



Rutland Area NAACP  
PO Box 311  
Wallingford, VT 05773

## 2022 Municipal **Racial Justice Survey** **Results**

Sixteen responses were from Rutland county, eleven from Addison county, and four from Bennington county. The number of candidates responding varied greatly. For example, three of four selectboard candidates in Middlebury responded, while only two of five candidates for selectboard in Bennington responded.

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**ADDISON COUNTY**

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME:</b> Clark W Hinsdale <b>POSITION:</b> FERRISBURGH - Selectboard</p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>lifelong community servant - current issues include future of our school system, pollution abatement, working with neighboring communities to provide quality cost efficient services to our residents</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Saw a stunning amount of it when I lived in the midwest. Ferrisburgh as well as my family has had major involvement in the anti-slavery movements, women's rights and environmental</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>I am not aware of any community-based policies that are discriminatory. From the point of inclusion, we are continuing Zoom participation post Covid as it has increased participation in our meetings. I personally work with individuals wishing to address our boards who feel insecure in doing so. We have a standing public comment agenda item in all of our meetings where anyone can bring an issue to our attention without being on the agenda.</p>

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME:</b> Jamie McCallum <b>POSITION:</b> ACSD School Board, Weybridge</p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I am running to help build a school board that is more accountable and responsive to the community it serves. I hope to focus on mental and emotional welling, issues at MUMS, a student-centered budget, and racial and socio-economic equity across all schools in the district.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in</p>	<p>Yes, my experience is that racism and white</p>

<p>Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>supremacy is alive and well in Vermont. I'm a professional sociologist. My job, in part, is to teach young adults about institutional and structural racism. So it's easy to recognize it outside the classroom too. I also study labor markets, The data show that in VT, racial disparity can't be explained by individual failings or personal beliefs--it is built into the fabric of hiring and firing, wage differentials, and criminal justice statistics.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>Our schools are microcosms of the larger society, where racism and class inequality produce disparate outcomes for students of color and poorer students. According to the ACLU, Black children make up 3% of Vermont's student population but represent 13% of school arrests. That's over 5 times the rate for their white peers. Research also shows that higher rates of poverty correlate with greater rates of arrest among K-12 students. These outcomes result from a culture of white supremacy and built-in discrimination by law enforcement. Police in schools criminalize typical youth behavior. Schools with police have an increase in reported student offenses and school-based arrests by as much as 400%. As educators, parents, community leaders, and aspiring school board members, we have adopted a two-part racial and socio-economic justice framework that informs our goals for ACSD schools. 1. Teaching for Racial and Socio-economic Justice. We believe schools are a vital place to teach and ensure racial justice and equity. We have signed and take seriously the HEAL Together Pledge developed by the national grassroots organization Race Forward. This pledge commits singers to: Advocating for an honest, accurate, and fully-funded public education in my community and across this country; Deepening my own learning about systemic racism and doing my part in addressing it in my own community; Fighting back against those who would deploy divisive narratives for their own political gain--whether they are harmful narratives about people of color (Black and Indigenous people in particular), immigrants, LGBTQ people, people who are disabled, and other marginalized people; or false narratives about the work of equity, inclusion, and justice; Working to build a just, multiracial, pluralistic democracy so that every person has the freedom to thrive. 2. We should pass S.63--endorsed by Senators Hardy, Clarkson, Pearson and Pollina--to</p>

	<p>remove police from our schools. Ensuring the emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing of students and teachers means challenging the presence of so-called School Resource Officers. Research by Vermont Legal Aid has shown that there is no evidence that police in schools make schools safer. Police have never stopped a school shooting and studies show they do not reduce physical assaults or property crimes committed in schools. In fact, cops in schools drain vital economic resources from school budgets. In Vermont, in-school police officers have been illegally paid using Medicaid dollars intended for improving health outcomes, and have even been used as substitute teachers. Funding for in-school police officers should be redirected to hire more counselors, nurses, and teachers who have a proven track record of increasing student safety and mental health. My primary goal in running for school board is to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students in the district. Fighting for racial and socio-economic justice is a vital component of that goal.</p>
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<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Mary Cullinane</b>  <b>POSITION: Addison Central School Board (Weybridge Seat)</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>Since 2017 I have been a member of the ACSD Board and for the past 3 years, I have had the role and responsibility of Chairperson. I believe during this unprecedented time, our district has weathered the storms of a global pandemic, increasing costs, staffing shortages and decreasing enrollments with empathy and passionate rigor. We still have much more work to do, however. I want to continue to offer my passion and experience of over 30 years in the work of K-12 education. I want to continue to work for our goals of equity and inclusion. And I want to continue to ensure we have the necessary resources to support the needs of all of our children. While we took the important step and flew the Black Lives Matter flag from our government flag pole this past year, the systemic work that we must continue, must go further and deeper.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>I believe Vermont is no different from any other state. Our entire country must acknowledge and</p>

	address our cloud of institutional racism. As a nation, it is choking us... on our streets, in our classrooms, and throughout the institutions for which we rely on their efforts and commitment to ensure the rights and privileges of all.
If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?	As a member of the ACSD Board, I will actively pursue policy that allows our district to create and deliver an equitable and inclusive learning environment. Over the next year, our board will be working with the community and district leadership to deliver our Strategic plan for Equity and Inclusion. If re-elected as Board Chair, I promise my leadership will reflect our commitment to equity and inclusion in all practices of the board for which I am responsible.

