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From: Elizabeth Burrows

Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 5:08 PM

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Subject: January 23, 2023 meeting

STATE OF VERMONT

General Assembly

Members of the State Board of Education:

We are writing as a group of legislators who are extremely concerned about the content of the January 23, 2024 State Board of Education meeting not being made available to the public. The agenda for the meeting was billed as a “special meeting” that optionally precluded recording. The agenda also indicated that the discussion would be identical to the previous meetings discussing public comment related to the 2000/2200 rules series, but it has been reported that it included a full redaction of the Education Quality Standards associated with Act 1 of 2019.

Now that those redactions have been made public, the lack of process transparency is of grave concern. Specifically disturbing is the fact that there was no public discussion of even whether to make changes, let alone whether changes should be undertaken by a process of two individuals working alone, in the absence of consultation with any of the statutorily indicated Working Group members.

Legislators are accountable for the initiatives we vote into existence, and many of us hold acute interest in how those initiatives are implemented, what needs may arise to refine statutory language, and ultimately whether these initiatives are successfully filling the need that they were created to fill. Not having access to review crucial meetings prevents us from being able to analyze the progress of legislation we put into place.

Legislators are also accountable to our voters. When we are asked about the status of a bill or initiative, it is incumbent upon us to follow through and find the answers. Not having access to full understanding of the processes makes it impossible to give an accurate answer when we are asked to follow up.

We therefore respectfully request that all meetings be recorded, and that all components, including recordings and all documentation, be posted somewhere with an intent towards full and easy public access. Not one step of this process should take place without public knowledge, and we ask that you be more vigilant about inclusion and transparency.

Sincerely,

Rep. Angela Arsenault

Rep. Melanie Carpenter

Rep. Kevin Christie

Rep. Elizabeth Burrows

Rep. Edye Graning

Rep. Rebecca Holcombe

Rep. Laura Sibilila