

# South Burlington School District

April 29, 2011

To: School Board Members

From: John Everitt

Re: Superintendent Report – May 4, 2011  
Policy 2.9 – Communication and Support to the Board

1. Graduation Requirements – During the discussion about graduation requirements at the last board meeting, there were questions about students who graduated with less than 24 credits. Principal Burke provided me with some details and some very interesting personal stories.

The students with more than 20, but less than 24 credits were representative of the rest of the class, those with 24+ credits. Some were admitted to highly selective colleges and some less selective colleges. Others went to technical programs, two-year community colleges, post graduate prep schools, and a few, directly to work. There were English Language Learners and students with disabilities in both groups. There were some honor roll level GPAs in the 20+ to 24 credit group, but generally the GPA of the 24+ group was higher. Another aspect of the story is credits attempted. More than a third of the 20+ to 24 credit group attempted more credits than they earned; they just did not complete the classes with passing grades.

Another interest of the board was participation in world language courses. While I am still getting numerical data, we find that students stick with a language for the following reasons:

- To meet actual or perceived college acceptance expectations,
  - Because they love the language and second language learning,
  - To study/travel abroad with TIE or in college,
  - Because they have a favorable relationship with a teacher, and
  - Because they see a second language as the “natural order” of their education. Teachers and guidance professionals encourage students to develop a second language, including the cultural study that is woven into the world language curriculum. Students understand the importance of this part of their education.
2. Digital Poetry – Students in the high school Digital Video course recently demonstrated their work. At the meeting I will take a few moments to show, not only some of the projects, but also how the teacher uses technology in instruction.

## Not On Agenda

3. Central Office Organization – Over the past few months, the Central Office Team has been discussing ways to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our work.

When David Young was appointed to be the next superintendent, we considered not doing a straight replacement.

While it made some sense to divide up his responsibilities, we saw that instead of increasing effectiveness, we would be fragmenting operations in ways that would add inefficiencies and lead to lower effectiveness. In addition, it became very clear to me and to David that in a district of this size and complexity, it would be a mistake to do away with the Assistant Superintendent position. Having a person with that level of responsibility allows for operational decisions to be made across the district by a person with a depth of knowledge required for quality decision making. Having to take too many decisions to the superintendent, providing context and background information, and then allowing time for consideration would not improve the district functioning.

At present, we are looking for an Assistant Superintendent whose main function will be operations. At the same time, we are considering less significant changes in the way we organize our work.

**Please bring your policy manual to the board meeting.**