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Annual Business Meeting

November 7, 2019

Statement of VISION:

The Vermont School Boards Association envisions a state where every student has access to and is engaged in a world-class public education, where local boards provide student-focused oversight of education systems, and where educators, families, and communities are engaged partners, ensuring that the futures of all Vermont children are driven by their aspirations, not bound by their circumstances.

Statement of MISSION:

The VSBA exists to achieve our vision for public education by supporting all school boards to serve as effective trustees for education on behalf of their communities and by providing a strong collective voice toward enhancing the cause of public education in Vermont.

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VSBA AGENDA

- I. Call to order
- II. Approval of the 2018 Minutes (Action)
- III. President's Report (Accept)
- IV. Executive Director's Report (Accept)
- V. Treasurer's Report (Accept)
- VI. Bylaws Committee Report (Action)
- VII. Resolutions Committee Report (Action)
- VII. Other Business
- IX. Adjournment (Action)

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VSBA 2018 MINUTES

The 2018 VSBA Annual meeting was held at the Lake Morey Resort on October 18, 2018 in the Morey Room.

Voting delegates in attendance were: Laurie Childers (Addison NW SD), Sonya Spaulding (Barre SU), Jim Salsgiver (Bennington-Rutland SU), Kathy Olwell (Burlington SD), Louis Bushey (Caledonia Central SU), Lynne Jaunich (Champlain Valley SD), Kevin Campbell (Chittenden East SU), Pat Murry (Essex Westford ECUUSD), Jean-Marie Clark (Franklin Northeast SU), Don Collins (Franklin Northwest SU), Clarence Haynes (Greater Rutland County SU), Kevin Christy (Hartford SD), James Peyton (Kingdom East SD), Adrienne Raymond (Mill River UUSD), Krista Siringo (Mt Abraham USD), Kathy Nolan (North Country SU), Bob Flint (River Valley Tech Center), Tom Candon (SAU #70), Bridget Burkhardt (South Burlington SD), Leon Johnson (Southwest Vermont SU), Jackie Kelly (Southwest Vermont Regional Tech Center), Ed Caron (Springfield SD), Flor Diaz-Smith (Washington Central SU), Dan MacArthur (Windham Central SU), David Clark (Windham NE SU), Kristina Naylor (Windham SE SU), Sharon Berry (Windham SW SU), Amy McMullen (Windsor Southeast SU) and Tori Cleiland (Winooski SD).

- I. **Meeting called to order** President Geo Honigford at 3:15 p.m.
- II. **Approval of Minutes**
Motion from Laurie Childers (Addison NW SD) to approve minutes of 2017 meeting. Dan MacArthur (Windham Central SU) seconded. Approved unanimously (voice vote).
- III. **President's Report**
Geo Honigford presented the President's Report.
- IV. **Executive Director's Report**
Nicole Mace presented the Executive Director's Report.
- V. **Treasurer's Report**
Kim Gleason, VSBA Treasurer (Essex-Westford), presented the Treasurer's Report.
- VI. **Bylaws Committee Report**
 - A. Neil Odell presented the Bylaws Committee Report, including proposed changes in bylaws recommended by the VSBA Board.
 - B. Motion by Flor Diaz-Smith (Washington Central SU) to move the recommended bylaws changes forward as a block. Leon Johnson (Southwest Vermont SU) second the motion. Approved 28-1 (voice vote).
- VII. **Resolutions Committee Report**
 - A. Resolution Proposal #1 – Burlington School District (Cost Containment)**
Motion by Dan MacArthur (Windham Central SU) to pass. Leon Johnson (Southwest Vermont SU) second. Approved unanimously (voice vote).

B. Resolution Proposal #2 – Burlington School District (Unfunded Mandates)

Motion by Don Collins (Franklin Northwest SU) to NOT pass. Andre Roy (Essex Westford ECUUSD) second. Approved unanimously (voice vote).

C. Resolution Proposal #3 – Burlington School District (Collective Bargaining)

Motion by Jackie Kelly (Southwest Vermont Regional Tech Center) to NOT pass. Laurie Childers (Addison NW SD) second. Approved unanimously (voice vote).

D. Resolution Proposal #4 – Burlington School District (Collective Bargaining)

Motion by Flor Diaz-Smith (Washington Central SU) to NOT pass . Jim Salsgiver (Bennington-Rutland SU) second. Approved unanimously (voice vote).

E. Resolution Proposal #5 – Burlington School District (Cost Containment)

Motion by Dan MacArthur (Windham Central SU) to pass . Kathy Olwell (Burlington SD)second. Approved unanimously (voice vote).

F. Resolution Proposal #6 – Burlington School District (School District Innovation Zones)

Motion by James Peyton (Kingdom East SD) to NOT pass. Pat Murry (Essex Westford ECUUSD) second. Approved 28-1 (voice vote).

G. Resolution Proposal #7 – Burlington School District (Teachers on Local School Boards)

Withdrawn by submitting board prior to business meeting. No vote held.

H. Resolution Proposal #8 – Burlington School District (Teachers on Local School Boards)

Motion by Diane Kirson-Glitman (Chittenden East SU) to NOT pass. Leon Johnson (Southwest Vermont SU) second. Approved unanimously (voice vote).

I. Resolution Proposal #9 – Kingdom East Unified SD (VSBA Regional Boundaries)

Motion by Flor Diaz-Smith (Washington Central SU) to pass. Jim Salsgiver (Bennington Rutland SU) second. Approved unanimously (voice vote).

J. Resolution Proposal 10 – Marlboro School District (Board Development)

Motion by Dan MacArthur (Windham Central SU) to pass . Don Collins (Franklin Northwest SU) second. Approved 28-1 (voice vote).

K. Resolution Proposal #11 – Newark Street School District (School Safety and Security)

Motion by Leon Johnson (Southwest Vermont SU) to NOT pass. Jim Salsgiver (Bennington-Rutland SU) second. Approved 27-2 (voice vote).

L. Resolution Proposal #12 – Rockingham School District (Moratorium on Introduction of New Education Legislation) Motion by Amy McMullen (Windsor Southeast SU) to NOT pass. Jim Salsgiver (Bennington Rutland SU) second. Approved unanimously (voice vote).

- M. Resolution Proposal #13 – Stowe School District (Cost Containment)** Withdrawn by submitting board prior to business meeting. No vote held.
- N. Resolution Proposal #14 – Taconic and Green School District (Keeping Students Safe from Gun Violence)** Motion by James Peyton (Kingdom East SD) to discuss the proposed resolution. Flor Diaz-Smith (Washington Central SU) second. There was discussion regarding revision of the proposed resolution from version originally submitted. The chair declared the motion to discuss out of order. Motion by Dan MacArthur (Windham Central SU) to pass. James Peyton (Kingdom East SD) second. Motion was not approved (received less than 60% of votes).
- O. Resolution Proposal #15 – Westminster School District (Cost Containment)** Motion by Diane Kirson-Glitman (Chittenden East SU) to NOT pass. Leon Johnson (Southwest Vermont SU) second. Approved 18-8 (hand vote).
- P. Resolution Proposal #16 – White River Union School District (Supervisory Unions)** Motion by Flor Diaz-Smith (Washington Central SU) to pass. Kathy Olwell (Burlington SD) second. Approved 28-1 (voice vote).
- Q. Resolution Proposal #17 – Worcester School District (Inequitable Debt Burdens In Districts Required To Merge)** Motion by Jim Salsgiver (Bennington Rutland SU) to NOT pass. Diane Kirson-Glitman (Chittenden East SU) second. Approved 26-1 (voice vote). Two abstentions
- R. Resolution Proposal #18 – Committee Proposal (Civil Discourse)** Main motion by Dan MacArthur (Windham Central SU) to pass resolution as presented. Kevin Campbell (Chittenden East SU) second. Subsidiary motion by Kevin Christie (Hartford SD) to amend the proposed resolution by adding the following language: “Accordingly, harassment, coercion and intimidation must be viewed as a fundamental threat to the democratic principles upon which our republic is based. When directed towards elected officials or those running for elected office, violence, the threat of violence and other forms of harassment, coercion and intimidation are not just crimes against individuals, they are direct assaults upon our democratic system of self-governance. Accordingly, we, as elected officials in the State of Vermont, hereby call upon those in law enforcement at the local, state and federal levels to make the investigation of such crimes a top priority. We ask that all levels in law enforcement take such crimes seriously and that they work diligently to identify and prosecute all who would attempt to subvert and interfere with the political process by means of violence, threats of violence or by other forms of harassment, coercion and intimidation.” Leon Johnson (Southwest Vermont SU) second. Subsidiary motion to amend approved 18-11 (hand vote). Main motion approved unanimously (voice vote).
- S. Resolution Proposal #19 – Committee Proposal (Commission on Public School Employee Health Benefits)** Main motion by Jim Salsgiver (Bennington Rutland SU) to pass. Don Collins (Franklin Northwest SU) second the main motion. First subsidiary motion by Clarence Haynes (Greater Rutland SU) to amend the “Selection Process” section of the proposed resolution by deleting December and inserting November. Flor Diaz-Smith (Washington Central SU) second the first subsidiary motion. First subsidiary motion approved unanimously (voice vote). Second subsidiary motion by Pat Murry (Essex Westford ECUUSD) to amend the “ Electronic Ballot” section of the proposed resolution by adding language stating that each SU/SD’s vote shall be weighted based upon that district’s FTE count. Kathy Olwell (Burlington SD) second the second subsidiary motion. Second subsidiary motion failed (voice vote). Main motion approved (voice vote).

VIII. Other Business

- A. Don Collins (Franklin Northwest SU) thanked Geo Honigford for his leadership as President of the VSBA Board.
- B. David Clark (Windham Northeast SU) asked why the VSBA Executive Committee submitted a letter to the State Board of Education regarding the State Board's October 2 decision to include a failed 706b merger votes as evidence of the impracticability of a forced merger. Geo Honigford provided the reasons for submission of the letter.

IX. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by James Peyton (Kingdom East SD). Second by Amy McMullen (Windsor Southeast SU). Meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

VSBA PRESIDENT

TO: VSBA Membership
FROM: Clarence K Haynes
DATE: November 2nd 2019

This report is both my first and my final report to the VSBA membership as President of the VSBA Board of Directors. To start, I must thank the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors for their support this past year. I must also give a hearty “thank you” to the Executive Director and her wonderful staff. As we all know, these staff play an integral part in helping us get our work done. They make it happen.

It has been another incredibly eventful year for VT School Boards. Our educational system seems to be ever-changing these days and it will be a welcome break when these cycles of change finally end. Foremost among these changes is the state-wide health care negotiation. The VSBA is not responsible for the content of these negotiations, but is responsible for providing the financial support to the employer negotiators (i.e., paying the bills). The result of this negotiation is imperative to every school board member in the state, as it will have a lasting effect and will most likely be the result of an arbitrator’s decision on or around December 15th 2019.

