

9 Mar 16

Dear Senate Committee on Education;

Here is what you asked for in Section 49 of Act 46:

"... a plan for maximizing collaboration and coordination between the Agencies in delivering social services to Vermont public school students and their families...

... systems-level planning and integration

... sustainable ways to increase efficiencies

... ways in which schools and social service providers can share services, personnel, and other resources

... identify any barriers to increased efficiency, statutory or otherwise..."

Here is what you got:

"We elected to *narrow the scope* of the work to supports for students with emotional disturbances...

...we propose an initial plan that relies largely on *re-calibrating and/or re-focusing* existing Agency resources, instead of moving in a completely novel direction.

We are energized to collaboratively "*get to work*" on this issue.

Here is the range of interests you asked to have involved:

"... in consultation with *school districts, supervisory unions, social service providers, and other interested parties*, shall develop a plan for maximizing collaboration and coordination..."

Here is the range involved:

"Department of Mental Health, Agency of Education, Agency of Human Services, Department of Health, Center for Health and Learning, Vermont Council of Special Education Directors."

This is deeply disappointing. By limiting input the approach continues to segment and treat various "wounds" our children suffer as a result of living with the effects of poverty rather than look for ways to coordinate the myriad State, local, private, and non-profit organizations and resources to deal with the root of the problem. This is simply a band-aid of a different color.

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