<b>CANDIDATE NAME: Amy Gibans McGlashan</b> <b>POSITION: Addison Central School District Board</b>	
Why are you running for office?	Though Ripton will only be part of ACSD until July 1, 2023, I want to do as much as I can while we are part of the district to address the equity gap we have in the district. I want to help advance ACSD's two key initiatives to accomplish that goal, our facilities master plan and our strategic plan for equity.
Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?	Yes, and feel one of the obligations and opportunity as a school board member is to ensure that all students feel welcome, supported, and successful in school. it is one of the reasons I serve on a school board, where we really can make a difference to address systemic racism.
If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?	As mentioned above, one of the reasons I want to continue to serve is to help pass and support in whatever other ways I can our strategic plan for equity currently in development. Making equity an explicit aim means it will be addressed at all levels - policy, staff development, governance, programming, operationally, and more. While on the board, and certainly once I am off the board, I personally commit to engaging our stakeholders in the important and difficult conversations we need to hold with parents, families, and community members so that the cultural change reaches well beyond the school walls.

<b>CANDIDATE NAME: Steve Orzech</b> <b>POSITION: Addison Central School District Board - Middlebury</b>	
Why are you running for office?	To continue my service to my community in retirement by helping to improve public school particularly for underserved populations.
Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?	Yes, absolutely. As a former teacher I encountered numerous examples of institutional racism and one of my reasons for running for this position is to play a part in dismantling these injustices.
If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?	By pushing for policies that will encourage, and in some cases force, school administrators to hire more minority faculty and staff. Similarly, I will advocate for a budget item to fund both support for students of color headed organizations and desperately needed education for white students around race and diversity.

<b>CANDIDATE NAME: Mary Sullivan</b> <b>POSITION: ANWSD School Board</b>	
Why are you running for office?	I have 40 years in education as a middle school teacher and University professor, and feel I have a lot to give to our students and community.
Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?	Sadly, yes. It is sometimes subtle or not recognized as racism, but it is there.
If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?	I'm already on committees that look at student voice in literature as well as written word. This is one important place. I also serve on a Community Engagement Committee, where I see opportunities to help with education in the area of systemic racism. I've been fortunate to have education around issues of racism the past few years in my work at UVM.

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Esther Thomas</b> <b>POSITION: Middlebury, VT</b></p>	
Why are you running for office?	Selectboard
Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?	Yes, I do see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country - from the policies to company norms. I recognized that it is normalized and accepted. As a black woman living and being in these spaces, I've had to do some of my own unlearning and encourage other to do the same. I've done that by facilitating retreats to create a safe space for folx to ask themselves hard questions.
If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?	Commit to continuing the work in the unlearning we are doing in Middlebury, VT. As part of the DEI workgroup, we have hired two black woman as consultants to help train and plant seed with the town employees and selectboard.

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Joanna Doria</b> <b>POSITION: School Board of Directors, Addison Central School District</b></p>	
Why are you running for office?	I am running for office to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all of our students, hold decision makers accountable, and bring a strong minority voice to the table.
Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?	Yes, I absolutely see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country. Institutional racism is pervasive and has manifested itself in foundations of our current society. To confront it, we must challenge current laws and practices and build a system that protects our most vulnerable.
If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?	Our schools are microcosms of the larger society, where racism and class inequality produce disparate outcomes for students of color and poorer students. According to the ACLU, Black children make up 3% of Vermont's student population but represent 13% of school arrests. That's over 5 times the rate for their white peers. Research also shows that higher rates of poverty correlate with greater rates of arrest among K-12 students. These outcomes result from a culture of white supremacy and built-in discrimination by law

