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VSBA; VSA; VPA Statement on Critical Race Theory

The Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA), Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA), and Vermont Principals' Association (VPA) share the common belief that *every student* in Vermont should be afforded the opportunity to learn in an environment that supports their academic success, holds them to high academic standards, and challenges them to engage as a productive member of the diverse society within which we live.

Nationwide, the term Critical Race Theory (CRT) has made its way into discussions about public education. CRT, a legal and academic framework originating in the 1970's, is not explicitly taught in Vermont public schools. Unfortunately, the spread of misinformation has only served to divide and polarize our communities as evidenced by intensifying actions seen at school board meetings and felt in classrooms. To assist VSBA, VSA, and VPA members in future conversations with their stakeholders, we are including a Q&A document to address some of the most commonly asked questions related to CRT.

In Vermont, there are many long-standing efforts to increase opportunities for each and every student to be successful and to close persistent opportunity gaps. These efforts are often referred to as equity initiatives. For example, school systems might examine a policy, practice, or procedure to determine if it is serving all students well, particularly if it disproportionately impacts one group of students more than another. At its core, creating more equitable school systems is about making sure that each and every student has the access and opportunity to succeed.

We, as education leaders, support Vermont schools in meeting their obligation to teach global citizenship, social studies, and history with the candor and historical accuracy that all Vermont students deserve. Studying and developing a clear understanding of historical contexts, successes, and failures helps us all to progress as individuals, as a community, and as a collective society. This work includes exploring our history with a knowledge of the current status of race, equity, diversity, and inclusion in our communities, in Vermont, in our nation, and in our world.

Recent efforts to upset the delivery of public education should not jeopardize the longstanding commitment to close persistent opportunity gaps in Vermont schools. We must continue to create more welcoming, equitable, and inclusive school communities, while remaining steadfast in our advocacy for equity-focused initiatives on behalf of each and every student in Vermont.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Critical Race Theory (CRT) and what is it not?

CRT originated in the 1970s as a legal and academic framework developed to examine the ways in which racism and bias are embedded in societal structures and ultimately contribute to unequal opportunities and outcomes. Further, CRT recognizes that race is a socially constructed idea rather than a biological reality.

CRT is not synonymous with everything related to race and racism and it is not a catchall term for diversity, equity, and inclusion in education. There is nothing in CRT that is centered on blaming any individual or class of persons or promoting one race as superior to another. It is very likely that CRT might never have been mentioned in your community but for the recent politicization of the term and practice.

2. Does the VSBA, VSA, or VPA have a definition of equity?

Yes. The VSBA and VSA have a shared definition of educational equity, which has been endorsed by VPA. The definition can be found here: [VSBA and VSA's Shared Definition of Educational Equity](#)

3. What does Vermont law require through Education Quality Standards with regard to curriculum?

Vermont's Education Quality Standards (or Vermont State Law) require(s) that each supervisory union deliver a curriculum that aligns with standards approved by the State Board of Education. Specifically, Education Quality Standard 2120.5 states that "each school shall enable students to engage annually in rigorous, relevant and comprehensive learning opportunities that allows them to demonstrate global citizenship (including the concepts of civics, economics, geography, world language, cultural studies and history)". Social Studies and World Languages are content areas within Global Citizenship."

According to the Vermont Agency of Education website, "... in 2017, the Vermont State Board of Education adopted the College, Career and Civic Life, C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards (C3) to guide the teaching of civics, economics, geography, and history within Vermont. The Agency of Education has provided social studies proficiency-based graduation requirements, which were developed from the C3 standards and developed by Vermont educators, to serve as a sample. These graduation proficiencies are examples of a rigorous proficiency-based graduation framework that meets Education Quality Standards?

Relevant Exemplar Standards:

- *D2.Civ.5. Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level.*
- *D2.Civ.10. Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles,*

perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

- *D2.Geo.2. Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions and their political, cultural, and economic dynamics.*
- *D2.Geo.5. Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.*
- *D2.Geo.8. Evaluate the impact of economic activities and political decisions on spatial patterns within and among urban, suburban, and rural regions.*
- *02.1-lis.5. Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.*
- *02.1-lis.7. Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.*

Additionally, the Education Quality Standards require, "Each school shall enable students to engage annually in rigorous, relevant and comprehensive learning opportunities that allows them to demonstrate proficiency in transferable skills (including communication, collaboration, creativity, innovation, inquiry, problem solving and the use of technology) . . . 'Transferable skills' refers to a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed to be critically important to success in today's world, particularly in collegiate programs and modern careers." (2120.5. Curriculum Content.)

Relevant Exemplar Transferable Skills:

Global Citizenship:

1. *Students recognize that the world is increasingly complex and interdependent*
 - a. *Ask probing questions that encourage inquiry around relevant issues.*
 - b. *Explain how choices and actions impact themselves and others.*
 - c. *Learn from and work collaboratively with others in a spirit of mutual respect.*
 - d. *Examine local and world issues using tools, data, and cultural information to propose balanced or unbiased solutions to issues.*
2. *Students understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities within a democratic society*
 - a. *Explain their own point of view on current issues.*
 - b. *Contribute to the enhancement of community life.*
 - c. *Respect diversity and seek to understand different perspectives.*
 - d. *Communicate in ways that foster a respectful exchange of ideas and support conflict resolution.*