A second issue we are currently actively engaged in, which is of paramount concern to every board in the state, is Act 173 (special education funding and service delivery), which changes our current reimbursement model to a block grant model based on student counts. As of this writing, the VSBA is engaged in a lot of negotiations with the concerned parties regarding the important details as to what needs to transpire to make this transition successful.

Another concern for VSBA this year was the final stages of implementation for Act 46. Act 46 required school district consolidation by 7/1/2019, and school districts that had neither merged, nor gotten permission to remain standing alone by that date, were forced to consolidate by the State Board of Education. This issue was one of the most divisive that VSBA had ever faced. We came to a point when a decision had to be made. After much debate, the board voted to NOT support a change in the law that would have resulted in a delay of the implementation of Act 46. The Board approved this course of action at a board meeting by a two-thirds margin. Unfortunately, for some time to come, there may be some fall out from this decision. We lost two members over their disagreement with the board’s position on Act 46.

An initiative that the board moved ahead with this year was fostering coalitions with other educational partners including the VSA, VPA, Business Managers, Special Education Administrators and the NEA whenever possible to present a united front to the legislature when we testified about educational issues. We wanted to create a united voice regarding common issues and to reflect our common ground where we had some. These coalitions did not interfere with the VSBA's right to an independent position, when that was in the best interest of school boards in the state.

Finally, as of the close of the annual meeting this year, the VSBA Executive Director, Nicole Mace, will be moving on to a private practice in education law. A search committee, chaired by your vice president Neil O'Dell, vetted and interviewed the applicants for the position. The final three candidates were presented at a special meeting of the VSBA Board in October and the board selected Sue Ceglowski, the current VSBA Director of Legal and Policy Services, as the new Executive Director. Sue will officially begin her term at the close of the annual meeting this year. We are thrilled to have Sue in this position.

I would personally like to thank my wife, Sharon and all the members of my family, that supported me as I transitioned from the elected member-at-large, to Rutland Regional Representative, to vice president and then finally to hold the position of the president. I look forward to continuing in the position of past president this next year to support and further the work of the VSBA Board.

Thank you for all your efforts and support on behalf of VSBA and Vermont School Boards.



Clarence K. Haynes

VSBA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: VERMONT SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS
FROM: NICOLE MACE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DATE: November 7, 2019

THE VSBA

Incorporated in 1961, the VSBA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The articles of incorporation filed with the Secretary of State's office in 1961 indicate that the organization was established for the following purposes:

- To promote and stimulate interest in education
- To cooperate with other organized educational groups
- To assist school directors in promoting better educational opportunities for the children of Vermont

The vision and mission of the organization have evolved over time, and are currently enshrined in the organization's bylaws:

Vision: The Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA) envisions a state where every student has access to and is engaged in a world-class education, where local boards provide student-focused oversight of education systems, and where educators, families and communities are engaged partners, ensuring that the futures of all Vermont children are driven by their aspirations, not bound by their circumstances.

Mission: The VSBA works to achieve our vision for public education by supporting all school boards to be effective trustees for their communities, and by providing a strong collective voice toward enhancing the cause of public education in Vermont.

The VSBA is governed by a board of directors, consisting of 24 members: a president, immediate past president and 22 regional representatives – 2 representatives elected from each of 11 regions. The President is elected from among active board members at the August meeting of each year, to serve a term from November 1 to October 31 of the following year. This August, the VSBA board elected Neil Odell of Norwich to serve as President of the Association. Clarence Haynes will serve a one-year term as immediate past president.

The VSBA has a terrific team of individuals dedicated to supporting school boards and school board members. Let me introduce you to our staff:

Sue Ceglowski - Director of Legal and Policy Services; Incoming Executive Director

Sue joined the Association in March of 2018; her primary roles at the Association are to oversee the Vermont Education Legislative Collaborative and the Vermont Education Policy Service, and to provide legal information and guidance to board members and administrators. Sue has been a school board member serving the Mettawee School District in the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union for over ten years. Her experience as a school board member and attorney have positioned her well to lead the organization into the future.

Kerri Lamb – *Director of Operations*

Kerri has been with the Association since 2001 and fulfills several critical roles for the association, including business operations, communications, event planning, personnel processes, and member services. Kerri is the engine that keeps this organization running and we are fortunate to have her on our team.

Susan Holson – *Director of Education Services*

Susan joined the VSBA staff in 2017 as the Director of Education Services. Susan has a broad base of experience as well as a passion for public education. Susan's primary role at the VSBA is to develop and deliver comprehensive education services for school boards and individual board members through in-person and web-based resources, including workshops, webinars, and podcasts. Susan will also be leading the VSBA's superintendent search service this year.

The VSBA's most important task is to help you, our members, perform your duties effectively. We urge you to use our services. A complete description may be found on the VSBA website. The following summary is intended to provide members with an understanding of the critical pieces of work accomplished during 2018-2019.

PUBLIC POLICY

The VSBA serves as the collective voice of school board members in the legislature and with administration officials, including the Agency of Education and the State Board of Education. We also serve as the staff for the Vermont Education Legislative Collaborative, a partnership of the Vermont School Boards Association, the Vermont Superintendents Association, the Vermont Principals' Association, the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, VSBIT, the Vermont Association of School Business Officials, and the Vermont Curriculum Leaders Association. Working with these partner organizations, we are able to ensure robust coverage of the legislative session and the production of the Legislative Report.

Issues of primary interest to school board members this year included Act 173 (special education funding and service delivery) implementation and rulemaking, Act 66 (lead testing in schools and child care facilities), Act 46 delay (education governance reform), and education funding and finance.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

A major function of the VSBA is to provide orientation and professional development for board members to help them be as successful as possible in their role. Susan Holson leads us in organizing and delivering this program, but all staff are heavily engaged in this core service.

During the past year over 50 live trainings have included hundreds of board members from numerous town, union, unifying districts and supervisory unions/districts. School Board U Live included a day-long workshop called Essential Work of Vermont School Boards Seminar and a full-day training session for board chairs and superintendents. Both utilized case studies drawn from actual school board experiences that illustrated the scope of school board roles and responsibilities. All trainings and workshops have incorporated tools from The Essential Work Tool Kit, the VSBA's proprietary platform designed to support school boards in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

In the spring, VSBA updated *The Essential Work of Vermont School Boards*, a comprehensive workbook that provides in-depth resources related to the roles and responsibilities of school boards and their members. The book complements and expands the online Essential Work Tool Kit at vtvsba.org.

In September 2018, we began a monthly webinar series as a means of utilizing technology to reduce members' travel time and evening commitments. Topics were relevant and often timely, including Policy, Fiscal Management and Oversight, Legislative Preview, Preparing for the Annual Meeting, Board Chair 101, Value of Board Retreats, Healthcare Negotiations, Monitoring, and the Annual Snapshot. In September 2019, we rescheduled the first Thursday webinar series to midday and added new topics of interest and importance to board members.

Building on digital platforms for board development, in September we announced a new podcast series, *Tell Me a Story*. Each episode will feature a board member answering three questions about their board experiences. VSBA members will be able to subscribe to the podcast via vtvsba.org, where a new episode will be available monthly.

In addition to scheduled board visits and presentations, much of our board development service is day-to-day consultation on a broad range of issues. Staff in the office talk and email daily with board members, board chairs, and superintendents on a vast array of topics including challenging community issues, superintendent relationship questions, and clarifying roles and responsibilities.

COMMUNICATIONS

Over the past year, VSBA communications have continued to be a priority. The overall approach to member communications is as follows:

- **VSBA Updates** - regular communications on pertinent topics via email
- **Postcards** – targeted mailings to members regarding board development offerings
- **Legislative Alerts** - electronic alerts on legislative issues requiring immediate action
- **Legislative Reports** - summaries of legislative action, published bi-weekly during the legislative session
- **From the Boardroom** - a newsletter published three times yearly with information on topics of broad interest to board members—each one focused on a theme with current significance.
- **Social Media Updates** – we post news items of interest to board members on Facebook (Vermont School Boards Association) and Twitter (@vtvsba).

The Executive Director was featured in stories on VPR, WCAX and WPTZ, as well as in numerous other, less high-profile media to discuss a range of topics impacting school boards, including education finance, special education funding, health care, and governance.

LEGAL AND POLICY SERVICES

Although we do not provide formal legal counsel, we provide extensive guidance and information which can help point districts in the right direction and avoid the need for extensive legal expenses.

The Vermont Education Policy Service – a joint service of the VSBA and VSBIT - continues to provide updated model policies for all members. The VSBA office has answered countless policy questions and has provided direct consultation to boards seeking to update their policies. This past year, two new safety policies were added to the Model Policy Manual related to access control for buildings and security cameras. We developed these policies in collaboration with Vermont’s School Crisis Planning Team.

We also collaborated with the Agency of Education and the Council of Independent Schools on development of a model policy on electronic communications between school employees and students designed to prevent exploitation of children (required by Act 5 of 2018). When the Agency of Education releases the final version of this policy, we will post it on our website in the model policy manual. We are in the process of reviewing and updating the model policy manual, and are in the process of conducting three district policy manual reviews. For more information about these and other policy services, contact Sue Ceglowski.

This year, a substantial number of requests for legal guidance and information have related to newly merged districts. For example, we have received questions regarding articles of agreement, board vacancies, intra-district school choice, reserve funds, and informational meetings. Additionally, we regularly receive questions about the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Act and the legal process for policy adoption.

In September 2019, a school board member filed a complaint in Washington County Superior Court, seeking a declaration that the VSBA is a quasi-public entity subject to Vermont’s Public Records Act. The VSBA board has hired outside legal counsel, Bernie Lambek, to represent the organization in this matter. The position of the VSBA is that it is a private entity that is not subject to public records laws. Our insurance provider is covering the costs associated with this litigation.

THE ACT 46 IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

In 2015 the VSBA, as part of its ongoing role in supporting improved education governance, joined together with the Vermont Superintendent’s Association (VSA) and the Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust (VSBIT) to provide supports to school districts and supervisory unions in responding effectively to Act 46. The initiative is known as The Act 46 Implementation Project.

From 2015-2017, the Act 46 Implementation Project’s purpose was to create a comprehensive, high-quality, and efficient system of supports that assists districts in locating consultants to work with them in the areas of project management, community process, education system design, financial modeling, and legal issues. The Project closely coordinated with the Agency of Education to assure timely and accurate answers to questions and to help remove system barriers to progress. Nikki South served as the Project Manager between June 2015 – June 2016. Josh O’Gorman served as Project Manager between August 2016 and August 2017. For the past two years the Project has not had a dedicated staff person – the three organizations work together with in-house staff to coordinate Project activities.

