

Meeting conducted via teleconference due to COVID19

January 14, 2021

Present: Amanda Garces (Chair), Mark Hage (Vice-Chair), Barbra Marden, Bruce Pandya, Cynthia Reyes, Infinite Culcleasure, Heather Bouchey, Max Barrows, Xusana Davis, Heather Lynn, Chelsea Myers, Mara Iverson,

Members of the public: Erin Adams, Imogene Drakes, Dana Jeffery, Kit Harrington, Neil Richardson, Ben Freemon, Mia Schiltz, Sue Ceglowski, Ted Hobson, Alyssa Chen, Lee Reilly,

Call to Order/Amendments to Agenda/Introductions

The meeting convened at 5:04 pm.

Review and Approve Minutes from (Date)

There were no amendments made to the agenda.

Motion was made to approve December 15, 2020 minutes

Mara Iverson kicked off the meeting.

Opportunity for Public to be Heard

Neil Richardson said he was here to listen to this issue.

Imogene Drakes said she was here to hear about issues that are important to her.

Kit Harrington said she was here to listen and learn about these issues.

Ben Freeman said he was here to listen to the work being done and to learn how to help amplify it through the network he works with.

Agenda item 1: Vermont School Board Association

Chelsea Myers said that the policy subcommittee made the recommendation to hear from the Vermont School Board Association. Sue Ceglowski was invited to present about how policy works in the state of Vermont.

Sue presented a PowerPoint that she made. It started with who is responsible for policy: the school boards. These responsibilities have been divided into 6 areas: engage the community and establish a vision, adopt policy, board and superintendent partnership, develop a budget, ethnical operations. Policy is defined as what should be done, the intent, and the details of how it is done is left up to the school administration. Policy is a priority because it is how direction and expectations are put in place. Policies and procedures are different, procedures are written documents for how to implement policy. Policy is needed by law, by recommendation (help

with operation of the school district), and to consider. Required policies are intended to relay what a law is set to cover, Mara Iverson mentioned that the way in which these are written aren't accessible to everyone and wondered if there was a way to make these more comprehensible for everyone. Sue said that this is being worked on with some policies such as hazing prevention (<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/healthy-safe-schools-hhb-model-policy-interpretation>).

Sue then broke down the model equity policy. Equity Policy C29 link (<https://www.vtvsba.org/copy-of-model-policy-manual>). The equity policy is not required by law. A discussion about the term disability aroused and how this word was opted out of the equity policy even though there are other laws that use the term disability. The implantation of this policy requires the district to use data to inform district decision making, providing students to equitable access to quality education, to monitor and evaluate the needs of district schools, incorporate cultural perspectives, identify and counteract biased practices, and provide ongoing professional development. There is monitoring going on, the superintendent must identify outcome indicators that shows that the policy is being implemented (information about discipline data, student success data, an audit of policies through an equity lens, etc.). An equity lens is able to be modified based on each district and what that district needs. An equity lens is a set of questions that you ask to see if a policy, practice, or program supports equity effort in order to ensure it doesn't disproportionately affect a set of students. Sue gave examples of questions to ask in her PowerPoint.

Where is the intersection is for policy governance? Sue said that it is district to district, not statewide. Does policy governance lend itself to be applicable to these equity lens? Sue said she thinks it does and there is a way for it to fit into a policy governance model. How does insurance would play into this, in terms of protecting the school board and the Working group. Sue said that the public gets notice when a school board is adopting a new policy. How do we handle schools not meeting the student's needs? Sue said it would be addressed at the local level.

The process for developing policy is to create a committee of the SU/SD board, ask administrative to research legal requirements, determine if the administration's proposal will accomplish the school boards goal, seek legal review for areas of concern, and present model language to board for adoption. There are legal requirements for adopting policies and the public needs to be given 10 days' notice (16 VSA Section 563 (1)). The supervisory union board is responsible for policy adoption.

District Equity Policy template https://b44bfd73-9878-43fe-a010-5ad36658c1f7.usrfiles.com/ugd/b44bfd_d8cf5ce210f64d77bd575f186e04c333.pdf

Agenda item 2: San Francisco State University

Mark Hage brought up a potential collaboration with the San Francisco State University's College of Ethnic Studies. After two Zoom meetings with the Dean, lead to a meeting in December where they were excited about the possibility of working with this group. This would be a different population and area for them to work with and suggested for the Act 1 group to submit a proposal to work with them. Mark is asking for authorization to propose projects to collaborate with the College of Ethnic Studies on and to be able to ask for a budget for this.

The objectives are to facilitate achievement of the Act 1 working group and to provide support for everyone involved in the school districts. The goals of collaborating with the College of Ethnic Studies is to strengthen Vermont's Educational Standards and State Board of Education Rules, evaluate tools and merit, create local curriculum committees, build a professional development collaborative for post-graduate course work, and explore virtual academic courses. Cynthia Reyes wanted consideration of this given to post teachers as well as pre teachers. Amanda Garces wanted to make sure that we are learning from other states, bringing what has been successful for them into this working group, and wanted to make sure that we aren't mimicking past actions. Barbra Marden wanted to make sure that clear criteria and accountability are established for both groups.

The document that Mark Hage was finalized and sent out to the College of Ethnic Studies. The Act 1 Working Group will wait and see what will happen. This document will be sent out by the end of January and the approximate turnaround time will be early February. A formal vote was conducted, and Mark Hage and Amanda Garces will finalize this and continue with the next steps.

Agenda item 3: Conversation about Literacy

Is reading still fundamental? How do we learn to read? We learn to read through science: it is a learned skill and about 40% of students need explicit instruction on how to read the symbols that represent the sounds speaking makes. Vermont still has an 'anything goes' policy on reading. Children need to learn how to read well early or else they will struggle their whole lives. It is a mixture of background information and verbal comprehension.

The State Board of Education and Agency of Human Services (not AOE) are responsible for reading instructions in schools. This should be based on "highly effective, research-based reading instruction," however, there is no criteria for this. The Blueprint focuses on Pre-K – 3rd grade with focus from AOE. 3rd grade is where educators see a shift from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn.'

In 2020, the H. 668 Bill was proposed, focusing on how to teach young people with dyslexia, however, was not passed. There is no plan for resurrecting this bill. Chelsea Myers followed this bill closely, it started as a way to assess how districts are doing with reading and how reading is developed. The most effective way to help improve reading outcomes is to give teachers the means that they need to help teaching the ability to read, especially to the most vulnerable children. This bill became more of a supplement to another bill that had already passed in Vermont, changing it from an evaluation bill to a support bill.

Most work done around reading, especially in black and brown students, is top down and doesn't focus on grassroot work, therefore not recognizing the systematic problems that exist with teaching reading (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/nataliewexler/2020/06/06/how-reading-instruction-fails-black-and-brown-children/?sh=73b54bda4ebe>). What is the goal? What should we do? This has been a politically charged issues and standardize tests have determined who is proficient and who is not; white culture measures the ability to read and comprehend, but this is a biased means of assessing that. There are few means of accountability for this. Vermont is the lowest state in the country on educating people with learning disabilities (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/VT-aprltr-2020b.pdf>).

Housekeeping:

State Board is giving the Act 1 Working Group space to present what they've found so far with the intersection of standards surrounding education.

Jan 25 @10 Mark and Amanda are doing the legislative report.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 pm.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Erin Adams and Amanda Garces.

DRAFT