



Supporting Learners & Leaders

Vermont Principals' Association
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October 19th, 2021

Update Regarding: Recent Concerns in Student Athletics

As previously shared in the VPA's [September 28th press release](#), No one should be demeaned, marginalized, or subjected to dehumanizing identity attacks, no matter their sexual orientation, the amount of money they have, the languages they speak, their gender, their age, their abilities, or the color of their skin. We view the recent increase in attention and reporting on this issue as signs of a welcomed intolerance for hate speech of any kind in and around our Vermont school communities, and as a sign of shared commitment to prevent and effectively respond to incidents when they do occur.

The following actions have taken place since our last public statement on this issue:

- In conjunction with the Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA) and the Vermont School Athletic Directors Association, we are asking for this [Statement for School Sponsored Events & Activities](#) to be read before each school sponsored event, effective immediately.
- The VPA now has an open log on its website where [reports of concerning incidents](#) from school officials, students, fans, and coaches can be logged. Please note, this log is to identify any trends of concern and all specific incidents should be reported locally for local investigation as the first and most important step.
- The timeline for the expectation for all officials (e.g. referees, judges, umpires) to participate in implicit bias training on an annual basis has been moved up to this winter sports season to match the expectation of all coaches.
- The VPA is building a third party investigation option for schools/districts to utilize when incidents occur and the results are not agreed upon.
- The Diversity Equity and Inclusion in Activities Committee met on 10-12-21 to review drafted updates to additional policy language regarding expectations, explicit connection to HHB, and specific expectations for officials, coaches, and administration when alleged incidents occur. We expect updated language to be adopted within the calendar year.

- The VPA is continuing to work closely with the DEI in Activities Committee to offer professional learning courses for the Vermont School Athletic Directors, specifically in moving from *awareness to action* in regards to systemic racism and structural bias.
- The VPA is working with the VSA and other stakeholders in an effort for continuous improvement on this issue going forward.

Ensuring safe learning environments with the ongoing efforts to prevent and effectively respond to incidents of harassment is fundamental. The VPA encourages a collective commitment from all stakeholders to this ongoing effort for shared responsibility and opportunity for growth.