



Vermont
Superintendents
Association

September 8, 2020

To: The House Committees on Education and Human Services

From: Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director, Vermont School Boards Association
Jeff Francis, Executive Director, Vermont Superintendents Association
Jay Nichols, Executive Director, Vermont Principals' Association

Re: H.663

For the Associations referenced above, we are writing to convey our perspective regarding the Senate-approved amendments to H.663 as passed by the Senate on 9/2/2020.

We respectfully ask the House to evaluate the Senate-approved bill in its entirety in the context of the current COVID-19 crisis. Below are our areas of concern:

Curriculum (Sec. 11. 16 V.S.A. § 136 amendment):

Curriculum is the responsibility of supervisory unions/school district boards working with school leadership teams, not the Agency of Education. As stated in 16 VSA Section 261a(a)(1) it is the duty of each SU Board to "establish a supervisory union-wide curriculum, by either developing the curriculum or assisting the member districts to develop it jointly, and ensure implementation of the curriculum.". In a memo dated January 30, 2020, AOE Secretary Dan French stated "Comprehensive health education needs to be a critical area of focus for school districts across Vermont, and **SU/SD leadership teams should work to ensure that a coordinated curriculum of appropriate rigor is provided to all students.**"

We note that in 2015, the SBE adopted the CDC and Prevention's National Health Education Standards to be used as a framework for schools to develop a health curriculum that will help ensure that students acquire knowledge and skills through proficiency-based learning.

Agency of Education Capacity:

Based on our discussions with staff at the Agency, we know that there are concerns about the requirements of the bill. We encourage you to take testimony from the Agency so that they can convey their concerns directly.

Redundant Policy (Sec. 12. SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY):

The responsibility for school district policies generally resides within the direct purview of local school boards, not the Agency of Education. Please note that the policy requirement outlined in

the Senate amendment is redundant to current [VSBA Policy \(C9\)](#). The VSBA policy references the requirements under the [Vermont School Wellness Policy Guidelines and Implementation](#), which was revised just one year ago.

Special Session of the General Assembly:

We also want to reiterate our concerns, as stated to House and Senate Leadership and chairs of the respective education committees August 28, 2020, that the pursuit of this policy legislation (and other education policy legislation also being considered) goes well beyond the stated purpose for this special session of the General Assembly, which was to complete work on the FY2021 Appropriations Bill.

Unfunded Mandates:

We would be remiss if we did not highlight that this bill includes an unfunded mandate. In addition to the cost of the provision of supplies in this bill, there is a requirement for reporting, which will be both a time demand and a distraction on staff, who are already working under unprecedented pressures.

Thank you for your consideration.



Sue Ceglowski, VSBA



Jeffrey Francis, VSA



Jay Nichols, VPA