

## **2018-2019 VSBA Board Resolutions Report**

According to the VSBA Bylaws, resolutions are "positions taken by the Association on issues of importance to Vermont school boards. They may include recommendations for action by the VSBA, local school boards, the Legislature, the Executive Branch...or other decision-making bodies." Resolutions are guidance for staff and the VSBA board when they are working in the public policy arena or developing programs and services for our members. Resolutions are **not** legislation.

The VSBA Resolutions Committee and the VSBA Board make a recommendation to "Pass", "Do Not Pass" or "Take No Position" on any resolution submitted by a member school district board. All resolutions submitted by member boards will be submitted to the membership at our Annual Meeting, regardless of the recommendation of the Committee or the VSBA board.

The following report was developed by the VSBA Board at a meeting on August 8, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,

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## **Resolution Proposal #1: Burlington School District**

### *Section II, Subsection O – Cost Containment*

**WHEREAS:** Vermont school districts develop their fiscal year budgets through a comprehensive and rigorous process often involving community outreach, consultation with stakeholder groups, and alignment of spending decisions with long-range planning objectives; and

**AND WHEREAS:** loss of anticipated revenue or new spending restrictions place on voter-approved budgets undermines the budget development process and impacts the delivery of programs and services in schools;

**BE IT RESOLVED:** NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Vermont School Boards Association advises the Vermont General Assembly to allow reasonable time for school districts to plan for cost containment legislation and refrain from passing legislation that affects budgets already adopted by school boards or approved by voters.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #2: Burlington School District**

### *Section II, Subsection K– Unfunded Mandates*

**WHEREAS:** A functioning democracy depends on an educated populace and that a skilled and highly educated workforce is necessary in an increasingly competitive world environment, and that the United States' discretionary spending for Education is 2% of the US budget or \$85 billion dollars, and that the United States' discretionary spending for Defense and Homeland Security is 15% of the US budget or \$632 billion dollars;

**AND WHEREAS:** Other industrialized nations provide significant financial support for their public schools, and the United States does not provide comparable funding, the VSBA needs to start making headway in a move to demand more federal financial support for public schools;

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the VSBA propose and promote increased federal funding of public schools in the United States and that the VSBA, in the interest of national defense and in support of establishing and promoting world class technical education and innovation, propose and promote that, in addition to current Education spending, the equivalent of 1% (one percent) of the United States' Military budget be dedicated or redirected for this purpose.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Do not pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #3: Burlington School District**

### *Section IV, Subsection B – Collective Bargaining*

**WHEREAS:** The VSBA recognizes that teachers/VNEA and boards/VSBA have the same goals of educating Vermont's children and that "Working Together" and not "Winning and Losing" becomes the mode and focus of the VSBA and its negotiations workshops.

**AND WHEREAS:** The "Relationship by Objective" Program (RBO) is a recognized best practice for unions and employers to accept joint ownership and responsibility for problems and jointly develop solutions;

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the VSBA's add workshops on labor-management models such as that used by at least one Vermont school district, called Relationship by Objective, to demonstrate how negotiations can emphasize ways in which the VNEA and the VSBA local Boards and NEA chapters can work together to formulate successive contracts between teachers and community representatives (boards) without disenfranchising dividing teachers, boards and communities, that the VSBA publicly and predominantly recognize that teachers (the VNEA) and school boards (the VSBA) have the same goals of educating Vermont's children, and that models for "Working Together" will be included annually in the mode, focus, and approach of the VSBA in its negotiations training workshops.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Do not pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #4: Burlington School District**

### *Section IV, Subsection B – Collective Bargaining*

**WHEREAS:** The VSBA should promote, celebrate, and award school boards throughout the state that are able to settle contracts with their employees amicably and in ways that further unite and not divide the communities they serve;

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the VSBA recognizes, celebrates, and awards individual school boards that show cooperative, expedient, successful and community-unifying strategies during contract-settlement negotiations throughout the state.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Do not pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #5: Burlington School District**

### *Section II, Subsection O – Cost Containment*

**WHEREAS:** Vermont school districts are increasingly incurring significant expenses associated with providing social services, including the employment of social workers, multi-lingual liaisons, student resource officers, after-school program personnel, and other staff providing socio-emotional supports for students and families; and

**AND WHEREAS:** The delivery of social services by Vermont school districts requires financial resources from annual school district budgets that cannot otherwise be used to fund the delivery of educational programs and services in schools.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Vermont School Boards Association supports the study and consideration of the costs associated with providing social services when making funding decisions and in setting any ratios.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #6: Burlington School District**

### *Section III, Subsection I – School District Innovation Zones*

**WHEREAS:** In reference to VSBA resolution III, I: SCHOOL DISTRICT INNOVATION ZONES. The VSBA “supports legislation authorizing the creation of innovation zones to exempt supervisory unions and/or districts from specific regulation and policy in order to create models of world-class education systems that can be scaled across the state,”

**WHEREAS:** The above resolution was voted into resolution last year but was not brought forward to the VSBA by any Vermont school board.