	<p>enforcement. Police in schools criminalize typical youth behavior. Schools with police have an increase in reported student offenses and school-based arrests by as much as 400%. As an educators, parent, community leader, and aspiring school board member, I along with my running mate, have adopted a two-part racial and socio-economic justice framework that informs goals for ACSD schools. 1. Teaching for Racial and Socio-economic Justice. I believe schools are a vital place to teach and ensure racial justice and equity. I have signed and taken seriously the HEAL Together Pledge developed by the national grassroots organization Race Forward. This pledge commits singers to: -Advocate for an honest, accurate, and fully-funded public education in my community and across this country; -Deepen my own learning about systemic racism and doing my part in addressing it in my own community; -Fight back against those who would deploy divisive narratives for their own political gain—whether they are harmful narratives about people of color (Black and Indigenous people in particular), immigrants, LGBTQ people, people who are disabled, and other marginalized people; or false narratives about the work of equity, inclusion, and justice; -Work to build a just, multiracial, pluralistic democracy so that every person has the freedom to thrive. 2. We should pass S.63—endorsed by Senators Hardy, Clarkson, Pearson and Pollina—to remove police from our schools. Ensuring the emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing of students and teachers means challenging the presence of so-called School Resource Officers. Research by Vermont Legal Aid has shown that there is no evidence that police in schools make schools safer. Police have never stopped a school shooting and studies show they do not reduce physical assaults or property crimes committed in schools. In fact, cops in schools drain vital economic resources from school budgets. In Vermont, in-school police officers have been illegally paid using Medicaid dollars intended for improving health outcomes, and have even been used as substitute teachers. Funding for in-school police officers should be redirected to hire more counselors, nurses, and teachers who have a proven track record of increasing student safety and mental health.</p>
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<b>CANDIDATE NAME: Andy Hooper</b> <b>POSITION: Select Board, Middlebury</b>	
Why are you running for office?	To help our great town continue to flourish and improve.
Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?	Of course. Across our country the descendants of enslaved people remain impoverished at a rate 2.5x higher than those of European ancestry. The long arm of explicitly racist practices such as Jim Crow and Redlining have precluded many people from economic prosperity and security.
If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?	Middlebury is among the towns in Vermont with the greatest wealth inequality, and I see giving voice to and advocating for the disenfranchised and economically marginalized people in our community [including both citizens and the sizable non-citizen agricultural worker community] as a fundamental priority. Creating affordable housing to broaden the wealth creation of home ownership, ensuring a clean environment, and providing quality municipal services creates a vibrant community that benefits all residents. Ensuring the Middlebury Police Department continues to deserve its excellent reputation is part of the important work of the select board. All residents much feel secure in voicing their concerns, and get timely and thorough responses to any complaints.

<b>CANDIDATE NAME: Matthew Delia-Lobo</b> <b>POSITION: Selectboard, Middlebury</b>	
Why are you running for office?	To better represent the younger and BIPOC residents of Middlebury and to maintain the momentum of our completed downtown/train project in a direction that benefits all residents.
Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?	%100 yes
If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?	My main platforms are: facilitating the rebirth of a vibrant downtown, fostering a more inclusive, diverse and welcoming community and collaborating with developers and town zoning to create opportunities for more housing for

	<p>everyone, especially lower-income/younger families trying to live/move here. All three of those goals are inherently focused on centering marginalized members of the community and can be accomplished by first reaching out and hearing the needs of the people and then moving on to reform restrictive zoning laws and find ways to work with property owners to fill otherwise empty storefronts and housing in ways that benefit everyone. Working with existing institutions and organizations in town to offer grants and incentives to potential BIPOC entrepreneurs is one example of how we can both fill empty storefronts and make downtown Middlebury a more inclusive and harmonious place simultaneously. I believe that working towards a more heterogeneous town center, representative of all types of folks living in Middlebury, is a crucial and foundational effort towards bettering our town as whole as we rebuild after a drawn-out, massive construction project and the impact of COVID-19.</p>
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<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Zoe Kaslow</b> <b>POSITION: Vergennes</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I am running for Vergennes City Council because I love this community, and I want to support its continued growth.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>I do see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country, and we need to take serious, committed, continual actions to combat systemic racism.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>I hope to center equity and inclusion in a few ways. I hope to bring the Declaration of Inclusion to the city council for a vote, and I am interested in the city of Vergennes forming a Civilian Review Board for our police. Additionally, I'd love for the city to review policies that have a disproportionate impact on residents from marginalized groups (e.g. zoning laws and increased access to affordable housing, winter parking bans that impact renters, sidewalk upgrades to make the city more accessible). Please reach out with additional ideas!</p>

**BENNINGTON COUNTY**

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Tina Cook</b> <b>POSITION: Bennington Select Board</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>As a member of the Bennington Select Board, I will build on the national effort to lift and support our most vulnerable populations while encouraging local business growth and development. A community that fosters justice, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging creates prosperity by welcoming diverse talent. A citizenry of varied experiences, viewpoints and perspectives uncovers new ways of doing things and highlights needs that you never knew existed.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Every second of every day.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>Last year, I developed a nonprofit organization called National New Media Corp, “a grassroots coalition working together to identify opportunities, demystify systems, and eradicate the barriers to resources and wealth that have historically and systemically been placed in the path of people of the global majority. Specializing in nonprofit programming supporting low- to moderate-income communities, addressing racial and social equity, and accelerating an inclusive economy,” and I look forward to working with town leadership to bring awareness and share resources with the Bennington Community.</p>

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Tom Haley</b> <b>POSITION: Bennington Select Board</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I believe that I can help bring changes that will benefit all of the citizens of Bennington</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>I helped spearhead the adoption of a Declaration of Inclusion for Bennington, and I have spent the last few months working with civic organizations,</p>

