

GREEN MOUNTAIN IMPERATIVE

A Breakthrough Summit on Public Education



#GMImpervative Summit Report

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“While no one can predict what advances the next twenty years will bring, we do know that Vermont will not have a workforce capable of meeting the challenges presented by those advances unless we have effective, adaptable education systems that maximize opportunities for each and every Vermont citizen.”

- Vermont Business Roundtable

The Green Mountain Imperative Summit was an awakening, an eye-opening awareness of the challenges facing Vermont public education, combined with an urgent call for bold leadership and even bolder innovations in equity, efficiency, and systems capacity.

This Summit Report captures key inputs and outputs to this breakthrough event: what happened, who was involved, and recommendations for follow-through. Building on the daunting Agency of Education (AoE) data shared, the summit generated an “acceptance of truths” for where we’re starting and where we need to go, sparking powerful conversations that kept 200 of Vermont’s best public education thinkers engaged for two full days in Burlington, Vermont, November 17-18, 2014. Poised for change, participants parted ways with an expanded perspective and sphere of influence, affirmation of the many exemplars effectively addressing these challenges [outside of the legislative process], and an awareness of the many dangerously left behind. With dialogue and deliberation, concrete recommendations for follow-through emerged, with bold leaders to help carry the torch in streamlining structures, clarifying lines of authority, and increasing local involvement and voice.

“There is no more money. No one is coming. We are it. And our children deserve all we’ve got.”

Acknowledgements

The Green Mountain Imperative was made possible by the generous resources, time, ideation, and commitment of many. We wish to acknowledge the following key contributors:

Funders

Building Bright Futures

Let’s Grow Kids

J. Warren and Lois McClure Foundation, *a supporting organization of the Vermont Community Foundation*

Nellie Mae Education Foundation Inc.

The Permanent Fund for Vermont’s Children

Ernest A. Pomerleau

Richard E. and Deborah L. Tarrant Foundation & The Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education at UVM

Vermont Business Roundtable

Vermont Community Foundation

Partners

Summit Partners served as the guardians of the planning process, the backbone of summit decision-making and overall governance. They included the following:

Julie Coffey, *Building Bright Futures*

Stuart Comstock-Gay, *Vermont Community Foundation*

Steve Dale, *Vermont School Boards Association*

Jeff Francis, *Vermont Superintendents Association*

Scott Giles, *Vermont Student Assistance Corporation*

Rebecca Holcombe, *Secretary of Education*

Stephan Morse, *State Board of Education*

Shap Smith, *Speaker of the House*

Lisa Ventriss, *Vermont Business Roundtable*

**“People are hungry
for change. The need
is there.”**

Teacher,
Burlington High School

Core Planning Team

The Core Planning Team is a working advisory whose job was to shepherd the summit planning process in partnership with the facilitators. This team met in person every three weeks, September through November 2014, to articulate the summit focus, brainstorm and engage key stakeholders, design the summit agenda and activities, and ready various communications outreach and design logistics. To the greatest extent possible, team composition was representative of the larger summit population, a demographic as well as functional mix of persons impacted by (and capable of impacting) summit outcomes.

The following persons made up the Green Mountain Imperative Core Planning Team: Sherra Bourget, Lauren Curry, Jim Doyle, Lindsay DesLauriers, Val Gardner, Willem Jewett, Emily Long, Nicole Mace, Beth O’Brien, Mark Redmond, Jill Remick, Aly Richards, Mary Schwartz, Laura Soares, Jackie Wilson, and Jeff Wilson.

Jen Hetzel Silbert and Tony Silbert of Spartina Consulting led summit planning and facilitation, and Tim Volk coordinated summit communications and media relations. Image Farm provided graphic facilitation support, and Karen Pike Photography, as well as Hilary Niles of the Vermont Digger, provided photography support. Special thanks to Champlain College faculty, William Hancy and Lynne Ballard, who volunteered their time to support the summit as well.

Summit Participants

Summit participants were identified by the Core Planning Team and included a diverse representation of public education stakeholder groups, from students, to educators, administrators, parents/guardians, legislative/policy, union management, early childhood, post-secondary/higher education, local and state government, sponsors, and business employers.

The following graphics capture the broad representation of voice and geography in attendance at the summit:

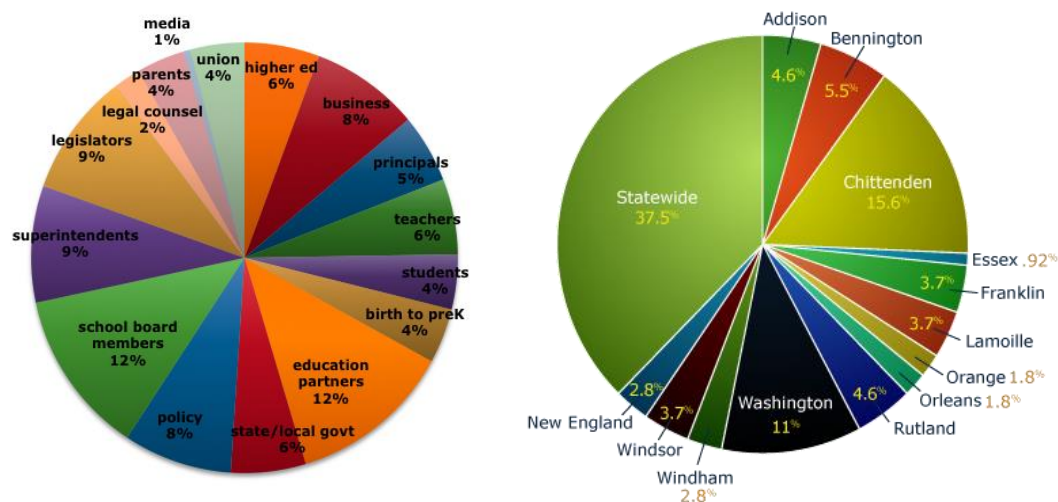


Figure 1 Diverse Summit Participation

Background

History

"Our education system, from pre-kindergarten to higher education, is the state's greatest economic development tool."

Governor Peter Shumlin

As the Vermont Business Roundtable pointed out in its "2010 Pulse of Vermont: Quality of Life" report, our society is increasingly comprised of two Vermonts: the educated and the under-educated. This division has been exacerbated by the lingering effects of structural economic changes brought about by the Greatest Recession of 2007. Those with higher levels of educational attainment have greater economic opportunities; those without, don't. Yet despite an understanding that "education equals opportunity", Vermont continues to demonstrate complacency with the fact that certain segments of our population will forever be challenged to elevate their standard of living for themselves and their families, and will not be able to fully contribute to building a vibrant economy or stronger democracy.

