

From: Lynn Vera <lynnveravermont@gmail.com>
Subject: State Board : Equity and Diversity in VT Education
Date: September 8, 2022 at 2:54:37 PM GMT-4
To: Lynn Vera <lynnveravermont@gmail.com>, tammy.kolbe@vermont.gov,
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Cc: Ruth Durkee <ruth.durkee@vermont.gov>

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Dear Kim Gleason, Tammy Kolbe, and members of the State Board of Education EQS Committee,

I am writing to you as a retired Vermont Educator. I spent 30 years working in our schools and assisted in the development of the Vermont Adult Diploma Program; I retired as a high school counselor. For nearly 20 years I have served as an Independent Reviewer, assisting school districts and the HRC and AOE to improve the handling and resolution of harassment and bullying complaints in schools.

Recently I have been shaken by the increased agitation in many communities by residents who want to stifle the accurate teaching of US History and who consider CRT (critical race theory) and the BLM and LGBTQ history as an assault on their moral rights. This is such a dangerous slippery slope and denies the fundamental responsibility of public education. I fear the radical righteous white supremacy movement is feeling empowered and choosing schools in Vermont as a target.

I am encouraged to learn that the recommended changes to the Education Quality Standards (EQS) will promote critical thinking around the history, contributions, and viewpoints of many different ethnic and social groups. Among other things, this will provide welcoming spaces for all students. This work is important to me because I care about you people, all young people. I am concerned that we educators model critical thinking and the value of truth. I want us to model respectful welcome and curiosity about our new Americans, as the history and stories of all those who came before. We can't have laws against harassment in schools and workplaces if we don't also teach why certain behaviors and attitudes are in themselves a challenge to the dignity of some. We cannot promote lies-ignoring history does just that.

There is emerging excellent curriculum and newly proposed AP courses that will enable schools to adjust course and genuinely teach.

I applaud and thank the educators who have committed so much time and emotional and intellectual energy to this committee process. I urge the State Board of Education to consider this valuable body of work. I hope there will be opportunities for public comment so we can share our voices on this critical topic. Please adopt these EQS recommendations submitted by the Ethnic Studies and Social Equity Working Group so we can better serve all students in Vermont schools.

Sincerely,

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