



Vermont
Superintendents
Association



To: House Committee on Education

Date: April 1, 2021

Testimony: S. 115 Miscellaneous Education Bill

From: Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director Vermont School Boards Association

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Thank you for the opportunity to share the perspective of our four associations on the Miscellaneous Education bill (S.115) as approved by the Senate.

For the record, I am Jay Nichols, Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association. I will be providing testimony today for the VPA as well as for the Vermont School Boards Association, Vermont Superintendents Association, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators.

Much of the bill pertains to libraries in the state. Our collective position is that libraries are good! However, we know you did not invite us to testify on that section.

Section 8 Cultural Liaisons

· As Vermont becomes more diverse, and welcomes more Limited English Proficient speakers and people from a wide array of cultural backgrounds, positions such as cultural liaisons will become more important and more prevalent. When town and city municipalities and school districts can share the cost of services to better serve their communities it makes sense and benefits the entire community.

We conceptually support the funding of these positions between municipalities and school districts when, in the judgement of the town/city and the school district, it makes sense for those communities to do so. Encouraging this level of cooperation and collaboration is positive.

We support Section 8 of the bill.

Section 9 Wellness Program; Advisory Council on Wellness and Comprehensive Health

- We are supportive of the forming of an Advisory Council on Wellness and Comprehensive Health to support the Secretary in providing curricular support to school districts.

Section 10 School Wellness Policy

- Our organizations support a model Wellness policy being made available for school districts and school boards. Model policies can be very beneficial to school districts, school boards, and school administrators. Currently, [VSBA's model wellness policy](#) establishes goals for nutrition promotion and education, nutrition guidelines, physical activity and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness. Under S.115, the goals are expanded to include comprehensive health education, including such topics as mental health, family health, community health, public health and world health. We respectfully ask that this bill specify that the Vermont School Boards Association will be consulted in the development of any policy.

Section 11 Menstrual Products

- We are supportive of having these products in a majority of bathrooms that are gender-neutral and/or designed for female students in any of grades five through 12 as well as in the nurse's office.
- It makes sense to allow the School Nurse and school officials to decide which bathrooms to stock with these products.
- The bill also provides that school districts pay the costs of these products. Many school districts, if not the vast majority of them, already provide these products. However, I would be remiss if I did not point out that this is still ultimately an unfunded mandate, since the General Assembly is directing this action.

We support Section 11 of the bill.