



Vermont
Superintendents
Association

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Resolution on the Potential Legalization of Marijuana for Recreational Use in Vermont

Whereas, in the view of the Vermont Superintendents Association, one purpose of public education is to afford every child an equal opportunity to a high quality education that properly supports the whole child, including his or her social, emotional, ethical, linguistic, cognitive and physical abilities;

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 Superintendents Association includes the thoughtful analysis and proactive response to major policy considerations that have the potential for affecting public education and the children it serves;

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

And, whereas, in its January 2016 [Health Impact Assessment of Marijuana Regulation in Vermont](#), the Vermont Department of Health 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 convenience 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 protocol should never allow infused/edible products that could appeal to youth.*

And, whereas, in the observation of Vermont's superintendents, the administrative and operational capacities of the State of Vermont's public safety, education, health and human service agencies are overburdened by expanding needs and resource constraints;

And, whereas, the capacity of Vermont's schools is being strained due to an ambitious agenda for public education and the increasing role of schools in responding to both education-related and adverse societal influences;

Now, therefore, the Vermont Superintendents Association calls upon the Vermont General Assembly, in its deliberations focused on the potential for legalizing marijuana for recreational purposes, to consider, respond to, and address the factors related to the findings and observations outlined above, including:

- Assuring that should 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 child protection and child welfare issues are at the forefront of actions taken by the General Assembly related to potential legalization and regulation;
- Assuring that involved state agencies are provided the capacity necessary to implement and respond to a legalization and regulation program, if, and when one is established;
- Assuring that the Agencies of Human Services and Education are provided with sufficient resources to respond to challenges associated with marijuana use by students and family members of students, if, and when a legalization and regulation program is established;
- Assuring that any new obligations for schools associated with a legalization and regulation program, such as education and prevention activities, are supported with commensurate resources.

Approved by the Membership of the Vermont Superintendents Association this 28th day of January, 2016.

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