Having said that, a recent series of high-profile events have unfolded that led us to believe that Vermont may be finally ready to make significant change regarding our education system. These included:

- The failure of 37 school budgets in 2014, with the forecast of even more in the upcoming year;
- In August 2014 Vermont school and municipal leaders convened to raise awareness around critical issues pertaining to property taxes and the rising costs of education;
- H883: Education Governance bill to consolidate school districts passed the House and failed in the Senate, and received unprecedented support from the education and business communities;

- In 2014, the No Child Left Behind Act reported that Vermont's schools are "underachieving"; and,
- In August 2014, Governor Peter Shumlin laid out a set of initiatives and requested that Secretary Rebecca Holcombe and the Agency of Education (AoE) pursue on his behalf to advance progress in education reform.

The individuals involved in the development of the Green Mountain Imperative Summit are experienced, effective, politically sophisticated, and highly credible leaders of their spheres of influence; all of whom have become intolerant of the lack of action toward meaningful educational transformation in Vermont. We have worked closely before, hand in hand, to identify, develop and champion reform initiatives. And while we've enjoyed incremental successes along the way, it became apparent that the rate of system-wide change must be accelerated if we are to make substantive improvement in educating all of Vermont's children.

"The distribution of a resource as precious as educational opportunity may not have as its determining force the mere fortuity of a child's residence."

Brigham v. State of Vermont

Purpose

We have an obligation to provide Vermont's children with the quality of educational experiences that will prepare them to be successful in life. Today Vermont's educational quality varies greatly and our fiscal capacity is strained.

We must be resolved in our efforts toward three imperatives:

1. **Equity** in opportunity;
2. **Efficiency** in delivery; and
3. **Systems capacity** in preserving public education as a public good.

Vermont's small size presents us with a tremendous opportunity to have among the finest public education systems in the world – one that responds to the unique needs and interests of every child, and at a cost Vermont taxpayers can afford.

We believe every child matters. We also believe that learning starts early and happens everywhere, and that every child learns differently. ***Our collective charge is to find new and better ways to design and deliver Vermont's public education in a manner that is collaborative across sectors and that benefits our children, our economy, and our global society.***

Three requests were asked of each participant:

1. First, their attendance, such that the significant outreach and planning would afford the summit diverse stakeholder participation.
2. Second, participant commitment to the full two days, such that the design could ensure that each activity built on and fed directly into the next in a manner that was highly participatory and interactive.
3. Third, participant willingness to set aside preconceptions and organizational positions, to collaboratively create real solutions to real problems – the readiness to be both congenial and collegial to spark meaningful change that keeps our children's interests, not our own, in the center of the policy discussion.

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A Breakthrough Summit on Public Education

In this vein, every summit participant was required to read and sign the Green Mountain Imperative “Participant Pledge,” which read as follows:

Participant Pledge

As a member of the broader community participating in the Green Mountain Imperative Summit, I commit to the goal of providing a high quality education for every Vermont student. I similarly commit to assuring the best use of monetary and personnel resources in that system.

As an individual participant in the Green Mountain Imperative Summit, I pledge to cooperate and collaborate in this critical effort to achieve high quality educational opportunity for every Vermont student. I pledge to work toward the goal of creating a more efficient system that responds with efficacy to the collective interests of the children being educated, the taxpayers providing the resources supporting the system, and the communities in which they reside. I also pledge to participate in a manner that is honest and respectful of differing perspectives, that is open to learning, builds on strengths, and seeks solutions in service of the collective good.

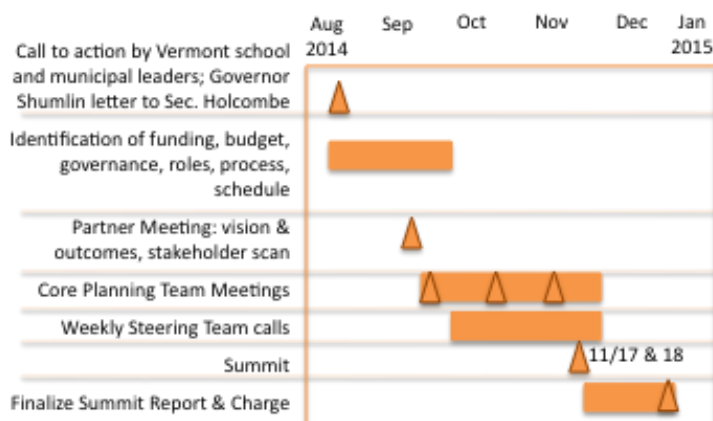
In that spirit, I hereby pledge to bring my best intentions, my best thinking and a true commitment to achieving a breakthrough for Vermont's public education system to this work.

“Providing every student with a path to academic success requires a revolution in what we do.”

Jeffrey Benson

There is no silver bullet to improving our education system. This summit represented a critical commencement; an essential starting point to shift how we think about and positively influence the future of education in Vermont. Participants were encouraged to bring their ideas and best thinking to the summit, but more importantly to commit their leadership after the summit in transforming the future of education in Vermont.

Planning & Process



“Culture does eat Strategy for breakfast, and the young people we are planning for have an expanded view of their culture - a much larger view of their sphere of influence than their parents/guardians. We can do this.”

Not Your Ordinary Summit

This was no ordinary conference or workshop.

Unlike typical conferences of information sharing via talking heads and panels, this summit was highly interactive by design, engaging 200 people from across the state using a strength-based, solution-focused, and participatory approach to planning and change known as Appreciative Inquiry (or AI).

Appreciative Inquiry is based on two deceptively simple concepts:

(1) What we look for, we find; and what we pay attention to grows. The more affirmative (solution-seeking) the conversations, the more positive and sustainable the follow-through and action.

(2) People commit to what they help to create. The more involved people are in planning the changes needed, the more committed they will be in seeing them through to success.

Traditional large-scale approaches to planning and change begin with a “SWOT” analysis, an examination of internal Strengths and Weaknesses, as well as external Opportunities and Threats. By exploring the weaknesses and threats, however, people often spend more time examining the past (and what's broken) versus looking forward. This narrows the focus around what isn't desired, carrying little momentum to inspire innovative ideas around desired recommendations for future change.

We instead employed an Appreciative Inquiry “SOAR” analysis, an environmental scan around key Strengths and Opportunities (similar to SWOT), but with an intentional focus on Aspirations and Results – outcomes most desired that propel strategic visions forward for follow-through and action.

Three Summit Imperatives

To remain resolved in our aim to address the three imperatives of equity, efficiency, and systems capacity, the following communiqué was issued to summit participants in November 2014 from Rebecca Holcombe, Vermont Secretary of Education:

In my role as the Secretary of Education for the State of Vermont, I ask you to join me in the call to action currently underway in our education system. While much of the discourse regarding our education system is focused on how funds are raised through the statewide property tax, we want to explore how those funds are spent through the lens of equity and opportunity for our students and our state.

