

Dear Agency of Education:

Good evening, the Vermont Educational Equity Collective (VEEC) is happy to provide a letter in support of the EQS Recommendations.

VEEC is a collective of educational equity leaders transforming Vermont culture by holding educational institutions, organizations and policymakers accountable to creating equitable systems by consistently naming and dismantling structures of oppression that disproportionately impact those farthest from justice, with an emphasis on intersectionality and the indelible impact of race.

Please see the attached letter from VEEC. We hope you pass these standards which are for the good of all students in our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Con mucho aprecio/ With gratitude,**

**maria davies** (she|her|hers|ella)

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Coordinator | Coordinadora de Equidad

GMTCC Building Room T-34

Lamoille North Supervisory Union

Office: 802-851-1569

Mobile: 802-730-6398

Fax: 802-888-7908

[Email:mdavies@lnsd.org](mailto:mdavies@lnsd.org)

*Diversity and Inclusion is about giving value to every human being no matter our differences. -*

*Anonymous-*

*"Equity" means that every child gets what he or she needs to succeed, as opposed to everyone getting the same thing. - Alan Blankstein-*

*"If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.", Shirley Chisholm*

## **Vermont Educational Equity Collective (VEEC)**

communications@weareveec.org

10/25/2023

Vermont Board of Education  
Education Quality Standards Committee  
Agency of Education  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 5  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

**Subject:** Education Quality Standards Public Comment (Rule Series 2000)

Dear Vermont State Board of Education,

We are writing to express our concerns and, at the same time, our strong support for the development and implementation of consistent, comprehensive, and inclusive standards in both public and independent schools in Vermont. Our concerns are over the integration and replacement of suggested standards with modified language from “Rule 2200.” These standards should be designed to protect students and ensure their right to equal access to a high-quality education while engaging and furthering anti-discrimination, equity, cultural responsiveness, and inclusivity. The modified language from “Rule 2200” does not provide protections to Vermont students who are subject to hate, bias, discrimination, and the resulting physical and psychological harm. What is more consistent with the needs and rights of marginalized students in Vermont, is increased anti-discrimination protections, NOT less. The EQS Working Group has put significant work into speaking with students, educators, and leadership across our state and the value of these shared experiences and stories should not be ignored. Diluting anti-discrimination language reinforces patterns of exclusion, rather than meeting the needs of marginalized students in Vermont. We agree there should both be consistency among public and private schools, and stronger anti-discrimination policies that EQS has been working with the community in addressing. “Rule 2200” contributes to the harm of our marginalized students by ignoring and further erasing their voices and needs. We believe the safety of marginalized students would be compromised with the adoption of modified language from “Rule 2200”. Effective and essential anti-discrimination measures must be implemented in all Vermont schools to ensure that all students are protected.

Education is a fundamental right and a pillar of our society, and it is imperative that all students have access to educational institutions that provide not only a high standard of learning but also a safe and nurturing environment. This must also include independent schools throughout Vermont, as each student’s education and safety is essential to lead Vermont into a more nurturing, accepting and inclusive space. Education is not only about the acquisition of knowledge but also about fostering values such as respect, dignity, tolerance, and understanding among students for the varying rich cultures we all hold. Therefore, it is essential that we establish, maintain, and enforce anti-discrimination policies in all educational settings,

including independent educational institutions by applying stronger anti-discrimination measures than the modified language that “Rule 2200” would provide.

It is paramount that the Vermont Board of Education ensures that the Education Quality Standards apply equally to both public and independent schools. This will send a powerful message that Vermont is committed to providing an education system that is truly inclusive, anti-racist, and equitable for all our students.

We urge the Vermont Board of Education to consider Education Quality Standards Committee recommendations seriously and work towards the development of such comprehensive standards that protect the interests and well-being of all Vermont students. By doing so, we can create a future in which every student has an equal chance to achieve or exceed the standards set by the State Board of Education.

Thank you for your time and dedication to ensuring a bright and equitable future for all Vermont students. I look forward to seeing progress in this critical matter.

Sincerely,

*Vermont Educational Equity Collective (VEEC)*

Maria Davies, Lamoille North Supervisory Union  
Tony Strat-Cortez, Thetford Academy  
Michelle Irish, Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union  
Gianni Solorzano, Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union  
Traci Price, Windsor Southeast Supervisory Union  
Susannah White, Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union  
Erin Maguire, Essex Westford School District  
Devon Voake, Dresden School District  
Lindsay Turgeon-Brown, Windham Central Supervisory Union  
De-Dee Loftin-Davis, Loftin-Davis Consulting  
Dana Decker, WRVSU Equity Coordinator