	<p>other towns, business, and individuals to formulate concrete ways we can integrate that statement into town culture. This board will shortly act to put in place some sort of oversight board, but I fear that lack of participation from the left in the committee tasked with formulating the plan for said group resulted in a more watered down plan than I'd have liked, so that will be an uphill battle. The real work is in convincing the silent majority in Bennington that there is a problem at all, and I we have a long way to go there. I will work to bring as many voices as possible into the work and engage groups that have not yet been active but could be. The far right folks in town have been coming together and getting much more organized, while those of us on the left have fractured, and it is going to take a lot of work to correct that.</p>
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<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Chaila Sekora</b> <b>POSITION: MAU School board</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I feel that those at the decision-making table for our school system should respect and work hard for EVERYONE! It is essential that every member of the MAU community be treated with respect and acceptance regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and ability.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>Ensure equity and inclusions is at forefront of all our programs, systems and processes that are in place or implemented moving forward; refining and reforming equity and inclusion program and practices in place that need addition support or that are not working,</p>

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Martha Cornwell</b> <b>POSITION: Town of Shaftsbury Selectboard Member</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I'm a proud Shaftsbury native. I was adopted from Calcutta, India as an infant and I spent my early years attending Shaftsbury Elementary School and participating in Girl Scouts. I am grateful for growing up in a town that was community-centered and focused on caring for its members. Many of my community members rallied around my efforts in my education including sending me money for books at school and supporting my decision to become a primary care provider. I studied medicine at the University of New England, becoming a Physician Assistant with the goal of returning to serve our community. I now work as a PA at The Memory Clinic, as well as working summers at Clearbrook Farm and subbing in our middle and high schools. I currently serve on The Town of Shaftsbury Planning Commission and look forward to helping to preserve and sustain the Shaftsbury we love. Shaftsbury is a place that is full of potential, but for too long we have had a lack of diverse voices on the board especially working people, women, people of color and young people. That diversity makes us richer and brings new perspectives to the table that we need to address our biggest issues including affordable housing, protecting our environment, creating equity in our schools and finding high quality jobs that pay living wages.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>As a young, professional woman of color in Vermont, I often find myself as the only person who looks like me at the table. As a medical provider I often encounter structural racism in providing care for my patients. My patients struggle to find providers who understand their cultural practices, or their ability to afford medications. They struggle to find providers who listen to their specific health concerns and provide culturally competent care. Our medical community is working to create more diversity and inclusion boards and beginning to speak about social determinants of health, but not addressing the core of discrimination in the health field and we do not have enough providers of color in our community to address the BIPOC communities health needs.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>My platform focuses on honoring the rich history of our community, while listening to all of our</p>

	<p>community members and preparing for the future. I would like to center voices that have been traditionally absent on the board including women, people of color, working people, parents and young voices. As a medical provider, I spend a lot of time listening to my patients and then working with them to find solutions that will fit into their lives. I am working to create more transparency with our local board and have created a Facebook page and website to share more information and to encourage other young people to make changes with me. I want to meet all of the community where they are already congregated at churches, on Front Porch Forum and Facebook and really get their input. As a Planning Commission member I have worked to create and revise bylaws that will encourage local businesses and try to address the need for affordable housing. I would like to see downtown South Shaftsbury become vibrant again. We have many empty and vacant buildings due to infrastructure issues. With the ARPA and Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill we have money to address these issues and benefit everyone who lives in our community. I would like Shaftsbury to also engage in a dialogue about diversity, equity and inclusion and adopt a mission statement, which reflects our values as a community.</p>
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**RUTLAND COUNTY**

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Michael Talbott</b> <b>POSITION: Board of Aldermen, Rutland City</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I was taught by my parents that everyone has a responsibility to serve their community. My father worked as a mental health professional and as an activist for homeless veterans and their families, and I grew up volunteering alongside him. My career as a teacher at a public college serving primarily first-generation college students was driven by my desire to serve the underserved. My role as chair of our faculty union gives me the opportunity to advocate for fair and equitable treatment for workers, and has taught me that we are stronger when we work together. I chose to run for the Board of Aldermen after seeing some former board members use their position to do harm in our community—signing a letter stating that Rutland was not ready to accept refugees as new residents, and blocking implicit bias training for city employees. I am running because I believe that the future of this small rural community is growth. Growth comes from retaining current residents and attracting new residents. In order to grow, Rutland City needs to be a place that is welcoming to all. A diverse community is a strong community.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Structural racism often shows up in our schools, hiring practices, and policing. Students of color are more likely to be suspended and expelled from schools for the same offenses as white students. People of color are often less likely to be considered for employment or advancement, despite qualifications or experience equal to or greater than their white peers. And people of color are more likely to be subject to unwarranted scrutiny by law enforcement. For example, BIPOC drivers in Vermont are more likely to be pulled over, searched, ticketed and/or arrested than white drivers. Vermont is especially egregious when it comes to the rate at which it incarcerates Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>Becoming a more diverse and inclusive community is key to the future of Rutland, and</p>

