



Agency of Human Services
Department for Children and Families

Family Services Division

CHILDREN AND FAMILY COUNCIL FOR PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Children's Trust Fund

Juvenile Justice

Delinquency Prevention

Hon. Kathryn Webb

House Committee on Education

Vermont State House

Montpelier VT 05602

Re: S.16 An act relating to the creation of the School Discipline Advisory Council

Dear Representative Webb,

The Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs (CFCPP) supports collection and evaluation of school discipline disparity data. The CFCPP is the State Advisory Board for youth justice and delinquency prevention in Vermont. Established by the Vermont legislature in 1986, it is the State advisory group to the Federal Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act. The federal government requires state advisory groups to review a multitude juvenile justice data, including juvenile offense data that originated on school-grounds. We strongly encourage the School Discipline Advisory Council to collect and review data for instances in which a civil, criminal, or juvenile citation was the consequence for a school-related infraction, as outlined in S.16.

The Council has an Ethnic and Racial Disparity committee focused on addressing the disparities at important decision points and is made up of a variety of community members in addition to the members appointed to the state advisory group by the Governor. In addressing racial disparities, committee members feel that it is important to not just address the result of disparities within the system with stakeholders, but to also provide prevention services and supports to at-risk youth.

In December 2020, The CFCPP funded two grantees to address these issues: Burlington School District and Spectrum Youth and Family Services. They are working implement a school-based community response that addresses the systemic and institutionalized racism within school systems as a tactic to addressing the disproportionate arrests of youth of color. Schools are a common area where all youth gather, learn, and grow which creates a unique opportunity to provide crucial supports to youth in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment. Instead of using punitive measures that perpetuate systemic and institutionalized racism, interventions and programs such as School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), trauma-sensitive training, and Restorative Practices that aim to address root causes of student behaviors and provide needed services both on and off school grounds are a crucial approach to reducing Vermont's ethnic and racial disparities in arrests.

The CFCPP looks forward to working with the School Discipline Advisory Council and collaboratively working to reduce disparities within the school and juvenile justice system. Please let us know if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kreig Pinkham".

Kreig Pinkham
Executive Director, Washington County Youth Service Bureau
Chair, Children & Family Council for Prevention Programs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Davenport".

Judge Amy Davenport
Chair of the Systems Improvement Committee
Children & Family Council for Prevention Programs