



**Task Force on Equitable and Inclusive School
Environments
September 24, 2021, 3:00-4:00 p.m.**

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting
Call In: 1-802-828-7667
Conference ID: 295 688 355#
1 National Life Drive, Room 523
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Heather Bouchey, Deputy Secretary, Agency of Education (AOE); Marianna Donnally, Department of Mental Health; Sandra Cameron, Vermont School Boards Association; Steve Perrin, Vermont Principals' Association; Wanda Otero, Vermont-National Education Association; Catherine Gallagher, Vermont Superintendents Association; Marilyn Mahusky, Legal Aid Disability Law Project; Karen Price (for Christine Kilpatrick), Vermont Family Network; Amy Wheeler-Sutton, Building Effective Strategies for Teaching Students Project at the University of Vermont; Lindsey Halman, Vermont Restorative Approaches Collaborative; Chris Sheehan, teacher, appointed by the Vermont-National Education Association; Ana Lindert-Boyes, Twinfield Union High School, Vermont Principals' Association/UP for Learning; Grace Brown, Burlington High School, Vermont Principals' Association/UP for Learning and Justin Picard, Vermont School Counselor Association.

Not Present: Darren McIntyre, Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators; Kym Asam, Vermont Independent Schools Association

Members of the public/others: Jeff Maling; Kheya Ganguly, Director of Trauma Prevention and Resilience Development at State of Vermont

Call to Order/Roll Call/Amendments to Agenda

Chair Gallagher called the meeting to order at 3:04pm

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes - Motion to approve 8/30/2021 minutes by Marianna Donnally, seconded by Heather Bouchey

Opportunity for Public to be Heard - 1 person from the public present, but no comments at this time (Jeff Maling)

- Interested in the idea of this work dealing with record expungement, which is a challenging issue

Meeting Minutes:

- Act 35 has a definite charge

- While there are many things that are important, task force needs to suggest other avenues for issues that are not within the scope of this work (as defined in Act 35)
- Chair & Vice Chairs will facilitate the discussion and move work forward, following timelines (6 minutes)
 - Chair can also break a tie if needed
- Lindsey Halman asked for clear articulation of the charge of this Task Force
 - Charge is to “make recommendations to end suspensions and expulsions for all but the most serious student behaviors and compile data regarding school discipline in Vermont public and approved independent schools in order to inform strategic planning, guide statewide and local decision making and resource allocation, and measure the effectiveness of statewide and local policies and practices.”
 - When complete, recommendation will be presented to Secretary French and Legislature
- Amy Wheeler-Sutton provided a tool to help outline the tasks, people responsible for tasks, due dates, and status check
 - Initial report by Jan 15, final report by March 15
 - Dep. Secretary Bouchey requested a correction as the first 2 tasks, relating to data, have been completed (from agency’s perspective)
 - Marilyn Mahusky - concern from the group that individuals won’t have time to go to the dashboard and look at data. Can AOE aggregate the data and present to this group?
 - H. Bouchey - Not saying the AOE is done working on data with this committee. To the extent that the TF needs additional supports or assistance, happy to provide that. When data is available and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is followed, data will be provided. When questions are clear, data can be provided.
- Sections of the organizational tool:
 - Current behavioral supports (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Restorative Practices, Trauma-informed Schools) not necessarily on the dashboard. Where will we find the information?
 - No central database; may be a list of Supervisory Unions/Supervisory Districts (SUs/SDs) trained from the PBIS group
 - Marilyn Mahusky asked for definitions of Restorative Justice, trauma-informed schools, etc. so that there is a qualitative aspect to data being collected
 - Amy Wheeler-Sutton - PBIS is positive behavioral interventions and supports - have trained 168 schools, but level of implementation and fidelity of implementation varies across the state (do have some data).
 - Restorative approaches in schools are around community building at tier 1 - strong relationships. Training had started and was disrupted by COVID-19. Tier 1 strategies with focus on repairing harm that was done when an incident occurs (10 schools, no central training system). Restorative Approaches Collaborative (about 45 schools with some training)
 - Trauma-informed care - training happens through a variety of providers throughout the state that SDs might contract with - training could vary widely.

- Cat added that being trauma-informed schools look at communities that face relentless trauma (i.e.: traditional behavior plans tend to be static documents that don't honor trauma or the fluid way that we need to look at behaviors and it doesn't look at students b/c more "one size fits all," where trauma-informed is about the adult response and interactions with students. There is not a repository of data on the schools that have focused on being trauma-informed
- Kheya Ganguly - trauma can be viewed in a couple of different ways. Resilience can be built and should be factored in as we make recommendations in practical ways for children and adults (trauma-responsive and healing-centered)
- Responsive classroom - tier 1 strategies on how adults can create the atmosphere for learning, intentional modeling
- Success beyond Six supports schools to bring in mental health in different ways
- Several task force members to form subgroups:
 - Collect data on training that has occurred in various locations (Marianna, Amy, Cat, Kheya)
 - Information gathering to "Recommend additional or more uniform in-school services that should be available to students under 8, where expulsion is not permitted" - this is a second piece of the 1st task; best practices (subgroup: Sandra, Marianna, Marilyn M., Kheya, Christine, Lindsey)
 - Define the most serious behaviors that ...should remain eligible for suspension or expulsion (Marianna, Chris S., Steve P.)
 - H. Bouchey - may be different ways to address challenges with a developmental lens
 - Review/recommend school professional development programs (first group with addition of Justin P.)
 - Identify best practice procedures...that minimize law enforcement contacts... (Lindsey H., Justin P., Marianna, Kheya)
 - Info/data on AOE dashboard (H. Bouchey, Cat, Marilyn can be backup)
 - Recommend how to ensure that school staff...understand... (Wanda O, Chris S.)
 - Review how other states address exclusionary discipline (Amy W-S., Marilyn, Sandra, Marianna)
- As much of this work that can be done should be collected **within 14 days**
- Information will be sent to Cat, who will synthesize it
- Who will ensure compliance w/Open Meeting Law (OML)? TF decided that none of these subgroups will represent a quorum so don't need to follow OML. Maureen Gaidys will confirm requirement to follow OML w/ E. Simmons and then help to coordinate subgroups
- All information to be reviewed by Task Force members before next meeting
- Next meeting 90 minutes - doodle poll for next meeting(s)
- FERPA - H. Bouchey addressed questions from the last meeting. Protect student privacy by restricting access to records that contain personally identifiable information (PII). Requires that reasonable methods are used to protect the data. Data we are interested in is sensitive. Protecting PII becomes more challenging as additional variables are added (i.e.: layered data). Protecting the student's data trumps the public's right to know. When talking about school level statistics and disaggregating the data. District-level data is typically not an issue, and this group should only be interested in broader data as opposed to a few students.

- If work cannot be completed within 6 meetings, request would go to the AOE, who would then take it to the General Assembly (not uncommon given the scope of work; may want an interim report and would need to request additional appropriation)
- Need to be mindful of overrepresentation of marginalized groups
- Repository being built so that resources will be on the AOE website

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:28pm

Meeting minutes submitted by: Sandra Cameron via Catherine Gallagher

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