	<p>local government can and should help lead the way. We can initiate a study to look at patterns of segregation or exclusion in community housing. We can reform hiring practices for city positions to ensure that adequate outreach and consideration is given to candidates of color. We can advertise vacancies for appointed positions on city boards and commissions to ensure that we have diverse nominees. We can reform the process for the sale of city owned properties to create more opportunity for low income individuals and families to become homeowners in Rutland. We can prioritize support for cultural programming and recreational activities that increases the visibility of historically marginalized communities.</p>
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<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Timothy S Guiles</b> <b>POSITION: Brandon select board</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>To serve my community and help it be as good as it can be.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Systemic racism is real. We must work every day to find and eliminate systemic racism wherever it exists in our public institutions.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>I have attended NLC workshops on racial equity. We have a racial equity task force in our community (lead by our town manager) which I am prepared to support in whatever way I can. I will continue to look for ways to promote racial equity and inclusion in my community.</p>

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Marielle Blais</b> <b>POSITION: Brandon Selectboard</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>Representation matters—the current selectboard is five white men. I love the Brandon community and want to continue to work actively to improve it.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Yes, absolutely. And I accept that I am part of it, as the first step to seeking ways to overcome it.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>I would support policy implementation by the selectboard. Brandon has recently completed a huge downtown renovation project, so I hope the selectboard now has more time to pay attention to</p>



	<p>social justice. There was considerable debate—for and against, when our local school district, Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union, adopted an equity policy. I would love advice and training about fostering equity and inclusion in a town, like most in Vermont, that is overwhelmingly white. As a recently retired public school speech language pathologist, I have worked for decades as an advocate for students with disabilities.</p>
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<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: leonard doucette</b> <b>POSITION: Clarendon MRUUSD board</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I have been directly involved in the Mill River Union High School community for over 40 years. My goal throughout that time has been to provide the best educational opportunities for all of our students. That does not mean all students should be treated the same. Treated as an individual means that all resources and services should be available. Equity may mean an unequal distribution of those resources and services. As stated in our equity policy, "equity involves disrupting inequitable practices, acknowledging biases, employing practices that reflect the reality that all students will learn, and creating inclusive multicultural school environments for adults and children." As a lifelong learner I am still learning. I admit that I haven't reached the ideal that some might imagine. But with yearly training, my own readings and searching I will continue to strive to accomplish the goal stated above for myself and all of our students. I want to help make Mill River a great educational opportunity for all.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Yes I do. Much of which I was not aware of growing up and living as a white male in Vermont. It has been sad to hear of situations where racism impacted decisions. The teacher for our board inservice spoke of how his father could not get a GI bill loan after WWII to purchase a home. My father had no problem getting a loan. When you look at voting rights in our county it is clear that there were specific laws, rules and regulations to deny minorities their legal right to vote. It is in Vermont. The fact that the former president of the NAACP had to leave her home in the town of</p>

	<p>Wallingford because of harassment based on her race. Several BIPOC individuals have had to leave their positions and/or homes because of racism. It is very real.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>As a member of the policy committee we are now taking a look at all policies through a different lens. There is no doubt that in the past there was not much attention paid to how a policy might affect each student. We now do that. We are asking administrators to look at discipline plans and procedures to make sure no one is being singled out. We have an equity committee that is charged with making sure our curriculum is all inclusive. We are looking at what is available in the library for student reading materials. In my opinion we are at the beginning of a learning curve. Much more can be done and must be done. We as a board and I as an individual need to continue to learn how we can best insure that every student's needs are met. No matter what resources we need to use. It is changing a way of thinking, a culture. I wish it could happen faster. But change in education has always been a slow process.</p>

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME:</b> Liz Filskov <b>POSITION:</b> Mill River Union Unified School District Board of School Directors from Wallingford</p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I am running for re-election. As a Board member I contribute to the establishment of the district's vision and goals based on the communities shared priorities, which include - equitable opportunities for ALL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- equitable opportunities for student growth.</li> <li>- favorable outcomes for ALL students.</li> <li>- positive community perception and public education.</li> <li>- human resources' development and retention, including NAACP strategies of building a more diverse pipeline of teachers, implementing mentoring and coaching of teachers to allow their development to reduce turnover and improve experience; supporting advanced certification of our teaching workforce to expand and address a wider range of content.</li> <li>- good financial controls and facilities' utilization.</li> </ul>

<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Yes, and specific to education, data points to disparate achievement and disciplinary action in our student populations. As a Board member, I will engage in the training necessary to inform district vision and goals' work that address disparities.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>I will approach my work with those most historically marginalized in mind. I will help to ensure a district vision that is equitable and inclusive and work to promote this vision within the community. I will participate in policy work to help ensure our policies are equitable and inclusive and do not inadvertently harm anyone, but especially those most historically marginalized. I will hold our school leadership, my fellow board members and the community accountable to equitable and inclusive schools and practices. I will help oversee equitable and inclusive financial controls and facilities' utilization. I will participate in the oversight of student outcome achievement progress and in district, personnel and community compliance with policies, laws, and regulations. I value equitable and inclusive practices, and will represent these ethics in my board work.</p>

