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Sent: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 1:34 PM
To: Gleason, Kimberly G <Kimberly.G.Gleason@vermont.gov>; Garces, Amanda <Amanda.Garces@vermont.gov>
Cc: Mark Hage <mhage@vtnea.org>
Subject: Socio-Economic Conditions and Discrimination

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Kim, hi.

Thank you for your patience as Amanda and I considered the question of how anti-discrimination measures in the EQS Manual for **socio-economic reasons** would be “operationalized” by school staff.

If a student faces discrimination for socio-economic reasons, and it results in physical or psychological harm or the threat of it, a school district is obligated, of course, to stop the discrimination and prevent its recurrence under its bullying and harassment policy and, perhaps, other policies as well.

In a different context, let’s say, for example, a student’s socio-economic conditions prevent an individual from accessing learning opportunities through a Flexible Pathway option. The school district, once apprised of the situation, would need to evaluate the option and the alleged discriminatory barrier(s) in question, then work closely with the student, the student’s family, staff, and community members, if relevant, to determine if there is a course of action that would eliminate or substantially mitigate any current or prospective discriminatory impact. In fact, the Act 1 Working Group recommended language in the EQS Manual that obligates school districts to “recognize and reduce social and economic barriers to accessing flexible pathways;....”

In both cases above, resolution would involve timely and effective investigation and action by school personnel.

We hope these comments are clarifying. Let us know if you need additional information.

Best,

Mark

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The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs. -- George Sand, “Middlemarch” (In honor of Women’s History Month)