



Act 1 - Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group – Policy Subcommittee

July 28th, 2023 – Draft Meeting Minutes

Present – Act 1 Working Group:

Amanda Garces (Chair); Chelsea Meyers, Miakoda Schultz, Vera Sheehan, Lynn Murphy, Mike McRaith, Addie Lentzner, Heather Lynn,

Public:

Jessica Meller and Ted Molnar

Invited: Sandra Cameron and Sue Ceglowski (VSBA)

Welcome & Introductions

The meeting convened at 10:06 am

Call to Order/Amendments to Agenda/Introductions

Opportunity for Public to be Heard.

Ted Molnar shared that he was observing and thanked the committee for its work.

Discussion:

Introductions and Purpose: The meeting focused on policy work tied to the work of the Act.1 Working Group which set to sunset on August 31st. Homework assignments were given, and the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 8/1/2023.

The chair brought options about a contingency Plan: If the current working group cannot finish the task of drafting the policy by August 31st, the Chair and Co-chair suggests bringing it to the full Act One Working Group in August meeting and possibly pass ask to allow the Technical Working Group, starting September 1st, to complete the work.

Documents: Three documents were highlighted for discussion:

- a. Recommendations and background on ethnic studies policies drafted by consultants.
- b. VSBA's recommendations from six months ago.
- c. Chelsea's document analyzing EQS and potential policy changes.



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Accessibility Issues: The Documents were discussed but were not available to all attendees prior to the meeting. The Chair shared the documents on the chat and will ensure they are uploaded to the Agency's site.

Crosswalk with the EQS:

Equity Policy and Anti-Racism Language: The need for a required equity policy in school boards and potential updates to the guidance supporting transgender and gender nonconforming students were discussed.

Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy: The inclusion of a notice of non-discrimination policy on school district pages to clearly reference federal and state anti-discrimination laws was proposed. It was noted that transparency on student protections could be beneficial.

Clarification Needed: More information was sought on the benefits of making certain policies mandatory versus notifications and publication of rights.

Further policies were discussed, including Instructional Strategies and Needs-Based Professional Learning policies. The challenges of dictating statewide professional development policy without conflicting with collective bargaining agreements were highlighted.

Alignment with Governance Standards: The Vermont School Boards Association (SBA) will be updating policies impacted by changes to the Quality Standards (QS) and aligning model policies accordingly. Members were encouraged to review the School Board Governance Standards.

Community Engagement Policy: Suggested improvements to align community engagement policies with EQS include intentional language focused on engaging marginalized groups and requiring state board diversity representative of the broader Vermont education community.

State Board Representation: Consideration of codifying standards for appointing state board members to ensure a diverse and representative makeup of decision-makers in Vermont's education system.

Clarifying Authority: Discussion about the authority division between the State Board and the Agency of Education regarding rulemaking, given the role the Agency of Education had with the DQS.



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Policy for Library Materials: The importance of creating a policy to control access to truthful and broad information in libraries was emphasized. The Vermont School Boards Association had previously recommended making it a mandatory policy.

Work Plan and Vision: Plans for the end product of the policy work were discussed. The final report, due at the end of August, will include policy recommendations. Considerations were made on drafting a short bill to make certain policies mandatory. The technical working group may help draft policies for the report.

Crowdsourcing Input: The group considered the possibility of crowdsourcing input on key questions for each policy area to gather diverse perspectives.

Prioritization and Graphic Communication: The group discussed the idea of creating a simplified list of policy recommendations and prioritizing them to present a clear focus to the legislature. Mike suggested using graphic communication to illustrate existing laws and areas needing emphasis.

Next Steps: **The meeting concluded with a plan for each policy committee member to create a simplified list of priority policy recommendations for the next meeting.** The subcommittee will read the provided documents and come up with a focused list to guide the drafting of policy recommendations for the final report. The group acknowledged the importance of supporting schools, students, and teachers through funding, leadership, and implementation plans. The VSBA’s involvement in drafting policies to support the work was appreciated.

Motion: Motion to adjourn 11:01 am
Moved by: Mike McRaith Seconded by: Vera White
Endorsed by: Amanda Garces (Chair); Chelsea Meyers, Miakoda Schultz, Vera Sheehan, Lynn Murphy, Mike McRaith, Addie Lentzner, Heather Lynn, Opposed by:



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Motion Passed: yes