

Location

Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust (VSBIT)
52 Pike Drive
Berlin, Vermont 05602

April 19, 2023

Present: Henri Sparks, Burlington Schools; Amanda Garces, Human Rights Commission; Jeff Francis, Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA); Sue Cegłowski, Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA); Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity; Jay Nichols, Vermont Principals' Association (VPA); Secretary Heather Bouchey, Vermont Agency of Education (AOE)-(arrived at 4:10 p.m.)

AOE: Suzanne Sprague

Agenda:

1. Public to be Heard
2. Working Session

The meeting convened at 3:34 p.m.

Chair Sparks asked if there was any public to be heard. There was none.

Chair Sparks appreciated the prior meeting's conversation around the Council being more project oriented. He would like to take the group to a place where it feels it is making a difference for children in Vermont. Chair Sparks invited Davis to lead the working session.

Davis reflected on the prior working session and reminded the Council of a three-page document that she sent following the meeting that included her notes and some next steps. The next steps were: 1) recompile and reconsider recommendations for the Council, 2) obtain an update from the AOE on the draft model policy, and 3) consider when and how to create subcommittees to plan public engagement and prospective budgeting. Chair Sparks said he confirmed with the AOE that the HHB Draft Model Policy is on hold pending the Biden Administration's release of the new rules related to Title IX. He said the AOE will combine the Title IX rules and HHB Model Policy into one document.

The Council participated in an icebreaking exercise and provided an update on how each are doing. Discussion followed regarding mental health resources and supports, culture not being

supportive, the challenges people are facing and how they are being addressed, difficult conversations, creating welcoming places for students and learning for joy, state of education since the pandemic, support to all schools, power and balance of the Council, advocating for collaboration, punitive process and current policy is not working.

Davis addressed the power differential of the Council. She encouraged discussion on power dynamics and representation on the Council. Discussion followed regarding the imbalance of power, student perspective, Council is designed to protect the system and not students and families, expectations of attendance, power differential with each other and with members of the public, resuming school visits and bidirectional engagement. Davis suggested more conversation around the engagement work of the Council. Discussion followed regarding school visits.

Davis welcomed Secretary Bouchey and gave a recap of the conversation. Secretary Bouchey said she is eager to jump in and learn more and to do what she can to make good use of the Council. Discussion followed on becoming proactive instead of being reactive, state-wide trainings, building a holistic approach, helping students work with each other, social emotional learning work, Act 1 changes on the proposed Education Quality Standards (EQS) rules, improving climate and culture in schools, students and parents understanding their rights, providing more clarity on what is “prevention”, students mirroring community, compliance, school visits, teambuilding, superintendent assurances and attestations from independent schools, including legislators and the State Board of Education on the Council and students being impacted.

Davis brought the focus back and recapped the meeting’s conversations. She said the Council could use a mapping session. Davis proposed that the next meeting of the Council be a mapping session and decide how to increase Council engagement.

Action items include preparing for mapping session, scheduling another meeting for early to mid-May, and updating members who were absent on the conversation of the meeting. Secretary Bouchey will send an email to the full council. A Doodle Poll will be sent to the Council for consideration on the next meeting date.

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Suzanne Sprague.