

The Oxbow Unified Union School District (OUUSD) board began a little over a year ago. We started with ambitious goals: creating policy, changing the Articles of Agreement to increase our school board size, and to create security that all of our schools will remain part of the district. The pandemic slowed our progress in some areas, but we feel that our district is moving forward in a positive direction. Though disheartened by our failing budget votes, we were excited to welcome two new school board members. In anticipation of the upcoming budget revote, we would like to highlight some of the exciting things transforming Bradford Elementary, Newbury Elementary, Oxbow High School and River Bend Technical and Career Center.

The proposed budget includes initiatives that improve the supervisory union's ability to function cohesively and, in turn, support our students in their pursuit of knowledge and skills. It also includes district reforms that enhance our goal of providing quality education, services, and support for all students, families, and communities.

At the Orange East Supervisory Union (OESU):

- The districts have struggled to attract and retain teachers; new software now allows the SU to track teacher retention and job satisfaction. As the backbone of our school, recruiting and maintaining the best teachers assures better-prepared children who will succeed in their pursuits of higher education or enter the workforce.
- Due to the lack of adequate space and an unhealthy working environment, the supervisory union offices moved to a new location. The new facility will promote program unification/interconnection and better communication between central office personnel, districts, and schools.
- Our schools' technology infrastructures have long been a jumble of platforms with no cohesive vision. The new technology director is working to align platforms with consistent electronic communication, platforms for distance learning, and cross-district performance data and budget access.
- A Multi-Tiered System of Support has been adopted by the supervisory union members and has worked to create programs and practices that are universal across all schools. This unification of supports will allow family mobility between OESU towns without sacrificing educational and social emotional progress.

At OUUSD:

- In order to both attract and retain high-quality teachers, we felt it imperative to address teacher salaries in our district. The average salary for a Vermont teacher is \$60,651. Our district's average teacher salary is \$55,731. We reached an agreement with our Teacher's union which will begin to make our district more competitive in our area and within the state. With the focus on the base salaries for new teachers.
- We are committed to offering our paraprofessionals a living minimum wage. Through negotiations, we were pleased to reach an agreement that would create a minimum wage of \$15.00/hr in three years.
- In the spirit of our new merged district, we were able to share a social worker between Bradford and Newbury. This position along with partnerships with Little

Rivers Healthcare and the Clara Martin Center will increase our ability to address the complex needs of many children and their families.

- Oxbow began using an independent contractor for Drivers Ed and offering French online due to these savings we added a middle school math position and increased the Technology position.
- River Bend Career and Technical Center continues updating and adjusting its trade and career programs, including its first off-site Cyber-Security Program at Thetford Academy.
- School board meetings, currently held twice a month via Zoom, have increased the ability for public participation. When we transition back to in-person meetings, we will continue to offer remote access.
- The OUUSD board recently created Finance, Facilities, Communication, School/community engagement committees. We hope these committees will help increase transparency and encourage community involvement.

We recognize that change is hard and that we have much more work to do. As a board we will continue to focus on ensuring that every member across our school communities knows that they have a voice and ownership.

Please contact us with your questions.

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