



Testimony to the Senate Education Committee - Wednesday, April 4, 2023

Chelsea Myers, Associate Executive Director

**Topic: H.461, An act relating to making miscellaneous changes in education laws**

Thank you for inviting testimony from VSA on the topic of H.461. First, VSA is generally in support of the recommended changes outlined in the current draft of H.461 as was passed by the House and will offer brief comments on each section.

*Sections 1-3. Repeal of the Shared School District Data Management System (SSDDMS)*

VSA is in support of repealing the mandate of the SSDDMS for the reasons laid out in the [December 2022 Legislative Report](#) from the Agency of Education and the Agency of Digital Services.

As the report describes, “Implementation of the SSDDMS software project has been difficult for school systems, and the software system has often not worked as intended nor met the financial, accounting and human resources needs of Vermont Supervisory Unions (SU/SDs).”

The report’s Executive Summary concludes with the following: “The Agencies will continue to find ways to support better and more effective reporting of school financial data.” Our Association recommends that any pursuits towards this goal follow the collaborative model between state entities and the field, such as was established in ‘The Path Forward Group’.

*Section 4. National Guard Tuition Benefit Program*

This program falls outside the scope of the work of VSA and its members.

*Section 5: Home Study Program*

VSA supports minimizing administrative burdens for families and local education agencies in the administration of the Home Study Program. Where appropriate, we

advocate for clear and transparent communication between all parties involved so that the continuity of education services for all students is maintained.

*Section 6: Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group*

VSA supports adjustment to the effective dates related to the work of the Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group. The Association will wait for and refer to the testimony of the Chair of the Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group on any additional recommendations to the proposed timeline.

The Association would like to take this opportunity to point out the importance of collaboration and commitment in the implementation of this important work. For that reason, we recommend:

1. Using your platforms to advocate for the passing of the proposed revisions to the Education Quality Standards at the State Board of Education.
2. Learning from Working Group members on how the General Assembly can support the implementation of the recommended revisions to the Education Quality Standards.

VSA would appreciate the opportunity to respond to any subsequent iterations of H.461 as they may arise.

Thank you.