**AND WHEREAS:** This resolution was taken from the “American Exchange Council” (ALEC) website, an arm of the Koch Brothers’ Tea Party political organization which is paving the way for charter schools to siphon funding from public schools and such schools would not be accountable to publicly elected school boards.

**AND WHEREAS:** Vermont school boards and the VSBA have an obligation to support and advocate for public education.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That VSBA Resolution III, I, titled SCHOOL DISTRICT INNOVATION ZONES, which is in direct opposition to the obligations and responsibilities of duly elected school board members throughout the state be deleted from the VSBA resolutions.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Do not pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #7: Burlington School District**

### *Section I, Subsection L – Teachers on Local School Boards*

**WHEREAS:** Teachers are a resource for information for local school boards and should be included on local school boards just as students are . . . as consultants on all public issues outside of executive session, and that boards composed entirely of citizens who may have never had direct involvement, experience, or training in teaching and learning practices are operating without significant knowledge and perspective.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the VSBA believes that local school boards benefit from having an ongoing teacher voice in their discussions of all school matters that are not subjects of executive session. The VSBA encourages its members to include teachers as active participants in the consideration of educational issues and favors the participation of teachers as board members. The VSBA will provide guidance and support to board to achieve this goal.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Withdrawn** by submitting board – duplicate

## **Resolution Proposal #8: Burlington School District**

### *Section I, Subsection L – Teachers on Local School Boards*

**WHEREAS:** Teachers are a resource for information for local school boards and should be included on local school boards just as students are . . . as consultants on all public issues outside of executive session, and that boards composed entirely of citizens who may have never had direct involvement, experience, or training in teaching and learning practices are operating without significant knowledge and perspective.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the VSBA believes that local school boards benefit from having an ongoing teacher voice in their discussions of all school matters that are not subjects of executive session. The VSBA encourages its members to include teachers as active participants in the consideration of educational issues and favors the participation of teachers as board members. The VSBA will provide guidance and support to board to achieve this goal.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Do not pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #9: Kingdom East Unified SD**

### *Section V, Subsection D – VSBA Regional Boundaries*

**WHEREAS:** The re-organization of Supervisory Unions and School Boards has created some interesting boundaries. The current VSBA Regions do not align with the VSA Regions, making working together more awkward than it needs to be. Non-Operating Towns have significantly different needs, concerns, and issues than operating Towns.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the VSBA Board should review the current Regional boundaries with an eye to updating them so that all Operating towns in one School District are in the same VSBA Region; and the Board should consider realigning its Regions with those of the VSA; and the Board should consider creating a single Region to represent the Non-Operating Towns so that their needs, concerns, and issues are more clearly represented on the VSBA Board of Directors.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #10: Marlboro School District**

### *Section I, Subsection E – Board Development*

**WHEREAS:** A primary responsibility of a school board member is to promote and support the education of its town's children; and

**WHEREAS:** The role of the Vermont School Boards Association is to assist school board members in their purpose; and

**WHEREAS:** In order to assure that our educational system continues to be influenced by locally elected people, the educational role of school board members is more important now that there are many large districts around Vermont; and

**WHEREAS:** It is vital in these times that Vermont's students become committed citizens of the world with sound civic and cultural understanding.

**WHEREAS:** The VSBA is already running successful training programs for Board members around the state, which could be modified or built upon to provide more outreach to potential board members.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Board of the Vermont School Boards Association should direct its staff to:

Devote time to recruiting and training new school board members, to provide them with the tools they need to be directly, educationally engaged in their Districts, to encourage them to support creative and innovative educational practices which will foster in our students a broad, inclusive world view and will promote civic and cultural literacy.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #11: Newark Street School District**

### *Section V, Subsection D – School Safety and Security*

**WHEREAS:** It is the express concern of the Newark Street School Board that school safety and security is not a one size fits all solution. What a rural, small school, as ours needs, versus a large more urban centered school, is completely different. Factors like school size and layout, the culture of the school and its community, available budgets, community resource volunteers, and lack of quick access to police must be considered on an individual basis.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Newark Street School Board resolves that any legislation passed in regards to school safety and security should be left to the individual School District Boards and Supervisory Union Boards; to decide how and what new safety and security measures, if any, should be instituted within each individual school in their District or Supervisory Union, to result in the maximum and most individualized safety

