



VT Human Rights Commission
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January 14, 2020

The Honorable Kathryn Webb, Chair
 House Education Committee
 Vermont Legislature
 State House
 Montpelier, Vermont

RE: Act 1 – An act relating to ethnic and Social Equity Studies standards for public schools

Dear Chair Webb and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to report on Act. 1. I am here with Bruce Pandya, an Act 1 working group member and student at U-32 High School.

I will briefly share the timeline of the work thus far and open it for questions.

July 2019: The Vermont Coalition for Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools requested an extension to appoint working group members by the coalition. The extension was granted by the Speaker of the House Mitzi Johnson and Senate President Pro Tempore Tim Ashe at the end of July.

October 22, 2019: The Vermont Coalition for Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools finalized the selection process and submitted the names to the Agency of Education. As stated by Kiah Morris, Director of the Coalition it was a “deliberative process, the committee considered expertise, personal experiences, community connectivity, regional impact and balance in representation of various ethnic and social groups for each of the appointees.” All other members of the working group were appointed by their selective organizations. See names below

Name	Entity
Asma Elhuni	VCESES
Bruce Pandya	VCESES (Student Representative)
Vera Sheehan	VCESES (Abenaki)
Barbra Marden	VCESES
Maxwell Barrows	VCESES
Miakoda Schultz	VCESES
Celilo Bauman-Swain	VCESES (Student Representative)
Infinite Culcleasure	VCESES
Mara Iverson	VCESES

Mark Hage	VCESES
Cynthia Reyes	VCESES- Vermont-based, college-level faculty
Deputy Secretary Heather Bouchey	the Secretary of Education or designee;
Natasha Eckart Baning	the Executive Director of the Vermont-National Education Association or designee;
Xusana Davis	the Executive Director of Racial Equity or designee;
Heather Thomas Lynn (VSBA)	the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards Association or designee;
Bonnie Johnson-Aten (VPA)	a representative for the Vermont Principals' Association with expertise in the development of school curriculum;
Jade Hazard (VTLCA)	a representative for the Vermont Curriculum Leaders Association;
Chelsea Myers (VSA)	the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents Association or designee;
Amber Wyley (VISA)	the Executive Director of the Vermont Independent Schools Association or designee
Amanda Garces	the Executive Director of the Vermont Human Rights Commission or designee

November 26, 2019: First meeting at Montpelier High School. Amanda Garces was elected Chair, Mark Hage was elected Vice Chair and Barbra Marden was elected Clerk.

January 13, 2020: Second meeting:

- The committee began some grounding work to develop some tools to work as a team. The activity was led by Amanda Garces.
- Mark Hage led the working group to review the scope of our work
- Deputy Director Heather Bouchey review some of the state standards

A discussion was also led by working group member Bruce Pandya who requested to add two additional students to the working group. The request was also made to add an additional seat for a representative from the broader Indigenous community. The Vermont Coalition for Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools has already identified the representative from the broader Indigenous community to their selection process.

The working group agreed to advocate to add three additional members, two students and one Indigenous representative.

We will be working on creating a budget to submit to the Agency of Education. As you know, this Act only has funds for stipends and mileage for community members, but no other resources

allocated, and we are hoping to dream big in our next meeting. We will also be working on our draft of the work plan and will probably be requesting an extension in case it is needed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amanda Garces
Director of Policy, Education & Outreach