You have been asked to participate in a statewide breakthrough summit on public education called the Green Mountain Imperative. This group of individuals is heavily invested in Vermont education. Along with the Vermont Business Roundtable, Building Bright Futures, the Vermont School Boards Association, Vermont Superintendents Association, Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, the State Board of Education and Speaker of the House Shap Smith, I implore all Vermonters to take a critical look at our current system to



Figure 2 Photo by Vermont Digger,
<http://vtdigger.org/2014/11/17/education-summit-seeks-common-ground/>



Figure 3 Secretary of Education,
Rebecca Holcombe

“A diverse body of people in VT now understand the issues facing education and are invested in doing something about them.”

“There must be input from our local communities. A top down approach will not work. Vermonters are demanding change; they must be part of designing the solution.”

see how we can ensure quality at a price we can all afford.

The summit is designed to engage Vermonters from all aspects of the system to explore innovative solutions aimed at three key imperatives: Equity, Efficiency and Systems Capacity.

Specifically, identifying:

The educational opportunities to which we want every child to access;

How Vermont’s public education system is currently serving the children and taxpayers of Vermont;

How to improve our systems to deliver educational opportunities in the most Equitable and affordable way; and

How to harness the commitment of our communities to better serve all Vermont’s children.

To fully understand the reality of the situation we currently find ourselves in, I suggest you view the [Situational Analysis](#) by the Vermont School Boards Association. I joined meetings with school board members across the state, adding my analysis of the current situation we are in. The facts seem grim: our student enrollment continues to decline, and our education spending continues to increase. In districts experiencing declining enrollments, each March voters are faced with the challenge of either cutting spending or seeing tax rates go up. School boards spend their time discussing what programs to trim, not how to improve outcomes for students.

We are delivering a 21st century education in a system designed for an agrarian society over 100 years old. Therefore, I ask: If we were to design an education delivery system from scratch, would we design it this way?

What opportunities are there for us to re-task the resources we have to ensure we can afford the high quality education our students deserve?

What elements of our current system are working well and must be protected? What are we all willing to put on the discussion table for the future of our students?

As a state and across communities, we need to work together to create school systems in all regions that are able to provide equitable services, address quality, and is one that taxpayers can support.

During this summit, we will work together following a strengths-based, solution-seeking approach to change known as Appreciative Inquiry. Through that lens, we will examine what we want to preserve, what we want to consider that is innovative and necessary, and how we get from where we are to where we want to be, in a manner that is in service to the collective good.

As members of the interested public here in Vermont, you are aware of the usual rhetoric and immobility that can often hinder change. Therefore, all invited participants to the summit must sign a pledge to commit to the goal of providing a high-quality education for every Vermont student, using the best monetary and personnel resources in that system. They must pledge to cooperate and collaborate, in respect of different perspectives and building on strengths, and to commit to achieving a breakthrough in public education.

Following the summit, a report and recommendations will be shared publicly. We hope it will inform lawmakers, school boards, educators, administrators, parents, voters, businesses and all Vermonters, and will provide us a pathway

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forward to the goal: keeping the promise to Vermont's children, in an efficient and effective system, in a manner that is sustainable and supported by us all.

Thank you for your work on this critical endeavor.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Holcombe

Secretary of Education



Figure 5 Governor Peter Shumlin

The Breakthrough Summit

Day One, November 17th

Day One kicked off with a call to action by Governor Peter Shumlin, who acknowledged the participants' urgent need to make incredibly difficult choices over the next two days. The summit was not a forum to simply "freeze this" or "spend more on that". There is no single silver bullet to resolve the complexities and challenges facing Vermont public education; if one did exist it would have been fired by now. The Green Mountain Imperative summit invited some of the most brilliant people in Vermont to come up with the shotgun pellets and go – to get to work on them – and with urgency.

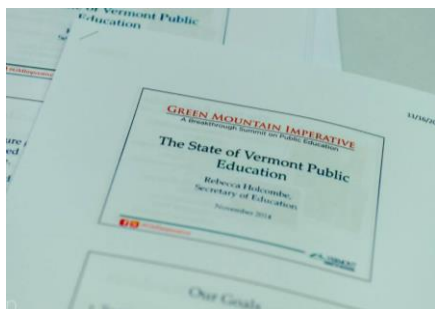
The Governor acknowledged quality as our single greatest goal. Vermont test scores aren't bad, but we can do better. Our greatest failure is that with all the money we've spent on quality, and all the efforts aimed at equity and efficiency, we haven't moved the needle in progressing more lower income students beyond high school. And almost without exception, a person lacking some degree of training beyond high school is guaranteed to struggle for sustainable income –not a great promise for prosperity.

If the summit debate becomes how to find more money, we'll be on the wrong track, noted the Governor. This is not a summit about raising taxes, which are already too high. There's not another pocket to grab from. So what smart CHOICES—really hard DECISIONS—can we make to help us to REDESIGN OUR SYSTEM?

After viewing the "2014 Situational Analysis" video prepared by the Vermont School Board Association (VSBA) and Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA), participants listened to Education Secretary, Rebecca Holcombe, present "The State of Vermont Public Education" – a compelling review of data to articulate the current challenges facing Vermont public education, and the choices summit participants need make to advance the three imperatives of equity, efficiency, and systems capacity.

Our goals, as outlined by the Secretary:

1. To ensure all children develop the skills they need to thrive in both their career and civic life.
2. To provide this education in the most effective, efficient and accountable way.
3. To reduce inequity of outcomes across the state



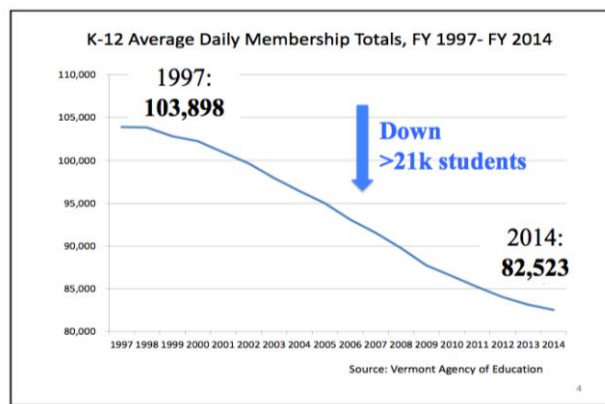
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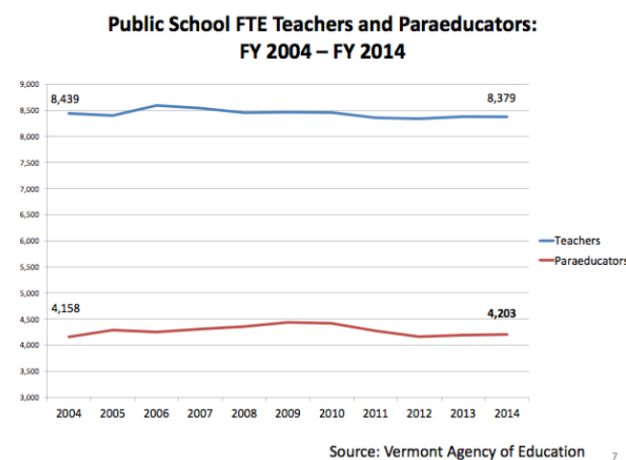


Our challenge, then, is to ensure that our **system** delivers this in an **equitable** and **affordable** way.

