

Proposed Revisions to the Hazing, Harassment, and Bullying Advisory Council

Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 570 is amended to read:

§ 570. HARASSMENT, HAZING, AND BULLYING PREVENTION POLICIES

(d) Duties of the Secretary. The Secretary shall:

(1) develop ~~and, from time to time, update~~ model harassment, hazing, and bullying prevention policies; and

(2) establish an Advisory Council ~~to review and coordinate school and statewide activities relating to the prevention of and response to harassment, hazing, and bullying. The Council shall report annually in January to the State Board and the House and Senate Committees on Education. The Council shall include:~~

~~(A) the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or designee;~~

~~(B) the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards Association or designee;~~

~~(C) the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents Association or designee;~~

~~(D) the President of the Vermont National Education Association or designee;~~

~~(E) the Executive Director of the Vermont Human Rights Commission or designee;~~

~~(F) the Executive Director of the Vermont Independent Schools Association or designee; and~~

~~(G) other members selected by the Secretary, at least one of whom shall be a current secondary student who has witnessed or experienced harassment, hazing, or bullying in the school environment; and~~

(3) provide the Advisory Council with administrative support.

(e) Advisory Council on Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying Prevention in Schools.

(1) Membership. The Advisory Council shall be composed of the following members:

(A) the Secretary of Education or designee;

(B) a principal, appointed by the Vermont Principals' Association;

(C) a school board member, appointed by the Vermont School Boards Association;

(D) a superintendent, appointed by the Vermont Superintendents Association;

(E) a teacher, appointed by the Vermont-National Education Association;

(F) the Executive Director of the Vermont Human Rights Commission or designee;

(G) the Executive Director of the Vermont Independent Schools Association or designee;

(H) a member, appointed by the Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights;

(I) a student member, appointed by the Chair of the Advisory Council;

(J) a student member, appointed by Outright Vermont;

(K) a member, appointed by the Commission on Women;

(L) a member, appointed by the Office of Racial Equity;

(M) a member, appointed by the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence; and

(N) a parent or caregiver member, appointed by the Vermont Family Network.

(2) Duties. The Advisory Council shall:

(A) Meet at least four and not more than 12 times per year.

(B) Review and coordinate school and statewide activities relating to the prevention of and response to harassment, hazing, and bullying.

(C) Review the model harassment, hazing, and bullying prevention policies developed by the Secretary every two years, beginning in 2026, and recommend updates to the policies as necessary.

(D) Generate and distribute resources on hazing, harassment, and bullying prevention and response to school professionals, including:

(E) Annually solicit input from students, parents, and schools on hazing, harassment, and bullying.

(F) Notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), annually on or before January 15, the Council shall submit a written report to House and Senate Committees on Education, which shall hold a joint legislative hearing each legislative session to review the report. The Council shall also submit the report to the State Board of Education at the same time. The report shall contain:

(3) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Council shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 12 meetings of the Council per year.

(f) Definitions. In this subchapter:

(1) "Educational institution" and "school" mean a public school or an approved or recognized independent school as defined in section 11 of this title.

(2) "Organization," "pledging," and "student" have the same meanings as in section 570i of this title.

(3) "Harassment," "hazing," and "bullying" have the same meanings as in subdivisions 11(a)(26), (30), and (32) of this title.

(4) "School board" means the board of directors or other governing body of an educational institution when referring to an independent school.

Sec. 2 EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.