

2024 Legislative Platform

ADOPTED BY THE VSBA MEMBERSHIP

VSBA's ORGANIZATIONAL DNA

VSBA is a non-profit, membership organization with the purpose of supporting school boards in fulfilling their duties, promoting public education, and providing a collective voice for strong education policy in Vermont.

VSBA has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to equity of opportunity and a strong, sustainable public education system.



VSBA Vision

The VSBA is the trusted leadership organization advancing the essential work of Vermont school boards so that each and every student is supported in their educational journey.

Beliefs

1. Public education is the foundation of and for democracy.
2. The VSBA represents school boards in Vermont.
3. Public education in Vermont is critically important for a healthy democracy, is the engine that drives economic development, and is the core of a strong community.
4. School boards and their communities need to understand the jobs, roles, and responsibilities of school boards and their members; and boards need to have professional development to be effective and efficient in their roles.
5. Public education is the greatest equalizer.
6. Education is a fundamental right.
7. Vermont is a state where every student has equitable access to a world class public education, and our students are driven by their aspirations, through empowered school boards, who are ensuring student success.
8. The VSBA is the glue that ties together local school boards, and is respectful of different positions of school boards.

About Our Members

Over 850 elected school board members, collectively dedicating 150,000 hours each year in pursuit of equitable, excellent, & cost-effective education for all Vermont students.

Oversee the education of more than 80,000 children in Vermont's public schools.

Strive to continuously learn & develop through the VSBA annual conference, regional meetings, webinars and customized board development.

Partner with students, parents, educators, and community members to support the community vision for 293 Vermont public schools.

Our members actively participate in the resolutions process, which is the foundation for our legislative work - from opportunities to submit resolutions for consideration by the full delegation, a live resolutions webinar, and the right to deliberate and vote on each proposal at the annual meeting, our members drive the process.

VSBA's member-proposed and approved resolutions provide directives to VSBA's staff to pursue a legislative framework that allows elected school board members to fulfill their statutory duties. Article 16E of the VSBA bylaws states that 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.

VSBA has over 50 resolutions covering a range of issues, including governance, local control, and the role of the state in education; education finance; instruction; labor relations; and health and wellness. Of note, our members have called on VSBA staff to:

Call on the General Assembly to bring Vermont tuition reimbursement policy and practice into compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the Carson v. Makin without violating the Compelled Support Clause in Article III of Chapter I of the Vermont Constitution.

Ensure that public dollars supporting private independent schools, prekindergarten programs, and afterschool programs carry with them the same obligations regarding quality, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability that apply to public districts.

Convene a task force to assess concerns that the State Board of Education and the Agency of Education are not providing appropriate support for the education of Vermont's students.

Advocate for equitable access, quality and accountability in publicly funded pre-kindergarten education.

Support legislation addressing health care for school employees that will reduce costs to school districts over the near and long term and reflect the health insurance plan norms for the majority of Vermonters.

Champion the health and well-being of Vermont's youth by supporting legislation that promotes our youth's mental health and protects them against intentional self-harm, and ensures adequate funding for any programs or requirements that are mandated by enacted legislation.

Support legislation prohibiting the use of restraint and seclusion except when there is a threat of imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student or others, and when it occurs, ensure that it is in a manner that protects the safety of all children.

Support a ban on the sale of flavored cigarettes, flavored e-cigarettes and flavored substances that contain nicotine or are otherwise intended for use in an e-cigarette.

Amend Vermont's Open Meeting Law to make fully remote meetings a permanent, voluntary option.