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*Supporting Learners and Leaders*

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## Resolution on the Potential Legalization of Marijuana for Recreational Uses in Vermont

(Adapted slightly from Superintendents' Resolution)

Whereas effective school leaders build and maintain safe, caring, and healthy school environments that meets that the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student (Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, 2015)

And whereas, in the view of the Vermont Principals' Association, the purpose of public education is to afford every child an equal opportunity to a high quality education that properly supports the whole child,

And, whereas, all facets of a child's well-being impact his or her potential for academic success, career development, and long-term independence;

And, whereas the mission of the Vermont Principals' Association includes a thoughtful analysis and proactive response to major policy considerations, which have the potential to affect public education and the children, it serves;

And, whereas the role of the school principal includes responsible stewardship and caring for the resources devoted to public education, and for demonstrating responsibility for each child served within the public education system;

And, whereas in its recent [Health Impact Assessment of Marijuana Regulation in Vermont](#) the Vermont Department of Health has found that:

- Early and persistent use of marijuana can lead to the development of anxiety disorders later in life. Marijuana use may lead to development of depressive disorders. Among individuals at risk for the

development of some psychotic disorders, marijuana use may increase the risk or mean that onset of those disorders begins earlier in life.

- Marijuana use may impact the physical structure of the brain. The exact effect, whether it is reversible, and what the potential health implications are, remains unknown.
- Early and continuous use of marijuana significantly increases risk of not completing high school, not enrolling or completing college, low educational achievement, lower income, unemployment and welfare dependence as an adult, premature workforce retirement due to disability, and reduction in IQ in middle adulthood.
- Marijuana use among high school and college students negatively impacts academic outcomes. The association has a dose-response relationship, which means the more a student uses, the worse the outcomes.
- The research on the relationship between marijuana use and academic outcomes is almost sufficient to show a cause-and-effect link between the two.
- Youth in more vulnerable situations (e.g. already experiencing behavior or mental health problems) are more likely to experience a negative academic outcome due to marijuana use.
- In Colorado, there has been a sharp increase in suspensions from 2013 to 2014. The state cannot confirm whether this is due to marijuana use, or due to the state's legalization in 2014. In Vermont, marijuana is the number one substance for which students are suspended from school.
- In a sample of 130 Vermont educators, half reported they had not noticed an increase in marijuana use from the 2013 school year to the 2015 school year, but two-thirds expected to see an increase in use under a regulated system.
- A Legalization and Regulation Program should never allow infused/edible products that could appeal to youth.

And, whereas, in the observation of Vermont's principals, the administrative and operational capacities of the State of Vermont's Public Safety, Education and especially Human Service agencies are overtaxed by expanding needs and a diminishment of resources;

And, whereas, the capacity of Vermont's public schools is being strained due to an ambitious, ever-expanding agenda and the role of schools in responding to both education-specific and negative societal influences;

Now, therefore, the Vermont Principals' Association calls upon the Vermont General Assembly, in its deliberations on the potential for legalizing marijuana for recreational purpose, to proactively consider, respond to, and resolve the factors related to the findings indicated above, including:

- Assuring that child protection and child welfare issues are at the forefront of actions taken by the General Assembly related to potential legalization and regulation;
- Assuring this: Should the legalization and regulation of marijuana be enacted, that enactment will have an indisputably positive effect on reducing access to marijuana by individuals under the age 21;
- Assuring that involved state agencies are provided the enhanced capacity necessary to successfully implement a legalization and regulation program, if, and when one is established;
- If and when a legalization and regulation program is established, assuring that the Agencies of Human Services and Education are provided with sufficient resources to better respond to challenges associated with marijuana use by students and family members of students.

*The Vermont Principals' Association Council passed on January 28, 2016*

