

Recommended Changes to Rule Series 2000, Education Quality Standards

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

May 11, 2023

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).



Committee Activities Since Last Special Full-board Meeting

- **Two sets of written comments** were provided to the Committee from SBE members
 - Jennifer Samuelson
 - Lyle Jepson
- **Committee met twice** to review and respond to SBE comments
 - Provided written responses to each point
 - Solicited and received responses to questions generated by SBE comments from AOE and Act 1 Working Group
 - Updated EQS document where appropriate to reflect changes consistent with SBE comments
- Added new text to **clarify requirements** for AOE under 16 VSA Sec 165(a) for monitoring whether schools meet EQS standards (see Rule Section 2126.2), to **harmonize with proposed AOE rules for the District Quality Standards (DQS)**.

Questions & Discussion

“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.

