**November 2021**

**Cabinet Report to Boards**

## *Our mission*

***"Windham Central Supervisory Union provides leadership and resources***

***to ensure a strong educational system for all students."***

*Core Values*

***Windham Central Supervisory Union will...***

* ***place students at the center of decision-making.***
* ***build trust and respect by acting ethically, transparently, and with integrity.***
* ***operate as a community of learners, committed to developing the skills and capabilities of all.***
* ***collaborate, share and seek creative solutions.***

Updates

Weighting Study [Nov 3rd Agenda](https://ljfo.vermont.gov/assets/Meetings/Task-Force-on-the-Implementation-of-the-Pupil-Weighting-Factors-Report/2021-11-03/1056a95235/GENERAL-357777-v1-TFWS_Agenda_November_3_2021.pdf)

* Bill was asked to Testify about Excess Spending Threshold (*at the end of this report*)

[ESSERIII/ARP Meaningful Feedback](https://sites.google.com/windhamcentral.org/wcsucovid19/esser-iiiarp?authuser=0) - The purpose of this survey is to gather feedback from the community about how the WCSU has spent and should spend ESSER funds. The WCSU identified needs in the school and community and created actions to address those needs. As the WCSU looks to allocate funds from ESSER III / ARP (America Recovery Plan) we are asking for more feedback from our broader community on the best ways to use those funds to address needs in our school community.

This is being sent to nearly two dozen community partners, being shared through schools, and is publicly available through the WCSU website.

**Academic Proficiency**

*Director of Curriculum & Instruction*

* AST Instructional Rounds (full day): Diagnostic planning, tools for teachers, Lit/ Math guides
* Vocabulary Surge (grades 4&5) Preparation for winter implementation

*Director of Special Education*

* Began work with part of middle school Special Education team at Leland & Gray with consultation from general education Admin, Counseling, and PBGR lead teacher on proficiency-based grading, ladder framework for students performing below grade level, and more. On-going work pertaining to academic instruction as well as transferable skills will continue.
* Beginning planning for scheduled special education rule changes for determination of Specific Learning Disability (SLD), which is shifting from a *discrepancy-based* model to a different type of model based more on patterns of strengths and weaknesses. Rule change to occur on 7/1/22 and we’re all staying tuned for more direction from the Agency of Education.

**Personalized Learning**

*Director of Curriculum & Instruction*

* MTSS: Flow chart, planning for schoolwide introduction

*Director of Special Education*

* Beginning brainstorming work around conceptual understanding of and system development for service delivery models and options in preparation of Act 173 (7/1/22) due to increased flexibility within the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) structures.

**High Quality Staffing**

*Director of Curriculum & Instruction*

* Grade Level Meetings (K-⅔-⅚)Math progressions, Math Menu, games & activities for student engagement
* Mentor-Protege Meeting: Technology Apps in the classroom
* Leadership Team Meeting: Covid Planning, Charlotte Danielson Framework (S&E), Observation of teaching, MTSS / LCAS review & planning

*Director of Special Education*

* Preparation for Act 173 rules and regulation changes
* Continued work on compliance monitoring through the Agency of Education
* Worked with regional Directors of Special Education to provide input for State Performance Plan percentages

*Director of Operations*

* Hired a second shift custodian at Leland and Gray.
* Looking to hire a split custodian for NewBrook and to also provide additional support to Leland and Gray. Beginning interviews this week.

**Safe, Healthy Schools**

*Director of Special Education*

* Intensive focus on social emotional and behavioral needs and systems
* Continued work and consideration of exit criteria from special education to other MTSS interventions and structures

*Director of Operations*

HVAC Controls:

* Alliance PM work was completed at all the district schools on the controllers and equipment.
* Continuing to improve equipment throughout the district as budgeting allows.

Safety Program:

* Attended the Behavioral Threat Assessment training in early October as did numerous other staff in the district. The hope is this will become a vital piece of schools crisis response programming.
* Schedule the first Community Safety team meeting on Nov 15, 2021. We will be reviewing the crisis binders and merging the Behavioral Threat Assessment program into our schools crisis teams.