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Alexandra Hilliard</b> <b>POSITION: Poultney selectboard</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I am running for office because I feel that the current selectboard lacks transparency and accountability in the town. I love this town and am raising my children here, and I would like to participate in the civic process to represent my family and other BIPOC who feel unrepresented here.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>I am committed to increasing representation for members of the BIPOC community in my town, whether on governmental boards/committees, as stakeholders whose voices are acknowledged in public issues, and to most importantly, be a vessel for individuals and families in the town who are experiencing racism. I will make their concerns heard, I will teach my fellow selectboard members and those attending meetings how the things that</p>

	<p>certain individuals experience are traumatic and continue to oppress BIPOC people. I will do my best to ensure that BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other underrepresented minorities are heard and seen and respected.</p>
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<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Matt Whitcomb</b> <b>POSITION: Rutland City</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>Alderman</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>For this question I am going to focus locally as I believe it is where I could impact change. In particular there are organizational elements that I believe warrant further investigation and action to address what is classified as systemic racism. In particular, what are organizations hiring practices, employee review practices, and disciplinary practices. What percentage of applicants that are interviewed for a job are people of color? What is the frequency at which people of color are hired into position that they interview for? Perhaps most important, what percentage of organization leadership positions are maintained by people of color? If we were to review our regions largest employers what would the total number of leadership positions held by people of color be? Locally, I believe this is where institutional racism most prominently exists. To be hired and receive promotions are more difficult for people of color. We need to take steps to attract, retain, and promote people of color and we do this be eliminating systemic racism in our organizations.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>If elected there are two specific steps I plan to take to center equity and inclusion. The first step I would take would be the review and redevelopment of human resource policy for city government. In May of 2021 Rutland City adopted a declaration of inclusion. I believe that exact declaration should be the first page an individual would see when opening a human resources manual for the City of Rutland. That statement should serve as a guide to how we craft our policies and procedures. It will assist us in creating a code of conduct and hiring practices that are designed to build and maintain a diverse</p>

	<p>and inclusive workforce. My second step would include working with department heads and officials. While there is value in implicit/unconscious bias training we are unlikely see a significant impact without implementation of a sustained practice. Much like organizations engage in company behavioral standards during monthly staff meetings there needs to be a way to include regular discussion that promotes equity and inclusion within city departments. My goal would be to work with those in city hall to identify a way to include this as part of regular discussion and engagement within respective departments.</p>
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<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Anna Tadio</b> <b>POSITION: Rutland City Alderman</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I am running for office because I care about the future of my community and state and I believe that change starts locally.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Systemic racism exists across the country and Vermont is not immune to its grip. Although our state government is making efforts to improve our laws to make our society more equal and free from discrimination there is still a lot of work we need to do to make Vermont a safe place for all people regardless of their race, ethnicity, or national origin. From unequal healthcare to disparate treatment at the hands of law enforcement, people of color in this country deserve better. We must work to ban the use of No Knock warrants which disproportionately affect Black people. We must work to end housing discrimination and we must fight to ensure that we have equal political representation at our state and local levels. Representation matters and it's very important to me to see members from all races represented in our government. We need to work to ensure the same access to healthcare, housing, quality education, and employment is available to everyone regardless of their race and we can use affirmative action programs to remedy historic injustices.</p>

<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>If elected, I will work to center equity and inclusion in every decision I make. Before making decisions, I will work to reach out to members of our POC community to hear their priorities and goals. I want to ensure that all my constituents have a voice at the table but especially people who come from historically marginalized communities. If elected, not only will I listen to and advocate for our Black community members, but I will invite them to speak for themselves and hand over the mic. We can center equity in our decisions in Rutland by deciding that supporting and celebrating diversity is a core value we have here. Equity should be a core outcome that we hope to achieve and that we work towards as we improve housing access and job opportunities.</p>
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<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Chris Etori</b> <b>POSITION: Rutland City Board of Aldermen</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I have served for three terms and have enjoyed being a part of our city's governance. In my work at CCV or Vermont Adult Learning, or my involvement with Rutland's Promise, the Continuum of Care, or the Rutland Youth Coalition, I often find myself advocating for people on the margins. I hope to continue my service as an Alderman so I can continue to bring that perspective to the issues of economic development.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>DEI principles need to be at the center of every policy and programming decision. It's challenging to give a specific answer to this question since every situation will be different, but the idea should be that with everything we consider, we should ensure that it assists in achieving the same or greater access for those who might not otherwise have access. As an example, housing initiatives should not only make sure that folks aren't specifically left out from accessing them but also are specifically targeted to benefit from them.</p>

