

Findings & Recommendations on Harassment and Discrimination in Schools

Working Group on Student Protections from
Harassment and Discrimination in Schools

Presented by Xusana Davis, Working Group Chair • February 07, 2024

Statutory Mandate

BACKGROUND

The Working Group studied & recommended how to address harassment and discrimination experienced by students

Pursuant to statute, the Working Group will cease to exist on February 1, 2024.

Act 29 charges the Working Group to “**study the current protections** for students against harassment and discrimination in schools and **make recommendations for legislative action** to ensure Vermont students have the appropriate protections from harassment and discrimination. In conducting its analysis, the Working Group shall consider and make recommendations on the following issues:

1. **eliminating the severe and pervasive standard** for harassment and discrimination for students in educational institutions;
2. **compulsory educational attendance requirements** for students who have been victims of harassment; and
3. **the resources required for schools** to develop harassment prevention initiatives as well as **supports for students** who have experienced harassment.”

Workgroup Echo

BACKGROUND

The WGSPHDS replicates (and slightly enhances) the existing HHB Advisory Council.

Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying Prevention Advisory Council
the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or designee
the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards Association or designee
the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents Association or designee
the President of the Vermont National Education Association or designee
the Executive Director of the Vermont Human Rights Commission or designee
the Executive Director of the Vermont Independent Schools Association or designee
other members selected by the Commissioner

Working Group on Student Protections from Harassment and Discrimination in Schools
the Chair of the Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying Prevention Advisory Council
the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or designee
the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards Association or designee
the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents Association or designee
the Executive Director of the Vermont National Education Association or designee
the Executive Director of the Vermont Human Rights Commission or designee
the Secretary of Education or designee
the Executive Director of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence or designee
the Executive Director of Vermont Legal Aid or designee
the Executive Director of Outright Vermont or designee
the Executive Director of Racial Equity or designee
the Executive Director of the Vermont chapter of the National Association of Social Workers or designee

Report Structure

REPORT OVERVIEW

The WGSPHDS report contains six sections describing its process, consensus recommendations, and member additions.

Background

Working Group Composition

Working Group Process

Recommendations

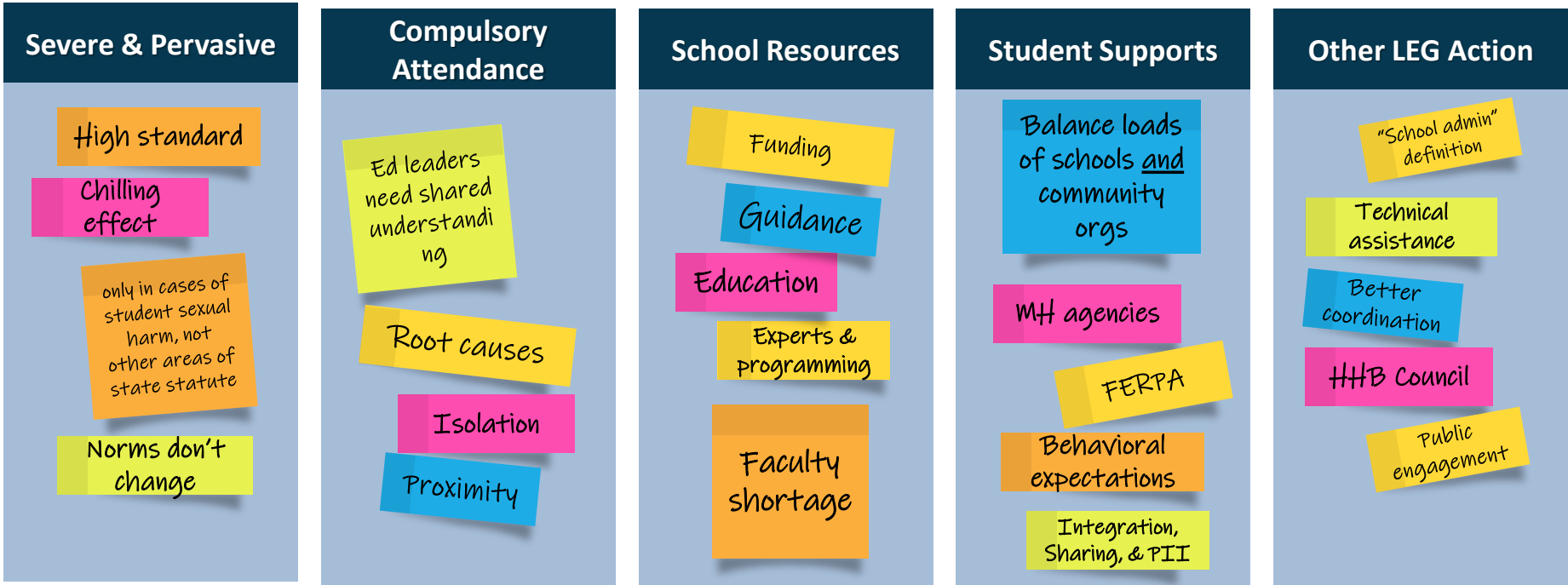
Additional Items For Consideration

Appendices

Issue Mapping

PAGE 6

Identifying the underlying factors



Consensus Recommendations

PAGE 3

Charge 1: Eliminating the severe and pervasive standard for harassment and discrimination for students in educational institutions.

No consensus was reached. See Appendices for detailed descriptions of the appointing organizations' viewpoints and additional considerations.

Consensus Recommendations

PAGE 3

Charge 2: Compulsory educational attendance requirements for students who have been victims of harassment.

Give due consideration to cases where students may face mental disabilities impacting their ability to attend school.

Set attendance requirements consider individual circumstances, ensuring a more effective response to diverse attendance challenges.

AOE to create guidance documents that emphasize the importance of tailored responses for all students struggling with safety and emotional issues. Emphasize emotional, academic, and social support.

Consensus Recommendations

PAGE 3

Charge 3 (Part 1): The resources required for schools to develop harassment prevention initiatives and supports for students who have experienced harassment.

Explore and fund alternative, flexible staffing solutions that address the administrative burdens on instructional leaders.

Dedicate district-wide funding for primary prevention, such as HHB investigations and programs to support social and emotional learning, inclusion, and belonging.

AOE create guidance documents that discuss [1] re-entry into educational spaces; [2] move from punitive to restorative practice framework; and [3] differentiated responses

Consensus Recommendations

PAGE 3

Charge 3 (Part 2): Supports for students who have experienced harassment.

Provide stronger support for community-based partnerships between community organizations and schools (these include but may not be limited to community-based domestic and sexual violence organizations, Community Justice Centers, and caregiver groups)

Add capacity to mental health designated agencies to support schools in mental health crisis prevention and support



“[T]hese issues are rife with complexity and must all balance the needs and goals of communities across the state.”

Gracias

Working Group on Student Protections from Harassment and Discrimination in Schools

Website: education.vermont.gov/working-group-student-protections-harassment-and-discrimination-schools

[Report](#) | [Meeting Minutes](#)