**Financial Efficiencies**

*Director of Special Education*

* Continued work with Regional Superintendents, Vermont Learning Collaborative, and New K-12 Solutions for future regional collaboration possibilities
* Collaborated regionally with Directors of Special Education for cost share for our Special Education Attorney to review recommended policies/procedures from the Agency of Education

*Director of Finance*

* Working on 1st draft budgets- see budget timeline [Budget Timeline-WIP](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MhnnBt_jwqpNCyPQJIu2z1VnR0ukaS62TT55L5s1J8Q/edit)
* Insurance projections to be updated based on VEHI’s latest communication
* Budget informational meeting for Windham for upcoming vote 11/2
* Continued work on numerous grants - spent time researching additional grant opportunities
* Develop a staffing plan for long-term absence
* Business office team attending professional development on Weds 11/3- “Better Conversations Everyday”[Better Conversations](https://www.ccl.org/leadership-programs/better-conversations-every-day-coaching-culture/)
* WCSU board meeting- Budget 1st look.

*Director of Operations*

HVAC Grant Program:

* Have not heard anything from Efficiency Vermont about the second round of Air Quality grants. Unfortunately there is still no firm date from the state on the release of this program, the repairs that can be covered or the amount of money a district can qualify for.
* I have signed all the schools up to be tested for PCBs through the state's new air testing program.

**Testimony for Nov 3rd - Pupil Weighting Study Task Force**

Under Act 68, a district with an education spending amount per equalized pupil (less approved construction costs and other specific exclusions) greater than the excess spending threshold incurs an additional tax for the amount over the threshold. The threshold amount is calculated annually using statewide data from the prior fiscal year, multiplied by a given percentage. ([16 V.S.A. § 4001](http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/16/133/04001))

Currently the Excess Spending Threshold only affects a handful of districts. I would expect more districts will be required to pay the penalty due to Act 173 implementation and the rising costs of student needs.

**William Anton, Windham Central Supervisory Union Superintendent**

* Beginning 6th year as Superintendent
* Serving the Towns of Brookline, Dover, Jamaica, Marlboro, Newfane, Townshend, Wardsboro, and Windham.
* Serving the School Districts of River Valleys (Dover Elem & Wardsboro Elem), West River (Jamaica Elem, NewBrook Elem, Townshend Elem, and Leland & Gray MHS), Marlboro (single district Elem), Windham (single district Elem), and Stratton (Prek-12 Non-Operating)

Experience with Excess Spending Threshold (EST)

* Acts as a penalty for budgeting to serve the needs of the students that currently exist within the system if that budgeting exceeds the EST
* School Boards are put in a challenging position during the budgeting process as a budget is built to serve students and follow the Educational Quality Standards (EQS); The [Education Quality Standards](http://education.vermont.gov/documents/state-board-rules-series-2000), or EQS, **describe what a high-quality education should look like for students attending Vermont’s public schools.** The Rules are an update to 1997’s School Quality Standards, and were approved by the Vermont State Board of Education in 2013, going into effect on April 5, 2014.
* What routinely happens during the budgeting process is a budget is developed to meet EQS, but as the budget goes through the filter of the count of Equalized Pupils, factors in annual cost increases (materials, salaries, health care, etc.), and then applies the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA), the cost per pupil exceeds the EST and boards are put in a position to reduce investment in the budget to avoid the double taxation penalty of the EST.
  + Consequences of this process:
    - EQS is not budgeted for and annually those decisions are cumulative.
    - When you reduce investment in building maintenance it causes bigger future physical plant challenges.
    - When you reduce investment in nursing, counseling, academic support, and social work then students' needs are not met at the level they could be, yet the needs do not evaporate.
  + Particular timely challenges
    - With the deployment of ACT 173 block grant for Special Education, districts in my Supervisory Union will need to **contribute an additional $600,000 in local money** while **student needs continue to increase**, thus the need for additional resources. I assume this is the case (more local money must be raised) in a majority of SU/SD’s in the state.
    - ESSER Federal funding will assist in providing one-time resources to address the Pandemic created additional student need. However, this one time funding will go away creating a funding cliff, but the ongoing student needs will not.
    - With the implementation of the recalibrated weights, many more districts that have not faced the EST, will be challenged with budgeting to deliver EQS without exceeding the EST.

**Recommendation:** Discontinue the EST and support school districts in budget

development and EQS delivery.

**Considerations:** Increase AOE staff to support school districts

* Provide EQS audits with recommendations about how to meet EQS in an alternative manner which school district boards can consider.
* Create an AOE Teacher and Principal fellowship program that allows mid-career education professionals to work for the AOE for a specific time period (2 years, for example) to assist districts in meeting EQS in a cost efficient manner. This also systematically increases the practitioners voice in AOE decisions.
  + \*Would require legislative action to fund\*