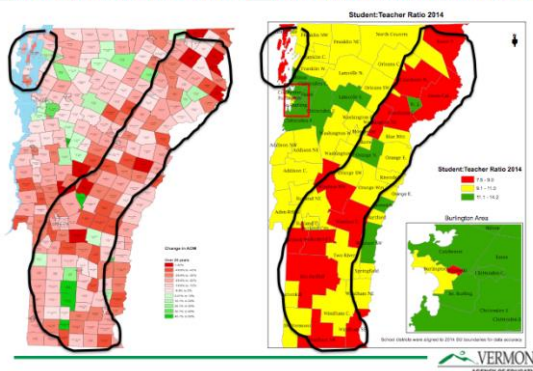
Fact: Vermont student enrollment is declining, down over 21,000 students since 1997.



Meanwhile, our number of teachers and paraeducators has not declined.



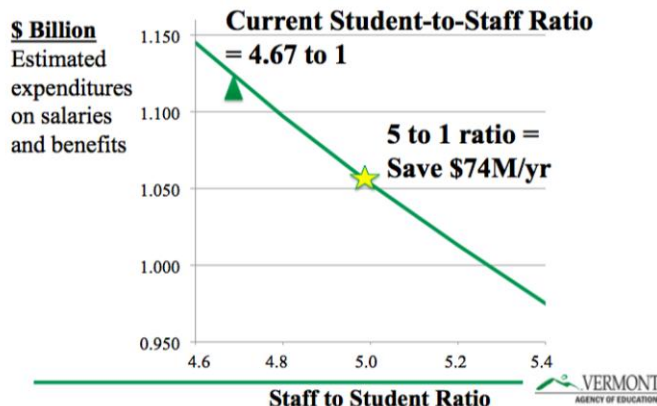
Student DECLINE >50% Student-to-Teacher Ratio 7.5-9.0



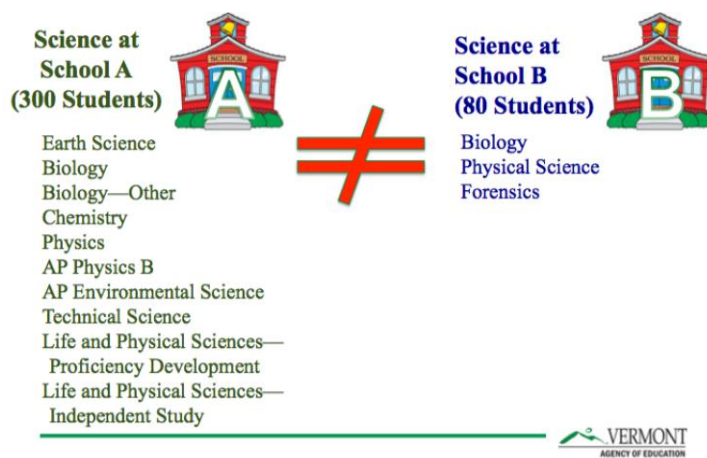
Our student-to-staff ratio is expensive, and every decimal counts. An increase to our current 4.67:1 student-to-staff ratio to 5:1, for example, would reap over \$74 Million cost savings per year in estimated salary/benefit expenditures.

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More than making public education affordable to Vermont taxpayers, we need to make it more equitable in pursuit of quality learning. Scale affects the breadth of opportunities we can provide our youth onsite for the same per pupil expenditure. Compare the science classes available at School A and School B, below:



Further, consider the possibility of a student at School B not liking his/her science teacher, and the impact of that relationship to the student's exposure to [let alone interest in] science for the rest of his/her life.

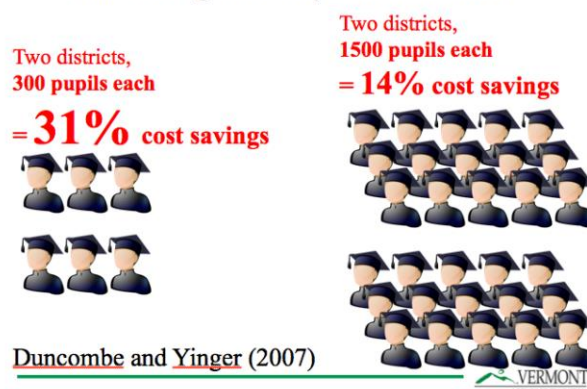
Call it consolidation, call it unification, call it merging; partnerships between small districts can yield substantial improvements to quality and equity, while generating significant cost savings, particularly for very small districts.

The following graphic illustrates how two NY districts (300 pupils each) merged for a 31% cost savings, whereas two districts five times this size (1500 pupils each) netted a 14% cost savings.

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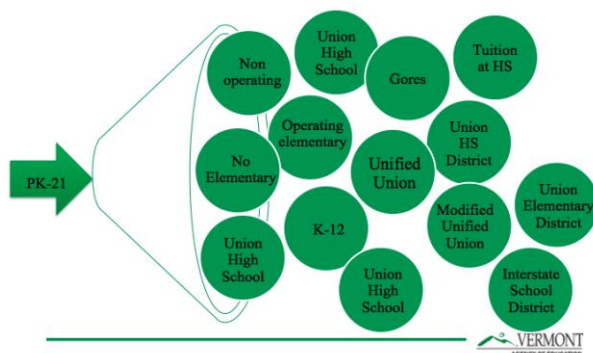
A Breakthrough Summit on Public Education

NY experience: merging can yield substantial cost savings for very small districts

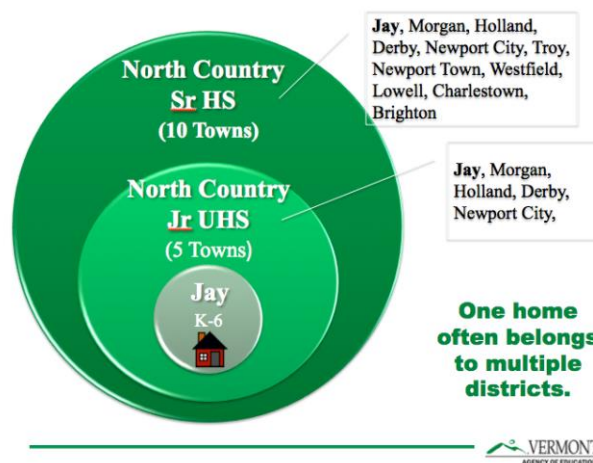


In closing, the Secretary painted a daunting picture of Vermont's complexity with regard to school governance, for which we currently have thirteen forms, pre-K to age 21.