In 2017-2018, the Project arranged for consultants to support several districts in the development of Section 9 proposals to the Agency of Education and State Board of Education.

Beginning in early 2017, the Project entered into an agreement with District Management Group (DMG) to provide intensive professional development, personalized coaching, and capacity building in the leadership teams for districts undergoing mergers. In conjunction with extensive coaching, superintendents, board members and their leadership teams attend a number of day-long professional development sessions.

Participating districts meet every other month as a group. During these sessions, DMG offers on-going input and assistance to:

- Identify and help to implement, for each district, 2 early wins for improvements for students under the new merged district
- Identify and help to implement, for each district, 2 early fiscal wins
- Establish the groundwork for school governance that will support continued improvement in both areas for years to come in close cooperation and support of VSBA efforts.
- Improve risk management and take advantage of risk reduction opportunities made possible by unification.

Two cohorts, representing a total of 12 SU/SDs, participated in this program.

The VSBA served as the fiscal and hiring agent for the Act 46 Implementation Project but member dues were not used to fund the service. Resources to cover the costs of this service came from VSBIT and from contracts developed with school districts and supervisory unions. VSBIT committed the funds needed to assure that all costs were covered. As of the end of fiscal year 2019, the work of the Project has concluded and it no longer exists. VSBA experienced no financial loss or gain as a result of this project but had direct and indirect costs covered through a small assessment to the Project.

VSBA SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION SERVICE

The VSBA evaluation tool has been designed to reflect best practice, which is to use a rubric to determine levels of performance for the superintendent. The rubric was built on a common set of leadership expectations that are tied to professional standards and indicators. Each section of the rubric contains clear indicators with specific criteria to rate each performance level. The levels are scored on a scale of highly effective, effective, developing, and ineffective. The rubric evaluates superintendent performance in the following areas:

- Board and Superintendent Relationship
- Policy
- Business and Finance
- Community Relations
- Faculty & Staff Relationships
- Instructional Leadership

The tool also provides for the evaluation of 3-5 district-specific annual goals that have been identified by the superintendent and board. The VSBA conducted seven superintendent evaluations this year.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SUPPORTS

For the past several years, the VSBA provided training on the collective bargaining process and support for regional bargaining councils. The passage of Act 11 by the General Assembly dramatically altered the collective bargaining landscape in Vermont, requiring us to shift the allocation of VSBA resources vis a vis collective bargaining to statewide health insurance negotiations.

Act 11 directed the VSBA to appoint five commissioners to bargain health insurance benefits for school employees on behalf of school districts and to cover the costs associated with statewide bargaining. As a result, the VSBA incurred substantial costs associated with this first round of bargaining, including the costs of legal representation, fiscal analysis, commissioner per diem, and the costs of fact-finding, mediation, and arbitration. While the VSBA paid the bills, the VSBA board played no role in the development of commissioner proposals or positions. The positions of the Act 11 Employer Commissioners are the positions of those Commissioners, working with legal counsel.

Once the statewide bargaining process is complete, the VSBA will turn its attention to training and support to school boards as they negotiate contracts for the first time with a state-negotiated health insurance benefit.

OTHER CONSULTING SERVICES

In addition to services provided to board members as part of their dues at no or very low cost, the VSBA provides consulting services at competitive rates. Services are provided both through VSBA staff and a cadre of consultants. The goal of all services provided by VSBA is to promote exceptional local education governance and high quality education for every student.

Consulting services include: strategic planning and goal-setting, board retreats, superintendent evaluation, superintendent searches, and Policy Governance training and technical assistance. We urge members to contact us when seeking these kinds of supports.

VSBA DUES

The VSBA is a membership organization, with about half of the Association's revenue coming from dues paid by member districts.

In 2016 VSBA members approved the following dues formula:

1. Dues will be assessed by supervisory union/district, which means the technical definition of "member" will change from a "board of education" to a "supervisory union or supervisory district board."

2. Dues assessed to member supervisory unions/districts shall be calculated as follows:
 - a. 50% of the total amount to be raised by dues will be assessed equally across all member supervisory unions and/or supervisory districts.
 - b. 50% will be assessed based on the Average Daily Membership (ADM) within the member supervisory union/district.

Any increase or decrease in aggregate dues per supervisory union/district resulting from this change was spread out over three fiscal years. In some cases, the new dues structure had a noticeable effect on the amount of dues paid by a supervisory union/district.

We are in the final year of the transition to the new dues structure. For more information about the VSBA dues, please see the Treasurer's Report.

PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEAR

As we look to the coming year, our priorities include the following:

- Complete hiring process for the Director of Public Policy position.
- Assure that boards have the tools and support needed to effectively perform their roles as trustees for education in their communities.
- Support school boards as they negotiate with school employees post-Act 11.
- Continue to refine our training modules and instructional videos that incorporate the Essential Work Tool Kit.
- Provide strategic planning services to school boards.
- Launch our new podcast series Tell Me a Story.
- Continue to be an advocate and promoter of a strong and dynamic public education system.

Serving the VSBA for the past eight years has been a profound personal and professional experience. I have learned so much from this organization and its members, and I truly value the work we have done together on behalf of public education in Vermont. I look forward to our paths crossing again at some point in the future. In the meantime, thank you for all you do to make Vermont and her communities a place where young people thrive.

Respectfully submitted,



Nicole L. Mace,
Executive Director

VSBA FINANCES

VSBA Financial Summary Report

Income

Annual Conference—FY20 includes a budgeted \$10,000 margin, which is conservative. FY19 actual profit margin was \$12,642.

Board Development— FY19 net income for this line item was \$12,840 (revenue minus expenses) on fee-for-service revenue for board retreats, superintendent evaluations, workshops, and Policy Governance supports. In FY20, we are budgeting a \$15,000 margin, recognizing that newly unified districts may need support for their transitions.

Contract Database – We anticipate subscriptions will continue at the current level, and will offset the \$3,000 annual maintenance fee paid by the VSBA.

Dues – This is the anticipated revenue expected to be generated by the dues formula. FY20 is the final year of the three year transition to the new dues formula. For the previous two years, the formula did not raise the full amount, due to transition provisions that phased in increases or decreases over the three year transition period. For comparison purposes, the amount budgeted to be raised by dues in FY16 was \$407,149.00; the FY20 dues amount of \$411,000 represents a 1% increase in total dues revenue to the VSBA in a five year period. In FY19 we lost one dues-paying SU; per the formula, the portion of the total dues generated from the number of participating districts was distributed across the remaining member districts for FY20.

Policy Services – We expect to conduct four policy audits/reviews in FY20. We completed three in FY19.

Public Policy -- This is the funding associated with the Legislative Collaborative. VSA, VASBO, VCSEA, VPA, and VSBIT all contribute. The amount we anticipate in FY19 was more than budgeted due to hiring a Legislative Analyst to support the Collaborative. Expenses were also higher for that reason.

Publications—Revenue was higher than expected in FY19 due to increased sales of the 2019 edition of The Essential Work of School Boards. We are budgeting for level publication sales in FY20.

VSBA Search —This projects 3 searches in FY20, one of which will be conducted internally. The VSBA nets \$1,000 per search. In FY19 we only performed one full search and one interim search, which is why income and expenses were lower.

VSBIT Service Agreement —VSBIT and the VSBA continued the service agreement in the amount of \$220,000, with a clear scope of services and reporting requirements. The FY19 service agreement budget, which was approved by VSBIT, allocated more resources to support the salaries of VSBA staff, who perform much of the work that VSBIT is expecting to occur under the agreement. It also allocated resources to supporting the Act 11 Bargaining Commission. Expenses for the Commission included legal representation, fact finding, mediation, and arbitration fees, commissioner expenses, and fiscal analysis. Act 11 required the VSBA to pay for all expenses associated with the employer commissioners' obligations. Costs exceeded the budgeted amount by \$24,000; VSBIT has generously agreed to provide the VSBA with an additional \$24,000 in FY20 in order to cover that deficit.

Use of Unrestricted Net Assets – According to the VSBA's policy on restricted/unrestricted net assets, the board is required to ensure at least \$200,000 in restricted net assets in order to provide funding for 4-6 months of operating expenses. For the FY19 budget, the board approved the use of \$20,258 in unrestricted net assets in order to cover an anticipated deficit due to the transition to the new dues structure. We exceeded that amount due to the higher than expected expenses associated with the Act 11 Commission. As of September 1 (the beginning of the FY20 fiscal year), the VSBA has \$53,236 in unrestricted net assets. The FY20 budget assumes \$17,920 in use of unrestricted net assets.

Expenses

Salary and Benefits—Includes 3% salary increase for staff, and a 15.5% increase in health insurance.

Board Development—We did more board development work than anticipated in FY19, which is why costs were higher than budgeted. We expect costs associated with board development to be relatively stable in FY20.

Board Expenses— This is the cost of VSBA Board Meetings – meals and mileage. We expect this expense to be stable this year.

Misc – In FY20, this line item is expected to cover the expenses associated with the Executive Director search, the Director of Public Policy search, Act 173 legal analysis, and any costs associated with the public records litigation.

NSBA Delegate—Covers the cost of sending VSBA Board Members to NSBA conferences: 2 to Advocacy (January), 2 to Annual Conference (April), 2 to Leadership (August).

Office Space— FY20 rent increased by 2%.

Taxes and Insurance—Modest increase expected.

