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September 30, 2019

Representative Anne Pugh
Chair, House Human Service Committee
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Chair Pugh,

The Agency of Education (AOE) and the Department of Health (Health) are in receipt of your letter, dated May 14, 2019. We share the Committee's interest in supporting increased cohesiveness for comprehensive, evidence-based sexual health education in Vermont schools.

AOE and Health met on August 9, 2019. Together we developed a set of next steps for a coordinated effort to support school implementation of sexual health education as it is currently outlined in law. **AOE and Health (we) do not recommend any additional statutory requirements, rather, we seek to enhance compliance with and implementation of what is already in place. We have concluded that we can most effectively improve sexual health education across the state by ensuring that leadership, resources and supports provided by our two agencies are coordinated and aligned to the existing standards at the state and national levels.** Additionally, improving our respective oversight and regulatory functions will leverage existing investments in our publicly-funded agencies.

Next Steps

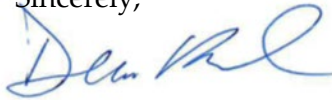
1. We are working on a guidance document for schools that will outline the current statutory and regulatory requirements concerning sexual health education, and provide examples of curricula, trainings and guidelines that can assist schools in meeting the requirements. This document will be sent to schools along with item 3 of this list.
 - a. The statutes defining a "Comprehensive Health Education" are robust, and already lay out instructional requirements more thoroughly than in other content areas. Challenges to implementation in this area are often related to lack of resources, time, or support needed to stand up robust curriculum in response to current standards.

These challenges are often one aspect of greater systemic challenges for coordination of curriculum and instructional practices resulting from Vermont's diversity of school governance structures.

2. We have planned two stakeholder engagement meetings for the fall, one on September 17, 2019 and one on November 5, 2019. At these meetings we will bring together a diverse group of community partners to consider the draft guidance document, and provide us with input on what other resources, examples, or supports should be included.
3. We intend to distribute a refresher memo to SU/SDs outlining the requirements of the Comprehensive Health Education statutes and the health education standards. This memo expands on the 2016 memo sent by our two agencies [Comprehensive Sex Education and Condom Distribution Programs](#), and will include the Guidance Document referenced in item 1 of this list.
4. We will explore the development of a communication plan whereby we will share information, resources, and learning opportunities through already existing mechanisms, such as the AOE Weekly Field Memo, the annual SHAPE conference, and a quarterly sexual health education newsletter disseminated by Health.
5. AOE is pursuing ways to strengthen monitoring and compliance with current statute and regulation through potential changes to the [Education Quality Review](#) process.

We plan to follow up with the committee in December 2019, outlining the steps we have taken, and any further recommendations we may have.

Sincerely,



Daniel French
Secretary of Education



Mark Levine
Commissioner of Health

cc: Representative Kathryn Webb, Chair House Education Committee



Sexual Health Education Curriculum and Instructional Resources Provided by the State of Vermont

Below find the resources currently provided by the State of Vermont, specifically the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) and the Vermont Department of Health (Health), for use by public and independent schools in choosing curriculum and instruction for health education.

- [Resources for Schools on Sexual Health](#): AOE received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control to develop a range of resources for Supervisory Districts and Supervisory Unions (SD/SUs) to assist with developing health and sexuality education programs, comprehensive sexual health policies and model policies for 12 school districts and supervisory unions. The AOE also provided best practices and educator professional development. As part of this grant, the AOE also worked directly with several school districts to develop their curriculum and policies.
- [Example Curriculum Framework for Sexual Health Education](#): This document illustrates what to include in a comprehensive sexual health education curriculum.
- [Model Comprehensive Sexual Health Program Policy](#): This document is an example/model program policy for sexual health, intended to unite curriculum, sexual health services and other school programs to promote improved outcomes and safer behavior.
- [Full Spectrum: Educators' Guide to Implementing LGBTQ+ Inclusive Sex Ed](#)
- [Sexual Health Professional Development Resources](#)
- [Best Practices for Schools Regarding Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students](#)
- [Comprehensive Sexual Health Program Policy](#)
- [HIV Model Policy](#)
- Webinar: [Building a Curriculum Framework for Sustainable Sexual Health Education](#)
- [Curriculum Framework Components to Support Sexual Health Education](#)

The following list of resources can also be found on the AOE's [Sexual Health page](#) as part of the agency's resources on [Safe and Healthy Schools](#).

[National Sexuality Education Standards](#)

[National Sexuality Education Standards Tools](#)

[Building a Foundation for Sexual Health is a K-12 Endeavor](#)

[Outright Vermont: Education and Outreach](#)

[Planned Parenthood of Northern New England: Peer Education Program](#)

[Joint Memo from AOE and Health on Comprehensive Sex Education](#) – Education and Health will be updating this memo as part of our collaboration.