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Do not pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #12: Rockingham School District**

### *Section II, Subsection P – Moratorium on Introduction of New Education Legislation*

**WHEREAS:** During the last ten years an unprecedented number of education-related laws have been enacted, some requiring substantial changes to the policies, operations and the structures of Vermont schools and school districts.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the VSBA urges the legislature and the governor to place a temporary moratorium on the introduction of new legislation. During this moratorium period the Vermont State Board of Education shall be tasked with analyzing the financial effects of these legislative changes along with any effects on student academic performance and social-emotional well-being. In addition, during this moratorium period, the capacity of the Agency of Education to manage and supervise existing legislative mandates along with the many regulatory requirements of the state and federal governments should be determined so that adjustments in resource allocation and staffing may be made to optimize the operations of the AOE and the state's educational system as a whole.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Do not pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #13: Stowe School District**

### *Section II, Subsection O – Cost Containment*

**WHEREAS:** The support of the community is fundamental to the success of schools. The responsibility of the local electorate to approve school budgets is perhaps the most important way community support of schools is expressed. Thus, it is essential that changes to the education funding formula or funding parameters for specific components of the education delivery system be communicated clearly to the electorate and considered annually as part of Annual and Town Meetings.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** Any legislative action regarding changes to education funding or funding for components of the education delivery system must respect the role of the local electorate, and be implemented prospectively, prior to development of school district budgets and the voting process for any future fiscal year.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Withdrawn**

## **Resolution Proposal #14: Taconic and Green School District**

### *Section V, Subsection D – Keeping Students Safe From Gun Violence*

**WHEREAS:** We are concerned for the safety of students and staff at our Vermont schools.

**WHEREAS:** We find that we are responsible for ensuring a safe learning environment for our students and a safe workplace for our employees.

We find that schools have become targets for mass murder with firearms.

We find that both students and their teachers have a right to go to school without the threat of somebody inflicting mass casualties with assault rifles. No policy can stop all violence, but rational policy can minimize both the risk and the actual outcome.

We find that arming teachers makes no sense. Even trained police miss a moving target much more often than not. A teacher untrained or minimally trained in firearms probably will miss an intruder and may shoot students or staff by mistake. Even an accurate shot may well not help, because mass shooters increasingly wear body armor. A gun in the hands of someone not trained for combat or a swat team is, at best, of little help and, at worst, an invitation to increased danger. If teachers have "extra" time, we want them to spend it training to become even better teachers, not training for combat.

Vermont public schools have installed such safety equipment and protocols as we reasonably can to protect the people in our schools, but we find there is no adequate way for schools to protect our students and staff from a person armed with a semi-automatic firearm.

We therefore commend the Vermont Legislature for passing, and the Governor for signing, legislation requiring background checks by federally licensed firearms dealers except for sales between family members, prohibiting high capacity magazines and bump-fire stocks for firearms, requiring people under 21 to complete a hunter safety course before buying guns, allowing removal of guns from the scene of a domestic violence crime, and enabling law enforcement officers to get an order to remove guns when a person shows signs of threat and danger.

We find, however, that state laws alone are an overly limited remedy because guns move freely across state boundaries.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** We therefore call on the United States Congress to enact a rational policy to keep our students safe from gun violence and call on the Vermont Legislature to explore further safety measures.

We do so recognizing that we live in a rural area with a long tradition of hunting and sportsmanlike use of guns. We respect that culture. But automatic rifles, armor piercing bullets and clips that hold more than a handful of shells have nothing to do with a hunting culture. These items should not be sold anywhere in the United States.

**BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Take no position**

## **Resolution Proposal #15: Westminster School District**

### *Section II, Subsection O – Cost Containment*

**WHEREAS:** Numerous school districts in Vermont have now merged as a result of the Act 46 Consolidation Law.

**WHEREAS:** Further, additional savings and reductions in spending have been achieved by many school districts by reducing staffing, renegotiating insurance coverage, and other cost-saving measures.

**WHEREAS:** In order to assure that our educational system continues to be influenced by locally elected people, the educational role of school board members is more important now that there are many large districts around Vermont; and

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the VSBA requests that the Agency of Education conduct an ongoing financial analysis of cost savings in these merged districts and that this analysis be published and forwarded to the legislature and to all Vermont school districts.

