

TO:
State Board of Education

FROM: Flor Diaz Smith, Incoming President, Vermont School Boards Association

RE:
Public Comments - Rule Series 2000 Proposed Changes

DATE: October 3, 2023

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Education Quality Standards. My name is Flor Diaz Smith. I am the incoming President of the Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA). I am here today to provide public comments on behalf of the VSBA.

I am very familiar with the proposed changes to the Education Quality Standards because I served on a VSBA Committee that provided feedback to the Act 1 Working Group. Through that work, I can confidently say that VSBA supports the changes throughout the Education Quality Standards that focus on providing equitable, anti-racist, culturally responsive, anti-discriminatory and inclusive educational opportunities.

The proposed changes to the Education Quality Standards began with the work of the Act 1 Working Group – centering Vermonters from historically marginalized communities – to ensure education in our state is accessible and nurturing for all students. Their proposal to the State Board included a requirement that both public and approved independent schools should be subject to the updated standards. The State Board removed approved independent schools from the update - we disagree with that decision. If we are going to create the culture we want to see and preserve our democracy in our nation we have the moral obligation to make sure ALL schools are committed to creating inclusive educational opportunities that are relevant both historically and culturally, addressing the impacts of bias, prejudice and discrimination. Our commitment should be to the development of cultural humility and personal growth for all and preparing all students to participate effectively in an increasingly racially, culturally and socially diverse Vermont.

There are students attending approved independent schools whose tuition is paid by Vermont taxpayers. All students who receive a publicly funded education (whether they attend a public school or an approved independent school) should have the benefit of an education program that is equitable, anti-racist, culturally responsive, anti-discriminatory and inclusive. The best way to ensure that all publicly funded students receive this benefit is to have one set of rules that applies to all publicly funded students. The State Board's current approach of having two sets of rules is inequitable and confusing.

Thank you.

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Flor Diaz Smith
She/Ella [why?](#)

diazsmith**STUDIO**

Washington Central Unified Union School District, Chair

VSBA Vice President /Central Vermont Region Representative

Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council Co-Chair

National School Board Association, Easter Region Representative