13 Current Forms of School Governance



Governance this complex means that a single home often belongs to multiple school districts, which presents a host of challenges to local decision-making and governance.



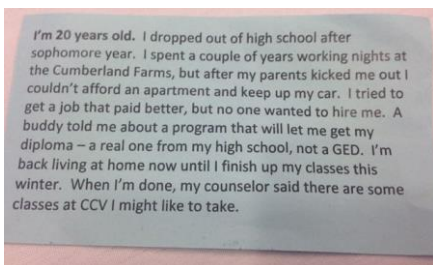


Figure 6 Sample Learner Profile

“Montgomery has exemplary results with relatively low cost - in spite of very high poverty rate. Let's distill and replicate what is working there.”



The AoE data was familiar to some, alarming to all. For most, this was a first-time awakening to the complexity and gravity of the current state, an agreement of truths that were daunting, real, and unacceptable.

Summit participants, now all armed with the Secretary's data, as well as an assigned "Learner Profile" describing a nameless Vermont learner and the complex challenges he/she faces daily, engaged in table group discussions to reflect on the information shared. Their charge: to capture key messages, insights, and opportunities to enhance equity, efficiency, and systems capacity in a manner that not only represents their individual voice/organization, but also that of their assigned "Learner Profile".

Participants were also moved by a Leadership for Education panel featuring local superintendents and school district leaders' perspectives on local needs and aspirations for success. Panelists were moderated by Jeff Francis, Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents Association, and included the following: Beth O'Brien, Principal - Montgomery Elementary School; Peter Burrows, Superintendent - Addison Central Supervisory Union; Emily Long, Chair, Windham Central Supervisory Union.

SOAR Analysis

To prime the pump for breakthrough thinking, participants brainstormed key Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations & Results (SOAR) for advancing the three imperative areas of equity, efficiency, and systems capacity. Tensions remained high as discussions continued among diversely mixed table groups, building on the Secretary's eye-opening presentation of data. However rather than pointing fingers participants built on possibilities, brainstorming solutions compelled by an urgent call for local and systemic change.

Stephen Dale, Executive Director of the Vermont School Board Association (VSBA), presented ideas for consideration from various regional VSBA meetings, solutions to further "prime the pump" in visioning the desired future, aspirations and results.

The buzz in the room escalated as table groups engaged in an unexpected, unprecedented summit twist, each presenting a "creative vision" for change. The future vision presentations were energetic and fun, but more importantly they were bold and provocative, yet grounded by the current reality of AoE data. Maintaining the status quo was no longer an option; courageous leadership and action toward meaningful educational transformation in Vermont was officially in demand, and now more urgent than ever. Among the key themes shared by participants were the following:

- Simplifying governance
- Community involvement (local engagement v. local control)
- Flexible pathways
- Student-centered learning
- Financial sustainability
- Birth to 6yrs and Birth to 20yrs continuum mindset
- Scale/Right-sizing
- Leadership sustainability



“I was already fairly well acquainted with the issues before the summit, and it was powerful discussing these challenges with so many different perspectives than my own.”

- Proficiency-based outcomes
- Statewide efficiencies and quality drivers

Day Two, November 18th

Another summit high point occurred at the launch of Day Two, beginning with a student panel, moderated by Lauren Curry, Executive Director of the Richard E. and Deborah L. Tarrant Foundation. Among the reflections the dozen or so young adults shared:

- Increased cohesion will be an inevitable summit outcome, made possible by (A) a new shared awareness of the data and urgency for change and (B) a stronger sense of unity and inclusion, having been invited to the table.
- Students yearn for the time needed to reflect and learn, to process insights; give them this time and encourage it in and out of the classroom.
- Students shared their “shock and awe” of Vermont’s cost challenge – data not previously available to them, yet essential for them to understand in order to be active advocates for change (not just as students, but as soon-to-be voting residents and community leaders).
- The more aware students and communities are of the data, the more compelled they will be to vote smarter and champion local and statewide change efforts; let student voice help facilitate this awareness campaign.
- Numerous students gave shout-outs to various teachers going above and beyond to be the change Vermont needs to see in public education.

Lauren Curry closed the student panel by encouraging participants to invite more students to their organizations and places of work, affording more young adults opportunities to contribute, while strengthening the very relationships that bridge education to local economic development.

A teacher panel followed, which included Chris Hood of Champlain Valley Union High School, Phoebe Guevin of Rutland’s Northwest Primary School, and Will Andrews of the Winooski Middle and High School iLab. Many stories were shared regarding student capacity to break the cycle of poverty, as well as the importance of making the community the classroom in ways that keep students in school and young adults committed to and employable in the Vermont economy.

Building on the cumulative activities and insights of the many summit activities, participants identified and organized into table groups to discuss “Breakthrough Innovations” with recommendations for post-summit follow-through and action. The following six topics were identified for deep dialogue on goals/desired outcomes and recommended action steps:

1. Student-Centered Learning/Equity
2. New Accountability and Metrics
3. Simplified Governance





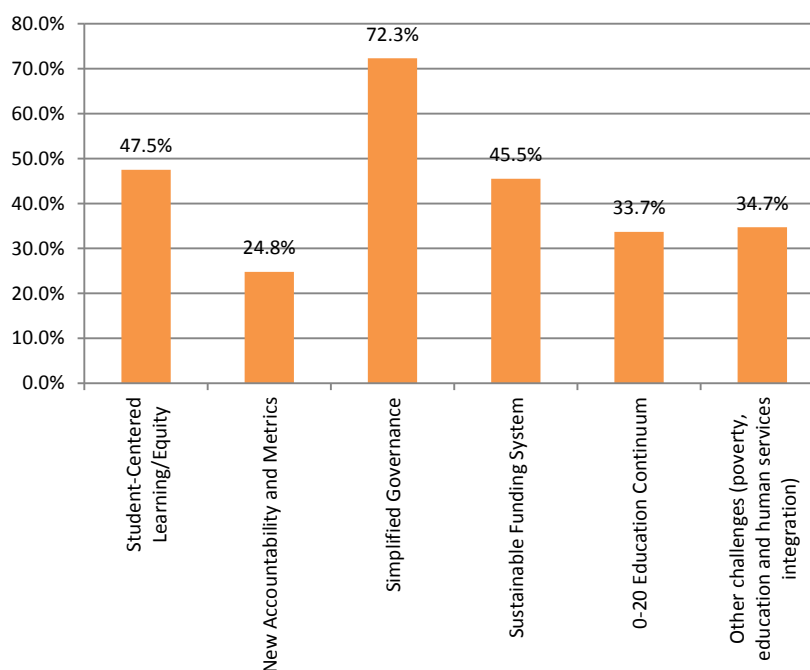
"I have never been in a room so diverse and yet focused in my 31-year career: public education."



