From: Samuelson, Jennifer <Jennifer.Samuelson@vermont.gov>
Sent: Sunday, September 10, 2023 7:13 PM
To: Mary-Katherine Stone <MStone@leg.state.vt.us>
Subject: Re: Accessibility Request

Hello, Rep. Stone, and thank you for reaching out. I appreciate your comments and your continued interest in the Board's work. I received a similar letter from Jeff Francis regarding accessibility to the Board's Search Committee meeting on September 1st and will reiterate my response here.

For at least as long as I have been on the SBE, it has been the Board's regular practice to only send a Teams meeting invitation to Board members and members of the public who will be presenting to or otherwise appearing before the Board as part of our agenda; other members of the public have routinely accessed our meetings by dialing in and listening. Before our meeting on the 1st, to my knowledge, no one has ever suggested that we do things differently,.

At the beginning of the Board's September 1st Secretary Search Committee meeting, members of the public were invited to comment. When no one did, we turned to our working session. At that point, a Board member offered to share his screen to begin our discussion, and Mr. Francis immediately raised his hand. Even though our Public Comment period had passed, I called on him and heard his concern. Given that we were already in our meeting, I instructed Board members to not share their screens nor to drop anything in the chat. Thus, our discussion was entirely oral to ensure that members of the public had the same access to the meeting as did individual Board members. Knowing that members of the public were listening to our meeting, we also took pains to read, multiple times, the language that we were discussing so that everyone could follow along with our discussion. At the end of our meeting, three members of the public indicated that, with some minor suggestions, they were pleased with the Overview, Description, and Preferred Qualifications that the Committee crafted during the meeting and they commended us on our work.

Having written the above, this does not mean that the Board's practices cannot be changed; rather, I provide this explanation so that you understand what measures the Board took, in the middle of a meeting, to respond to a public comment that was raised for the first time at that meeting. I would not characterize the Board's response as either "vague" or constituting a "lack of action".

As you know, the Board has no staff and is dependent upon the Agency for support. With regard to your good suggestions about improving accessibility in future meetings, I have had several conversations over the past week with both the AOE and the Governor's Office in this regard. I will keep you and other members of the public posted on our work.

Kind regards,

Jennifer Deck Samuelson
Chair, Vermont State Board of Education

From: Mary-Katherine Stone <MStone@leg.state.vt.us>
Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 5:47 PM
To: Samuelson, Jennifer <Jennifer.Samuelson@vermont.gov>; Gaidys, Maureen <Maureen.Gaidys@vermont.gov>; Sprague, Suzanne <Suzanne.Sprague@vermont.gov>
Cc: Diop, Mohamed <Mohamed.Diop@vermont.gov>; Fearon, Grey <Grey.Fearon@partner.vermont.gov>; Gleason, Kimberly G <Kimberly.G.Gleason@vermont.gov>; Jepson, Lyle <Lyle.Jepson@vermont.gov>; Lovett, Tom <Tom.Lovett@vermont.gov>; O'Farrell, Jennifer <Jennifer.OFarrell@vermont.gov>; Werner, Richard <Richard.Werner@vermont.gov>; Wilburn, Aaliyah <Aaliyah.Wilburn@partner.vermont.gov>; Bouchey, Heather <Heather.Bouchey@vermont.gov>; Kolbe, Tammy <Tammy.Kolbe@vermont.gov>
Subject: Accessibility Request

To All It May Concern:

Please see the attached letter sent on behalf of all signatories.

Thank you,
Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone

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