



Supporting Learners & Leaders

Vermont Principals' Association
Two Prospect Street, Suite 3
Montpelier, Vermont 05602-3555
Telephone: 802-229-0547 – Fax: 802-229-4801
<http://www.vpaonline.org>

PRESIDENT: Beth O'Brien

PRESIDENT ELECT: Erica McLaughlin

PAST-PRESIDENT: Bob Thilbault

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jay Nichols
jnichols@vpaonline.org

ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Bob Johnson
bjohnson@vpaonline.org

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Mike McRaith
mmcraith@vpaonline.org

To: House Education
From: Jay Nichols/VPA
Subject: S. 283 Miscellaneous Ed. Bill
Date: March 23, 2022

Sec. 1 Determination of Residency for Tuition Purposes

Although this is not a VPA issue as our mission is K-12 focused, we like the Committees thinking on how refugees would be considered a resident for in-state tuition purposes at the start of the next semester of academic period.

Sec. 2 Suspension or Expulsion of Students

We believe that any entity that receives public dollars should be compelled to follow the same rules as public schools. All of Vermont's children should be treated in a way that assures they are not discriminated against for any reason. We have made some strides in this area in our state but still worry that students with disabilities are often discriminated against in some non-public school settings. Adding approved independent school, or prequalified private prekindergarten program is something we testified in favor of last year and continue to support.

Sec. 3 Building Bright Futures/ AHS/AOE Report on Exclusionary Practices in Early Childhood

This, at least partly, addresses concerns in Section 2. Our members have observed many cases in which very young children have been excluded from private providers early childhood programming for age appropriate behavior. These are programs that are receiving public funds and have excluded children from programming for engaging in behaviors for which public schools would not even consider utilizing exclusionary behavioral practices.

Sec. 4 Standardizing Kindergarten Entrance Age

We are fine with an Agency of Education report to the two General Assembly committees of Education on the impact of standardizing the entrance age for Kindergarten. And we will willingly collaborate with the Agency of Education in that work.

I do have to say that I think this is an issue that should be able to be easily resolved. Having the same entrance date and age cutoff across the state would, in the long run, be much better for parents and schools.

Sec. 5 Uniform Statewide School Calendar

I fully support this. I actually tried to get the Vermont Superintendent's Association trustees to support this concept. And, every single superintendent in the room supported the concept ... until it came down to details and everyone wanted it their own way. There are obviously many benefits to an approach like this for students, teachers, and parents. If we end up doing something like this, I would like us to look at learning research when we create a new calendar. What if we developed a calendar that better supported students, cut down on long periods of learning loss, and allowed for some type of remediation support time during the academic year? If we ultimately do this, I hope we are not constrained to historical thinking. I'd love us to blow up the current calendar and develop a calendar that really would much better support student learning not a calendar that was more focused on the personal desires of adults.

Sec. 6 Remote Learning Policy

We support a model policy being developed on Remote Learning. We think the time has come for this and that we need collectively to ensure the most high quality learning opportunities' we can for our students, including through remote means.