

Why did you want this job?

- Sense of responsibility
- Concerned about the future of public education system

Do you like governor's policies?

- Had to check in on a number of those elements
- Education is not a silo, function of economic and social development
- Jane recognizes that he is not being specific and commenting on the actual policies
- Complex policy environment, that will be reset in next legislative session
- Act 46 is a good representation of what direction things should go
 - Indication that we are moving to more systematic vision
 - Message of coherence
- Excited about Scott's vision in terms of evolving leadership, think more dramatically about change, not incremental
- Jane- Can you get law makers on board?
 - VSA President has experience working with law makers
- What is the role of state and what is the role of locals?

Has Act 46 been a success in your eyes?

- Yes
- Challenging policy to make sense of
- Done some work as a consultant
- Impressed with how people have come together and made these changes
- 18 mergers that were recommended:
 - Last night was in Franklin/Highgate
 - Legislature was prudent in turning it over to state board of education
 - Districts have opportunity to influence
 - Hearings from state board
 - State board will now evaluate the policy/recommendations
 - Can the districts really fulfill the 5 things under the governance they propose?

Listener: Do you believe that alternative governance structures are allowed under the law? Should public vote matter?

- State board has more flexibility to hear the local sentiment than AOE who is working to make suggestions based on the constraints of fulfilling law
- French is interested in what specifically the questions are being asked in voting for the public
- Challenging for voters because people don't know
- Fear voting - Closure of local schools

Listener: Can you be specific about financial, economic benefits that Act 46 could bring? How do we bring new people to towns if we are closing schools?

- Some places are taking advantage of mergers to protect small schools
 - Additional protections
- French involved in closing Norton school when it had 6 students
- Act 46 does not give the state authority to close schools
- Need to make sure small schools are viable in the future

Jane: School-aged population dropping. Won't schools need to close to provide good education to the students?

- Distinction between small elementary schools and small high schools
- Feels more pressing is high schools
- Hard to offer students everything that the larger schools are offering
- Not talking about going on a bus 2 hours
- Hard assuage the fear of school closings
- Small schools are actually more viable in larger systems

Listener from Barton: When it comes to school funding we need to display caution when making cuts. There is not a level playing in our society, schools are the one place that attempt to level the playing field.

How do we improve achievement gap in income?

- We need to build coherent systems
- School districts (K through 12) work together
- International context does not allow us to operate in silos anymore
- Incrementally monitoring for student outcomes
- We rely a lot on school boards, so we need to really make sure that school boards are really driving good policy
- Superintendent accountability from school boards
- Local governance in terms of promoting equity
- “We have some pockets of excellence around the state that need to be scaled... we need to scale these islands of excellence.”
- Board role: State has a role in ensuring equity across the state, local role in equity in schools
- NCLB put a lot of emphasis on testing
- We delegate a lot of authority to local
- Local control doesn't mean that you do whatever you want to do, state needs to make sure that they are doing what they should do

Listeners: Healthcare contract is one bargaining chip for teachers.

- Need to look at this
- Way too complex of an issue to bargain locally within the federal context
- Too much to have all of these micro-negotiations
- State-wide teacher contracts is more complex
 - Equity issues here
- Hard to bring salary scales together, could start on a regional level for this
- Interested in exploring collective bargaining, not easy to do

Listener: One of the roles of secretary will be to function as a mediator between the state's education community and the governor. Rift that has developed. Some educators perceive that governor is trying to slap educators on the wrist.

Thoughts on this?

- Point of tension that education has been standing alone in state policy
- French advocated for governor appointing secretary
- Need more holistic thought on education connection with broader societal issues
- Commitment to equity and equality but need to work on what is the structure that will achieve that

Teacher-student ratios thoughts?

- Focus group
- Will put together recommendations for legislature to consider

A new governor could potentially determine they don't want you to be in the job.

- Continuation of commitment to creating a world-class education in Vermont
- Not worried about the long-term viability