**Appendix E Additional Inputs**

**From the red group**

**What’s missing from the [VELS] guiding principles?**

* Attention to systems of power and privilege
* Attention to advocate to make systems more responsive to families
* Attention to data that tells us where we are now (sticky note: Data—yes)
* Attention to where we want to be
* Attention to equity
* What are the teeth?
* They are lovely and comfortable🡪We need accountability and expectation
* What are the results we expect to see? What is full potential?
* Developmentally inappropriate work is still happening
* RBA framework: we will hold ourselves accountable for every level.
* Cultivating a sense of belonging
* Needs more attention to family strengths, assets and competence
* Action plan are more in alignment with family
* Place matters—the physical environment matters—VELS doesn’t mention it. (Sticky note: This allows for meeting families where they are birth to 3rd grade)
* Language is us/them rather than “we;” everyone has a part to play; everyone contributes
* Use “we” language that works for all—New Mexico is closer to this
* Families and professionals together
* Need to support professionals in the work that they do🡪 a community that supports teachers, supports kids
* Could we specify roles so that the system commits to X, Y and Z; Families to A, B and C etc.?
* VELS is too much—the 4 “we believe capture it.
* Different systems engage in different ways committed to the application of these principles, across all roles and disciplines
* What are the measures?
* Committed to continual improvement and reflecting on our practice
* Love the New Mexico graphic
* Identifying road map

**From the green group**

* What level will the Guiding Principles be at: forest, tree, branches, leaves?
* Tension between the public good and the private good
* How will the Guiding Principles be accessible to families? Companion documents? Words and language used?
* Make the relationship between “we believe” and “we commit to” explicit
* How will the Guiding Principles remain dynamic?
* What is needed for the Guiding Principles to become embedded in our work at all levels of the early childhood ecosystem? Awareness? Skills? Knowledge? Atributes? Policies? Accountability? Resources? How to counteract the idea that this is top down, more work, “being done to them”
* Who is the owner of this work? Document process? Engagement of more state people? Maybe not “the agencies”
* When you have conflicting values, how do we support our field?
* Continuum of teachers development and adult development

**From the orange group**

* How are voices of families from other cultures and ethnicities included?
* When whites are in the minority, the discussion is more authentic

**From the yellow group**

* Greeting → welcome (example: eye contact, take time, not too busy, just say hello, yearning from families and how they are respected)
* Recognize our family → celebrate our family
* Promise – Every child and every human being. As adults, we have made a promise to our children and it is our moral imperative to live our promise.
* Some families (adults in the family) are not seeking connection/help. May have the culture, what is said stays here. Many want connection for children but not for themselves.
* How do families define connection? May be different for every family. How do we know what it means for them?
* Culturally responsive practices and child protection may exist in tension. Example: make a report to DCF-FS and maintain a relationship with a family
* In an unhealthy environment, concerns about well-being, safety need to be addressed.
* Transformational to both parties as they get to know each other through deep dialogue over time.
* Professionals remember why they entered the field in the first place
* Need to define high quality
* Will Guiding Principles have both high literacy and low literacy formats? Also, translated in different languages.
* Open – some people never lose impact of early experiences or differences (e.g., poverty)
* Race as self-identified vs. pre-determined. Other, mixed, no category for me – not inclusive. The categories are social constructs. Pre-determined questions can be triggering. Example: questionnaire – be sensitive to use Parent 1/Parent 2 instead of mother/father
* The way we ask people to identify themselves may not be the way they identify themselves
* Don’t have to check a box that makes you stand out (e.g., criminal history)

**From the blue group**

* Some parents may want their children connected in a different way than they may want to connect
* Fundamentally families have their children’s best interests at heart
* Ask questions about what form of communication and involvement they want. Ask, not assume
* Continue concrete learning about different identities lines of difference
* Two-way communication
* Preserving dignity of all actors
* Words aren’t just words. How do we put them into action?
* Respect for families, professionals, children, process
* Sincerity, authenticity, genuine
* Cultural fear – families not participating in established school process because attending a conference is seen in a negative light – seeking or asking for input from a teacher is not a cultural practice.
* Developing cultural competence, identifying cultural mediators/liaisons. Funding is needed to support this!
* Creating community – when we feel a sense of community including all we have put our work into action.
* Commitment to equity and access
* Fundamental right to grow, thrive, and belong. Multi-generationally across all family structures.
* Moving beyond being passively “welcoming” to actively reaching out to and engaging families
* Being creative about how we create space to engage with families in ways that remove barriers and stigmas
* We must commit to being partners in dismantling broader systemic inequities
* Thinking about the language we use. Make sure it is family friendly.
* Place matters: classroom, community gathering spaces, policy making spaces
* Understand, differentiate, and meet children and families where they are at
* Examine and unpack our own biases and privilege
* In addition to the principles we will need concrete resource, supports and infrastructure to put them into practice

**From the black group**

* Need to feel a better connection between K-6 and EEE for more continuity for kids. Don’t think K-6 teachers really recognize how significant the preschool teachers and programs are to our schools.
* One of the Guiding Principles should be a commitment to support this work with resources
* Is this guiding principle process family driven? Are we empowering families to identify how Vermont could support them?
* Use action words to frame the Guiding Principles
* Include strengths-based frame up front as they did in the NM Guiding Principles
* Consider combining VELS guiding principles #2, #3 and #9 in more simple language
* How do we create principles for people across different roles (e.g., families, educators, administrators, policymakers)? Or language that can be applied to someone in any role?
* We can call a process “family-driven” or we can restructure it so that families are actors. The phrase makes it active.
* Who defines “the promise of every child”? What it looks like to thrive?
* Principles should speak to the now
* While inclusion can be relational, inequity and injustice happen at a systems level and need to be addressed at a systems level.
* How do these principles reach those who are falling through the cracks and not served?
* How does this reality not reflect the principles? How do we apply them at a policy level?
* How do we draft and execute the principles to acknowledge, reflect, and support our mixed delivery system?
* Use pronoun specificity. General “we” makes unclear who is acting.
* We need a course on the Guiding Principles
* Empower those who work with children and families to engage in discussions of equity and inclusion and make it part of a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children.
* Include Strengthening Families language into the guiding principles as it is being used already, families know about it, and it just makes sense
* Replace “realistic” with “practical”
* Find a balance in “we will” section between what is done directly in work with children and families and what is done at a systems level to support that
* Include ways in which Guiding Principles can be used by various groups (e.g., teachers, family members, faculty/trainers, EC program administrators) like they did in New Mexico
* Consider changing terms like “family-drive process” to “empower families to . . .”
* Use strengths –based approaches. New Mexico opening really exemplifies this. Goes beyond just valuing families.
* Who is the audience? Write to the audience. Need multiple iterations of the Guiding Principles? (e.g., brochure, detailed reports, guiding questions, etc.)
* Like “always ask” statement for goal #2 but need to explain who is asked. All those involved are empowered to weigh in.
* How to ensure that the Guiding Principles are implemented and families’ voices are instrumental in the evaluation/continuous quality improvement process
* Use simplified language (like in the Head Start Interagency Agreement)
* Integrate Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Adverse Family Experiences (AFEs) directly into programs