VERMONT SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AUGUST 31, 2019

ASSETS

Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 282,072	
Accounts receivable	3,497	
Prepaid expenses	<u>31,953</u>	
Total current assets		317,522
Furniture and Equipment		
Furniture and equipment	10,258	
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>(7,282)</u>	
Total furniture and equipment		2,976
Other Assets		
Investment in Two Prospect Street Partners LLC		<u>53,514</u>
Total assets		<u>\$ 374,012</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 60,102	
Vacation payable	<u>7,160</u>	
Total current liabilities		67,262
Net Assets		
Without donor restrictions		
Undesignated	53,236	
Designated for future year expenditures	200,000	
Designated for Two Prospect Street Partners LLC	<u>53,514</u>	
Total net assets		<u>306,750</u>
Total liabilities and net assets		<u>\$ 374,012</u>

Profit/Loss & Budget Report Income

	FY19 Actual	FY19 Budget	FY20 Budget
Income			
Annual Conference	25,763	35,000	30,000
Board Development	27,070	15,000	30,000
Contract Database Income	6,600	7,000	6,000
Dues	392,494	398,751	411,000
Grants	60,681	38,272	0
Interest	1,266	1,000	1,000
Other Income	4,180	2,000	0
Policy Service Income	2,000	2,500	4,000
Public Policy	19,000	14,000	20,000
Publications	39,552	35,000	35,000
VSBA Searches Income	13,050	24,000	25,500
VSBIT Service Agreement	215,000	215,000	220,000
Total Income	806,656	787,523	782,500

Profit/Loss & Budget Report Expense

Expense	FY19 Actual	FY19 Budget	FY20 Budget
Annual Conference Exp	13,121	25,000	20,000
Annual Meeting	0	2,250	0
Audit & Tax Prep	4,750	5,400	3,800
Benefits	65,947	62,930	67,946
Board Appreciation	0	0	1,000
Board Development Exp	14,230	6,500	15,000
Board Expenses	12,893	16,000	15,000
Collective Bargaining Supports	72,979	75,000	135,000
Act 11 Expense	84,748	60,000	
Computer Services	2,434	2,500	2,500
Contract Database	3,000	3,000	3,000
Depreciation Expense	714		0
Equipment Leases	2,986	7,500	6,500
Grant	57,681	33,080	0
Library & Subscriptions	294	200	300
Misc.	3,035	1,000	10,000
New Equipment	0	2,700	2,000
Newsletter	2,453	3,800	3,500
NSBA Delegate Expenses	17,492	15,000	15,000
NSBA Dues	24,397	22,000	24,212
Office Space	21,944	21,869	22,484
Payroll Expenses	1,492	1,400	1,500
Payroll Taxes	26,012	27,580	27,472
Phone	5,917	5,500	6,000

	FY19 Actual	FY19 Budget	FY20 Budget
Expense			
Policy Service Expense	450	0	0
Postage	1,659	1,600	2,000
Public Policy Analyst	8,462	1,000	10,000
Publications Exp	22,146	22,000	20,000
Salaries	329,266	324,472	334,206
Staff Travel & Development	13,638	21,000	20,000
Supplies	2,956	3,000	3,000
Taxes & Insurance	12,858	13,500	14,000
VSBA Searches	12,100	21,000	15,000
Total Expense	<u>842,051</u>	<u>807,781</u>	<u>800,420</u>
Net Income	-35,395	-20,258	-17,920
Other Income/Expense			
Other Income			
Prospect St Asset Adjust	<u>-5,055</u>		
Total Other Income	<u>-5,055</u>		
Net Other Income	<u>-5,055</u>		
Net Income	<u><u>-40,450</u></u>		

VSBA Proposed BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this corporation shall be the Vermont School Boards Association, Inc.

ARTICLE II.

VISION, MISSION, GOALS

Vision:

The Vermont School Boards Association envisions a state where every student has access to and is engaged in a world-class public education, where local boards provide student-focused oversight of education systems, and where educators, families, and communities are engaged partners, ensuring that the futures of all Vermont children are driven by their aspirations, not bound by their circumstances.

Mission:

The VSBA exists to achieve our vision for public education by supporting all school boards to serve as effective trustees for education on behalf of their communities and by providing a strong collective voice toward enhancing the cause of public education in Vermont.

Goals:

VSBA will support local school boards by:

1. advocating for high quality public education at the state and national levels;
2. providing education and training to prepare and assist board members to carry out their roles effectively;
3. researching issues, collecting and disseminating information
4. providing legal and policy services
5. providing a number of customized services to support boards in carrying out their roles.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Any supervisory union or supervisory district board or private school in the State of Vermont may become a member by notifying the executive director of its intentions and by paying the annual dues as provided in Article IV. Any school board within a supervisory union that is a regular member shall be eligible for all the regular benefits of membership, except as provided in Article VI – DELEGATES AND VOTES.

ARTICLE IV. DUES

Membership dues shall be assessed annually according to the following process:

~~Beginning in FY 2018, s~~ Beginning in FY 2018, supervisory unions and supervisory districts shall be the entities upon which the VSBA calculates and assesses dues, unless the member is a private school.

On an annual basis, the VSBA Board of Directors will determine the amount of revenue to be raised by dues. In no case shall an increase in dues by the Board be in excess of the annual percentage increase in education spending in Vermont for the year in which the dues are being assessed.

Dues assessed to members shall be calculated as follows:

- 50% of the total amount to be raised by dues will be assessed equally across all member supervisory unions and/or supervisory districts.
- 50% will be assessed based on the Average Daily Membership (ADM) within the member supervisory union/district.

Prior to the annual meeting each year, the Executive Director shall estimate the projected revenue needed from member dues for the VSBA in the subsequent year, and shall make a recommendation to

the Board of Directors regarding the amount by which the dues should be adjusted for the subsequent year.

The Executive Director shall thereafter prepare a report regarding such estimate, including an explanation of budgetary needs of the VSBA, and shall distribute the report to the membership of the VSBA at the annual meeting.

Any other changes to dues assessments and calculations shall be approved in advance by the membership at the annual meeting of the VSBA. Dues are payable within 60 days of the invoice being sent to the member. ~~Boards whose dues are not paid for the fiscal year preceding the date of the annual association meeting shall not be eligible to vote at the annual meeting.~~

Transition Provision:

For the years FY 2018 through FY 2020, the total dues paid to the VSBA by a supervisory union/district shall not increase or decrease by more than 1/3 of the total increase or decrease within a single year.

For the purposes of the transition period “total increase or decrease” means the total amount by which, according to the new calculation, dues would increase or decrease in the initial year from the aggregate amount of all dues paid by member districts within each supervisory union/district in FY 2017.

Unless otherwise voted on by the membership, this transition provision will expire on September 1, 2020.

ARTICLE V. ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

The annual meeting of the association shall be each year at a time, date, and place to be set at least 8 months in advance by the board of directors. Other meetings of the association may be called by the president with concurrence of the board of directors. Each member board shall be notified of the date, time and place together with the agenda of the business meeting at least 30 days prior to the meeting date. If the meeting has been duly warned, the board representatives present, as designated under article VI, shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VI. DELEGATES AND VOTES

Each regular member in good standing shall be entitled to one vote at the annual or special association meetings. Each regular member shall designate a delegate from its members to cast one vote on behalf of the member. Each regular member may be represented by as many school board members as it chooses, and those school board members shall determine the method for casting its one vote. When an individual casts a vote at a meeting, the member shall be presumed to have authority to vote for his or her regular member entity. All school board members shall have the right of discussion.

The VSBA Board of Directors is authorized to adopt policies and procedures permitting attendance, participation and voting at association meetings through remote electronic communication. In no case shall an individual be permitted to participate or vote unless the individual is able to hear and/or see the proceedings as they happen substantially and concurrently with such proceedings.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

There shall be a president, vice president, treasurer, two at-large members elected from the Board of Directors, and an immediate past president. Their duties shall be the usual duties of such officers. ~~Their terms of office shall begin at the adjournment of the annual meeting at which they are elected and shall continue until their successors are elected and assume office. With the exception of the immediate past president, o~~Only those persons who are members of a school board shall be eligible to serve in the above offices. Should the current president of the association cease to be a local school board member that individual shall step down from the VSBA board leaving a vacancy that will be filled by the board of directors from amongst its membership. The president shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees. Officers will support their regional representatives in their outreach duties.

The following officers shall lead the organization and comprise the Executive Committee:

- The **president** shall lead the board, oversee meetings and the establishment of committees, serve as a spokesperson for the board, and head the Executive Committee.
- The **vice-president** will serve in the role of president upon the absence of the president and will perform such duties as are assigned.
- The **treasurer** shall provide board oversight of the finances to assure strong internal controls and to chair the finance committee.
- The **immediate past president** will serve on the Executive Committee. (*Effective Nov. 1, 2016*)
- **Two at-large members** elected from the Board of Directors will serve on the Executive Committee.

Elections and terms of service are as follows:

- The president is elected by the board of directors from among active members at its August meeting, the term to take effect on November 1.
- The vice-president, treasurer, and two executive committee members will be elected from among the members of the board of directors at the November meeting.
- The immediate past president will serve for one year after the expiration of their presidency.

ARTICLE VIII. STAFF

The board of directors may engage such professional staff as they find necessary to conduct the business of the association and shall set compensation for said staff.

ARTICLE IX. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board of directors shall consist of the president, vice president, treasurer, immediate past president, and two regional representatives from each of 11 regions. Each regional representative is elected at the regional meeting for a two- year term on a staggered schedule. The president is elected from among active board members at the August meeting of each year, to serve a term from November 1 of one year until October 31 of the following year. If the election of a president creates a vacancy in a regional seat, that seat is filled at the next regional meeting in his or her region.

The board of directors shall administer the affairs of the association in accordance with ~~policies~~ bylaws approved by the association at the annual meeting or by vote of the board of directors in accordance with the stated objectives and purposes of the organization. The board of directors shall select the place of meetings and be responsible for the programs of all meetings of the association, and shall direct the payment of claims and accounts against the association, including necessary expenses for members of the board of directors attending board meetings. A quorum shall consist of eight members which shall include at least two officers and at least one representative from six regions. The board shall meet upon the call of the president or upon written request of three members of the board, addressed to the executive director. Such written request shall state the purpose of the meeting and upon receipt the executive director shall issue the call for the meeting. Members of the board of directors ~~and regional representatives~~ shall be notified of all meetings at least 5 days prior to any meeting.

Members of the VSBA Board of Directors fulfill two distinct roles.

- First, the board is responsible for oversight of the organization. It must assure that the organization has a clear vision and goals, is fulfilling its mission, is fiscally sound, and has a strong connection with the membership.
- Second, the regional representatives will develop a liaison relationship with boards in their area, promoting local board involvement in association activities and services, and hearing their concerns and input on matters of broad public policy.

The board shall meet five-six times annually, including in a planning retreat, or as needed, to fulfill its duties.

The board shall have the power to hire and fire the executive director, shall adopt the annual budget, shall adopt the mission and goals of the organization, as well as official policies. The board shall provide broad guidance for the executive director around public policy, in the absence of clear membership resolutions.

Vacancies

A VSBA officer's position (president, vice-president, treasurer, members at large) on the board of directors shall be treated as vacant if the holder of that position:

1. submits a written resignation, or
2. fails to attend three consecutive board meetings without notification to the president and without concurrence of the board of directors that the absence(s) are reasonable

Such a vacancy may be filled by the board of directors from among the current members of the board.

A regional representative's seat on the VSBA Board shall be treated as vacant if the holder of that position

1. submits a written resignation, or
2. fails to attend three consecutive board meetings without notification to the president and without concurrence of the board of directors that the absence(s) are reasonable

In the event a regional representative position is vacant, such a vacancy may be filled by the board of directors after consultation with the regional representatives.