4. Sustainable Funding System
5. 0-20 Education Continuum
6. Other Challenges (poverty, education and human services integration)

A thorough capture of these Breakthrough Innovation recommendations and post-summit action steps are provided in the Appendix of this report. Among the most popular areas of focus were Simplified Governance (72.3%), Student-Centered Learning/Equity (47.5%), and Sustainable Funding System (45.5%).

What proposed breakthroughs do you think have the greatest potential to positively transform VT public education?



The Green Mountain Imperative Summit was a "mind-expanding" commencement, an awakening, an urgent call for bold leadership and even bolder advances in equity, efficiency, and systems capacity. Among the key takeaways were:

- Grounded awareness of the stark reality surrounding AoE data, an agreement and "acceptance of truths" for where we're starting and where we need to go
- Powerful conversations that kept 200 of Vermont's best thinkers engaged for two full days and poised for change, now with an expanded perspective and sphere of influence
- Affirmation of the many exemplars already addressing these challenges effectively [outside of the legislative process], as well as an awareness of the many being left behind
- Concrete recommendations for follow-through with emerging leaders to help carry the torch, particularly with regard to streamlined

structures, clearer lines of authority, and increased voice – local involvement v. local control.

Next Steps & Recommendations

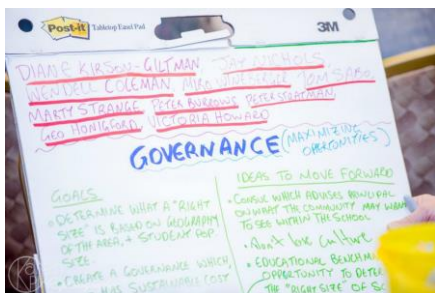
Much work is still needed to make the Breakthrough Innovations a reality and to harness the energy and inspired commitment that began at the summit. Below are a few critical next steps to sustain and even grow the momentum:

1. **GMImpervative Governance:** Transition key Partners and Core Planning Team members to establish a GMImpervative governance structure to meet on a quarterly (maybe monthly initially) basis to serve as a convening body for post-summit accountability, working group counsel, communications, and follow-through. This body could also serve as the convener for future, topic-specific GMImpervative gatherings designed to inform legislation, policy, and various summit innovations – consistent with the solutions and proposals provided by the working groups.

In addition, establish (and/or build upon the existing) Core Team leadership to designate the following post-summit leadership teams:

- a. **GMImpervative Communications** – Establish a team to build the post-summit GMImpervative narrative and broaden statewide awareness and interest in the data, building on the momentum already begun. Establish a post-summit communications strategy and delegate key roles for sharing updates via email, web, social media, and press. Some recommendations for consideration:
 - **Web** - Create a GMImpervative.info website for publishing summit materials and outputs, as well as photos, graphic artistry, reports, and links to press/articles of interest.
 - **Video** - Create a short TED-like talk (10-15 min) video of Rebecca Holcombe's "State of Education" presentation; promote via web and social media to every school district.
- b. **GMImpervative Student Voice** – Create a student advisory team to engage student council leadership across the state and host student-led community conversations
- c. **GMImpervative Teacher Voice** - Create a teacher advisory team to engage educators across the state and host teacher-led community conversations.
- d. **GMImpervative Policy** – Create a policy advisory team to engage legislators and advance the work of the summit and post-summit working groups.

2. **Establish Working Groups** for the six innovation breakthroughs explored at the summit; identify and engage a minimum of two (2) Co-Leads per working group. These working groups would serve as the basis for turning recommendations into action. These working groups could be supported by former Core Planning Team members, other leaders that emerged at



"I will be talking about my impressions from this summit every chance I get. I will be advocating a THOUGHTFUL, ANALYTICAL mindset as we move forward and stressing that schools cannot solve all of society's ills on their own."



"I made connections with leaders of several key organizations and have already pursued follow-up conversations. I will be hosting listening sessions with the leaders and SU boards in my district. We MUST continue to build on the movement that this summit has begun."

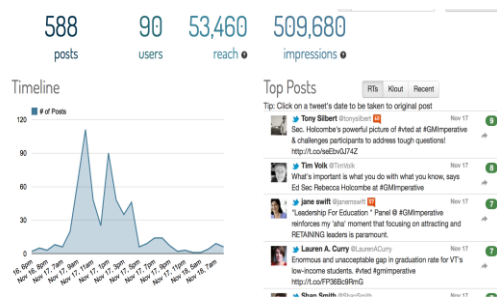


Figure 7 #GMImpertive Twitter Activity, 11/17-18

the summit, and could include other experts in that innovation breakthrough area.

Next steps would include: Setting up a launch session for each of the working groups (either all together or separately scheduled sessions). Create a shared working group calendar for hosting meetings in person, via Google Hangout, conference calls, etc., as well as agreed upon terms for communication, collaboration, transparency, and accountability to the GMImpertive governance body. **NOTE: This should include teacher and student representatives as team members and/or team leads.**

3. **Local Involvement & Engagement:** Create more opportunities for local community conversations statewide in ways that elevate awareness of the "State of VT Public Education" data and shift how key stakeholders think and talk about public education solutions in response to the three imperatives and urgency for change – local and systemic. Additionally, these sessions could be focused on developing locally-owned solutions in response to the three imperative areas: equity, efficiency, and systems capacity. Create multiple mediums to continue the conversation and further broaden awareness and engagement. Some recommendations for consideration:
 - a. **Live Forums** – host smaller-scale, local GMImpertive town hall-like events to (A) create a compelling case for change by sharing AoE data, and (B) invite solution-focused conversation, building on the breakthrough recommendations proposed at the summit, now with a focus on local awareness and involvement. Establish a statewide GMImpertive calendar publishing when/where various community conversations are taking place and invite working group members to attend as listeners, further building on the breakthrough recommendations proposed at the summit, while informing working group action steps.
 - b. **Social Media** - Establish a group to curate weekly or monthly one-hour #GMImpertive chats, building on the #VTed network. Establish weekly topic schedules, consistent with topics addressed at the summit, and publish chat summaries on the web via Storify.

