

A few suggestions for presenting an Alternative Governance Structure to the State Board of Ed. (SBOE), compiled by Dan MacArthur from the Alliance of Vermont School Board Members (AVSBM) and including feedback gotten from numerous places. NOTE that as people provide more input from THEIR meetings with the State this will be updated- watch the AVSBM web site <http://avsbm.org>

The process is looking like this right now, based on what we have seen from Districts which have received their initial outreach from the SBOE and the Agency of Education:

- the applying District receives a notice of a meeting to begin the conversation, with a short list of questions that the District will be expected to answer. So far, this list has been the same for all Districts and is included in the attached Compendium. The time frame is one half hour, and the meeting is with the Secretary of Education, and Brad James and Donna Russo Savage from the Agency of Ed. PLEASE REMEMBER that the purpose of this initial meeting is to respond to specific questions from the State and is NOT to present or defend the entire AGS proposal. We will update this group as we get more info from entities which have had this meeting.
- Beyond that things are less clear but eventually the proposal will be before the entire State Board of Ed. Again, we will update this as more info comes in as to the actual procedure. (Note: When the Marlboro Act 49 presenters were before the Board with their proposals, a Green Sheet had been circulated to Marlboro and to the members of the Board recommending AGAINST granting the Independent School status. This info was great to have ahead of time. AVSBM hopes that this Green Sheet will be a part of each of the AGS proposals, but this may not happen.)
- 

**The BOE should provide feedback BEFORE the meetings with the State:** (list of questions, see attached Compendium- be prepared to thoroughly answer all of the questions posed by the State):

- Make sure to be in close touch with the Agency and the BOE as the time approaches. The “conversation” should begin as soon as your presenting body has questions, either in response to communication from the Agency or before that if questions arise. Ask for help when you need it! Both Secretary Holcombe and Donna Russo Savage from the Agency of Education have offered assistance and to be part of the “conversation”- see attached recommendations from both of them in the Compendium.

**There will be time “over the summer” for the conversation to continue:**

- provide any further info that is helpful to the State as the “conversation” continues, there is no limit to the amount of info that can accompany proposals. See the Compendium for timelines.

**Have as much support in writing as possible with the Proposal:**

- Letters from anyone in a position of influence will be helpful- Supervisory Union personnel, local Legislators, educational professionals involved with the Proposal, School Board members, etc.

**Have as much support as possible in the room:**

- All available School Boards should be represented
- Anyone from the SU should be present
- Representatives or Senators? Invite them...

- Members of local 706 (b) Study Committees
- Parents or other community members
- Education professionals

**Time for presentation may be short:**

- We now know that the State is scheduling one half hour for the initial meetings, and we certainly hope that there will be follow up both in the form of communication and further meetings.

**Have available copies of the Proposal:**

- Extras do not hurt, although Board members should all have copies, these will be helpful when pointing out specifics in the proposal in response to questions.

**Choose and prepare several people to answer questions and present:**

- Somewhere around 3 people with microphones, the best presenters possible, to cover as much ground as possible: perhaps a primary presenter, a numbers person, an educator, etc., each prepared to address questions within their realm.

**Powerpoint?**

- Marlboro did, others have not, not sure how much difference it made. You will essentially be going over material already presented in the proposal and the members of the BOE seemed happy to look at paper copy.

**Start slowly and make the case from the beginning: (this is meant for a second presentation, which we certainly hope will happen)**

- Even though time may be short, a good argument is necessary. Lay out the basic arguments, address the members of the BOE directly, and point out the material in the proposal which reinforces the arguments.
- Try to engage with individual members of the Board- these folks are all educators and all want what is best for our kids, and as with any communication a direct personal outreach will be best.
- From Margaret Maclean: (send the right team, prepare carefully, stand together, keep the superintendent in the back seat, stay on script!)

**Questions to prepare for, some possible Hot Button issues:** (Your proposal will be given time for a presentation, then be prepared for a wide range of questions. These are a few of the many things that may surface.)

- Review and be familiar with the Scott Administration proposals re: Ed Funding- for example, they are looking closely at student/ teacher ratios, shrinking student numbers, Special Ed. How does your committee address these, in ways either included or not included in the written document?
- Is there information from recent Legislative work that may come up?
- School choice? will it remain the same or be expanded or shrunk?
- Per pupil expenditures? The BOE will rightly want to know how your proposal addresses rising costs, and will want to hear that you have plans to keep costs in line.
- Educational outcomes and assessment?