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MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and Principals
FROM: Rebecca Holcombe, Ed.D., Secretary of Education
SUBJECT: Encouragement of Attending CIRS Webinars
DATE: December 9, 2016

RH

I am writing to ask each of you for your help in tackling an issue of high importance. Last year, the Agency of Education produced a report regarding exclusionary discipline in Vermont. [You can get a copy here.](#)

At a high level, the good news is that Vermont schools exclude students at 1/3 the rate of schools overall in the nation. However, across the state, we see persistent disproportionality in exclusion; students of historically marginalized populations (students who are non-white, living in poverty, or have a disability) are excluded with greater frequency than we would expect given their representation in the population overall. Of some concern, the highest rates of exclusions are for ambiguous reasons in circumstances in which alternatives to exclusion are possible.

Every time a child is out of class or out of school, that child is missing critical instructional time. When that happens with frequency, it may discourage or erode the child's success in school.

As part of the testimony and work with the legislature last year, the Agency of Education committed to providing school systems with technical assistance on the collection of discipline data. We have developed a series of webinars intended to address that commitment. Specifically, this memo has information below on a webinar dedicated to clarifying definitions and terminology so that schools across the state can provide more accurate data submissions to the Combined Incident Reporting Software (CIRS). These webinars will also inform incident reporters of [Combined Incident Reporting Software](#) updates for 2017, discuss why accuracy in reporting is important, and explain how providing this information can be used to support efforts to improve school culture. The webinar also identifies points to remember when reporting incidents, in order to ensure accuracy of data.

The AOE expects to be back before the legislative body in the coming session, answering questions on the CIRS data, and would love to be able to let the legislature know that 100% of our schools participated in this work.

The webinars are announced in the weekly field memo and can be attended by one or more of your staff who handle discipline. They will also be recorded and posted for future reference. You can access one of the 30-minute webinars here:

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| <p>CIRS Webinar #1: Date: Tuesday, December 13, 2016 Time: 12:30-1:00pm join the CIRS webinar</p> | <p>CIRS Webinar #2: Date: Friday, December 16, 2016 Time: 9:00-9:30am join the CIRS webinar</p> | <p>CIRS Webinar #3: Date: Thursday, January 12, 2017 Time: 4:00-4:30pm join the CIRS webinar</p> |
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OER Platform Demo session with Edmodo

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

I encourage each of you to take time from your busy schedule to attend one of these webinars, and join with us in this important work of accurately reflecting the low rate of exclusionary discipline taking place in Vermont.

The AOE is happy to provide professional development certification that can be used towards relicensure to any educator who completes this training.