APPENDIX

Summit Outputs: Breakthrough Innovations

Building on the cumulative activities and insights of the previous day, participants were invited to identify “Breakthrough Innovations” with recommendations for post-summit follow-through and action. The following six topics were identified and organized into table group breakouts for deep dialogue on goals/desired outcomes and recommended action steps for each:

1. Student-Centered Learning/Equity
2. New Accountability and Metrics
3. Simplified Governance
4. Sustainable Funding System
5. 0-20 Education Continuum
6. Other Challenges (poverty, education and human services integration)

I. Student-Centered Learning

Goals:

- More opportunities for proficiency-based, personalized learning (starting in Kindergarten)
- Shift responsibility of learning from teacher to student, as shared system where students are drivers of system
- Increased student engagement
- Teachers/workforce representative of student backgrounds and rich culture in communities
- Clear academic and behavioral expectations; more education on social-emotional learning to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning styles, to challenge in ways that foster learning
- All students understand, act upon, and influence own education and the system that delivers it.
- Connect students and teachers to information and empower them to share it
- Teacher as facilitator; students co-creators; multiple feedback loops
- Choice in how to learn and demonstrate learning in and out of school

Recommendations:

- Dialogue on the Why of Act 77, allow culture shift to be named at a system level (e.g. "Shaping Our Future Together"). Facilitate implementation of Act 77 with students at the design table, EQS; scale up pilots, support teachers
- Make students and teachers more of a team; students can be advisors, as well as teachers/mentors to lower classes (Already happening with support of NMEF and Agency: students and teachers are co creating materials). Professional development with students and teachers
- Establish common language
- Create more opportunities for parent and student body leadership and voice
- Increase partnerships, need community-wide support and culture shift to enable 24-7 learning. More involvement is key. Exemplars: Partnership for Change, i-Lab, YATIST, Gov Institute, Walden, Big Picture Learning
- Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) - share information around how can fit into normal school day or year; how integrate into every class? To ensure consistency, teach PLPs early so are prepared to advocate for self well before high school. More project/portfolio-based learning.
- Formalize system of collaboration between students, school boards, and superintendents. Youth-driven responsibility and voice in decision-making process (e.g. ask students to lead assemblies). Create a student "clearinghouse" – student leadership in soliciting and coalescing ideas for change, shift culture
- Culture Shift led by and for students: "spread the 'love'" – "school is cool" culture sparked by student voice; develop ways to embrace diversity (culture, ethnicity, socio-economic, interested/disinterested) and develop process to explore – opportunities to find student purpose and interest

II. New Accountability and Metrics

Goals:

- Focus on multi-faceted accountability system that focuses on student engagement and learning, student-centered learning outcomes [that prepare students for life]
- Measure opportunities to learn – progress, not time/end date. Broader measures include pre/post tests, student survey, performance tasks/CCSS. Measure student strengths/proficiency, writing; not a "school" measurement but "student" measurement
- To ensure equity, must be able to collect and report data at a high enough level and disaggregate (eg FRL, gender, race, etc.)
- Formative/Continuous Improvement process for kids and for schools; demonstrate and communicate the positive to communities, e.g. successes (what's working), strategies and results
- Collect and report data at high enough level, links to governance and systems groups; must be able to disaggregate data
- Create state level structure to support adoption of system in all schools
- Leverage existing resources: Global Best Practices, SBE Accountability, Project Zero

- Formative: measures growth and progress
- Communication: need means to communicate the WHY and WHAT, successes across the system
- Indicators: at student, classroom, building, S.U. levels, equity level
- Consistency: Need all schools using same assessment; local involvement v local control
- Note: must be careful in defining/communicating what mean by “accountability”

Recommendations:

- Examine the Balanced Accountability Model: understand and communicate, get input into components, look at other models (eg Global Best Practices)
- Restructure and empower AOE and supports to facilitate participation and adoption in all schools
- Encourage student-centered learning/community conversations to promote local involvement in understanding and measuring accountability; want a systems approach "just like college applications"
- Participants who can help: Madeline Ganey, Bud Mejers, Samuel Boudreau, Sarah Buxton, Rebecca Holcombe, Karen Heath, Jill Remick, Holly Moorehouse, Steve Abbott, Brian Boyes, Harry Frank, Sean-Marie Oller, David Schoales

III. Simplified Governance

Goals:

- Streamlining governance that will ensure sustainable, quality LEADERSHIP, guarantee cohesion across schools to ensure EQUITY of student opportunity, and lead to FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY of the system
- Stabilize leadership; attract great leaders, continuity
- Top-down doesn't work, but community engagement does; right-sizing best done from bottom-up (mandates don't work but involvement does)
- Educate communities using a consistent vocabulary; engage and educate voters (governance v. operations, school improvement council)
- H.883 like model - self imposed consolidation, educational benchmarks determine the “right size” of schools (based on geography, student population/size)
- School improvement councils in relationship to parent-teacher councils
- Training for board members, leadership, with clear roles and responsibilities (board, PTO, School Improvement Council, etc.
- Statewide financial software system for all schools and student indicators (data analysis)

- Single pre-K to 12 governance structures that reflect optimal size, common learning management system statewide
- No more supervisories
- Limit redundancy
- Redefine “local” and “community”
- Transparency in process
- Respect culture that exists; and consider ways to influence/change it
- Maximize what's working well
- Figure out where the independent schools fit in terms of public money and equity; do they have a place in public school governance?
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Flatten per pupil spending increases

Recommendations:

- Develop the model and implement H.883 with accelerated deadline of 2018; create advocacy for moving H.883
- Create a communications strategy/public awareness campaign that defines the “WHY” for a system of governance, leveraging media, AoE data, and student voice (student and school councils); establish a working group for action steps and timelines for legislature
- Study, research, benchmark best practices in other states, how determine “right size”; conference like this to examine what works in consolidation
- Working group where VSA, VSBA, NEA, VPA, and VT BRT create a document that defines structure for governance, propose action steps and time line for legislature
- Consul to advise principal on what the community may want to see within the school
- Guard rail: incentives for consolidation with opt-in options
- Leadership: clarify roles and responsibilities, be proactive vs reactive in communication
- Multi-year budgeting
- Expanded role for state to eliminate redundancy, eg reinforce EQS, statewide accounting and possibly a calendar
- Legislative action needed to establish larger school districts (eliminate SU) and allow for voluntary configuration over a set period of time. These districts will be held to educational benchmarks to more clearly define “right size”

