



**Task Force on Equitable and Inclusive School Environments  
Subcommittee #1: Best Practices, Defining Behaviors, other  
states  
October 6, 2021, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.**

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting  
Call In: 1-802-828-7667  
Conference ID: 574 314 878#  
1 National Life Drive, Room #532  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

**Members Present:** Marilyn Mahusky; Amy Wheeler-Sutton; Chris Sheehan; Sandra Cameron; Lindsey Halman; Justin Pinard; Steven Perrin; Kheya Ganguly  
**AOE:** Suzanne Sprague, Maureen Gaidys  
**Members of the public/others:**

**Call to Order/Introductions/Amendments to Agenda**

Meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. There were no amendments to the agenda.

**Opportunity for Public to be Heard**

There were no public to be heard.

**Working Session**

Subcommittee #1 – Best practices, defining behaviors, other states:

- Review how other states address exclusionary discipline (Amy W-S., Marilyn, Sandra, Marianna)
- Define the most serious behaviors that ...should remain eligible for suspension or expulsion (Marianna, Chris S., Steve P.)
- Identify best practice procedures...that minimize law enforcement contacts... (Lindsey H., Justin P., Marianna, Kheya)

Resource to explore: <https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/school-discipline.aspx>

We need to continue looking for states who have moved toward reducing and/or eliminating suspensions/expulsions for all students; where can we find the forward-thinking policy? Range of examples and non-examples.

Conversation around local control of schools – it is interesting that other states still give a lot of latitude to administrators about when to suspend/expel

What is the alternative to suspension? We need to make strong, specific recommendations. More than one tool in that toolbox (i.e., restorative practices, individual instruction, therapy, etc.).

We need a good definition of suspension – situations in which students are attending part-day because they have behavioral challenges at the end of the day – some cases nationally in litigation around this. When does it cross the line into a suspension?

Time away from learning IN school – denied educational access during the school day.

How do the different frameworks, approaches, and practices we recommend interplay with cultural responsiveness, disproportionate effects on students?

It cannot all fall on the AOE and the schools – there just aren't the resources. How can we require interagency collaboration?

Our recommendations need to assume that these approaches take time, mindset shift, etc.

Another layer of this could be looking for language that would help school boards to adopt a model policy. Also need to look at legislative language. Do we have any school districts in Vermont to look to? Need to be clear on the various schools that would need to adopt this policy (i.e., approved independent schools, Pre-Ks who receive public funds, etc.).

We also need to consider the needs of the victim as well – look at the impact people in the community as well. Need to make it clear that restorative approaches are VOLUNTARY.

Lindsey will create a document that begins to identify best practices and links to policy language.

Question about whether this Task Force is supposed to be looking at/recommending policies? May come into play in the “recommendations to the legislature” part. Also, in reviewing how other states address discipline, this would be the policy piece.

There may end up being a recommendation to the legislature for a statute/rule change that there are certain things that administrators can't suspend for. Not sure what direction the recommendations would take.

There are challenges associated with the Open Meeting Laws and collaborating with one another to get work done in between larger group meetings.

Marilyn will research other states' exclusionary discipline practices by reaching out to her listserv.

For the next few weeks, we should have one topic agendas.

School-resource officer conversation – demonstrate examples of when SROs are removed – why have they made that decision, what is the impact on students (especially BIPOC) when there is an SRO in the building. Look at these districts – what have they done to replace the SRO? Need concrete recommendations.

What would a trauma-responsive procedure look like?

We will share with Maureen our research on best practices.

Next Meeting: 12-1pm on Oct. 13

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 12:57pm.

Meeting Minutes recorded by: Amy Wheeler-Sutton

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