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## Summary of Outcomes: Supporting Educational Equity (SEE) Project

### Background

In 2017, the Vermont Agency of Education received a \$10,000 Innovating ESSA Educator Engagement grant from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The grant was designed to support improvements in classroom practice and teacher understanding tied to the federal approval of Vermont’s ESSA State Plan.

A critical area of focus within Vermont’s Plan was increased commitment to goals for equity. The AOE proposed measures to implement Act 77 equitably. The AOE also sought to eliminate the inequity that persists between Vermont’s affluent white students, and students who have historically demonstrated achievement gaps within our state’s school systems.

Given this focus, the AOE used the CCSSO grant funding to collaborate with fourteen K-12 teachers from around the state through two focus group-style meetings. This project was named Supporting Educational Equity (SEE). Participants, including the meetings’ facilitator, were largely people of color and women. The meetings were facilitated by Rebecca Haslam from Seed The Way, who asked SEE participants to consider the following: “What classroom-level and systemic improvements would need to happen to fully leverage the equity-related changes described in Vermont’s State Plan?”.

The SEE group made multiple recommendations for the AOE addressing perceived problems of practice at the classroom, LEA, and AOE-level. After reviewing those recommendations, the AOE identified several that we believed that we could address. These are listed below, along with the steps we plan to take in 2018-19 and beyond to address them.

### Recommendations and AOE Action Steps

SEE Recommendation	Resulting AOE Action Steps
1. Participants requested more opportunities for professional development related to equity and diversity issues, including trauma-informed practice.	AOE staff will share this request with Vermont’s professional educator associations (superintendents, principals, teachers, and curriculum leaders).  The AOE will explore issuing an annual Request for Information (RFI) to identify providers of professional development related to educational equity, in and outside of Vermont. Provider applications will be reviewed by the AOE, which anticipates publishing a list of vetted providers annually.
2. Teachers should better represent diverse perspectives in their classrooms when creating curriculum, purchasing instructional materials, and designing their learning environments.	Washington State has a 10-point checklist for teachers to use when making inclusion-informed decisions about instructional materials and curriculum. The AOE will discuss modifying this checklist for Vermont’s use, and anticipates sharing out a version of this resource within the 2018-19 academic year.

SEE Recommendation	Resulting AOE Action Steps
3. Teachers requested more frequent opportunities to discuss equity and diversity issues at the state and local level	<p>AOE staff will share this request with Vermont’s professional educator associations (superintendents, principals).</p> <p>AOE will identify where field/AOE conversations about educational equity are currently happening and discuss the possibility of providing additional opportunities for discussions.</p>
4. Equity-related measures should be more consistently represented within local-level teacher evaluations.	<p>Schools in Vermont commonly use Danielson, Marzano, or Vermont’s Core Teaching and Learning Standards to frame their teacher evaluation models. The AOE will investigate where equity is being addressed within each of these models and will develop a resource that highlights these connections for schools looking to prioritize equity within their evaluations.</p>
5. The AOE’s Integrated Field Reviews (IFRs: site-based reviews of schools and LEAs) should incorporate a number of equity-related prompts.	<p>The AOE will develop equity-related prompts for inclusion in IFRs.</p>
6. “Cultural competency”, or something similar, should be represented as an Education Quality Standard (EQS) Transferable Skill.	<p>The AOE will review how cultural competency can be highlighted within each of the current EQS transferable skills.</p>
7. Diversity, equity, and school climate should be more consistently represented within Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) and the AOE’s Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA).	<p>This conversation was already in progress at the AOE when this SEE recommendation was made. The AOE appreciates knowing that its work on the CIP and CNA reflect field interests and will continue to review the CNA and CIP with more deliberately representing equity-related concerns in mind.</p>
8. AOE should spotlight schools who are doing equity/diversity-related work well.	<p>The AOE will examine ways to reflect this recommendation in its current work reviewing and spotlighting schools and SUs.</p>

## Questions?

If you have questions about the SEE project, please contact Chris Case, Education Project Manager, at [chris.case@vermont.gov](mailto:chris.case@vermont.gov), or Emma Louie, Education Coordinator (MTSS), at [emma.louie@vermont.gov](mailto:emma.louie@vermont.gov).