- Unless willing to take on topic of choice there is no way to implement, need procedure to move to regional structure; where districts are already aligned ... Where not, SUs need coherent K12 system
- Remove incentives for wrong direction, add incentives for regional structures
- Assess opportunity and cost, is there a diff conversation with AOE and state board
- Legislation needed to give time period to consolidate/"unify" that is sustainable for financing
- Plan mandated by state, but has taken the time to gain trust through increased public engagement at community level; our communities need a lot more conversation
- Participants:
 - Marha Maksym, Carolyn Weir, Val Gardner, Patrick Guinee, Joey Donovan, Bob Mason, Elaine Pickney, Bill Schubart, Mary Powerll, Carolyn Dwyer, Vicki Wells
 - Joan Canning, Laura Soares, Kim Gleason, Michael Seaver, Colin Robinson, Jane Swift, Chris Smid, Stuart Comstock-Gray, Charlie Toulmin
 - Diane Kirson-Giltman, Jay Nichols, Wendell Coleman, Miro Wineberger, Tom Sabo, Marty Strange, Peter Burrows, Peter Stratman, Geo Honigford, Victoria Howard
 - Chip Conquest, Mill Moore, Bob Herbst, Allison DeLauriers, Martha Heath, Barbara Benedict, Joseph Teragarden, Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Mike Martin, Dave Sharpe, Mary Hooper
 - Celeste Goorell, Donarae Dawson, Steve Dale, Lachlan Francis, Emily Long, Peter Peltz, Alice Worth, Jackie Wilson, Leslee Mackenzie, Mary Burns

IV. Sustainable Funding

Goals:

- Statewide accounting system that works with simplified governance, limited redundancy
- Community engagement and awareness building; voters know what they are voting on and understand it before casting their vote
- Meets the needs of all students efficiently, equitably
- Support individuality with common statewide standards
- Greater equity and broader student opportunity
- Continuity of leadership focused on instruction
- Flatten per pupil spending by setting structural standards, eg min/max. class size (residency of SU, "sharing students"), examine indirect overhead rates, student-to-faculty ratio at Optimum
- Property taxes – consider recent loss of high-paying jobs

- Nothing else can happen until we figure out how to pay for it
- Change model by which you can “shop” – conflicts within SUs, districts
- Define/balance how we distribute money to educate student vs. to “keep doors open” vs. social services; definition of equity when spending

Recommendations:

- Examine models in healthcare are relevant to education. One constraint is fee for service, expensive way to run a healthcare system. Constraint in education is pay per student, very expensive. In healthcare talking about global budgeting, so why not try in education to finance education in state of Vermont?
 - Value proposition: determine what we want to get out of education and how much we’re willing to pay for it
 - Now schools determine what they need, the state raises taxes to pay for it. Paradigm shift - determine first at state level by assessing community needs, Eg in healthcare conduct community health assessment to determine what is needed to reach goals
- Need to identify activities better done at state level
 - Create purchasing calendar to streamline large purchases, incorporate transportation and services
 - Present budget in two parts, admin and direct education costs
 - Teacher contracts established across state
- Make sure teachers are effective for numbers of students they have; suggest minimum class size, optimal ratio
- Fewer SUs or one statewide district?
- Avoid overlap of grades in schools of same area
- Incentives trump mandates; have umbrella framework while allowing some local control
- Continuum of care and services provided, overlap with 0-20 group and governance.
- Who educating? What is state’s share? Can local communities kick in more money?
- End up with a structure similar to healthcare that focuses on prevention vs reaction; can go to one place to work with team of people more systemically.
- Distribute money through community block grants.
- Tbd: special grants to apply for?
- Retain community involvement and decision-making based upon the needs of the community. “Here is an amount of money for you to use the best way you know how, not without accountability or oversight, but still within your culture.”
 - Move from dollars following the student to dollars following the community

- Increase income sensitivity base rate; legislature positioned to do this to take some pressure off property owners
- Link seniority to performance evaluation system and reexamine layoff strategy, not last one in is first one out
- Cost effectiveness vs cost efficiency; sustainable funding means conversations about sustainable costs
- Remember that if everyone is affected the same way by state level is more sustainable
- Participants:
 - Barbara Radelson, Jeff Fannon, Erik Schwarz, Ann Manwaring, Greg Goldman, Scott Giles, Willem Jewett, Jack Hoffman, Kitty Toll, Rick Pembroke, Bernie Juskiewicz, Brigid Schiffert, Julie Coffey
 - Global Funding Paradigm Shift table (sp?): Jessica Nordhaus, Susanne Dirmaier, Vaughn Altemus, Caroly Branagan, Adam Greshin, Jeff Wilson, Armand Messeek, Bill Mathis, Paul Millman, Steve Jeffrey, Jeff Glassiserg

V. 0-20 Continuum

Goals:

- Education continuum that starts at birth and into career
- Increase post-secondary education for VT high school graduates
 - Goal set by Obama: 60% of our 25-35 year-old gain at least a two-yr credential post-secondary

Recommendations:

- Proposal to adopt two new indicators of educational success:
 - (A) 100% Kindergarten readiness indicator and
 - (B) 60% of VT students compete 2 years post-secondary education
- Commission a study to make recommendations for the deliberate investment of education resources with respect to these two indicators
- Expand Head Start model into and beyond Kindergarten for students and parents (through grade 8)
- Expanding the right of foster children to all children to remain in a school, regardless of parental residency
- One of the best ways to promote commerce is to ensure that all children have access to a high quality education system
- 10k credit card to every Vermont student graduating from HS, changes conversations by families

VI. Other Challenges: Poverty and Integration of Education & Human Services for Economic Development, “From Homeless to High Achievement”

Goals:

- Education stability is a right
- Eliminate child poverty by 2020
 - Currently 15% VT children live in poverty, over half of them living with a household income <\$10k
- Opportunity for schools to become a full service human services hub
 - Feed all children at school
 - Help all children and families access health care and other human services
 - Universal access to full-day Pre-K/Daycare/Childcare

Recommendations:

- Align human service teams in school districts, geographic alignment around responsibilities
 - Systemic coordination with human services, AOE, and local community
 - Increase partnerships between schools and human services
 - Stipulate food security as absolute right from age 0 on up
 - Universal access to full-day Pre-K
- Increase stability in WHERE students learn; currently kids bounce from various schools; need to change rules so more kids stay in same schools and same districts
- Lower walls of confidentiality to protect the child, strengthen teamwork and integration, reasonable loosening of protocols; schools need to know about students with open cases
- Multi-year case plan eligibility linked to participation in education, stabilize human services arrangements; improve connection and continuity of parent engagement in children's education
- Early childhood prevention
 - Parent support in education
 - Incentives from business to subsidize early childhood care and education
- Economic development
 - Create economic opportunity zones (incentives) in areas with reduced student population (red zone)

GREEN MOUNTAIN IMPERATIVE

A Breakthrough Summit on Public Education

- Job training for adults and incentives for Vermonters in economic services
- Work to school programs (ready to work)
- Exploring causation of poverty in Vermont
- Human services and education integration
 - Redesign “birth to 22” services (geography, capacity, accessibility)
 - Include health care in conversation, consider integration with medical delivery services