If a region is not represented at three consecutive VSBA Board meetings by either regional representative without notification to the president and without concurrence of the board of directors that the absence(s) are reasonable, the board may declare both seats vacant and appoint a regional voting representative after consultation with member boards in that region.

ARTICLE X. COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board may create such committees as it finds necessary to conduct the business of the association. Standing committees of the board may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Resolutions Committee.** Consisting of the vice-president, who shall serve as chair, and one representative from each region. This committee will solicit and recommend positions to the board of directors for action by membership at the association's annual meeting
- B. Finance Committee.** Consisting of the treasurer, who shall serve as chair, and two (2) members of the board of directors appointed by the president with the advice of the board of directors. The committee shall present a proposed budget to the board of directors and recommend adjustments to the board's financial monitoring policies as needed.
- C. Executive Committee** is comprised of the six officers (the president, who shall serve as chair, vice-president, treasurer, two at-large board members and the immediate past president.) The Executive Committee meets most months during the year to assure the timely conduct of the business of the association, including an annual performance review of the executive director and an annual review of the bylaws of the association.

The Executive Committee is empowered to take action on behalf of the full board in all areas except those identified specifically in Article IX.

ARTICLE XI. REGIONAL ORGANIZATION

For organization and administrative purposes, the state shall be divided into eleven regions, ~~generally organized around the following counties:~~ Addison, Bennington, ~~Caledonia/Southern Essex~~ Kingdom South, ~~Western Chittenden,~~ Eastern Chittenden/GI, Franklin/Grand Isle, Central Vermont/Lamoille, ~~Orleans/Northern Essex~~ Kingdom North, Rutland, ~~Washington/Orange,~~ Windham, and Windsor. Regions are not defined solely by county, as no supervisory union shall be split between regions. A full listing of supervisory unions and VSBA regions can be found on the VSBA website.

Regional representatives shall be elected to two-year terms from each of the eleven regions at the regional meeting preceding the annual meeting, with terms of office to begin at the conclusion of the annual meeting.

In the event that a position of the regional representative becomes vacant, the vacancy may be filled by the board of directors after consultation with the regional representatives. If other vacancies occur, they will be filled by the board of directors until the next regional meeting.

Only those persons who are members of a school board within a regular member entity in good standing shall be eligible to vote at a regional meeting and serve as a regional representative. No person shall serve more than five consecutive elected years in the same office. The regional representative shall be responsible for promoting the interests of the association within their region as members of the board of directors. They shall have the responsibility for holding at least one regional meeting each year. The regional representatives will select which of them will serve on the Resolutions Committee.

ARTICLE XII. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year shall be from September 1 through August 31.

Beginning in FY 2022, the fiscal year shall be July 1 through June 30.

Transition Provision:

The VSBA board of directors shall produce an FY 2021 budget that runs from September 1 through June 30, and shall adopt the FY 2022 budget at its June 2021 board meeting.

ARTICLE XIII. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND BONDS

The financial report of the Association and the auditor's report shall be presented at the annual meeting of the association. Officers shall be bonded at an amount determined by the board of directors.

ARTICLE XIV. ASSETS

All of the assets of this Association shall, during its existence, be deemed to be held in trust by the board of directors of the association for the purposes set forth in the objectives and purposes. In the event of a winding-up or dissolution of the association, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the association, the board of directors shall dispose of any remaining assets by distributing them on a prorated basis, the same as used for dues assessment, to the member school districts to be used for education purposes.

ARTICLE XV. RULES OF ORDER

All meetings of the Association or of any committee shall be governed by the policies and bylaws of the Association and then by Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE XVI. RESOLUTIONS

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 of Vermont government, or other decision making bodies. The process for submitting and approving resolutions is as follows:

- A. The president shall supply ample notice to the membership requesting that proposed resolutions be submitted to the chair of the resolutions committee no later than three (3) months before the annual meeting.
- B. The resolutions committee shall meet prior to the annual meeting to consider all proposed resolutions it has received. The committee shall make a recommendation to "Pass" or "Do Not Pass" each resolution submitted by a member school board. In the alternative, the committee may submit a proposed resolution to the annual meeting with the statement that it "Takes No Position" on the proposal. All resolutions from member boards submitted to the resolutions committee as prescribed in paragraph A above, regardless of the position of the committee or the board, shall be placed by the board before the membership at the annual meeting. The committee may develop its own resolutions, which shall be included in its report to the board of directors, and, if approved by the board, shall be

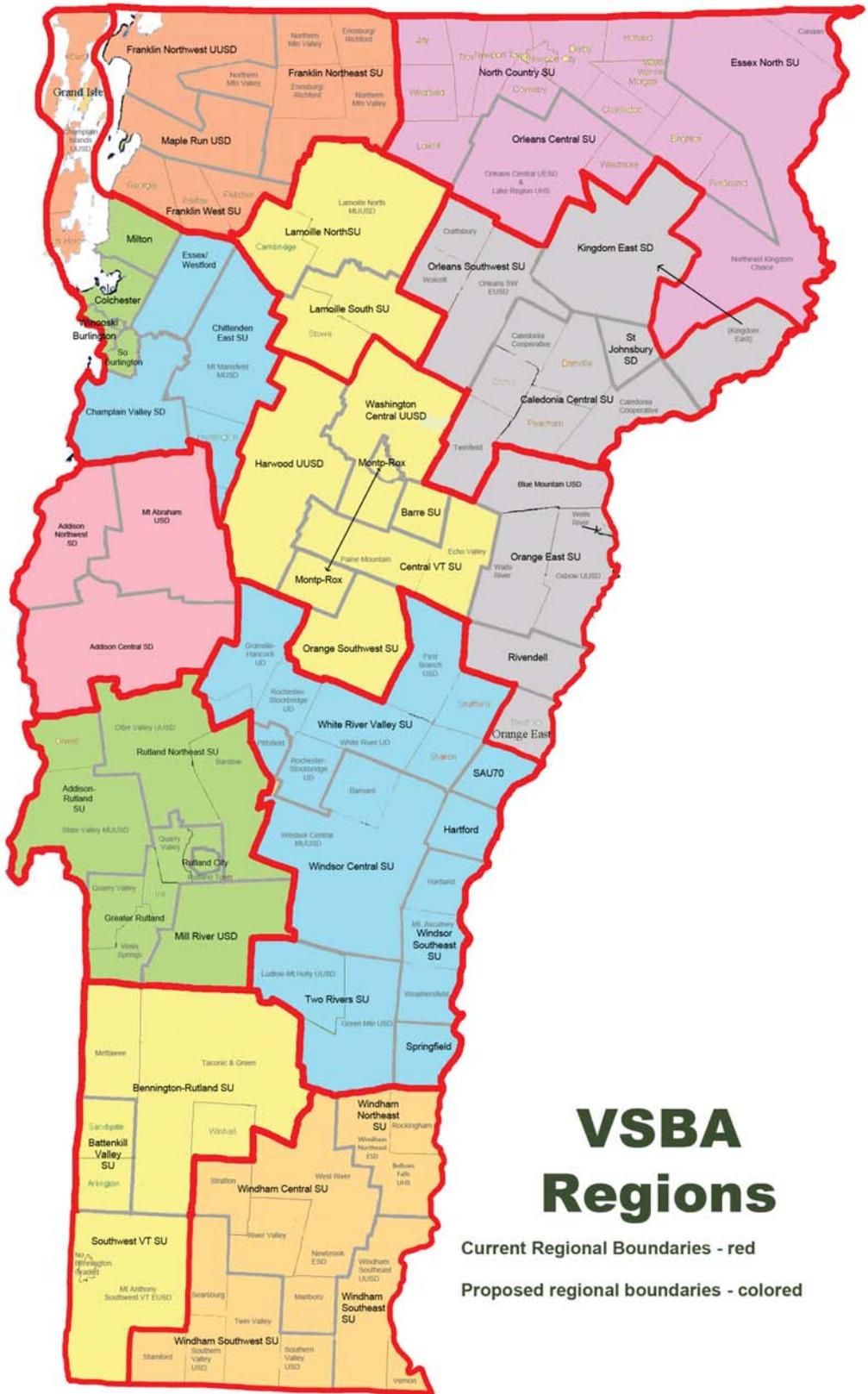
- presented to the annual meeting as recommendations of the board. The committee shall prepare a report of resolutions and its recommendations which shall be presented to the board of directors. Each member board shall be notified of the recommendations made by the board of directors at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting.
- C. Other resolutions may be presented at the annual meeting, provided they are in writing with sufficient copies for voting delegates and 60% of the voting delegates present at the beginning of the meeting are in attendance for consideration of such resolutions. A majority of the voting delegates present must approve a motion to allow the resolution to be introduced for discussion.
 - D. Amendments to resolutions must also be in writing and if the amendment is detailed in nature, sufficient copies for voting delegates shall be furnished.
 - E. When passed by sixty percent (60%) of the voting delegates, a resolution shall become a position or statement of the association. Each position shall be voted as a resolution or continuing resolution. Continuing resolutions shall be statements of association policy which are of an ongoing or permanent nature and shall be in effect until amended at a subsequent annual meeting of the association. Resolutions shall be statements of specific positions on behalf of the association and shall be in effect until the next annual meeting when they may be deleted, continued or amended by vote of the membership.
 - F. When a position has not been taken at the annual meeting, the board of directors may take a position on the question as a result of a vote of 60% of the members of the board present and voting at a regular or special meeting of the board. Notice of the discussion of any such position by the board shall be placed on the agenda prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE XVII. AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended only at an annual meeting of the association or a special meeting duly called by the president and bylaws committee, and then by two-thirds of those members present and voting, providing all member boards shall have been notified of the changes at least 30 days prior to such a meeting.

ARTICLE XVIII. MEMBERSHIP LISTS

- A. Lists of school board members maintained by the association will not be released to individuals or organizations whose stated intentions are to promote commercial or partisan political interests.



