

For the record, Rep Kate McCann from here in Montpelier and I sit on this committee.

This morning I bring you an amendment to align public funding for education with existing law and expectations. The amendment would require publicly funded independent schools to meet the Education Quality Standards adopted by the State Board of Ed.

The introduction to the updated EQS reads:

The purpose of these rules is to ensure that ***all Vermont students are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality*** and are equitable, anti-racist, culturally responsive, anti-discriminatory, and inclusive, thus enabling each student to achieve or exceed

the performance standards approved by the State Board of Ed.

- Vermont's Constitution requires substantially equal educational opportunity, as interpreted by the Supreme Court

- The Education Quality Standards are the State's mechanism for defining and enforcing those expectations

- If public dollars are funding a school, those expectations should apply. In other words, if a school receives taxpayer dollars, it should meet Vermont's Education Quality Standards

- EQS is the rule adopted by the State Board to define what a quality education must include

- It is explicitly designed to ensure **all students** receive educational

opportunities that are substantially equal in quality

- And It translates a constitutional obligation into real, enforceable requirements
- This does not eliminate independent schools
- It does not dictate mission, culture, or pedagogy beyond baseline standards
- It simply requires that schools accepting public funds meet the same minimum expectations as public schools

To close, I want to thank you all for the opportunity to present this amendment for consideration.