

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Dial in Number: 802-552-8456

Conference ID: 307 945 515#

November 30, 2020

Present: Tim Vincent, Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust (VSBIT); Jeff Francis, Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA); Melissa Horwitz, Human Rights Commission (HRC); Sue Ceglowski, Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA); Jay Nichols, Vermont Principals' Association (VPA); Jeff Fannon, Vermont NEA (VT-NEA); Henri Sparks, Burlington School District; Dan French, Agency of Education (AOE)

AOE: Suzanne Sprague

Agenda:

1. Mascots and Symbols discussion
2. Racial Justice and Restorative Practices discussion
3. Title IX
4. Other?

The meeting convened at 2:32 p.m.

Chair Vincent began a discussion on mascots and symbols. Nichols shared that a couple of school districts in the state are actively involved in conversations pertaining to mascots and symbols. Chair Vincent asked the members if there was interest in HHB Council taking action such as releasing a position statement. Discussion followed regarding the [VPA position statement](#), legislation regarding mascots, removing gender from mascot names such as "lady" generals and the statement speaking to hazing, harassment and bullying. Chair Vincent will draft a statement for the Council members' approval prior to the January 25, 2021 meeting. Sparks hoped that the statement will be distributed as widely as possible. Secretary French said that he would review the statement with his leadership team.

Chair Vincent updated the Council on Title IX and the grievance procedure at VSBIT. He said the Title IX Toolkit was on their web site as a resource to assist schools that need help. It breaks down the role of each individual involved in the process. He added that the HHB Toolkit was listed on VSBIT's web site as well and has been updated to be aligned with Title IX's new language. Discussion followed that Title IX may change again in a few months and the struggle for schools to implement this change.

Secretary French shared a link to the first [report](#) to the Governor from the Racial Equity Task Force which is chaired by Xusana Davis, Executive Director of Racial Equity. Chair Vincent asked if the Council wanted to wait for the Act 1 Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group to make their recommendation on curriculum standards to the State Board of Education or if it preferred to address the issues with a more unified approach. Discussion followed regarding available resources to support the Council, statewide conversations on School Resource Officers (SROs), if schools decide not to use SROs who would fulfill their obligations, data contained in the second report from the Racial Equity Task Force, Human Rights Commission (HRC) data, SRO training, guns in schools and understanding public sentiment on SROs.

Chair Vincent asked the Council if there was an action item to pursue as the HHB Prevention Advisory Council. Further discussion followed regarding understanding the function of SROs. Chair Vincent asked Sparks to share the memorandum of understanding (MOU) the Burlington School District has in place regarding SROs. He said he would like to reach out to Rob Evans, Margolis Healey, and Mark Moody, retired SRO and invite them to the January 25, 2021 meeting to get a better understanding of SROs.

Chair Vincent mentioned restorative practices when addressing HHB issues in schools. The concern is in bringing the victim and the people (person) that affronted them in the same room. Sparks said that does not happen in his school. They cannot substitute a restorative practice for an HHB investigation. It is possible to bring the two together as a restorative outcome, if the two parties agree to it following the investigation.

Horowitz said she would follow up on the translation service used by the HRC.

Secretary French said it is time to look at the education system and address the impact of the pandemic on students both from an educational and holistic perspective. He would like the Council to engage in that conversation. He added that there will be issues that are relevant to the Council. He added there will be a long road to recovery. It will be challenging as a system to respond to those needs and there will be a need to bring all our resources to bear in the most effective way possible to remediate and address the needs of students.

The next meetings are below.

January 25, 2021

March 29, 2021

May 24, 2021

July 26, 2021

September 27, 2021

November 29, 2021

The meeting adjourned at 3:16 p.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Suzanne Sprague.