VSBA Regions

Current Regional Boundaries - red
 Proposed regional boundaries - colored

VSBA RESOLUTIONS

2019-2020 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 and attached proposed revisions to the current Resolutions were adopted by the VSBA Board at a meeting on August 14, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,

Clarence Haynes, *President*

Geo Honigford

Neil Odell

Kim Gleason

Louis Bushey

Flor Diaz-Smith

David Chandler

Laurie Childers

Jean-Marie Clark

Don Collins

Celeste Girrell

Kevin Hanson

Diane Kirson-Glitman

Dan MacArthur

Amy McMullen

Judy Murray

Kristina Naylor

Mark Nielsen

Kathy Nolan

Adrienne Raymond

Jim Salsgiver

Linda Smith

Resolution Proposal #1: Mill River UUSD

Section V, Subsection E – Replacing Paper Towels with Hand Dryers

WHEREAS: Paper towels in plastic bags contribute a significant amount of mass in landfills, and

WHEREAS: It is widely recognized that single-use plastic bags have a large negative impact on our environment, and

WHEREAS: We must all do our part to reduce waste and protect our environment, and

Whereas: Policies and practices of our public schools have an impact on our environment and communities,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that Vermont schools should replace paper towels with hand dryers in all restrooms, and seek sources of compostable containers for removing waste from school buildings.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: DO NOT PASS

* * * * *

Resolution Proposal #2: River Valley Technical Center SD

Section II, Subsection P - Social Services/Education Funding

WHEREAS: Many school districts in Vermont are spending increasingly significant resources not on education, but on fundamental social services for their students.

AND WHEREAS: The likely disparity in social spending in Vermont school districts is creating a have/have not situation in terms of resources available for education, such as numbers of academic programs and extracurricular activities.

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Vermont Legislature direct the Agency of Education to conduct a detailed survey, by district, to determine the amounts that are being spent on social services and, furthermore, mandate the Administration to find alternative funding sources for these social services aside from the Education Fund.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: DO NOT PASS

Resolution Proposal #3: Rutland Town School District
Section I, Subsection C – Maintaining Current SU Governance Language

WHEREAS: the Rutland Town School Board is a member of the Greater Rutland County Supervisory Union, and insofar as the school board wishes to maintain the current governance structure concerning representation on the supervisory union board, the Board unanimously seeks the continuation of current statutory language as follows:

§ 266. For the purpose of holding meetings and transacting the business of a supervisory union, the school board of any district assigned to a supervisory union, and having more than three members, shall elect from such board three members who shall represent and act for it in meetings of the supervisory union to which it is assigned. But the school board of any district which employs no teacher shall have only one vote in said supervisory union meeting.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: DO NOT PASS

Resolution Proposal #4: Addison Northwest School District

Section I, Subsection M

State Mandates: Timely and Reliable Information & Implementation

WHEREAS: Whereas Vermont School Boards and their related education systems rely on the Agency of Education's leadership and response for student success,

AND WHEREAS: the VSBA represents the majority of Vermont School Boards and works effectively with the Agency of Education, the VT NEA, the State Legislature, the Vermont Superintendents and School Business Officials Associations, and the Governor's office,

AND WHEREAS: the mission of the Agency of Education is to "provide leadership, support, and oversight to ensure that the Vermont public education system enables all students to be successful."

AND WHEREAS: Whereas the Agency of Education's recent leadership and oversight have repeatedly failed to provide timely and reliable information to our school systems,

AND WHEREAS: it is June and our Business Managers have not received final Equalized Pupils numbers,

AND WHEREAS: Whereas our Business Managers do not have a working statewide Chart of Accounts nor do they have a working statewide Accounting Software System, but are expecting them to be implemented by next July 1,

BE IT RESOLVED: The VSBA will prioritize and use its influence to support Vermont School Boards in ensuring that our Business Managers, Superintendents, and School Boards receive required, useful and timely information from the Agency of Education and that the implementation of the statewide Chart of Accounts and Accounting System will not become a burden on our education systems.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: PASS

Resolution Proposal #5: Marlboro & Dummerston SD *Section II, Subsection B – Capital Spending*

WHEREAS: Many Vermont schools are in need of repair and upgrading for both safety and educational concerns; and

WHEREAS: Vermont at one time had a School Building Construction Aid budget which allowed Districts to apply for a cost-share with the State for Capital Improvements to address these needs, and;

WHEREAS: Vermont suspended the School Building Construction Aid temporarily in 2007 and has not reinstated it. Consequently, it has not had a cost-share budget since then, and;

WHEREAS: the State has discussed re-instating a School Building Construction Aid cost-share, making School Building Construction Aid available first to newly-merged Districts which are closing schools, and;

WHEREAS: ALL Vermont schools still operating, whether merged or not, equally house and educate our children and ALL children deserve to be equitably safe and educated,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that current VSBA Resolution II B 1. be amended by adding the quoted wording below:

Resolution II B. CAPITALSPENDING

1. General Education Construction: The moratorium on school construction aid should be removed Schools require predictability and stability in state aid in order to plan successfully over the long term. The VSBA supports reinstatement of 30 percent or more in state reimbursement aid for all eligible capital expenses “irrespective of school district consolidation status.”

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: PASS

Resolution Proposal #6: Marlboro & Dummerston SD
Section V, Subsection E – Environmental Impact

WHEREAS: Global Climate problems will be among the major significant issues facing today's students as they grow, begin their careers and have families of their own,

WHEREAS: The buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is one of the main factors contributing to climate change, and one which schools can directly affect,

WHEREAS: School buildings and their energy use are one of the ways that State-wide policy can be effective in addressing climate change,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: The VSBA will consider the impact on the environment when deciding whether to support legislation and initiatives.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: PASS

Resolution Proposal #7: Mettawee School District
Section III, Subsection J – Vermont’s Dual Enrollment Program

WHEREAS: Vermont resident students who reside in districts that do not operate a high school, whose tuition is publicly funded and who attend public schools in a state bordering Vermont are being denied access to Vermont’s Dual Enrollment Program;

AND WHEREAS: Vermont’s Dual Enrollment Program is a crucial tool in helping Vermont resident students aspire to continue their education past high school;

AND WHEREAS: empirical research has found that dual enrollment programs significantly improve college degree attainment rates for low-income students:
(<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0162373712461933>);

AND WHEREAS: the VSBA supports initiatives that are designed to create greater equity in high quality learning opportunities and to achieve cost effectiveness (VSBA Resolution I, J);

AND WHEREAS: the VSBA’s vision states “The Vermont School Boards Association envisions a state where every student has access to and is engaged in a world-class public education, where local boards provide student-focused oversight of education systems, and where educators, families, and communities are engaged partners, ensuring that the futures of all Vermont children are driven by their aspirations, not bound by their circumstances.”

BE IT RESOLVED: The Vermont School Boards Association supports a change to state law to allow access to Vermont’s Dual Enrollment Program for Vermont resident students who reside in districts that do not operate a high school, whose tuition is publicly funded and who attend public schools in a state bordering Vermont.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: PASS

Resolution Proposal #8: West Windsor School District
Section II, Subsection K – State Cease Unfunded Mandates

WHEREAS: “Whereas it is the responsibility of the State of Vermont to designate funds within its Education Fund for specific educational purpose; and whereas unfunded educational mandates add to local taxes and artificially inflate the local tax burden;

AND WHEREAS: and whereas state lawmakers then specifically point to the local tax burden as being inflated, without acknowledgement of its own unfunded mandates’ significance as part of that local burden; and whereas local funding of mandates forces school boards to strip local education budgets in order to accommodate said mandates; and whereas doing so forces residents to consider its children a financial burden rather than the investment that they are;

BE IT RESOLVED: that the West Windsor School Board requests that the State of Vermont temporarily or permanently cease passage of all unfunded mandates that add taxes to local education allocations.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: DO NOT PASS

Resolution Proposal #9: West Windsor School District

Section II, Subsection H – State Cease to Add Non-education Items to Ed Fund

WHEREAS: Whereas it is the responsibility of the State of Vermont to designate funds within its Education Fund for activities and programs specifically related to education; and whereas the State of Vermont for the last several budget years has added non-educational expenses to its Education Fund;

AND WHEREAS: and whereas the State of Vermont's Education Fund's burden is perceived as being due to the high cost of education; and whereas the non-educational expenditures were offloaded from the General Fund to the Education Fund without transferring corresponding funds from the General Fund; and whereas the General Fund thus has a reported surplus;

BE IT RESOLVED: that the West Windsor School Board requests that the State of Vermont temporarily or permanently cease the transfer of tax burden from the General Fund to the Education Fund without transference of the coordinating funding, and likewise requests that the State of Vermont address such burdens as have been placed on the Education Fund over the last 15 years, and restore corresponding funds as noted above.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: DO NOT PASS

Resolution Proposal #10: Washington Central UU School District

Section I, Subsection M – Monitor Outcomes from Act 46 Goals

WHEREAS: Act 46 directed the Secretary of Education, for the period January 15, 2016 – January 2021, to collect and analyze data from the new districts created under this section regarding educational opportunities, operational efficiencies, transparency, accountability, and other issues following merger.

AND WHEREAS: Act 46 further directs the Secretary to submit a report to the House and Senate Committees on Education and on Appropriations, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance regarding the districts merging under this section, conclusions drawn from the data collected, and any recommendations for legislative action.

BE IT RESOLVED: VSBA declares that the Secretary's adherence to the dictates of Act 46 to comprehensively compile and analyze data and present the report with the required conclusions and recommendations is a matter of the highest priority for its member school districts.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: PASS

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Resolution Proposal #11: Washington Central UU School District

Section II, Subsection P – Fairly Distributed Pre-existing Debt

WHEREAS: Washington Central Unified Union School District would like to have a fair and equitable method of adjusting property taxes for the towns within a school district that takes into consideration the impact of pre-existing school debt on small towns after Act 46 consolidation.

BE IT RESOLVED: To the extent possible, VSBA will support all efforts to work toward equitable taxation within districts that were ordered to merge by the State Board of Education.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: PASS

Recommended removals are indicated with a ~~strike through~~
Recommended additions are highlighted in yellow

2018-2019 VSBA Resolutions

I. GOVERNANCE, LOCAL AND STATE

A. THE ROLE OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

Education in Vermont is overseen by local school boards. Each local board serves as the Board of Trustees for education on behalf of the entire community. It is entrusted with assuring that the young people of the community receive a high quality education and that taxpayers are receiving an excellent return on their investment of tax dollars.

B. THE ESSENTIAL WORK OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Each school board is responsible for leadership in the following areas:

Create a vision for education in the community. Answer the questions: What do you want students to know? What kind of experiences do you want them to have? What kind of long-term outcomes do you desire?

Establish policy parameters to carry out that vision. Establish the district's priorities. Define parameters for carrying out the educational program. Define any limitations to be placed on the administration.

Hire a superintendent to administer the district to achieve the vision. Provide the latitude to do the job. Hold the superintendent accountable for results.

Monitor progress toward the vision. Determine indicators which need to be monitored on a regular basis and assure a plan to regularly monitor performance.

Develop and adopt a budget to support the vision and monitor plan vs actual expenses. Assure the budget reflects the vision and the values of the district and the community.

Advocate for education within the community. Be sure your community understands the needs of the local education system and is supportive of the education being provided to young people. Encourage community involvement.

Meet other legal requirements—serving as a quasi-judicial board to resolve disputes on appeal and negotiating collective bargaining agreements with teachers and other staff.

