
March 30, 2021

To the House Education Committee:

Vermont Care Partners strongly supports the findings and the goals of S.16 and the creation of a taskforce focused on exclusionary discipline reform.

- As providers of services for over 10,000 children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities and with mental health and behavioral challenges, we have a strong record of advocacy on inclusion, equitable access to education for students with disabilities, and whenever possible minimizing the use of harmful and potentially traumatizing discipline practices, not only suspensions and expulsions but also seclusions and restraints.
- Through our Success Beyond Six Programs, Vermont schools contract with our network agencies to support students who, in another era, may have been expelled or suspended for behavior. Instead, these services support students in accessing their education. In 2020, our school-based programs served 3662 kids across the state, in 91% of supervisory unions. This includes 1200 students in behavioral intervention programs, and 300 students in the 14 therapeutic schools run by our agencies. More data and outcomes on our school-based programs are [here](#).
- We support the adjustments to this bill that emphasize using data that already exists. Our schools and school-based staff do a lot of reporting on many of the elements that are outlined here, and we want to minimize any duplication of reporting efforts.
- It is great to see that therapeutic schools will be represented on the Taskforce. Given our reach in terms of the array of students and families we serve, and the volume of services we provide in this area, we respectfully request that a representative from the Vermont Care Partners network be included on the Taskforce.

Thank you very much,

Dillon Burns

Mental Health Services Director, Vermont Care Partners
Supporting Vermonters to lead healthy and satisfying lives community by community