



From: Vermont Educational Equity Collective
Re: **OPINION ON THE NEW PROPOSED
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION**
Date: 03/29/2024
Cc: Vermont Superintendents Association
Vermont Principals Association
Vermont School Boards Association

Dear Legislators,

We are the Vermont Educational Equity Collective. We are a collective of educational equity leaders from districts across the state working toward the transformation of Vermont culture by holding educational institutions, organizations, and policymakers accountable to creating equitable systems that uphold the needs of those furthest from justice. We do this by consistently naming and dismantling systems of oppression that disproportionately impact those farthest from justice, with an emphasis on intersectionality and the indelible impact of race.

Therefore, we are called to share our perspective on the possibility of an eventual Senate's approval of the Secretary of Education candidate proposed by the Governor.

We are writing to share our deep concern about choosing a person who has dedicated their career to efforts antithetical to much of what the educational communities of Vermont hold dear, such as the equitable access to quality public education, and someone who has worked for a notable period of time with an organization that supports anti-equity stances in educational practice. We have a concern about providing this level of power to someone who has spent so much time in those spaces. This appointment does not represent the interests of our work toward EQS, equity-driven schools, or our dedication to ensuring public schools survive and thrive. To the best of our knowledge, it also ignores the vast majority of voices that were consulted in the process. The State Board of Education requested input from all major educational networks in the state and still failed to provide a candidate with even the minimum number of elements practically unanimously requested by stakeholders. Education professionals in the state know their communities best, and doing the exact opposite is an affront to the communities they represent.

We encourage you to consider asking for a different appointment that matches the needs of the educational system in Vermont and that truly promises genuine engagement for a future vision that addresses our greatest challenges ahead. We encourage you to consider the level of contact you have received related to this and listen to the voices of those who have elected you. We want our public schools transformed, not dismantled.

Sincerely,
Members of the Vermont Educational Equity Collective

VEEC Members 2023-24:

- Ainaka Luna, DEI Coach, Williston Central School
- Asma Anunaib, Dir. of DEI, Champlain Valley Union School District
- Autumn Bangoura, Equity Instructional Leader, Burlington School District
- Bageshree Blasius, DEI Coach, Champlain Valley Union School District
- Dana Decker, Exec. Equity Coordinator, White River Valley Supervisory Union
- De-Dee Loftin, Exec. Director of Equity and Anti-Racism, Consultant
- Devon Voake, Equity Steward/School Counselor, Dresden School District
- Erin Maguire, Dir. of Equity & Inclusion, Essex Westford School District
- Esther Charleston, Consultant & Coach, Conversation Compass
- Gianni Solorzano, Equity Coach, Orleans Southwest
- Gretchen Hogan, Equity & Inclusion Coach, Mount Mansfield Unified School District
- Jamilah Vogel, DEI Coordinator, Colchester School District
- Jessica Murray, Dir. of Social Emotional Learning & Wellness, Montpelier Roxbury Public School District
- Jodie Stewart-Ruck, Asst. Superintendent/Equity Dir., Mill River Unified School District
- Julia Lau, Dist. Equity Coordinator, Hartford School District
- Kat Yun, K-8 Equity & Inclusion Coach, Mount Mansfield Unified School District
- Kimberly Hunt, Coordinator for Equity & Inclusion, Addison NW School District
- Lashawn Sells, Dir. of Equity, Champlain Valley School District
- Lindsey Turgeon-Brown, Equity Coordinator, Windham Central School District
- Maria Davies, DEI Coordinator, Lamoille North Supervisory Union
- Michael Fife, Equity Team, Champlain Valley School District
- Michelle Irish, Dir. for the Advancement of Educational Equity, Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union
- Mikaela Simms, Diversity Coordinator, Windham SE Supervisory Union
- Monika Desrochers, Dir. of Equity, SEL & Anti-Racism, South Burlington School District
- Porchea Tipton, Coordinator of Equity & Inclusion, Essex-Westford School District
- Rebecca EunMi Haslam, Consultant & Coach, Seed the Way
- Sarah Crum, Dir. of Learning & Innovation, Champlain Valley School District
- Sparks, Dir. of Equity and Safe & Inclusive Schools, Burlington School District
- Stephanie Sleeper, Equity Coach/Social Studies Teacher, Mount Mansfield Union High School
- Susannah White, Equity & Engagement Coach, Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union
- Tony Strat-Cortez, DEI Coordinator, Thetford Academy
- Traci Price, DEI Coordinator, Windham SE Supervisory Union
- Wayne Kermenski, Dir. of Equity, Twin Valley School District
- Wilmer Chavarria, Superintendent, Winooski School District
- Alena Martez, Asst. Principal, Windham SE Supervisory Union
- Courage V Pearson, Dir. of Organizing, Outright VT