

**Sunset Advisory Commission
Board and Commission Review**

STATE INTERAGENCY TEAM

Act 264, passed in 1988, requires that human services and public education work together, involve parents and coordinate services for better outcomes for children and families. The act developed a coordinated system of care so that children and adolescents with a severe emotional disturbance and their families receive appropriate educational, mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, residential, and other treatment services in accordance with an individual plan.

Act 264 legislation can be found here:

https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/sites/dmh/files/documents/CAFU/Act264/DMH-Act_264_Advisory_Creation_1988.pdf

The Commission reviews every State board and commission and takes testimony regarding whether each board or commission should continue to operate or be eliminated and whether the powers and duties of any board or commission should be revised. Each board and commission has the burden of justifying its continued operation.

The Commission also reviews whether members of a board or commission should be entitled to a per diem and, if so, the amount of that per diem.

In testifying before the Commission, you should be able to provide the following information:

1. In general, how often does the board and commission meet? Provide specific information on how often the board or commission has met in the past two fiscal years. Provide information on where agendas and minutes of meetings can be found.

- The SIT meets 11 times a year, once a month for two hours, with the exception of November and December when there is only one meeting that occurs which covers the two months due to holidays.
- Agendas and meeting minutes can be found here: <https://ifs.vermont.gov/docs/sit>

2. Provide the names of members of the board or commission, their term length and expiration, their appointing authority, and the amount of any per diem they receive.

- There is no term or appointment-all members are the designees for their respective departments.
- The state employees who are members of SIT attend as part of their job duties.
- The parent voice representatives (Vermont Family Network and The Vermont Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health) attend as salaried employees of

their respective agencies. The budgets for these agencies are funded through state funds, grants and fundraising efforts.

State Interagency Team Members

- Cheryle Wilcox, SIT Co-Chair, Department of Mental Health
- Diane Bugbee, SIT Co-Chair, Developmental Disabilities Services Division
- Amy Roth, Developmental Disabilities Services Division, Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living
- Pam McCarthy, VT Family Network
- Karen Price, VT Family Network
- Alicia Hanrahan, Agency of Education
- Laurel Omland, Department of Mental Health
- Dana Robson, Department of Mental Health
- Brenda Gooley, Department for Children and Families, Family Services Division
- Melanie D'Amico, Department for Children and Families, Family Services Division
- Morgan Cole, Child Development Division
- Department for Children and Families
- Amy Lincoln Moore, Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
- Cindy Tabor, Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
- Sandi Hoffman, Department of Vermont Health Access
- Danielle Bragg, Department of Vermont Health Access
- Vacant, Department of Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Monica Ogelby, Department of Health, Maternal Child Health
- Suzanne Legare Belcher, Agency of Human Services, Field Services

3. Provide an overview of the board or commission's purpose.

From Act 264 Statute:

The state interagency team shall have the following powers and duties:

- submit an annual report to the commissioners of mental health, social and rehabilitation services and education on the status of programs for children and adolescents with a severe emotional disturbance which shall include a system of care plan. The system of care plan shall identify the characteristics and number of children and adolescents with a severe emotional disturbance in need of services, describe the educational, residential, mental health or other services needed, describe the programs and resources currently available, recommend a plan to meet the needs of such children and adolescents, and recommend priorities for the continuation or development of programs and resources;
- ensure that local interagency teams are established by January 1, 1989;
- develop and coordinate the provision of services to children and adolescents with a severe emotional disturbance;

- make recommendations to the local interagency team for resolution of any case of a child or adolescent with a severe emotional disturbance referred by a local interagency team under section 33(f) of this chapter; and
- recommend to the secretary of the agency of human services and to the commissioners of the departments of education, mental health, and social and rehabilitation services any fiscal policy, or programmatic change at the local, regional, or state level necessary to enhance the state system of care for children and adolescents with a severe emotional disturbance and their families.

4. Is that purpose still needed? What would happen if the board or commission no longer fulfilled that purpose?

Yes, the purpose is still needed. If the team no longer fulfilled that purpose, there would be no state interagency team overseeing how services and supports for families with complex needs are addressed in Vermont. This is the team tasked with ensuring the silos that exist between funding streams and services do not impede the supports and services families need.

5. How well is the board or commission performing in executing that purpose? What evidence can you provide to substantiate that performance?

This team fulfills the full purpose of the statutory mandate. This is accomplished by the following:

- Monthly meetings to provide consultation to LITs and to families who request assistance.
- Address system of care issues
- SIT also provides resources to the community when needed. One example of this in the past few months is a brochure that was created for family members who are in the Emergency Department with their child when experiencing a mental health crisis. The brochure is in print format and being disseminated to hospitals, providers, families and other interested parties. A pdf of the brochure can be found here:
https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/sites/mhnew/files/documents/Services/ES/Emergency_Crisis_Brochure_REV6.pdf

Annual System of Care reports, materials and past presentations from annual statewide gatherings can be found here: <https://ifs.vermont.gov/docs/sit>

6. If the purpose is still needed, can State government be more effective and efficient if the purpose was executed in a different manner?

The purpose is still needed, and no other team fulfills the purpose as outlined by the Act 264 statute.

- 7. If the purpose is still needed, do any of your board or commission's functions overlap or duplicate those of another State board or commission or federal or State agency? If so, is your board or commission still the best entity to fulfill the purpose?**

If the State Interagency Team no longer existed there would be no formal group to fulfill the purposes as outlined in Act 264.

- 8. Does the board or commission's enabling law continue to correctly reflect the purpose and activities of the board or commission?**

The most up to date purpose of this team is reflected in the 2005 Interagency Agreement which expanded eligibility to include all children/youth with a disability who receive services from the Agency of Education and the Agency of Human Services.

- 9. Provide a list of the board and commission's last fiscal year expenditures including staffing costs. How are these funded?**

SIT does not have a budget and all members are state employees who attend as part of their job duties.

The parent voice representatives (Vermont Family Network and The Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health) attend as salaried employees of their respective agencies. The budgets for these agencies are funded through state funds, grants and fundraising efforts.

- 10. Is the board or commission required by law to prepare any reports or studies for the Legislature, the Governor, or any State agency or officer? If so, have those reports or studies been produced? Does the board or commission have ongoing reporting obligations?**

SIT prepares an annual system of care report as mandated in statute that recommends to the secretary of the agency of human services and education and to the commissioners of the departments mental health and children and families any fiscal policy, or programmatic change at the local, regional, or state level necessary to enhance the state system of care for children and adolescents with a severe emotional disturbance and their families.

- 11. How would you measure the performance of the board or commission?**

- ✓ Annual publication of the System of Care Plan.
- ✓ Annual statewide learning opportunity attended by representatives from all 12 statewide LITs.
- ✓ Membership of SIT is inclusive of statutory mandate.
- ✓ Technical assistance provided to LITs.
- ✓ Supports and consultation is provided to LITs and family members who are struggling to access their entitlements under Act 264.