| AOE logo | Harassment, Hazing and Bullying Prevention Advisory Council |
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# Draft Minutes

# Meeting Place: Agency of Education

# Address: 219 North Main Street, Suite 304

# Date: March 28, 2016

Present: Bernice Garnett, Ken Page; Mike Dreiblatt (via telephone); Bor Yang; Jeff Francis; Jeff Fannon; Kathy Johnson; Curtiss Reed; Don Morrill; Emily Simmons; Dana Kaplan; Kathy Johnson; Karen Richards; Mill Moore; Henri Sparks; Tracy Harris; Lucie Garand; Rebecca Holcombe

AOE: Suzanne Sprague

Visitors: Jean Murray, Vermont Legal Aid; Kristen Murray, Vermont Department of Health

Agenda:

1. Review the 2015 Vermont YRBS data on bullying:
   1. Presentation from Kristen Murray, PhD – Vermont Department of Health
2. Review draft HHB council yearly legislative report
3. Updates from council members on individual work
4. Transgender policy update
5. Recommendations/statement on AOE’s discipline report for follow up work to reduce incidents of exclusion as well as disproportionality
   1. Proposal from Karen Johnson and Jeff Francis regarding Restorative Justice
6. Other?

The meeting convened at 2:38 P.M.

Garnett introduced Kristen Murray from the Vermont Department of Health for the results of the YRBS. Murray explained the survey is conducted nationwide to include all middle school and high school students. Questions include topics regarding mental health, personal safety, substance abuse and other perceptions. Results are broken down by county and compared to state results. Results are forthcoming broken down by school district. Murray continued to provide results for Vermont. Vermont middle schoolers have seen a decrease in bullying possibly due to awareness. High school results have leveled off and the hope is to see it begin to go down.

Reed asked if results are broken down by race. Murray advised not at this time. Secretary Holcombe added it would be worth breaking down. Johnson added the report used to contain clearer distinctions and she hopes there is no data being lost. Yang said its definition is a little too broad and asked if bullying repetition and the percentage was captured? Murray explained that the CDC dictates the questions. Yang added that the info is skewed. Garnett advised this is a standardized form and is the largest data source we have. Another downside is that it doesn’t explain why. We know the biggest factors are race, sexual orientation, weight and income. Secretary Holcombe added that this data has been collected for a long time and is used for various reasons.

Johnson asked if there was a question about students feeling safe. Murray said yes. Moore asked if there was an uptrend on the mental health side and bullied numbers depending on state of mental health. Murray said there are numbers included on these topics as well as numbers for students considered suicide based on their mental health and whether or not they were bullied.

Reed added students of color have a 2 ½ -3 times higher suicide rate and prevention is not targeted to this group. Johnson said sexual orientation is 4 times higher. Kaplan added that lesbian, gay and bisexual students have a disproportionally higher rate. Garnett would like to see bullying and date violence. Johnson asked if there were any harassment questions. Murray answered no. Page asked if there were any questions regarding successful efforts to turn events. Murray advised that there were some but not a direct question such as whether there is a person available that the student could go to for help. Sparks added that in his school district harassment is up and asked how new American students are being captured.

Johnson would like a note sent to the CDC in support of putting questions back on the survey so we do not lose data. Garnett asked her to take the lead. Francis said it is the council’s responsibility to advise the Secretary and it should come from her. Secretary Holcombe asked Johnson for assistance. Murray added if you add a question then a question needs to be removed from the survey. Reed would like the Secretary to contact her counterparts in New Hampshire and Maine and approach it as the northern NE block. Murray said any suggestions to the CDC for an addition or deletion need to be sent to her by April 4, 2016. Secretary Holcombe added that any additional questions should be phrased in a way that is not Vermont-specific.

Garnett moved to the yearly legislative report. She asked for input from council members on professional development needs and discipline. She would like edits and comments or questions on the format or the report in general sent to her by April 11, 2016.

Sparks asked for clarification on the council’s role in regards to discipline and conflicts of interest with members of the council. Page explained that the role the council could provide made some people uncomfortable on having programs on or off the list. The group couldn’t agree on criteria like price and maybe this shouldn’t even be the role of the council. Page thinks one place for resources will make things easier for people wanting help. Sparks said the government website for No Child Left Behind included prices. If there is one place to go that would be the most helpful.

Secretary Holcombe asked for clarification regarding the list being for all providers or only reviewed or recommended providers. Johnson said a vetted list is different than a complete list. Garnett added that all council members are getting questions about where the schools go for help. The council could have a plan b and have the most inclusive resource and defer to the Secretary. Morrill said we need to identify if the council means prevention or compliance. Sparks would like to know what the people on the council do. It would be helpful to know what people in the room can offer.

Secretary Holcombe added that the VSBA & AOE have school safety trainings. Morrill said that VSBIT can provide compliance training and the number of days and types of training would be different for each school. Page is particularly interested in hazing training. Morrill added VSBIT training does not include a lot with hazing.

Due to time, Garnett suggested that agenda item 3 be delayed until the next meeting. She asked the council to come to the next meeting prepared to speak 5 minutes about who they are and what they do.

The AOE and Kaplan provided an update on the AOE’s new Transgender guidance. Kaplan noted that all superintendents and principals received the Best Practices Guidelines. It includes terms and definitions, laws, addresses privacy, official records, facilities, sports, names and pronouns and FAQs. Secretary Holcombe added that there is rapidly changing case law. It’s helpful to have clarity and standards to help push the conversation. There will be ongoing updates to best practices. Kaplan thanked the AOE for the help and said it’s a win-win all around.

Garnett asked that agenda item 5, “Recommendations to the AOE regarding equitable school discipline,” be tabled until the May 2016 meeting due to time constraints. Sparks said this is a viable topic. If we eliminate suspensions then we must address the wrap around policy to include alternative placement and reintegration. Francis agreed that it is critical to have an alternative to suspension and noted this will be much different in a big school district versus a small one. Page added that it is bad practice to suspend kids and give them zeros across the board. Fannon wishes to work with Sparks on this topic.

Garnett advised Sparks and Fannon to work as a bubble group and report back to the council.

The next meeting is May 23rd, 2016.

Adjourn:

Garnett moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:02 PM.