Taking these savings and reductions as a whole, the VSBA requests that they be used in the future to reduce educational taxes statewide and not to fund new mandates and programs or to fund existing obligations that are not now paid from the education fund.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Do not pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #16: White River Union School District**

### *Section I, Subsection C – Supervisory Unions*

**WHEREAS:** Supervisory Unions (SUs) were created in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and had little authority over the districts within the SU;

**WHEREAS:** Each operating district in an SU was granted 3 representatives to the SU board regardless of population, and nonoperating districts were granted 1 representative;

**WHEREAS:** The State Board of Education is able to waive the statutory requirements for SU board structure only if an SU board requests a change;

**WHEREAS:** Statutory changes over the years have given increasing authority to the SU in almost every aspect of a district's operation;

**WHEREAS:** Act 46 has caused many districts around the state to consolidate, necessitating SUs to revisit their board structure;

**WHEREAS:** In some cases larger population districts, which pay a greater share of SU expenses, are not able to persuade the SU board to petition the State Board of Education for a waiver of SU board structure requirements.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the General Assembly should examine the laws governing Supervisory Union board structure and the process for waiving the statutory requirements for SU board structure or composition, taking into account issues of fairness, equity and funding.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #17: Worcester School District**

### *Section II, Subsection P – Inequitable Debt Burdens in Districts Required to Merge*

**WHEREAS:** If merging school districts have disparate levels of bonded debt, assuming the debt equally across a new merged district may result in inequitable debt burdens in districts that did not incur or approve the debt.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** The VSBA believes that, if districts are required to merge by the Board of Education, the amount of debt carried by each merging district should be considered in the consolidated governance structure. The repayment of such debt should be paid in an equitable way. The VSBA advocates for legislation that will allow districts to devise mechanisms to ease transitions for towns and identify equitable solutions to mitigate increases in tax rates for towns that would be caused by debt obligations acquired by other towns.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Do not pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #18: Committee Proposal**

### *Section I, Subsection L: Civil Discourse*

**WHEREAS:** It is our obligation as educational leaders to model civil discourse and problem solving.

**AND WHEREAS:** We want future generations to approach conflicts and opposing priorities with humility and a commitment to understanding diverse perspectives.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** The Vermont School Boards Association urges all educational stakeholders to (1) teach and model conflict resolution and consensus building as those skills are necessary for the health and wellbeing of tomorrow's society and (2) engage in civil discourse as we set a course for the future of our schools and communities.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Pass**

## **Resolution Proposal #19: Committee Proposal**

### *Section IV, Subsection I: Commission on Public School Employee Health Benefits*

**WHEREAS:** Act 11 requires the VSBA to appoint five representatives of school employers to the Commission on Public School Employee Health Benefits (“Commission”), an independent commission created to determine the amounts of premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for school employee health benefits that shall be borne by school employers and by participating employees.

**AND WHEREAS:** Act 11 further directs the VSBA to select appointees who have an understanding of health care and employer- employee relations and who demonstrate a willingness to work collaboratively.

**AND WHEREAS:** Act 11 further directs the VSBA to adopt procedures for ratification of an agreement entered into by the Commission.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** The Vermont School Boards Association adopts the following requirements for appointing representatives to the Commission:

Statutory Requirements: each appointee shall have (1) an understanding of health care, (2) an understanding of employer-employee relations, and (3) a demonstrated willingness to work collaboratively. The term of each member of the Commission shall be six years provided that of the members first appointed by the VSBA, one appointee shall serve a term of two years and one appointee shall serve a term of four years.

Criteria for Selection: in selecting appointees, the Vermont School Boards Association shall give priority to applicants who provide regional representation, have experience on a negotiations council and demonstrate willingness to participate in training and professional development regarding negotiations.

Application Process: Vermont School Boards Association shall accept applications for appointment to the Commission via an online form. The deadline for submission of applications shall be November 1.

Selection Process: The Vermont School Boards Association Board of Directors shall appoint representatives to the Commission based on the above statutory requirements and criteria at its December board meeting.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** The Vermont School Boards Association adopts the following process for ratification of an agreement entered into by the Commission:

Notification - Voting Delegates: By April 1 each supervisory union/supervisory district shall notify the VSBA of the name, telephone number and e-mail address of its voting delegate.

Informational Webinar: If the Commission enters into an agreement, the VSBA shall host an informational webinar for the voting delegates within ten calendar days after execution of the agreement.

Electronic Ballot: Within ten calendar days after the informational webinar, the Vermont School Boards Association shall conduct an electronic ballot. Delegates will be provided at least ten calendar days' notice of the day of the vote. Delegates will be able to cast their vote through the electronic system between 7 am and 7 pm on the day of the vote.

**BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

**Pass**