



Officers

Neil Odell
President
Norwich

Flor Diaz
Vice President
Washington Ctrl UUSD

Kim Gleason
Treasurer
Essex - Westford

Jim Salsgiver
Member-At-Large
Taconic & Green

Adrienne Raymond
Member-At-Large
Mill River

Staff

Sue Ceglowski
Executive Director
sceglowski@vtsba.org

Susan Holson
Director of
Education Services
sholson@vtsba.org

Kerri Lamb
Director of Operations
klamb@vtsba.org

Sandra Cameron
Director of Public Policy
scameron@vtsba.org

TO: House Education Committee
FROM: Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director
RE: Weighting Study Testimony
DATE: February 11, 2021

Thank you for inviting testimony from the Vermont School Boards Association on the weighting study.

The VSBA’s official public policy position on issues of interest to School Boards in Vermont is derived from its Resolutions (submitted by Member School Boards and the Resolutions Committee and voted on at each Annual Meeting); and when there is no applicable resolution, by vote of the VSBA Board on a motion made during a VSBA Board Meeting.

The following VSBA Resolutions relate to the Weighting Study:

Resolution Addressing Equity, Quality and Cost Effectiveness

The VSBA supports initiatives that are designed to create greater equity in high quality learning opportunities and to achieve cost effectiveness. Such initiatives shall focus on the needs of students and taxpayers of the state of Vermont. Any initiative that impacts our governance structure or funding system must be designed in a way that reflects our community values. School boards are in the best position to inform this process and must be fully engaged in this effort. The VSBA will work with the General Assembly and our members to support initiatives at the state, regional and local level that will address our challenges while maintaining and strengthening local communities.

Resolution Addressing Equalization

VSBA supports the maintenance of “. . . substantially equal access to a quality basic education . . .” for all of Vermont’s children as required by the Vermont Supreme Court in its *Brigham* decision, and as legislatively promised in 16 V.S.A. Section 1. It is the duty of the State of Vermont to ensure fiscal equity for all school districts to allow equal educational opportunities for all students. Significant state expenditure is required to equalize the financial resources of districts and maintain educational opportunities of students.

VSBA Board Motions Related to the Weighting Study

Since the release of the Weighting Study on December 24, 2019 - the VSBA Board has discussed the Report at several of its Board Meetings and has voted on 3 motions relative to the Study.

At the March 11, 2020 VSBA Board meeting Professor Tammy Kolbe (one of the authors of the Study) and Chloe Wexler (Legislative Fiscal Data Analyst at the Joint Fiscal Office) presented the Report and its findings to the VSBA Board.

The above relevant VSBA Resolutions to the Weighting Study relate to ensuring equity in education. To determine an advocacy position more specific to the Weighting Study, the VSBA Board voted and approved two motions at the March 11, 2020 meeting related to the Weighting Study:

1. "VSBA fully supports the findings as presented in the weighting study."
– passed unanimously, with one abstention
2. "VSBA requests the legislature to thoughtfully and expeditiously establish an implementation plan in pursuit of equity of outcomes for all students and one that is designed to build capacity within our systems to absorb the changes in funding due to changes in weights."
– passed unanimously, with one abstention

At the VSBA Board Meeting on June 10, 2020 the Board again took up its position on the Weighting Study and voted unanimously to approve the following position, to be communicated to key Legislative Leaders after the General Assembly completed its June work and recessed until August.

3. "The VSBA advocates for the establishment in this biennium (*note: this would have been the legislative session of 2020*) of a Working Group to address implementation of the Weighting Study recommendations with a set timeline for the creation of the Working Group product." – passed unanimously

The President of VSBA sent a letter to that effect to Legislative Leaders on August 7, 2020.