

# Recommended Changes to Rule Series 2000, Education Quality Standards

Presentation to the Vermont State Board of Education by the EQS Committee

April 13, 2023

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# Act 1 Working Group Charge

Act 1 charged with Working Group with recommending additional standards designed to:

1. Increase cultural competency of students in grades PK-12;
2. Increase attention to the history, contribution, and perspectives of ethnic and social groups;
3. Promote critical thinking regarding the history, contributions, and perspectives of ethnic and social groups;
4. Commit schools to eradicating racial bias in their curricula;
5. Provide, across their curricula, content and methods that enable students to safely explore questions of identity, race equality, and racism; and
6. Ensure that the basic curriculum and extracurricular programs are welcoming to all students and account for parental concerns about religion or culture (Act 1 of 2019, Section 1(g) – Duties of the Working Group).

# EQS Committee Process

- May 2022: EQS Committee began its review/work
- Summer 2022: Testimony and focused work on Definitions
- Fall 2022: Testimony and focused work on sections related to Curriculum & Instruction
- Fall 2022: Testimony and focused work on AOE-recommended technical changes
- November 2022: Public hearing
- Late Fall 2022: Testimony and focused work on “to whom” the rule should apply
- Late Fall 2022/Winter 2023: Legal review
- Winter 2023: Updates to sections of the rule to address reporting requirements and align with proposed District Quality Standards (DQS)

# Basis for EQS Committee Changes

- EQS Committee recommendations for further modifications to the revisions proposed by the Act 1 Working Group fell into four categories:
  1. Ensuring the EQS was consistent with existing statute
  2. Whether the EQS was understandable and able to be implemented in the field
  3. Technical changes recommended by AOE and the field to bring the document current with policy and practice
  4. Bring the EQS in alignment with the newly-proposed District Quality Standards (DQS) and Quality Assurance Review (QAR) process

# Focus of the EQS Committee's Work

The EQS Committee's review focused on:

1. Section 2114, Definitions
2. Section 2120, Curriculum & Instruction
3. Section 2124, Reporting of Results
4. Section 2125, Continuous Improvement Plan
5. Section 2128, Effective Date
6. Section 2100, Statutory Authority

The EQS Committee also considered sections that address "to whom" the EQS rules applies, specifically:

1. Section 2110, Statement of Purpose
2. Section 2112, Education Quality Standards

# Section 2114, Definitions

- EQS Committee recommendations for further substantive changes to definitions proposed by the Act 1 Working Group:
  1. Ethnic groups
  2. Ethnic studies
  3. Ethnicity
  4. Racism
  5. Critical thinking
  6. Neurodiversity

# Section 2120, Curricular Content

- EQS Committee took testimony from representatives in the field about changes proposed by Act 1 Working Group to Section 2120
- The questions posed by the Committee were:
  - Are the rules clear as written?
  - Do they strike an appropriate balance between offering enough detail to be understood, and enough flexibility to ensure application in a local context?
  - Are these rules able to be operationalized in our schools?
- The EQS Subcommittee made several minor editorial changes to reflect recommendations by AOE and other groups/individuals, for clarity

***Testimony was universal in its support for the recommended changes to the EQS proposed by the Act 1 Working Group and minor changes made by the EQS Committee.***

# Sections 2124 & 2125, Reporting of Results

- EQS Committee developed and recommends changes to Section 2124 to:
  1. Clarify and streamline SU/SD reporting requirements and identify categories for data disaggregation in reporting
  2. Align reporting requirements with Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) Process
- EQS Subcommittee recommended changes to Section 2126 to align CIP and reporting requirements with DQS/QAR



# Section 2128, Effective Date

The EQS Subcommittee recommends the following timeline for implementing the new rules:

- Statement of Purpose and Definitions on adoption
- Implementing the full rule on July 1, 2025

# Questions & Discussion

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# “To Whom” The Rule Applies

- Act 1 Working Group recommended that the EQS be extended to apply universally, and equally, to independent schools
  - This is a **significant departure from current policy** and the EQS Committee determined that this was **not permitted under current statute** (16 VSA Section 165)
- The Subcommittee **agreed** with the Act 1 Working Group that:
  - **All Vermont students** should be afforded an **equitable, anti-discriminatory, culturally responsive, anti-racist, and inclusive education**
  - **Act 1’s principles and goals should apply to schools that receive public funding**, whether they are a public school or an approved independent school.

# Committee Considerations

In its deliberations the EQS Committee also recognized:

- **Other statutes articulate common curricular, school climate, and facilities requirements for both public and independent schools** (e.g., 16 VSA Section 164(9), 16 VSA Section 906, 16 VSA Section 1161) and that these other sections in the law may provide statutory authority to apply sections of the EQS to approved independent schools.
- **State Board of Education Rule 2200 (Independent School Program Approval) provides a regulatory framework for independent school approval** that might be expanded to include operating and quality standards for independent schools.
- When describing the duties of the Act 1 Working Group, Act 1 requires the **Group to review standards of student performance adopted by the SBE under 16 VSA Section 164(9)** (standards for student performance in appropriate content areas)

# Options for SBE Consideration

The Committee identified two options for how the SBE might implement the Act 1 Working Group's recommendations for approved independent schools.

- Option 1: Selectively apply sections of the EQS to independent schools approved to receive public tuition.
- Option 2: Revise Rule 2200 to include new requirements for independent schools that mirror changes to the EQS recommended by the Act 1 Working Group.