

The Vermont School Boards Association & Vermont Superintendents Association
Agenda for a World-Class Education System
January 2013

Assuring Success for Every Student: All schools must provide extensive and equitable access to meaningful and rigorous learning experiences. The learning styles, interests, and aptitudes of each student must drive instruction, learning activities and assessment in every school.

Legislation

- The General Assembly should adopt legislation this year to provide universal access to pre-k education for every student.
- The General Assembly should adopt legislation that provides for the expansion of, and more equitable access to, rigorous multiple pathways for students such as dual enrollment, virtual learning, independent studies, vocational education and community-based learning.

State Policy and Support

- The State Board of Education must ensure the timely development of a system that gives credit for learning based on demonstrated proficiencies, rather than seat time.
- The State Board of Education should authorize 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.

Local Action

- School boards and superintendents will work together to ensure that every student has a personal learning plan focused on core academics, dispositions towards learning, and student aspirations.
- Superintendents and principals must lead the efforts within school systems to assure that the learning needs of students and the professional development needs of teachers are met. The emphasis of the work must be on supporting the personal learning needs of students.
- Regional superintendents groups should establish school calendars that provide for more continuity in learning and better reflect the needs of students.
- Businesses, large and small, must engage with schools in providing meaningful work study and internships to students.

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Supporting a New Vision for Teaching and Learning: The transformation of public education is the responsibility of all - but it is teachers who are the faces and facilitators of change. We must do all we can to prepare, attract, support and retain committed teachers and to create working conditions that support creativity, flexibility, innovation and collaboration.

Legislation

- The General Assembly should undertake a thorough review of the benefits and costs of negotiating compensation and benefits at the state level while leaving other facets of collective bargaining agreements to be negotiated more locally.

State Policy and Support

- The Secretary of Education should lead a process to better align teacher preparation and licensing requirements with the new vision for teaching and learning.
- The Secretary of Education must convene a council of experts and interested parties to determine how to best support teachers and their practice in responding to the emerging needs of Vermont learners. The council should determine how Vermont can update our statutes to reframe the purpose of collective bargaining agreements with teachers – to devise strategies that contribute to improving student learning and to create the professional employment conditions that enable teachers to be effective practitioners.

Local Action

- School boards should open discussions among board members, administrators and teachers regarding the evolving role of a teacher in a world class education system.
- School boards and teachers should start collective bargaining discussions with an emphasis on the importance of changes in educational practice for the benefit of students and consider contract language to effectuate those changes.

Engaging and Supporting Families and Communities: School, family, and community partnerships are essential to student success and to building an enduring new system of public education. Families and children must be well-supported to maximize learning.

Legislation

- The General Assembly must enact legislation to provide free lunches to students who qualify for reduced-price lunches.

State Policy and Support

- The Governor must ensure that the Agency of Human Services is well-resourced and that it works in close collaboration with local human service delivery systems to provide leadership, support, and resources to those systems.
- The Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Human Services must work together to build strong connections and reduce barriers, and to create models for human service systems within schools that support student learning.

Local Action

- Our Associations will develop and offer training to administrators on the importance of family engagement and effective strategies to do so.

Delivering and Using World-Class Technology: In a world-class education system, modern technology and timely information about system performance must be as available as the electricity that flows when you flip on a light switch.

Legislation

- The General Assembly should establish funding mechanisms exclusively focused on the equitable procurement, development and utilization of technological assets – connectivity, hardware, data, professional development and support.

State Policy and Support

- Connect Vermont - Governor Shumlin's vision for high-speed broadband connectivity to every corner of Vermont - must be fully realized.
- The Agency of Education must successfully complete its work to create a longitudinal data system that will collect and distribute meaningful student data.
- The Agency of Education should expand its professional development platform so that it provides for open access to educators outside and within Vermont and becomes a repository for research-based practices from across the globe.

Local Action

- School boards must ensure that every school has reliable access to high-speed connectivity.
- School systems must ensure that every student has access to personal learning devices.
- Superintendents and principals must ensure that teachers have and demonstrate the skills necessary to support students in the full use of digital learning devices.

- Superintendents and principals, with support from the Agency of Education, must make certain that boards, school administrators and teachers know how to use the data that will become available to them through the longitudinal data system.

Providing Effective Leadership: Our education systems must become nimble in their response to the needs of students and communities. School boards and administrators must lead, becoming more responsive, responsible and highly focused on effective decision making processes.

Legislation

- The General Assembly must update legislation to clarify the roles and responsibilities for Supervisory Union and School District boards that will move this work forward.
- The General Assembly must enact legislation to require joint training for superintendents and board chairs.

State Policy and Support

- The Governor must ensure that the Agency of Education is well-resourced and that it works in close collaboration with school boards and superintendents to provide leadership, support, and resources to school systems.
- The Secretary of Education should lead a process to better align administrator preparation and licensing requirements with the new vision for public education.

Local Action

- School boards and superintendents must work together to ensure principals have time, organizational supports, flexibility, and resources to fulfill their roles as instructional leaders.
- School boards and superintendents will identify outcomes and indicators on system performance and will use that data to inform decision-making.
- School boards in all districts and supervisory unions must work with superintendents, principals and business managers to design and implement structural changes that allow for greater student opportunity and more nimble decision-making, and that attract and retain high quality administrators.