
 - Dedicated legal counsel
 - Increased compensation for Board members
- One-Time Line Item Adjustment to FY25 budget
 - \$40,000 for consultant to assist in reviewing the proposed Ethnic Studies Standards that have been proposed by the Act 1 Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group
 - \$25,000 to retain legal counsel to assist with updates to the Board's Rule Series 2370 (Career and Technical Education)
- Additional Funding in FY26 and Beyond
 - Rule updates
 - Meet other obligations set forth in statute

Future Considerations

What is the General Assembly's view of the role of the SBE?