	<p>Committees and working groups that are formed should be sure to include a wider representation than just the normal attendees, with specific requests for unrepresented members. Additionally, the board of aldermen meetings tend to be an esoteric dance of motions and discussions, only accessible to those in the know. To center equity and inclusion, as part of the fulfillment of our roles, we need to use accessible terminology, explain the processes, and invite people in to be a part of our system of governance. In the end, by inviting in those who might otherwise experience exclusion, we can build a thriving community - one that not only includes everyone but helps elevate anyone.</p>
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<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Marybeth Lennox-Levins</b> <b>POSITION: Rutland City Board of School Commissioner</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I am running for the Board because I want to help foster a compassionate, inclusive, and healthy learning community, where each child feels respected, safe, and cared for, and feels ready to pursue their goals. I will serve all students. I will support the hard work our teachers do. I will empathically listen to the concerns of all the stakeholders, but particularly the parents, the teachers and staff, and of course, the students. Together, we can continue to make Rutland City Schools a first-rate learning environment for every child. I am running for the Board because I believe in and have seen the transformative power of education. I began my career in education 28 years ago through my work in athletics. I understand the work of educators to be a labor of love. For the last ten years I have been a member of the faculty at Castleton University (CU), where I both direct and teach in our Sport Management and Athletic Leadership programs. My colleagues and students would tell you my bar is high, but my leadership and teaching are rooted in compassion for my students and mutual trust and respect. I am running for the Board because I have qualities and skills which will significantly benefit our district, and most importantly, our students. I am a solution-seeker, someone who can work collaboratively with people who have diverse perspectives. In seeking solutions, I am meticulous at thoroughly researching relevant</p>

	<p>information and then tying it all together to serve the mission of the organization. I do not shy away from conflict, because I know it is an important step in creating organizational cohesion. I am running for the Board because service to my community is ingrained in my core. I am a youth soccer coach, a former Girl Scout troop leader, the hot chocolate/check-in parent at Nordic ski practices, an official volunteer for USA Hockey programs, a former youth minister, a swim team volunteer, a lead volunteer at my daughter's school, and hopefully one of the next commissioners on the Rutland City School Board. I assure you my authentic, inclusive, and committed approach to serving this community and our students will have a long-lasting impact on the learning community of the Rutland City Public Schools.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Yes, I absolutely see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country. I have see it for years in my time in the athletics industry and in higher education. I have also seen it in numerous other ways.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>Here in Rutland, it is very clear we have some deeply rooted racism. I believe the "mascot issue" is only one example or symptom of a much larger challenge. While I am hopeful the VT legislature will be able to pass a law to help rid the state of all racist mascots, I know that is not a surefire solution or one that will happen quickly. In the meantime, if elected, I am anxious to work with all members of the board to find a path forward that can help stop more damage and even reverse the damage done to our local people of color (particularly the youth). Additionally, right now, I know all parents are concerned about the mental health and safety of their children, but none more so than parents of marginalized youth. I look forward to ensuring ALL kids have access to the school psychology resources they need, and that we, the Board, are looking at ways to improve the safety of all children. Lastly, I also know inclusive curriculums across the country are under attack. I will work to ensure any discussions and/or decisions surrounding curriculum at RCPS are completely inclusive of the needs and safety of all children. I am committed to a Rutland that is "inclusive, forward thinking, and ready to grow its downtown, its population and its heart". This cannot happen without a commitment to do so</p>



	with equity and inclusion as its foundation.
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<b>CANDIDATE NAME: Dave Searles</b> <b>POSITION: Rutland City School Board</b>	
Why are you running for office?	My life long belief that each individual is important.
Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?	I see a tendency toward ignorance and bias manifesting itself throughout society. That is simply a reality to be acknowledged and properly dealt with. It is the job of education to help allow us to reform ourselves individually and socially to be able to confront and reverse that tendency.
If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?	First I will be an advocate for all. This is but a small example. Years ago my daughter attended the high school. My daughter is very sensitive and noticed several students making fun of another student. My daughter complained to the teacher about it on two occasions. Apparently if the teacher did anything about it, it wasn't taken seriously and the problem continued. My daughter then took it upon herself to complain to the police officer assigned to the school who apparently spoke to the students and the problem stopped. Each student should be able to feel that they are as welcome at school as every other student with no exception. Nowhere is this more important than in the provision of what is called special education. It has been federal and state law for over 30 years that except for an absolute minimum, students not be segregated into special education classes or "resource rooms." In reality such segregation helps neither the students removed nor those remaining. If in 30 years school administration has not learned how to properly avoid this, I would see it as part of my job to vocally insist that administration finally learn what the law requires them to know. Hopefully when I am elected and can see the process up close, I will see a model program for all to be proud of. If that turns out not to be the case, I can promise a constant effort on my part to have that problem exposed to public scrutiny and corrected.

