

# Orange Windsor Supervisory Union

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## Superintendent's Report August, 2007

**General:** I have settled comfortably into the office and have begun to read and review minutes of Board and Cabinet meetings and am beginning to adjust to the rhythm of the various meeting schedules. In general, all of the schools appear to be well situated for the opening of school in a week and a half

**Opening Day:** The first in-service day for faculty and staff occurs in each of the schools on Monday, August 27. Typically everyone congregates for our opening convocation Monday morning at one of the schools. However, I have asked that we convene at 12:00 on Tuesday, August 28 for lunch followed by a presentation on "Responses to Inappropriate Student Conduct" by Heather Thomas of the law firm, Lynn, Thomas, and Mihalich. The principals will introduce their new employees, and I will make a brief presentation about the important roles played by teachers and support personnel in improving students' learning. We will also present the OWSU nominees for the University of Vermont's Outstanding Teacher Recognition Award for 2007-2008. All Board members are invited to attend and to be introduced.

**Cabinet Meeting:** We held our first Administrative Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, August 8 at the central office. In addition to the usual litany of 'nuts-and-bolts' issues necessary for the successful opening of school, we had a discussion with Bruce Donahue, and George Reynak, consultants (teachers) for the Vermont Data Consortium (VDC). Their planned hour-long presentation easily stretched to more than 2 hours as we explored the breadth and depth of the data warehouse's 'data analyzer' features. In addition to being the repository for state generated data and mandatory reports for the US DOE, the Warehouse allows all districts to import their student information system data (grades, attendance, courses taken, etc.) and any local assessments they may administer (Primary Observation Assessment, Gates-McGinty, or a locally written assessment). The analyzer tool allows us to follow an individual student's academic progress from year to year and from subject to subject. It allows us to follow a group of students from grade level to grade level and to see if the curriculum is accomplishing the growth we anticipate. In addition, the analyzer provides a wide variety of options for teachers and administrators to look at the overall effectiveness of their programs. I will arrange to have Bruce and George attend a future OWSU full Board meeting to share the information with you.

**On the local front:** This has been a busy summer in each of the OWSU towns.

- Leading the news is the pending September 11 vote by the citizens of Royalton to determine if they will build a new gymnasium and make much needed improvements to parts of the building and the parking lot. They had a successful but moderately attended meeting with the public this week to review their plans and answer any questions that this initiative may spawn among the electorate. Other meetings are being planned over the next several weeks. All professional and paraprofessional positions at SRS have been filled.

- Sharon received a planning grant in conjunction with the town to review and outline a proposal for a shared water system to meet the needs of a handful of facilities in the village. The grant will allow the town and school district to explore the costs and logistics of developing a merged water system to serve the town hall, the old school building and the local church which is used as a community meeting place. In addition, the district is working with Efficiency Vermont to retrofit lights in the school with energy-saving fixtures and bulbs. The retrofit will result in annual energy savings which should pay off the initial investment in 2-4 years.
- Strafford will undertake a water project similar to Sharon's. In addition it is dealing with a lightning strike which disabled its computer system and which delayed the installation of its new telephone system. The computer glitch has been slow to resolve and has given us the opportunity to reexamine the role of network design and operation, and to explore any economies which might be had by developing a service consortium, a wide-area network, or a collaborative purchase-of-service with another supervisory union. We will keep you posted.
- Tunbridge has been very successful filling more vacancies than is usual in a given year. For the first time in many years they will have a guidance counselor on hand two days a week. In addition to collaborating with classroom teachers about the curricular contributions he may make to enhance classroom activities and learning, his emphasis is on building relationships with students in small groups or individually.
- Chelsea welcomes Barrett Williams as the Interim Principal of the Chelsea Public School. The Board chose Barrett after a screening committee reviewed 23 applications and interviewed 2 of the 4 candidates they chose as semi-finalists (one withdrew and one did not make the reference check). One of Barrett's first duties as principal was to climb atop the gymnasium building to patch a leak in the roof so the renovations inside could continue without interruption after recent rains revealed water that could damage newly installed insulation. A broad-based search for a permanent principal is scheduled to begin in January.

Local Assessment Plans: After the VDC presentation, the cabinet spent a considerable amount of time reviewing the kinds of student performance data we would like to be able to use to determine achievement, the effectiveness of our curricula, and possible instructional improvements needed to ensure high student performance. We agreed that we all need to work on our Local Assessment Plans and to build on previous initiatives. Therefore, we will be looking at assessments in writing and possibly in math as our beginning points.

Notwithstanding the 'lazy days of summer,' we have followed a series of initiatives into the beginning of school. I will use this report to keep everyone apprised of these and other developments.

Dave