

2016 Superintendent's Report Michael J. Clark

I'm pleased to have joined the Essex-Caledonia Supervisory Union in July of 2015 and it is an honor to report on the progress of the Supervisory Union over the past year. I would like to begin my report by thanking the thirty Board of Education members across the supervisory union. The time and dedication each Board Member makes to the towns he/she serves is honorable and worthy of respect. Thank you for your service to our towns.

Our Focus

This year is a transition year for ECSU and the schools. We have worked to identify and document the values and beliefs each of our schools and communities have for teaching and learning. Throughout the rest of the year we will use this information to create a shared mission and vision that prepares students for their future in our fast changing world. In addition we have focused on:

1. Creating a positive school climate;
2. Transitioning teaching and learning strategies to meet the Common Core State Standards;
3. Refining the delivery of instruction of our mathematics program;
4. Individualizing curriculum to meet the needs of students;
5. Exploring changes in governance to meet the requirements of ACT 46.

I would like to thank the teachers and the support staff for the work they do. Their efforts bring us closer each day to achieving these goals.

ECSU-Wide Initiatives

During the 2015 legislative session law makers passed ACT 46, a law which had the goal of ensuring high quality, equitable education to all of Vermont's children at a reduced rate to tax payers. The law attempts to achieve this goal by requiring school districts to look at their governance structures to determine if there are efficiencies within their systems which could be realized. ACT 46 describes "preferred structures" for supervisory unions to try to achieve. The law also provided incentives for supervisory districts which could achieve a preferred structure and be operational by July 1, 2019. The incentives included 4 years of tax reductions of 8,6,4, and 2 cents. All of the ECSU school districts looked seriously at the law and have taken steps to meet the requirements of ACT 46.

Our school boards which operate pK-8 schools have joined the NEK pK-8 Exploratory Committee to investigate how merging the **governance structure** of 6 to 12 school districts, represented by 2 to 3 supervisory unions into 1 supervisory district will affect the quality and efficiency of the education all students receive. The assumptions going into the study were **all of the individual schools** in the new supervisory district would **stay open** and all students in grades 9-12 would **maintain high school choice** as they have it now.

The school boards in our supervisory union who provide school choice for students in grades pK-12 have also joined an Exploratory Committee. The NEK Choice exploratory committee will investigate how merging the **governance structure** of all of the school districts in the North East Kingdom who currently offer choice to each student in grades pK-12, into 1 supervisory district will affect the quality and efficiency of the education students receive. The assumptions going into this study was all students in grades pK-12 would **maintain school choice** as they have it now. Both of these committees will report their findings later this spring.

To ensure ECSU provides a high quality and equitable educational experience for all students, we applied to and were named one of 16 supervisory unions to shape the course of the Vermont Education Quality Review process by piloting the Integrated Field Review. The educators and students within our supervisory union will contribute to draft the protocols and procedures that will define Vermont's commitment to educational equity and quality for years to come. This Education Quality Review system is designed to meet state and federal accountability requirements, as well as provide state and local education officials with critical information about school performance and equity. Our goal in this review process is to work towards high quality education with increased equity across our supervisory union.

Last year ECSU implemented Great Mind's, Eureka, math program and this year we are working to refine our delivery of instruction using this program. We have partnered directly with Great Minds and Lyndon State College to provide training to all of the ESCU teachers who use the program as well as any teacher in the NEK in the "Preparation and Customization of Eureka Math Lessons". We believe this work will better prepare our students to demonstrate their proficiency in mathematics.

This will be the second year our students demonstrate proficiency in mathematics and literacy using the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) assessment tool which is associated with the transition to the Common Core State Standards. This assessment is web-based and require a level of technical sophistication that we have been teaching for the past three years. We are still building our capacity with this assessment and know that we will have more work to do in the years to come. Vermont Students will continue to take the Science New England Common Assessment Program test for two more years.

A Look Ahead

This year will be a pivotal year for education, governance and finance. The legislature has made it clear we need to look at larger governance structures in Vermont if we are to sustain the quality and equity of the education we provide our students. We will continue to navigate ACT 46 to provide the best opportunities available to our students. I encourage residents to stay informed and communicate to your representatives and senators your values and beliefs as they relate to education. I am happy to work with community members and can provide more information as well as answer questions if you would like to contact me.

It is privilege and honor to serve you and the communities of the Essex-Caledonia Supervisory Union. Please stop by our office in Concord or contact us by phone if you have any questions.

Thank you for all you do to support our students,

Michael J. Clark
Essex-Caledonia Supervisory Union
Superintendent of Schools