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Sara Atkins Doenges</b> <b>POSITION: Rutland city school board</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>To be an advocate for the hardworking teachers and staff in our schools. To do everything in my power to set up our students for success in school, and in life.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Yes I do. It's a part of our society even when we can't see it.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>I would fight for the rights of all students first. Meaning the disadvantaged kids get everything they need to thrive right along side the rest of their classmates. We need to teach the students about the history of ALL people. Students should be able to find their history being taught, as well as other histories they can learn from. The more we teach children about each other, it helps them develop empathy. I want to make sure that the students have the most adequate and available mental health professionals possible. I would push for making sure children are taught how to communicate effectively with people who disagree with them. I would like to have parents involved in that kind of learning too. If we can get family units learning more about each other, led by the students of our community, that sets them up to become future leaders that Rutland Vermont can truly be proud of.</p>

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Marisa Kiefaber</b> <b>POSITION: Rutland City School Board</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I am running for Rutland City School Board to serve my community in the best way I know how, by advocating for students and educators. I grew up and went to school in Rutland and returned here to build my life in our special community. I now teach 5th-grade and live near downtown with my partner and our dog, Kipa. As a teacher, I am well versed in the day-to-day needs of learners and educators. My experiences with the functional processes of a school will provide valuable insight as we strive to support all of our kids. As a school board member, my goal will be to support teachers and staff to foster compassion and understanding in the Rutland City Public Schools community. Our schools are an essential part of</p>

	<p>our city's health as a community. The teachers, staff, and especially our students, will benefit from active and continuous support from our school board. I look forward to utilizing my experiences as a compassionate educator, community advocate, and above all, my love for our city to serve Rutland on the school board."</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Yes, I see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country. More specifically, I see systemic racism in our schools. The lack of awareness, understanding, and compassion shown by some leaders in our community is just one example of implicit bias, a result of institutional racism.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>If elected to the Rutland City School Board, I will center equity and inclusion by seeking out and advocating for unheard voices. When making decisions that impact ALL students, our predominately white board is not always the most knowledgeable. It is essential to hear from ALL voices in order to make well-informed and just decisions. For example, the Rutland City School Board has heard from community members, alumni, students, local Abenaki leaders and other native voices about the harmful Raider name and logo. The board made progress toward a more inclusive and welcoming school system by retiring the harmful moniker, only to reverse that decision, disregarding the feedback from students and community members most impacted. This is an example of a missed opportunity to listen to and encourage marginalized voices throughout a decision-making process.</p>

<p><b>CANDIDATE NAME: Courtney Collins</b> <b>POSITION: Rutland School Board</b></p>	
<p>Why are you running for office?</p>	<p>I am running for office because I am committed to assuring students and educators have the resources they need to be successful in whatever way is meaningful to them in an environment that is safe, respectful, and conducive to learning.</p>
<p>Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?</p>	<p>Yes, I believe racism exists not just in Vermont, but in all areas, because it's a human issue and thus it is present where ever humans are. I feel that locally we need to impact real change. I believe this starts with education. Education in</p>

	schools, for teachers, and for leaders. If we can understand human bias, which is within us all, we can have awareness and act with intention. If we are all committed to providing equity and inclusivity; if we can center marginalized voices, so that we ALL can be heard, then we will be on our way towards a brighter future.
If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?	I would support a curriculum that promotes diversity and intellectual curiosity for all students. The more we can include and promote material from varying backgrounds and cultures, the better we can equip our children for the larger world.

<b>CANDIDATE NAME: Adrienne Raymond</b> <b>POSITION: School Director MRUUSD</b>	
Why are you running for office?	Commitment to the kids in our community.
Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?	Sadly, yes.
If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?	I will support efforts within our schools to improve inequitable systems and processes.

<b>CANDIDATE NAME: Justin Jankus</b> <b>POSITION: Wallingford Selectboard</b>	
Why are you running for office?	As my family grows in Wallingford, I feel the need to bring another progressive voice to the Selectboard. I feel privileged to have a job and home situation that would allow me to devote my time to serving my town. I feel privileged to be able to shape my town to be a better place for my children and for all of the residents of our town.
Do you see systemic racism exemplified in Vermont and across the country?	As a white, cis identifying individual I personally have not experienced racism in Vermont. But in our town there was a troubling incident where I saw the systemic racism ring loud and true. As I understand it, Tabitha Moore, former President of the NAACP Rutland Branch, did not feel that it was safe to display palettes painted by her family as part of Wallingford Day festivities that depicted

	<p>a raised fist over a rainbow background and one with Black Lives Matter painted on a black background and so her across the street neighbor, Maria French, a white woman, offered to display them on her yard. It turned out that Tabitha's fears were justified as the palettes were vandalized with white paint, effectively white washing them. This act of hatred would have been enough of a sign of the existing bias and racism we are living in just on its own, but what really put those deep seated biases in full relief was when a few weeks later an individual graffitied the baseball dugout with "Black Lives Matter". What made this more indicative of that deep seated racism was the difference in response from town members about the two incidents. The violent, personal act of throwing paint on top of a piece of art on someone's property seemed like it was no worse than littering, while someone spray painting a side of a rarely used dugout was seen as a veritable warcrime by those individuals who were completely silent after the first act. These small actions and reactions are the main way I see systemic racism in Vermont. The other was my own reaction, which was anger, but not enough action, I hope that being elected to the Selectboard in Wallingford I can take more substantial action in the future when the time arises.I.</p>
<p>If elected, how will you center equity and inclusion?</p>	<p>I would promote the drafting and adoption of a DEI statement for the town. I would look into having bias training for the selectboard so that we an be seen as a more welcoming community to diverse individuals from within and outside of our already established community.</p>