

To Whom it May Concern,

The Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network (VSARN) is a student-led, education centered, nonprofit that is focused on uplifting the voices of Youth in our community. We are writing today on behalf of over 300 Vermont students that are a part of our organization to address Governor Phil Scott's appointment of Zoie Saunders as the new Secretary of Education. The members of VSARN believe our schools need to foster the goals of: equity as a means of equality, youth voice in decision making, and people before profit. At this time VSARN cannot support Zoie Saunders or any candidate that has not expressed support for these *Vermont education* values.

Although Saunders claims to have worked in public education for twelve years, she has realistically only held a public position for the past few. Prior, she worked for Charter Schools USA, a publicly funded but privately run institution with a history of racial segregation. Furthermore, when confronted about her beliefs on the homophobic and racist policies put forth by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis during her time in public office, Saunders sidestepped the question completely. We, as the students most affected by this appointment, will not stand for our education — our future — to be subjected to the same scrutiny that our peers in the sunshine state face.

Despite having an extensive background attending elite institutions and sitting in high power jobs, Saunders has no experience as a principal, teacher, teachers aid, or any role that directly impacts youth. In fact, when making decisions in her previous employment, Saunders went against the desire of the educators she worked with and supported a bill that would expand private education in public school facilities. This begs the question, if Saunders doesn't value teachers' voices will she even hear ours?

To clarify our position, we do not contend that Zoie Saunders is of poor character, we only wish that the next Secretary of Education is absolutely qualified for the responsibility. Regardless of the appointment, we, as youth of Vermont, would be happy to speak with our next secretary, on matters related to our education.

To read more about the matters discussed above visit the links below:

- [VPR Interview](#)
- [Forbes](#)
- [UCLA Study on Charter Schools](#)
- [Zoie Saunders LinkedIn](#)

Sincerely,

The Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network

Achieving education without racism through education about racism