

I am in support of any legislation that would require school districts (and potentially any municipality) to do a minimum of 6 hours of Implicit Bias training. It has been my experience in Vermont that we unknowingly transfer these biases into our work with children and families. I have been a Vermont school administrator for 36 years and I have observed several examples. While our population is racially homogeneous, we are faced with issues of bias around gender, economic status, disability, and sexual preference that come up all the time. Many districts have already implemented some form of this training with staff. It would not be costly or cumbersome to implement. Our district is looking at the work of Linda Skryla, Kathryn Bell McKenzie, and James Joseph Scheiurich in their book Using Equity Audits in the Classroom. It is eye-opening to see the subtle ways we send the wrong messages to kids by our room arrangements, wall hangings, reading materials, and general classroom materials. Bias can infiltrate in very easily identifiable ways. We just have to recognize it and be courageous enough to deal with it. I liken it to the way Vermont drew a very firm line in the sand with respect to bullying and harassment. This needs similar attention.

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