

## **LIT Connections**

**March 27, 2024**

*I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship. ~ Brene Brown*



**Present:** Beth Sausville, Cheryle Wilcox, Krista Barbagallo, Amy Lincoln Moore, Donna Sherlaw, Melanie Feddersen, Deb Caruso, Vicky Whitehill, Marlene Wein, Sandi Yandow, Jessica Coleman, Alicia Hanrahan, Holly Branon, Kerri Duquette-Hoffman, Cinn Smith, Maria White

### **Topics:**

- Alicia Hanrahan—Agency of Education.
  - New Secretary starting on April 15<sup>th</sup>. She will be doing a 90-day listening tour around the state. <https://governor.vermont.gov/press-release/governor-phil-scott-appoints-zoie-saunders-secretary-agency-education>
    - For information about Zoie Saunders’ Listening Tour--contact [suzanne.sprague@vermont.gov](mailto:suzanne.sprague@vermont.gov) or [maureen.gaidys@vermont.gov](mailto:maureen.gaidys@vermont.gov)
  - Special Education TA phone line and email [aoe.specialed@vermont.gov](mailto:aoe.specialed@vermont.gov): 802-828-1256
    - Both are email/voicemail boxes, probably a timeline is a 24-ish hour turnaround
- Sandi Yandow-Vermont Federation of Families: expressed concern about the number of school budgets that were not passed. Additionally added that in Addison county, the issue of putting in an all-gender bathroom (with a cost of \$800,000) has occurred with some in the community who don’t support this or understand it.
- Parent representatives shared:
  - that more youth are going to court and isn’t sure how helpful court visits are.

- Parents who are unable to work because of a lack of education and alternative schools for youth.
- Schools need help to understand Functional Performance information: <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-rule-change-functional-skills-functional-performance-slidedeck> and that the discrepancy model isn't being used <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/rule-changes>
- NKHS: seeing youth going to Brattleboro Retreat and parents are not picking them up.
  - "I don't feel safe so I am not picking them up" DCF is saying this isn't child protection, it is a mental health issue.
  - 4 youths in the past 3-4 months
  - 3-4 Youths in the past 6 months being told to leave school because parents do not agree to residential. This has been said by supervisory unions.
- Seeing kids with no educational placements.
- Question to the group: Are teams seeing an increase in trends of youth graduating at 18 instead of 22 which they may be entitled to under special education? No one commented that they have.
- 2024 System of Care Report:
  - You can find the 2024 System of Care report on this page. <https://ifs.vermont.gov/docs/act264> We can discuss this more next month. The recommendations and information were gleaned from data from SIT, LIT Connections, and the Act 264 Advisory Board.
- Last week DCF and AOE did a joint presentation about chronic absenteeism
  - [Attendance Works](#)—what are things schools and families can do to increase student engagement.