

Agency of Education  
219 North Main Street, Suite 424  
November 26, 2018

Present: Bernice Garnett, UVM; Henri Sparks, Burlington School District; Kathy Johnson, A World of Difference; Jay Nichols, VPA; Jeff Francis, VSA; Jeff Fannon, VT-NEA; Tim Vincent, VSBIT; Mara Iverson, Outright VT; Daniel M. French, Agency of Education

AOE: Suzanne Sprague

### Agenda:

1. Work-group session on Council's goals
  - a. Professional Development
  - b. HHB model policies to one page
  - c. Youth voice
  - d. School climate assessment
2. Work-group Share
3. Revisit Listening Tours
4. Other?

The meeting convened at 2:35 p.m.

Chair Garnett welcomed the Council to the meeting. She said that Iverson had a question that pertained to her work and that she would like input from the Council. Chair Garnett said she would circle back to the agenda following the discussion. Iverson said that she has begun work with elementary schools and has found that teachers are unwilling to teach about LGBT because they fear community backlash or the parents will opt the student out of the lesson. She asked the following question: What topics are students required to participate in during the school day and can parents opt the student out of any and all topics of instruction? Iverson mentioned that a kindergarten parent volunteer was not permitted to read "I am Jazz" to a class.

Discussion followed regarding the definition of curriculum, discrimination, first amendment issues, who determined curriculum, School Board responsibility, ethnic studies bill, school climate and culture, white perspective, parents being more involved with younger children and the issues being complicated. Chair Garnett said that inclusive curriculum at the policy level within the school district level is a protective factor to reduce bullying and suicides among queer youth and other marginalized youth. She wondered why 20 years of empirical evidence cannot be used to support inclusive curriculum. Further discussion followed regarding recommending policy changes that might advance the cause, local control, teachers under

pressure, official statements from organizations supporting inclusive curriculum, teacher trainings and further conversations with Statewide Curriculum Directors.

Secretary French said he believed curriculum should be developed from the grass roots up. He added that developing curriculum is on his radar. Secretary French said that the broad goals for education are in the U.S. Constitution. The State Board of Education develops the standards. Districts or SUs work to establish curriculum frameworks and the schools and teachers develop specific aspects. The goal of education is non-negotiable, but the specific means on how it is achieved is. Secretary French said the goals of inclusivity is equity and quality which need to be delivered to all students.

Johnson suggested the Council do another round of listening tours and develop another poster like the one from 2014. Discussion followed regarding access of programs that directly address bullying and harassment prevention, professional development, youth voice, student involvement, school climate and work across state agencies on mental health.

Vincent shared a document of the HHB Model policy which was narrowed down to 2 pages. He asked the group to review the document and edit the language so it is in layman terms and more understandable to the average parent/student. Chair Garnett asked to have edits ready for the next meeting. Discussion followed regarding age appropriate language, communications and parent and teacher training.

Chair Garnett asked for information regarding listening tours that the HHB Council organized. Fannon, Sparks, Johnson and Francis explained and shared their experiences. Chair Garnett asked for further discussion at the next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 29, 2019.

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Suzanne Sprague.