

Agency of Education
219 North Main Street, Suite 423
March 27, 2018

Present: Bernice Garnett, UVM; Jeff Francis, VSA; Bor Yang, Human Rights Commission;
Curtiss Reed, VT Partnership; Henry Sparks, Burlington School; Mill Moore, VISA; Emily
Simmons, Agency of Education; Rebecca Holcombe, Agency of Education
AOE: Suzanne Sprague

Agenda:

1. Legislative issues
2. Restitution for parents
3. Racial Equality and Justice
4. Resolution of intra-school harassment complaints
5. Agency update to the Hazing, Harassment and Bullying Task Force

The meeting convened at 2:32 p.m.

Garnett asked the group for introductions and asked for reflections from each relating to the Council's work. Reflections included National Student Movement around gun violence, privilege and power, harassment of athletes, understanding best practice policy, school safety and call volume received by the Agency of Education pertaining to hazing, harassment and bullying.

Garnett said that Deputy Secretary Fowler will present at the next meeting to discuss the Ethnic Studies Bill (H.794) and the Trauma Informed Bill (S.261). Moore said that both will be added to the Miscellaneous Education Bill (S.257) in House Education. Discussion continued regarding Act 77, standards, curriculum, implicit bias and teacher training programs. Secretary Holcombe suggested that the Agency's ROPA staff speak to the Council regarding teacher professional development.

Yang clarified that restitution does not mean monetary payout but rather a need for some type of independent review at schools in terms of bullying when parents are dissatisfied with outcomes and processes at their child's school. She advised there is a real need. Yang said her organization gets many calls on this topic. Secretary Holcombe said that there is a bill in Senate Judiciary mandating restorative practices in schools. Sparks said that if bullying reports are not substantiated then the parents are not happy. He wondered about support systems and trainings for schools and teachers where there are no resources. Simmons said that independent

reviews are contracted services and locally funding. She added that the reviewers have a unique skill set and the numbers of independent reviewers are scarce. Discussion followed regarding accountability and investigations with integrity.

Secretary Holcombe handed out an overview of school climate in Vermont's accountability model and sample initiatives related to restorative practices and social and emotional learning to explain ongoing work at the AOE. Discussion followed on PBIS for middle and high schools, student outcomes and equity. Sparks mentioned a 28 million dollar lump sum paid to Vermont by the Tobacco industry. He asked Secretary Holcombe if any of the money will be used to fund restorative practices in schools or school safety. Secretary Holcombe said 5 million dollars may be used to harden schools which includes installing cameras and electronic door locks. Sparks said softening schools is important as well and building relationships with kids and putting the money into people on the ground. Secretary Holcombe said that school budgets have added 18 million dollars over the last 5 years for services for students and clinicians in schools.

Discussion followed regarding School Resource Officers and their roles, school safety audits, all hazards approach and prevention.

Garnett asked for input on agenda item 3, Racial Equality and Justice. Discussion followed on the race gap and bias, disadvantages for young African American boys, generational impact and gender differences.

Reed explained a recent act of discrimination at a high school sporting event. He said the student, who was on the visiting team, reported the incident to the coach. Reed said that the parents from the opposing school have no rights. He described a similar event at a different school where the parents have received no resolution or access to the process. Secretary Holcombe suggested that the model policy should be amended. Garnett said this is important because the policy does not address inter-school incidents of bullying, hazing and harassment. Discussion followed regarding addressing the loophole in the model policy to place the responsibility on the school that the perpetrator attends, an addendum vs. new policy, and VPA's best practice process.

The remaining meeting dates for 2018 are below.

Monday, May 21, 2018

Monday, July 30, 2018

Monday, September 24, 2018

Monday, November 26, 2018

Garnett said that topics for the next meeting include an update from Deputy Secretary Fowler on the Ethnic Studies Bill and the Trauma Informed Bill, and an update on PBIS and NTSS. She requested that topics for the agenda be sent directly to her attention.

Francis thanked Secretary Holcombe for being an exemplary leader.

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Suzanne Sprague.