Be sure the system is operated ethically. Acknowledge that members carry no power outside of the context of the board. Assure no actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Adopt and adhere to a code of conduct.

C. SUPERVISORY UNIONS

Vermont's system of education governance includes an array of district boards, union school boards, and tech center boards. Some boards have a fairly straightforward supervisory district designation, meaning that a single board hires a single superintendent. The vast majority of boards are part of a Supervisory Union where a number of districts are assigned to a single area for purposes of hiring a superintendent and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of all education services in the region. The VSBA is committed to supporting highly functional supervisory districts and supervisory unions which are able to assure equal

education opportunity for all students in the region and which can attract and retain strong education leadership.

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.

D. LOCAL DECISION MAKING

Local school boards have been given responsibilities by state statute to oversee public education in their districts and to make the important decisions necessary to assure the provision of high quality education in an efficient and effective manner. As local boards are accountable, they must be assured that there is no state interference in their decision-making responsibilities.

E. BOARD DEVELOPMENT

School boards have a large responsibility in overseeing the educational system in an increasingly complex environment. School board members should expect to have readily available opportunities for new member orientation and mentoring and for ongoing training. Board members have the duty to seek out and participate in these opportunities. The VSBA will work with the Vermont Superintendents Association to ensure high quality joint training opportunities are available to board chairs and superintendents so that they may fulfill their joint training responsibilities under Act 56 of 2013.

The Board of the Vermont School Boards Association should direct its staff to:

1. devote time to recruiting and training new school board members,
2. to provide them with the tools they need to be directly, educationally engaged in their Districts,
3. 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.

F. ROLE OF THE STATE IN EDUCATION

The VSBA believes that the role of the State Board of Education and the State Agency of Education is:

1. To guide the creation of a broad design for the education system in a rapidly changing world where information is no longer confined to books or geographic locations. The broad design must include a focus on: assuring success for every student; supporting a new vision for teaching and learning; engaging and supporting families and communities; delivering and using world-class technology; and providing effective leadership.
2. To provide support for local boards in their efforts to design and implement the best possible educational program.
3. To promote equity of educational opportunity for students throughout Vermont.
4. To provide assistance when requested by individual school districts and local boards to help them meet statewide per-pupil spending goals.

In order to accomplish these goals, the Agency of Education must be properly staffed and resourced.

VSBA desires to be a strong partner with the State Board of Education in overseeing Vermont's education system. VSBA believes that the State Board should include an active school board member, an administrator and a teacher. The Governor should consult with the VSBA in the selection of the school board member.

G. CHARTER SCHOOL LEGISLATION

The VSBA supports public school innovation which can offer rich and diverse educational opportunities for all students. VSBA supports the recommendations of the 2001-2002 Charter School Study Commission that state that Vermont should not enact charter school enabling legislation because existing law allows for the establishment of new schools, programs or "schools-within-schools" that can readily accomplish many of the goals that larger, urban school systems in other states seek in charter schools. By drawing funds away from existing small public schools, charter school legislation may undermine the ability of public schools to serve the educational needs of Vermont's children.

While the existing law allows the granting of waivers to schools relative to meeting specific regulations, all publicly supported schools should adhere to state or comparable standards and administer the statewide assessments.

H. STUDENTS ON LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

VSBA believes that local school boards benefit from having an ongoing student voice in their discussions of all school matters that are not subjects of executive sessions. The VSBA encourages its members to include students as active participants in the consideration of educational issues, and favors the participation of students as board members. The VSBA will provide guidance and support to boards to achieve this objective.

I. BOARD REORGANIZATION

~~VSBA supports a clarification of state law to allow school boards to depose a board officer and elect new board officer(s) at any time such action is deemed appropriate by a two-thirds majority of the board.~~

J. ADDRESSING EQUITY, QUALITY AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

The VSBA supports initiatives that are designed to create greater equity in high quality learning opportunities and to achieve cost effectiveness. Such initiatives shall focus on the needs of the students and taxpayers of the state of Vermont. Any initiative that impacts our governance structure or funding system must be designed in a way that reflects our community values. School boards are in the best position to inform this process and must be fully engaged in this effort. The VSBA will work with the General Assembly and our members to support initiatives at the state, regional and local level that will address our challenges while maintaining and strengthening local communities.

K. APPOINTMENTS TO UNIFIED BOARDS

School boards can provide valuable input to selectboards when there are needs to fill vacancies on union school district boards. Additionally, collaborations between school and town officials can only serve to benefit their communities. The VSBA supports a change to the union school district statutes to provide that a selectboard will seek input from the school board prior to filling a vacancy on that board.

L. CIVIL DISCOURSE

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.

Accordingly, harassment, coercion and intimidation must be viewed as a fundamental threat to the democratic principles upon which our republic is based. When directed towards elected officials or those running for elected office, violence, the threat of violence and other forms of harassment, coercion and intimidation are not just crimes against individuals, they are direct assaults upon our democratic system of self-governance. Accordingly, we, as elected officials in the State of Vermont, hereby call upon those in law enforcement at the local, state and federal levels to make the investigation of such crimes a top priority. We ask that all levels in law enforcement take such crimes seriously and that they work diligently to identify and prosecute all who would attempt to subvert and interfere with the political process by means of violence, threats of violence or by other forms of harassment, coercion and intimidation.

II. FINANCE

A. EQUALIZATION

VSBA supports the maintenance of "...substantially equal access to a quality basic education..." for all of Vermont's children as required by the Vermont Supreme Court in its *Brigham* decision, and as legislatively promised in 16 V.S.A. §1.

It is the duty of the State of Vermont to ensure fiscal equity for all school districts to allow equal educational opportunities for all students. Significant state expenditure is required to equalize the financial resources of districts and maintain the educational opportunities of students.

B. CAPITAL SPENDING

1. General Education Construction: The moratorium on school construction aid should be removed. Schools require predictability and stability in state aid in order to plan successfully over the long term. The VSBA supports reinstatement of 30 percent or more in state reimbursement aid for all eligible capital expenses **irrespective of a district's consolidation status.**
2. School Building Consolidation: The VSBA supports school building consolidation projects when the local school district or districts believes the result will be greater cost effectiveness or improved educational outcomes for students. The VSBA supports extending indefinitely 50 percent state reimbursement aid for school building consolidation projects as provided under 16 V.S.A. § 3448(a)(7)(C).
3. Technical Education Capital Expenses: The moratorium on technical center construction aid should be removed.
4. The General Assembly should establish funding mechanisms exclusively focused on the equitable procurement, development and utilization of technological assets, including connectivity, hardware, data, professional development and support. Furthermore, the Agency of Education must develop adequate logistical support for districts to assist districts in achieving world-class technology and the associated transformation of teaching and learning.

C. ADULT STUDENTS IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The VSBA urges the state legislature **General Assembly** to fund 100% of the costs of educating, in technical education centers, persons over 21 years of age who lack high school diploma and are not enrolled for purposes of pursuing graduation from a high school or technical center.

D. USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS

The VSBA does not support funding private independent educational institutions with public funds in districts that operate public schools for the education of local students, except at the discretion of local school boards. The VSBA opposes indirect public support to private independent educational institutions through the granting of tax credits or tax subsidies for tuition or expenses. Public education funds in Vermont districts that operate schools should be directed to the improvement of those public schools.

~~E. WEIGHTING OF STUDENTS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS~~

~~The VSBA requests the General Assembly to conduct a thorough analysis of the weighted membership for English Language Learners in order to determine whether 1.2 FTE provides sufficient resources to adequately meet the needs of ELL students.~~

F. COMMON LEVEL OF APPRAISAL

That the VSBA calls upon the Governor and General Assembly to study the mechanics of the Common Level of Appraisal and its effect on education property tax rates.

1. We especially ask for consideration of the effect that calculation and application of the CLA has on small towns.

2. We ask for consideration of alternative methods of adjusting property values for taxation, including but not limited to developing a regional CLA or a rolling reappraisal system.
3. We ask for an examination of a more equitable system of calculating the CLA, which could include such approaches as:
 - a. Automatically excluding high value outliers from calculations;
 - b. Re-examining how properties are categorized;
 - c. Limiting the punitive impacts of annual changes in a community's CLA that result from local reappraisals.
4. We ask that this study consider the effect these recommendations would have on the Education Fund.

G. REFORM THE EDUCATION TAX SYSTEM

The General Assembly should examine alternative funding sources for our education system that are more equitable and sustainable, rather than continue a system that predominantly relies on the property tax for revenue.

H. USE OF THE EDUCATION FUND

The VSBA strongly supports the intended limitations on the use of the Education Fund, and opposes any diversion of funds raised through the statewide property tax to programs not within the jurisdiction of public school districts or supervisory unions.

I. TEACHER PENSION PLAN

The VSBA requests the General Assembly to conduct a thorough analysis of the Vermont teachers' retirement system and to make recommendations and take action to ensure its sustainability over the long term, including consideration of conversion from a defined benefit to a defined contribution plan.

J. NO COST-CUTTING DOUBLE JEOPARDY

The VSBA calls on the General Assembly to avoid putting school districts under multiple cost-cutting strictures at the same time, for example: eliminating small schools grants along with further reduction of the excess spending penalty.

K. UNFUNDED MANDATES

All new educational requirements or programs mandated by the federal government or the State of Vermont should be fully funded by either the federal or state government.

L. STUDENT TRANSFERS

The legislature **General Assembly** should provide a mechanism to allow for preK through grade 8 student ADM transfers or tuition terms within a supervisory union on terms agreed to by sending and receiving school boards with approval of the Superintendent.

M. INDEPENDENT SCHOOL FUNDING

Public dollars that support private independent schools should carry with them the same obligations regarding quality, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability that apply to public school districts. In order for an independent school (other than an independent school with a specific state purpose) to be eligible to receive public education funds, the school should:

1. Not discriminate or deny enrollment on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability
2. Operate with an open admissions policy, meaning that it accepts all publicly-funded students on a space-available basis
3. Be approved for special education services in *at least* four categories and arrange for special education services related to *any* disability category if required in an enrolled student's individual education plan
4. Administer state assessments and make outcomes data available to the public in the same manner as public schools

5. Provide free and reduced lunch to all eligible students
6. Employ teachers and administrators that have licenses and endorsements required by professionals working in public schools

N. FEDERAL FUNDING FOR K-12 PROGRAMS

The Vermont School Boards Association urges Congress and the Administration to ~~amend the Budget Control Act to mitigate the drastic cuts to~~ provide full and sufficient funds for public education including, but not limited to, Title I and IDEA that would affect our students and communities, and to protect education as an investment critical to economic stability and American competitiveness.

