



MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Education Committee

FROM: Joel D. Cook, Executive Director, Vermont-NEA

DATE: January 14, 2015

SUBJECT: Background information about Vermont-NEA

Lobbyists you'll see:

- Martha W. Allen (mallen@vtnea.org), President
- Joel D. Cook (jcook@vtnea.org), Executive Director
- Jeff Fannon (jfannon@vtnea.org), General Counsel
- Colin Robinson (crobinson@vtnea.org), Organizer

Purpose and Priorities (see next page)

Vermont-NEA wants all children to have an excellent education. Our purpose is to make sure our members have a satisfying work environment where they are acknowledged for the work they perform and where the work they perform helps students do their best.

Organization basics

- An affiliation of local Associations of educators (teachers and support staff) in almost all public school districts in Vermont (and about 300 schools).
- Membership, including retired teachers and student teachers, now exceeds 12,000 Vermont educators who belong to their local Association, Vermont-NEA, and the National Education Association.
- Structure: 20-member Board of Directors elected by membership (4 statewide Officers, 16 regional Directors, + the Executive Director *ex officio*).
- Subject matter affiliates: More than a dozen professional affiliation groups (such as teachers of math or English or special education) function as formal affiliates of the Association, and the Association sponsors another dozen or so other education organization projects and programs (such as the Scholars Bowl).
- An affiliate itself of the National Education Association.

Activities basics

- Organizing and developing strong local Associations
- Collective bargaining and "contract administration"
- Professional development
- Public policy advocacy (see last page)

Vermont-NEA: Our Purpose and Priorities

Adopted 12/2/00

Our Purpose

Vermont-NEA wants all children to have an excellent education. Our purpose is to make sure our members have a satisfying work environment where they are acknowledged for the work they perform and where the work they perform helps students do their best.

Our Priorities

Student Achievement: All students have the opportunity to achieve the highest standards they can. We support:

- Safe, secure, and civil learning and working environments for all students and school employees
- A system that recruits and retains highly qualified and diverse educators and enhances their skills
- Adequate and equitable public school funding
- School curricula, policies and procedures developed with local Associations

Association Member Well-Being: All educators have high professional satisfaction and economic security. We stand for:

- Excellent compensation, benefits, and working conditions for members
- Protection of the rights of educators
- High participation by members in NEA and Vermont-NEA programs and activities
- Responsiveness to changing needs of members

Active Membership: Members participate in the life of the Association. We strive for:

- Continuing growth in the number of members
- Active, well-organized, self-sustaining local and state Associations
- Good communication between Vermont-NEA and its local Associations and members

Public Support: Parents, business, and the general public support public education. We work for:

- Election of candidates for public office who share Association views on education, labor, and social issues
- Public recognition of Vermont-NEA as an advocate for excellent public schools and high student achievement
- Active and well-informed parents, communities and policy makers who support public schools
- Consistently positive media coverage about public schools, public school employees, and their Associatio

Our public policy advocacy extends to:

Education policy

Examples:

- Teaching as a self-regulating profession
- Curricular and related manages

Education finance

Examples:

- “Property tax reform”
- Acts 60 and 68

Labor

Examples:

- “SU bargaining”
- Appointment process for Vermont Labor Relations Board

Health care

Examples:

- Catamount
- Publicly financed health care removed from employment

Retirement

Examples:

- Financial stability of Teachers and Municipal Employees’ Retirement Systems
- Pension “forfeiture”

(Other)

Examples:

- Lobbying and campaign finance laws
- Public meeting process