

Good afternoon. My name is Laurie Boswell and I serve on the board of trustees at Lyndon Institute. My entire professional life has been spent in K-12 schools and my comments today are on behalf of Lyndon Institute.

Two years ago, substantial revisions to Rule Series 2200 were made in response to Act 173. It is my understanding that the State Board of Education now seeks to make additional changes for purposes of clarity and inclusivity of stakeholders' perspectives. I would like to speak in support of two proposed changes.

Last school year a group of Lyndon faculty, staff, trustees, and parents worked collaboratively to develop a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement. I believe the DEI statement was overdue, though ultimately the process allowed for important dialogue, listening, and understanding to occur. It is because of this work I can assure you Lyndon Institute supports the draft recommendations put forth by the working group on ethnic and social equity. Certainly, all students should have access and opportunity for learning in a welcoming, inclusive, bias-free environment. Moreover, Lyndon Institute supports the recommendation that Vermont independent schools be free of discriminatory practices and that independent schools attest to such annually.

These two recommended changes are in alignment with the values, practices, and culture of Lyndon Institute. Minor adjustments to Rule Series 2200 are appropriate as the full scope of revisions are still being integrated into practice.

However, I am concerned about the slippery slope I fear may be coming. I want to be clear that as a trustee at Lyndon Institute, I do not support any effort to unilaterally apply the full set of Education Quality Standards to independent schools. While all schools are in the business of educating the students they serve, public and independent schools have different governance structures. These structures do not advantage nor disadvantage either school model with respect to a school's obligation to provide a high quality, equitable education for all students they serve.

I therefore encourage you to proceed slowly with proposed changes to Rule Series 2200 as you work on behalf of Vermont students. Thank you.