



**Act 78: Adult Education and Literacy HSCP
Student Access Study Committee -
October 3, 2023, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting
Call In: 802-552-8456
Conference ID: 389 021 804#

**APPROVED
MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Catherine Kalkstein, Central Vermont Adult Basic Education; Mary-Katherine Stone, Vermont House of Representatives; Martine Gulick, Vermont Senate; Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity; Jess DeCarolis, Vermont Agency of Education; Mike McGraith, Vermont Principals' Association;

AOE: Suzanne Sprague

Others: Michelle Faust, Sharon Parker, Robin Castle

Meeting called to order at 3:33 p.m. Minutes taken by Xusana Davis.

Agenda

1. 3:30 p.m. Call to Order, Roll Call, Amendments to Agenda
2. 3:35 p.m. Approval of September 12, 2023 Minutes
3. 3:35 p.m. Discussion of distributed materials
4. 4:15 p.m. Discussion of Goals
5. 4:50 p.m. Next Steps & Public Comment
6. 5:00 p.m. Adjourn

Approval of September 12, 2023 Minutes

- Motion to approve: Mike MCRAITH
- Second: Jess DECAROLIS
- Vote Outcomes
 - Aye: [Mary-Katherine STONE, Martine GULICK, Xusana DAVIS, Catherine KALKSTEIN, Jess DECAROLIS, Mike MCRAITH]
 - Nay: [None]
 - Abstain: [None]
 - Result: Minutes approved.

Presentation: Overview of the Current Landscape

- DECAROLIS reviews the Study Committee's charge as set forth in Act 78 of 2023. The presentation includes data on adult learner outcomes and success rates. The presentation also reviews applicable state statutes and rules governing the Study Committee's work.
- Result: The Committee is informed/reminded about the applicable laws and rules, and about the current landscape regarding educational pathways. The Committee would like to review the presentation slides again more deeply after the meeting. DECAROLIS will send the slides to the Committee for public posting.

Goal-Setting & Next Steps

- The Committee members are invited to share their goals and aspirations for this working group. Summarized responses include:
 - DAVIS: Approach the topic with a racial equity lens that challenges the very measures and milestones that we hold up as markers of "success" for students. Find solutions that will support a larger and more diverse state population, but not in a way that treats communities of color (specifically immigrants) as just bodies to serve as workers, but as whole, welcomed, valued community members.
 - GULICK: Discover whether we have the data needed to make meaningful decisions about which pathways are best; Find ways to reach the point where everyone is able to attain a high school diploma or equivalent, which feels daunting with the limited timeframe the Committee has been handed.
 - MCRAITH: Work closely with practitioners and incorporate the perspectives and experience of the school leaders represented in the VPA's membership.
 - STONE: Gain deeper understanding and information/data needed to relay to legislative colleagues and better engage the Committees on Education; make the information and data accessible for external audiences and colleagues.
 - DECAROLIS: Approach the topic of adult education with proper respect and investment; Build broad awareness that adult education is unique and is distinct from mainstream conversations about high school completion; Explore the need for unrestricted education funds; Explore the possibility that it might be time to update/adapt the high school completion program to increase access and sustainability.
 - KALKSTEIN: Secure the funding needed to support the programs, including flexible funding to fund the administrative work that's required. Also includes allowing for flexibility in student numbers and for funding to grow with inflation; Support students living with disabilities through sustainable funding that allows them to access programs that will support their stable employment and supporting of their families.
- Proposals
 - DAVIS: Plain-language summaries of any of the Committee's public-facing materials and translated versions of those plain-language summaries, to model support for the communities we are aiming to center. ORE can assist with coordinating this.
 - GULICK: Concerned about capacity to be able to do this work and re-work the pathways, would like to have a conversation with AOE to discuss how we are going to be able to manage this workload.
 - DECAROLIS: Additional AOE staff are present at this meeting who can answer questions about the requirements of WIOA and other programs are. There are other pathways to a high school diploma that can come from different funding sources and might be more efficient if they're pulled from the appropriate funding sources. Should be increasing opportunity for adult education and literacy providers that are supported through the general fund programs.
 - MCRAITH: Agrees; this aligns with what school leaders are stating. For certain students, the existing program(s) are a good fit, and for others, there's a need for stronger incentives for students struggling with attendance. These are often broader conversations that may involve other entities like DCF, for example. Worries that the complexity of investment in the high school completion program might make it harder to utilize the other options/pathways available.
- Next Steps
 - DECAROLIS: AOE has been conducting a study under Act 74 of integrated adult education and training system to examine adult CTE and adult education providers.

DAVIS: It sounds like we're simultaneously saying we need more information but also acknowledging that there is so much information out there. We're also beginning to discuss how we're going to relay our findings and recommendations to external stakeholders and also hear from stakeholders. The in-between task is finding the time and space for Committee members to digest what they learn, which is difficult with the timeline we have been handed.

DECAROLIS: It also sounds like this Committee might be interested in seeking additional time from the legislature to complete its deliberations (but still providing the required reporting as assigned).

- **Result**

The Committee holds open the possibility of seeking an extension, depending on how well it is able to synthesize the information and generate meaningful recommendations. The Committee wants to hear from members of the public and will ensure future agendas list opportunities for public comment. Part of this community dialogue may also include creation of a short document (perhaps a one-pager or similar) that can be publicly shared to help others understand the Committee's work. DAVIS and STONE volunteer to assist with creating this resource if the Committee does decide to move forward with this idea.

Public Comment

- Sharon Parker shares that she is an educator who has been working in this field for decades and that students who have high need should be supported so they are able to succeed.
- Michelle Faust shares that this is a very complex issue and she is hopeful the Committee will generate a solution that works for both students and providers.

Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn: DECAROLIS
- Second: STONE
- Vote Outcomes: All vote aye.
- Meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.
- Next Meeting Date: October 24, 2023 (3:30-5:00 p.m.)

Action Items

- Complete - DECAROLIS: Share presentation slides with the Committee
- ALL: Review today's presentation and other shared materials and formulate questions/feedback.
- KALKSTEIN + AOE: Solicit and collate the Committee's questions before next meeting.

Materials Shared/Discussed

- [Materials Packet for 10/03/23 meeting](#)
- [Overview presentation from AOE](#)

Acronyms

- AOE: State of Vermont Agency of Education
- ORE: State of Vermont Office of Racial Equity
- VPA: Vermont Principals Association
- WIOA: Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act