Minutes

VSAC Programs & Services Committee Meeting

November 16, 2026
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Boardroom, VSAC Offices
10 East Allen Street
Winooski, Vermont 05404

Committee Members Present:	Martha Heath (Chair), Dave Larsen, Ryan Dulude, Tim Chamberlin
Committee Members Absent:	Clarence Davis
Other Members Present:	Dodie Mitchell
VSAC Staff Present:	Scott Giles, Patrick Leduc, Meghan Metzler, Brad Fallon, Kirstin Boehm

Chair Martha Heath called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. With a quorum established, the Committee took up the first order of business.

Approval of September 21, 2026, Minutes

> ***Upon a motion made by Ryan Dulude and seconded by Dave Larsen, the Committee Members voted unanimously to approve the Programs & Services Committee Minutes of September 21, 2026, with the update that Dodie Mitchell's name in attendance will be moved to the section of Other Members Present.***

Public Comment
There were no public comments given during the public comment period.

Grant Policy – Ongoing Review
Martha Heath asked Patrick Leduc to walk the Committee through the policies being reviewed and their revisions.

- **Enrollment and Satisfactory Academic Progress Verification Policy** – Patrick gave a high-level review of the policy and there were no material changes beyond this version being a combination of the two previous policies; Enrollment Verification, and Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- **Residency Regulations Policy** – Patrick gave a high-level review of the policy and that the most significant change to the policy was combining the two previous policies; Residency Regulations and Residency Appeal. Patrick also noted the state law that codified immigration status was added to the background information.

The Committee discussed the policies and Patrick responded to questions.

Upon a motion made by Ryan Dulude and seconded by Tim Chamberlin, the Committee Members voted unanimously to recommend that the full Board approve the Enrollment and Satisfactory Academic Progress Verification, and Residency Regulations policies, as presented.

Aspirations
Kirstin Boehm began her presentation to the Committee with an overview of the Aspirations program and reminded them that the program began because of the actions of the 2014 Legislature. The program has developed into a highly customizable partnership with each high school. The program's goal is to ensure students graduate with a plan. She went on to talk about how they work with school leaders and educators to create their own school's path toward a sustainable model of every student graduating with a plan. Finally, Kirstin reviewed outcome data from the high schools in the program which supports that students and educators now have more opportunities and conversations toward post-graduation planning. The Committee and the Executive Committee engaged in a discussion of the program.

Operations Updates
Vermont Microgrant follow-up: Patrick Leduc brought data that was requested by the Committee on outcomes of the Vermont Microgrant. He reported out that in FY26 over 80% of Microgrant recipients returned to school the following semester, and in FY25 89% of the students returned.

Debrief on NCAN Emergency Grants Discussion: Kirstin Boehm talked about her experience at the NCAN conference, and what she learned. There are 10 states with a program similar to the Vermont Microgrant. There are also several educational institutions that have programs like this. All the programs have very different funding methods, payouts and eligibility criteria, but have the same goal for student resiliency and retention when they are facing a personal crisis.

Loan Origination: Patrick Leduc said that there is loan growth in both approved loans and actual funds disbursed. Student loan disbursements are up by nearly 28% and parent loan approval is up nearly 50%. Some of the loan volume can be attributed to the recent federal loan changes, for example; loans for graduate students grew from 4% in FY26 of the total student loan portfolio to 9% so far in FY27.

Standing Reports and Items of Interest: Patrick highlighted that the average revised Freedom and Unity award increased by approximately $1,500 which is caused by the expansion of the household income eligibility limit to $85,000. He also noted that there has been a sharp decrease in the number of Dual Enrollment stipends this fall. This is attributed to a change in a system that the Agency of Education (AOE) hosts where the marking of free and reduced lunches (FRL) was not occurring. AOE is aware of the issue, and VSAC is advocating that since AOE already has FRL data, there does not need it to be recertified by a school counselor.

Annual Meeting Update: Scott Giles gave a review of the meeting. He took a moment to highlight that VSAC has been successful at weaving together existing programs and developing

new low-cost programs, that when woven together, result in massive impact for Vermont Students. For FY27 it is estimated that nearly 5,500 students will receive a free tuition education.

Throughout the operations updates the Committee engaged in discussions with Patrick and other members of the Executive Committee.

Upcoming Board Retreat
Scott Giles said the retreat in part is a kickoff to strategic planning. He reviewed the agenda and entertained questions from the Committee.

Federal Update
With time constraints this section was not discussed but the full Board will get a federal update at the upcoming VSAC Board Retreat.

Vermont Update
Scott Giles informed the Committee that after the recent election, the Executive Committee met with the Governors Team to discuss VSAC's state budget request for FY28. This year VSAC's request is for a 1% increase to VSAC's base budget and to have Freedom and Unity funding added to VSAC's base budget. Patrick reminded the Committee that the Rural Health Transformation funding increased this summer from $6M to $9M and there is a potential to increase the amount even more for this upcoming academic year. Scott ended the update by reminding the committee that Democrats do have a super majority again in the Legislature and legislators are currently in conversation on both House and Senate leadership.

Other Business
There being no other business, the Committee adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Patrick Leduc, Assistant Secretary

DRAFT