



**Vermont Sexual Violence  
Prevention Task Force**

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*The Vermont Sexual Violence  
Prevention Task Force (SVPTF)  
is a legislatively created body  
composed of representatives  
from state and local agencies,  
seeks to reduce sexual violence  
in Vermont in accordance with  
the Sexual Violence Prevention  
Act of 2006.*

January, 2013

Dear Vermonter;

In 2009, the Vermont Senate and House passed S.13 — *An Act Relating to Improving Vermont's Sexual Abuse Response System*. The legislative intent of this act—known as **Act 1**—is to increase child sexual abuse prevention efforts, enhance the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse, and improve the supervision of sex offenders.

Vermont's Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force (SVPTF) is charged with providing technical assistance and materials to help school districts and supervisory unions create and implement developmentally appropriate educational programming.

In the spring of 2012, the SVPTF disseminated the *2012 Sexual Violence Prevention Education School Survey*. The goal of the survey was to assess schools' current sexual violence prevention practices to guide the SVPTF's ongoing technical assistance and compare to baseline data collected in 2008 through a similar survey administered by the Vermont Approach. In total, 125 individuals responded to the survey; more than 60% of the state supervisory unions and districts were represented.

Three themes emerged from the findings. The three identified themes are:

**1) School-based Curriculum Practices**

Many of the survey questions asked about current practices with regard to actual and considered important curriculum/programming, number of hours spent on sexual violence prevention, format, and the education/involvement of adults in the school community. These school-based curriculum practices provide a broad-spectrum view of the current landscape of sexual violence prevention in Vermont schools, and identify gaps in knowledge, resources, and time.

## **2) Community Engagement**

Vermont has a robust network of state and community-based agencies that provide training, technical assistance, and other supports to schools in their sexual violence prevention. As evidenced by the survey responses, many schools are collaborating with these agencies to deliver effective sexual violence prevention education. The SVPTF recommends that community agencies increase outreach efforts to raise awareness of the support they can offer. Additionally, the SVPTF recommends strengthening the capacity of these organizations to provide critical resources to school communities.

## **3) Leadership | Sustainability**

Survey responses and anecdotal evidence suggest that there is an ongoing need for leadership commitment towards sexual violence prevention, as well as practices aimed at sustaining sexual violence prevention efforts (professional development, adequate resources, and strong policy that clearly articulates goals and consequences). Furthermore, research on sexual violence prevention indicates that high-level leadership, strong policies, and well-trained prevention practitioners are the key to effective violence prevention.

We invite you to read and reflect on the report of the 2012 SVPTF School Survey. The full summary can be found at the Agency of Education's Health Education page here: [http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_health\\_ed.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_health_ed.html)

The SVPTF will work to address these survey findings and recommendations over the next eighteen months of its legislative authority. We encourage your sustained participation in these efforts and thank you for your ongoing work to prevent and effectively respond to sexual violence in Vermont.

Warm regards,

The Members of Vermont's Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force