



To: Senate Education Committee
From: Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director
Re: H.165
Date: April 13, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.165.

The VSBA is governed by bylaws, resolutions and policies. Resolutions are positions taken by the Association on issues of importance to Vermont school boards. They may include recommendations for action by the VSBA, local school boards, the Legislature, the Executive Branch or other decision-making bodies. Resolutions are guidance for staff and the VSBA board when they are working in the public policy arena or developing programs and services for the members. They are approved by membership at the annual business meeting of the Association each October.

The resolutions passed by VSBA membership in October of 2022 covered the following topics: universal meals, public funds accountability, district quality standards, funds to assist school districts with PCB and radon remediation, and governance of Career Technical Education Centers.

The universal meals resolution: *“VSBA supports Universal School Meals in Vermont schools. The funding should come from a source other than the education fund.”*

We understand that the current proposal provides universal meals funded by the Education Fund without a dedicated revenue stream. Given that context, we urge the General Assembly to identify and implement a dedicated revenue stream for the program. As noted in the Fiscal Note for S.165 dated March 31, 2023: “Without adjusting any non-property tax revenue streams, establishing a universal school meals program as an ongoing obligation of the Education Fund would require increasing property taxes to fund the program and keep the Education Fund balanced.” Funding the program through increased property taxes is likely to cause significant challenges for school districts to pass budgets funding their core educational programs in the future.

Thank you.