O. COST CONTAINMENT

The statewide cost of PreK-12 education has been at the center of significant policy debates and interventions for the past decade. The VSBA offers the following recommendations to respond to concerns about costs while maintaining education quality:

1. *Statewide health insurance benefit for school employees:* In order to ensure equity and sustainability in the health care benefits available to all school employees, the General Assembly should adopt a process for the negotiation of health care benefits at the state level by a council of school board members to apply to contracts that expire in 2019.
2. ~~Create a task force to establish target equalized pupil/teacher/support staff ratio:~~ Policymakers should convene a task force to establish staff to equalized pupil target ratios for specific categories of schools and school district configurations and develop recommended strategies for districts to help them meet targets.
3. *Study of state-funded retirement buy-out that conditions rehires on achieving ratios:* The VSBA recommends the creation of a stakeholder task force to explore the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a state-funded initiative in support of early or "on-time" retirement. Two conditions of a district's participation in the initiative would be a commitment to meet staff to student ratio targets by reducing total personnel through the retirement program, and a commitment to sustain these savings through future budgeting processes.
4. *Establish standards for fact-finders in the collective bargaining process:* The General Assembly should modify 16 V.S.A. §2007 to require neutral fact-finders to consider only a statutory list of legitimate measures of a community's ability to pay, rather than a pattern of area salary and health benefits that purports to demonstrate financial wherewithal but in fact does not.
5. *Guidelines for reserve funds and budget surplus amounts:* In light of the goals of affordability, transparency and accountability, the VSBA will work with the Agency of Education, the Vermont Superintendents Association and the Vermont Association of School Business Officials to establish guidelines on the appropriate amounts and uses of reserve funds and the treatment of budget surplus amounts. Guidelines should support best practices in amounts of, establishment of and utilization of reserve funds.
6. 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.
7. 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.~~

III. INSTRUCTION

A. PERSONALIZATION & PROFICIENCY-BASED LEARNING

The VSBA believes that students learn best when they play an active and meaningful role in their education. The learning styles, interests, and aptitudes of each student should drive instruction and learning activities in every school, as opposed to standardized programs designed to prepare students to perform well on state standardized assessments. ~~The State Board of Education must complete the development of a proficiency-based system that gives students credit for demonstrated learning, skills, and development that takes place inside and outside of school buildings.~~

All schools must provide equitable access to meaningful and rigorous learning experiences that will allow students to demonstrate proficiency in multiple ways.

The VSBA supports a study regarding whether the current construct of Act 129 Vermont's Public High School Choice Law presents a barrier to the personalization of education or the expansion of opportunities for students, and further recommends that there be supports available for school districts to collaborate on joint endeavors to expand access to innovative educational programs.

B. STUDENT ASSESSMENT

The VSBA recognizes the value of standardized assessments as one tool to be used in evaluating student performance. It must be used in conjunction with other means of evaluation to present an accurate picture of student achievement. The VSBA does not support the use of standardized assessments alone to determine the success of schools, to evaluate teacher performance, to promote students from grade to grade or as a final "gate" to a high school diploma.

State standardized assessments should be designed to provide information about student growth over time, and should include interim assessments so that students and educators are able to measure student performance throughout a school year, rather than just once a year. The Vermont Agency of Education should also continue to support development and administration of local assessment plans which may include national norm-referenced achievement and/or aptitude tests as well as other locally administered evaluation methods. As the reliability of additional local assessments is assured, it may be of value to give more weight to local assessments in the State's Accountability System.

C. ESEA REAUTHORIZATION

The federal Department of Education should provide adequate technical support, guidance, and resources to ensure that the Vermont Agency of Education as well as school districts are prepared to comply with ESSA's provisions. Specifically, Congress should appropriate funding to no less than 95% of the authorized funding level. Our congressmen and senators should continue to support state and local decision making in the ESSA rulemaking process.

The Agency of Education's work to implement Education Quality Reviews is crucial to successful ESSA implementation on the local level. The Agency of Education should make up-to-date data gathered in Education Quality Reviews readily accessible to school districts.

D. SCHOOL CHOICE

VSBA recognizes the varied learning styles and needs of students and supports the provision of multiple options for student learning in the public schools. The Association supports the maintenance of the parameters of Act 129 of 2014 Vermont's Public High School Choice Law and the thorough monitoring of its outcomes. VSBA urges the legislature General Assembly to examine closely all ramifications of the law to understand the effects on those students who choose new schools and those who do not, as well as the impact on all schools.

Vermont needs to recognize the long history of school choice in many towns and to leave in place that status quo. VSBA is concerned that expanded school choice for all other towns could have significant unintended consequences. If this option is to be seriously considered, it requires extensive study with substantial involvement by VSBA.

E. UNIFORM KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE AGE

~~VSBA supports the establishment of a common statewide entrance age for kindergarten. School districts should be authorized to grant waivers in accordance with board policies and procedures. The recommended age should be consistent with research results on child development and successful school experience. This effort should be accompanied by expansion of opportunities for pre-school education to ensure adequate preparation for school success.~~

School Boards serve as trustees for education on behalf of the community – assuring that young people of the community receive a high quality education and that taxpayers receive an excellent return on their investment. VSBA believes that the authority granted to school boards as the final decision makers on collective bargaining agreements should be unchanged.

E. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FOR EMPLOYEES IN SCHOOLS

School district employees accept employment in schools knowing that the work is available only during the school year. Schools cannot be responsible for providing unemployment compensation to those employees during school vacations and the summer months, when there is reasonable assurance that the work will continue when students return.

F. PROBATION FOR NEW HIRES

The General Assembly should amend 16 VSA 1752 to ensure that a probationary period is afforded to supervisory unions/school districts for all new hires. This will provide districts the time and flexibility to determine if the chosen candidate is the best fit for the district. It frees districts to take greater risks on candidates in order to find the best available employee.

G. REDUCTION IN FORCE

Seniority should not be the sole factor for determining which employees are subject to Reduction in Force actions. School boards in Vermont should negotiate Reduction in Force provisions in their master agreements that include clear standards and measures other than seniority – such as performance evaluations that include multiple sources of evidence to measure teacher performance – that will allow administrators to make Reduction in Force determinations that are in the best interests of students. These provisions should also state that if employees are recalled after a Reduction in Force, seniority will not be the sole factor for determination as to which employees are recalled to employment.

H. HEALTH CARE FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Any legislative approach to addressing health care for school employees must: demonstrate that it will reduce costs to school districts over the near and long term; reflect the health insurance plan norms for the majority of Vermonters; and include a date-certain whereby education employees will transition to the new system.

I. COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFITS

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 November board meeting.

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.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

A. SOCIAL AND MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDED IN SCHOOLS

VSBA supports the delivery of social and medical services in public schools, by use of contracted services for which Vermont schools are reimbursed at full actual cost.

B. DATA COLLECTION & REPORTING

The passage of the federal ~~No Child Left Behind~~ **Every Student Succeeds Act** as well as state and local needs make the necessity for accurate and informative data more important than ever. The legislature **General Assembly** should continue to fund the integration and close linkage of state and local information systems to maximize the efficiency and productivity of data collection, analysis and reporting at both levels.

1. The State ~~Department~~ **Agency** of Education should promulgate consistent and understandable definitions of data.
2. The ~~Department~~ **Agency** must analyze and coordinate all its requests for data from local districts to assure that all such data are needed and utilized in a way that improves student learning.
3. All requirements for information from local districts should be accompanied by a streamlined and easy-to-use mechanism for collection and submission with the goal of reducing the negative impact on local districts.

The VSBA strongly supports the protection of student privacy rights. Any data collection, maintenance or distribution system must be developed with the primary objective of protecting personally identifiable information about students.

C. FIREARM SAFETY ZONE

The VSBA supports the enacting of Firearm Safety Zone legislation that would prohibit the firing of any type of firearm within 500 feet of any preK-12 school campus. Appropriate and serious penalties should be included. Exemptions for pre-existing, regulated gun ranges and special events should also be included. The Gun Safety Zone is needed to promote the safety of children and staff from accidental injury and to prevent unnecessary anxiety and safety procedures from firearms discharging nearby schools from unidentified sources.

D. VSBA Regional Boundaries

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.

F. SCHOOL TIME

~~VSBA sees a need for more learning time for students and for more educator preparation, coordination, and professional development time. The VSBA urges the General Assembly to support school districts in their efforts to use current time better and to find innovative ways to provide the increased student and educator time that may include weekend and summer schools, common in-service days, and mentoring among other methods. The state should research, develop and support pilot programs that demonstrate better use of time.~~

~~Decisions such as the length of the school day or the school week should be made at the local level. The Legislature should direct the Commissioner of Education to make available assistance to districts that wish to consider the financial and academic effects of adopting alternatives.~~

G. EARLY EDUCATION

The VSBA encourages the General Assembly to create universal access to pre-kindergarten education, through a system that emphasizes equity, quality, and simplicity. School districts should play a central role in assuring quality and accountability in publicly funded early education programs. ~~Private providers of early education services that meet high standards can and should play significant roles as partners with school districts and parents.~~

H. SCHOOL CALENDAR

VSBA is supportive of school calendars that provide for more continuity of learning, better reflect the needs of all students and increase opportunities for professional learning and reflection throughout the school year. The VSBA urges regional superintendents groups to explore school calendars that reasonably distribute the pace of education to maximize student learning, provide opportunities for student interventions during the school year, promote academic momentum for students, and allow for districts to partner with community organizations to provide enrichment, academic, and other skill-building opportunities throughout the year.

I. SCHOOL DISTRICT INNOVATION ZONES

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.

IV. LABOR RELATIONS

A. UPDATING VERMONT'S COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FRAMEWORK

The VSBA urges the General Assembly to transform the traditional collective bargaining framework in order to best respond to contemporary expectations for education and to elevate the teaching profession in ways that create conditions for innovative schools. The new framework should promote bargaining that is: student-centered, collaborative, evidence-based, flexible and transparent.

B. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

~~The VSBA will promote legislation and collaborative action with the NEA and other education partners which will:~~

- ~~1. Promote collective bargaining agreements which facilitate and do not interfere with transforming education and the role of the teacher.~~
- ~~2. Promote more collaborative approaches to collective bargaining in this time of significant change.~~

C. BINDING INTEREST ARBITRATION

The General Assembly should eliminate the right to strike and impose contracts by updating Vermont's collective bargaining process to be more in line with our New England neighbors. The new approach should not include mandatory binding arbitration because it would turn over important decisions that impact up to 80 percent of school budgets to out-of-state arbitrators generally unfamiliar with community issues and Vermont's education finance system.

D. VOTER RATIFICATION OF NEGOTIATED CONTRACTS



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