

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting
Call In: 1-802-828-7667
Conference ID: 807 584 152#

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Working Group (WG) Members Present: Xusana Davis, Executive Director of Racial Equity, Chair; Lynn Stanley-Currier, Vermont Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Executive Director, Vice-Chair; Heather Bouchey, AOE, Secretary of Education; Amanda Garces, Vermont Human Rights Commission (HRC), Director of Policy, Education and Outreach; Rebecca McBroom, Vermont-NEA, General Counsel; Heather Lynn, Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA), Attorney; Jay Nichols, Vermont Principals' Association (VPA), Executive Director; Chelsea Myers, Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA), Associate Executive Director; V Pearson, Director of Organizing, Outright VT, Executive Director; Cammie Naylor, Vermont Legal Aid (VLA).

Agency of Education (AOE): Tracy Watterson, Meghan Jaid, Maureen Gaidys

Members of the public/others: Big Hartman, Erica McLaughlin, Jeff Francis, Colleen DesChamp.

Note Takers: Bouchey, Myers, Robinson, Garces

Call to Order/Amendments to Agenda/Introductions

Davis called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Opportunity for Public to be Heard

Erica McLaughlin, Assistant Executive Director, VPA, spoke about how the larger schools with more resources have the personnel dedicated to do the Hazing, Harassment and Bullying (HHB) work and principals are part of that work but don't do the majority of the work; the smaller schools rely on the principals to share the workload and that impacts their capacity for fulfilling their role of instructional leadership. These principals need more proactive support for the HHB work. Garces asked what might be envisioned for support for the smaller districts. McLaughlin offered suggestions that included clarity around definitions and preventative funding for processes that support students.

Duane Pierson, principal since 2004, with a lot of experience at elementary, middle, and high schools. He said he believes that smaller schools, and schools in general, need increased capacity. Investigations and ensuring safety are a priority, but capacity is limited. One suggestion would be to hire investigators for each supervisory Union (SU) – and the funding

of this would be a challenge. To do the investigations properly takes time; a recent one took 6-7 hours of getting notes together. A full report could take 12-16 hours.

There was discussion on discrepancy between self-reporting and number of investigations, administrators may hesitate to pursue investigations as the process is intensive – instead the incident might be treated as misconduct or an opportunity for re-teaching, there is always a distinction of behaviors experienced and alignment with definitions, frequency and response of *general* complaints of HHB behaviors, how we view the difference between student voice and student reporting, risk factors, working under different sources of authority, the need to fully understand data, and the need for school cultures where students feel safe, supported and included.

Approval of [October 2, 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes](#) and [October 23, 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes](#)

Boucheley delegated Watterson to speak to an edit to the draft minutes of the October 23, 2023 meeting. Watterson asked that the minutes be corrected to read: “Tracy introduced herself as the Assistant Director of the Division for Student Support Services **and will continue as** the Vermont Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) Program Manager.” WG members agreed with this. Nichols moved that with that change, the minutes for October 23, 2023 be approved; Garces seconded. There was no discussion. The motion passed. Garces moved to approve the October 2, 2023 minutes, Boucheley seconded. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

Idea-Generating Exercise

Davis introduced Miro (interactive whiteboard), shared her screen and explained the exercise.

The group started with the recommendation of “Resources for Schools to Develop Harassment Prevention Initiatives.” Ideas suggested were: 1) dedicated district wide funding for prevention efforts and HHB investigation efforts (secondary prevention), 2) AOE provides examples of best practice and technical assistance and leverages great examples in Vermont, 3) funding and experts for programming to be embedded in schools on social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum that focuses on inclusion and belonging, 4) create and fund a position on a building-by-building basis that will a) support education efforts with students on behaviors expectations related (but not limited) to HHB, b) help train staff on these issues, c) perform all HHB investigations. For this recommendation, the group identified and discussed why it works, risks, what students and families would need, and how comfortable they were with the recommendation.

There was discussion on the usefulness of this exercise and wanting to use this for the other recommendations/ideas, Open Meeting Law restricting collaboration of WG members outside of a publicly warned meeting, using this exercise as homework for the WG, needing to address the timeline for the report from this WG due to the General Assembly (GA) on December 1, that the WG is quickly running out of meetings, asking for more time, and identifying stumbling blocks in the process.

Davis recapped that the WG needs to work on problem identification and an extension of the required report to the GA to January 15, 2024. The WG ceases to exist on February 1, 2024. Davis said that the next four meetings would be from 9-11:00 a.m. on November 20, 2023,

December 4, 2023, December 18, 2023, and January 8, 2024. Davis will forward a template to the group to be completed individually in advance of the next meeting.

General Discussion and Work Plan

N/A

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Meeting Minutes recorded by: Maureen Gaidys.

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