

Memorandum

To: Kim Gleason and Tammy Kolbe, State Board of Education
From: Amanda Garces & Mark Hage, Chair and Vice Chair of the Act 1 Working Group
RE: Response to April 27th E-mail on the State Board's Proposed Revisions to EQS Manual
Date: May 1, 2023

Kim and Tammy, we hope this finds you well. Below are responses and recommendations to the matters you inquired about in your e-mail of April 27. We may have further commentary prior to May 8 about proposed revisions beyond what you specifically inquired about. We will prioritize the latter to meet your scheduling needs.

State Board Commentary:

1. We had feedback that the order of the phrase referencing the statement of purpose, should be modified to bring the "equal in quality" sentiment to the front of the phrase. We agree with that suggestion, and will make that change. Please note this edit aligns with the order that the Act 1 Working Group had originally recommended to us. That sentence (and others throughout the document) will read: *The purpose of these rules is to ensure that all Vermont students are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality and are equitable, anti-racist, culturally responsive, anti-discriminatory, and inclusive, thus enabling each student to achieve or exceed the standards approved by the State Board of Education.*

Act 1 Working Group Response:

We are fine with this change.

State Board Commentary:

2. In the definition of "Social Identity Group" we had a suggestions that while the definition states "...or other characteristics or conditions that are innate, **unchangeable**, or fundamental to identity." some of the items in the list are arguably changeable. It is our recommendation that "unchangeable" be removed from that definition. Please let us know if there is a reason that it should remain.

Act 1 Working Group Response:

Upon further reflection, we suggest simplifying this definition by ending it after the word "status." The last clause now strikes us unnecessary:

"Social Identity Group" means a group of people who share common characteristics that shape their identify and promote a sense of unity, including sex, sexual orientation, gender

identification, disability, class, socio-economic status. ~~or other characteristics or conditions that are innate or fundamental to identity.~~

State Board Commentary:

3. In Section 2121.5 *Tiered Systems of Support*, a recommendation was made that in the second paragraph we replace "issues" with "instances" in the second sentence, which currently reads: ".....offer support and resources that are respectful of the lived experiences and unique identities of students, and support students who either experience or witness **issues (instances)** of racism and discrimination." We view that to be a reasonable suggestion. Please let us know if you feel that change would be inconsistent with the intent of this language.

Act 1 Working Group Response:

We're fine with the substitution of "instances" for "issues."

School counseling services shall support the mission and vision of the school and shall be available to all students K-12. The services shall address students' academic, career, personal and social development, offer support and resources that are respectful of the lived experiences and unique identities of students, and support students who either experience or witness ~~issues~~ instances of racism and discrimination. Such services shall be aligned and integrated with the work of other professionals in the school setting, as well as those in other educational and human services.

Act 1 Working Group Recommendation on definition for "intercultural competency."

We are amenable to adding a definition on "intercultural competency." We recommend the following:

***Intercultural competency** describes practices and actions to pursue deep understanding, mutual respect, and willingness to learn about the cultures of all people, especially those who have been marginalized, silenced, and/or undervalued.*

Please let us know if you have any questions. Thanks.