

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Dial in Number: 802-552-8456

Conference ID: 969 333 197#

September 28, 2020

Present: Tim Vincent, Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust (VSBIT); Jeff Francis, Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA); Melissa Horwitz, Human Rights Commission (HRC); Sue Ceglowski, Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA); Mara Iverson, Outright VT; Jay Nichols, Vermont Principals' Association (VPA); Jeff Fannon, Vermont NEA (VT-NEA); Dan French, Agency of Education (AOE)

AOE: Suzanne Sprague

Agenda:

1. Title IX discussion
2. Other?

The meeting convened at 2:32 p.m.

Chair Vincent asked for a roll call. He asked for any additions to the agenda. Nichols requested a conversation on mascots and symbols. Fannon asked for a discussion focused on racial issues and racial equity. Iverson asked where the layman's interpretation of the HHB Model Policies and Procedures are published on the AOE's web site. Chair Vincent will send a copy of the final version of the layman's interpretation of the HHB Model Policies and Procedures to Sprague.

Chair Vincent lead the discussion on Title IX and the changes therein. He said Lynn, Lynn, Blackman and Manitsky, P.C. developed a model policy as a guideline to the new Title IX regulations that included AOE input at VSBIT's request. It can be located on the VSBIT web site under the Toolkit section. Additionally, a slide deck was created for training purposes that address the changes are located in the Toolkit section. Chair Vincent said there is a training scheduled for October 2nd, 2020. Nichols wanted to make sure that school leaders and superintendents knew of the changes in the law and had training on them. He would like to find a way to ensure all districts have training. Nichols added there have been substantial changes in the law.

Chair Vincent asked if Title IX fell under the HHB purview. Secretary French said there is a multi-state lawsuit that has not been settled. He added that the AOE will not promulgate a

model policy until it is settled. It has put the AOE in a difficult situation because it wants to help districts but are cognizant of the litigation. Secretary French suggested a separation of policy versus procedure as a simple approach to a complicated issue. Chair Vincent said that as Lynn, Lynn, Blackman and Manitsky, P.C. while developing the Title IX Toolkit, they have made subsequent updates to the HHB Model Policy to keep it in sync with the updated law.

Chair Vincent asked for translation resources that council members have used. Horowitz and said the HRS pays for the service. Secretary French will look into translation services and asked Horowitz to forward the service name to him. Iverson said that the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) provides translation services.

Nichols said that symbols and mascots may contribute to harassing, hazing and bullying type behavior from a systemic point of view. The VPA released a statement on mascots and have received a lot of feedback both good and bad. Nichols summarized the statement that mascots and/or school symbols should be inclusive of the entire population and not one that excludes part of the school population. Ceglowski suggested listening to a podcast called "Sounds like Hate" put on by the Southern Poverty Law Center that deals with the Randolph Union High School and its mascot. Chair Vincent suggested discussing this topic at a future meeting.

Chair Vincent asked Fannon to begin the discussion on race and racial equity. Fannon said it's important to try and make sure that everyone feels included, is treated equally and fairly throughout school systems. He said that those with unequal systems should be addressed. He said it may include school resource officers (SRO) and school discipline. Discussion followed regarding suicide data and its correlation to race, Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), VT-NEA's documentary called "I Am From Here" used as a tool to address race, VT-NEA's race specific toolkit "Advancing Racial Equity in Vermont's Public Schools" used as a resource, and that the race conversation is difficult to have in Vermont. Secretary French said that Xusana Davis is the State Executive Director of Racial Equality and has been tasked with addressing the topic. Her report will be released soon that details a section on schools. Secretary French reminded the members of the Act 1 Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group who will be recommending curriculum standards to the State Board of Education. He hoped to address the issues with a more unified approach. Discussion followed regarding a public statement on the topic of race, role of the Council, school procedures for dealing with the student that was harmed and restorative justice practices.

Chair Vincent said that mascots/symbols and racial justice will be on the next agenda.

The next meetings are below.

November 30, 2020

January 25, 2021

March 29, 2021

May 24, 2021

July 26, 2021

September 27, 2021

November 29, 2021

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.
Minutes recorded and prepared by Suzanne Sprague.

DRAFT