

SCHOOL DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2010 - 20100

Rather than repeat the important facts already stated in the superintendent's, the principal's and the curriculum coordinator's reports, the School Board would like to discuss what interests us most and what drives us to volunteer and serve during these challenging times: The children of this community and the education they receive! The board firmly believes we are entrusted, in part, with the task of overseeing and assuring that our students are well prepared to meet the needs, demands and opportunities of the future.

Despite the best efforts at all levels involved in administering education, such as the department of education, the supervisory union, the administration, the faculty and the school board, we can no longer continue to do what we have always done, specifically at the high school level. We cannot offer students a meaningful, rigorous and stimulating environment while class size is dropping steadily each year. We cannot continue to reduce course offerings while the demands of the 21st century continue to call for an expanded knowledge base, diverse experience and fluency in technology. Nor can we ask taxpayers to continue to fund a building we cannot fill with students or to support a staff whose schedules we cannot fill with teaching hours. We are clearly at a crossroads.

So which way do we turn? Which direction do we take? The board has made a concerted effort over the past twelve months to reach out and engage the community in a dialogue regarding the future of our school. Your school directors have met frequently to discuss this issue, to develop scenarios for the future and to hear feedback from the community. In late summer and early autumn the board sent out two informational mailings regarding the vote to leave the SU. Those mailings were followed by a community dinner and informational meeting held by the school board and attended by 178 people. At the meeting the public was given in-depth information regarding the directives and choices from the DOE in reference to withdrawing from the SU. More importantly, what occurred at the meeting, from those in attendance, was a clear show of support for the board to continue exploring options to maintain a school in our town. The board also started a Futures Committee comprised of parents, residents, teachers, staff, administrators and board members. This committee has met for 3 straight months and has been instrumental in providing the board with feedback. Based on the information we have received to date from the Futures Committee, the community is still asking that we maintain a school in our community while assuring families our students are receiving an excellent education.

Committed to finding a solution which affords our students a quality education and is also fiscally responsible and sustainable, the board proposes a timeline for the next 4 years which addresses declining enrollment, seeks to deliver quality education and meets the requirements of the State for dissolving the Supervisory Union. The timeline deals specifically with how we offer education to our high school students and suggests a shift away from the traditional high school model. In addition, it outlines the timeframe for transitioning away from our existing SU.

Proposed Timeline Addressing the Future of our School and SU Reorganization:

- **Fiscal Year 2011/2012:** Maintain the High School as is. The budget has already been prepared. Focus on growing and marketing the Big Picture Program while continuing to offer choices outside our traditional High School such as but not limited to: RTCC (Randolph Technical Career Center), VAST (Vermont Academy of Science and Technology), CVBPA (Central Vermont Big Picture Academy) and Introduction to College Studies at Vermont Technical College. We will begin to increase offerings of online courses and distance learning. The School Board will continue discussions with neighboring Supervisory Union's regarding forming a RED (Regional Education District) or joining a SU. By the end of FY 2011/2012 a decision will be made as to which direction we are headed regarding the SU.
- **Fiscal Year 2012/2013:** We continue to offer and improve our Kindergarten through 8th grade. The shift away from traditional High School occurs and students are given the choice of outside programs (as mentioned above) and Individualized Learning Plans structured and guided by Central Vermont Big Picture Academy. Students are assigned an academic advisor/certified teacher through BP. Individual learning plans include but are not limited to: outside placement (AP courses or traditional courses at

another setting) and/or academic seminars, distance learning, internships and online courses. At this point we will be fully committed in a direction regarding the dissolution of the SU and will be in a relationship with potential RED (Regional Education District) partners or committed to unbundling the existing SU and joining another SU. Research to determine the most fiscally responsible and efficient use of the HS facility will continue.

- **Fiscal Year 2013/2014:** Maintain and improve our Kindergarten through 8th grade program. CVBPA (Central Vermont Big Picture Academy) now offered at SU level. We no longer offer a traditional High School. HS students are given the choice of individual learning plans through CVBPA. Each student has the opportunity to design their individual learning plan. **Education will be delivered using a different model to meet the needs of the 21Century learner.** Rochester High School building now housing our local branch of Big Picture, our Middle School and perhaps other entities (Triple E) within the facility. We may be in the process of forming a RED (Regional Educational District) or be part of another SU depending on what direction we chose.
- **FY 14/15:** Rochester School fully reorganized within a RED or under the umbrella of a neighboring Supervisory Union. CVBPA (Central Vermont Big Picture Academy) now offering a full menu of outside placements, online courses, distance learning, internships with a mentoring and academic orientation, independent studies and academic seminars.

We are aware that we still have research and fact finding to do to ensure that the proposed timeline meets the needs of our students and our community. We are currently engaged in such a process. We are confident that, with this timeline, we are headed in the right direction. Based on the information we have received from our community, combined with research regarding transformation in education, we believe our proposed timeline will put us on the road to preparing our students for a productive and successful future. We thank you for the opportunity to serve our students and the community.

The Rochester School Board of Directors:

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