

Elevate the recommendations within the 2022 Act 35 Task Force on Equitable and Inclusive School Environments Report and elevate concerns around restraint and seclusion in Vermont schools. More detailed information on exclusionary discipline recommendations can be found in the [Final Report of the Task Force on Equitable and Inclusive School Environments](#).

Data monitoring, analysis, and reporting:

- Require the Agency of Education to monitor both the use of exclusionary discipline and the implementation and effectiveness of Rule 4500, regulating the use of restraint and seclusion in Vermont schools. The monitoring and review of seclusion/restraint and exclusionary discipline data can help to identify where there may be problem areas/school districts where additional resources/training may be directed. Specific recommendations:
 - Require a report to the legislature due by January 15th of each year identifying the number of restraints and seclusions in each school and district, with demographic breakdown by disability status (IEP, 504 plan, or none), race/ethnicity/national origin, and gender at the district and state level.
 - Amend by statute Rule 4500 to require that districts report all restraints and seclusions to the AOE within 3 school days of the event.
 - Amend by statute Rule 4000 to require that districts reports all suspensions and expulsions, including in- and out-of-school suspensions and full and partial day suspensions, through a monthly data collection.
- Due to the complexity of this monitoring, data analysis, and reporting, the legislature should consider whether to recommend (and support with adequate appropriations) the AOE develop a multi-year contract with an outside organization that has the requisite equity-oriented quantitative skills and is facile with large scale state-wide educational data sets.

Create permanent state-level staffing to provide subject matter expertise on equitable and inclusive school environments (to include overseeing the alignment of all related initiatives/programs (i.e., school climate (and state-wide school climate survey efforts), PBIS, restorative approaches, SEL, trauma-informed schools, restraint and seclusion, etc.).

Create an interagency committee that examines the intersections between AOE, Agency of Human Services departments (including Department of Mental Health, Department of Health, Department for Children and Families, Department for Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living), and the Office of Racial Equity as they connect with this topic of equitable and inclusive schools. The interagency committee would be responsible for identifying areas of need to create equitable and inclusive schools and making recommendations to the Agency Secretaries and to the legislature.

Create more resources for educator training.

- Data-related training: i.e., definitions of behaviors and responses to behaviors (including “informal removals”). Data literacy on social/emotional/behavioral indicators that involves disaggregating data and other equity considerations.
- Content-level training (e.g., alternatives to exclusionary discipline, restorative approaches, Early MTSS/Pyramid Model training)

Legislate definitions of Most Serious Behaviors, Suspension, Expulsion, etc. Some language for suggested definitions can be found in the Act 35 Task Force Report. Others can be provided at VCDR’s request.

Hazing, Harassment, and Bullying

- Amend HHB statute to create an independent review pathway for bullying investigations.
- Mandate safety plans for HHB and sexual harassment/assault, stalking etc. victims that do not inconvenience the survivor.
- Develop qualifications and training requirements for HHB Investigators.