



Date: April 8, 2026
To: House Education Committee
Re: Testimony on [S.227](#)

Thank you for inviting testimony from the Vermont Superintendents Association on this pressing and important topic.

At its foundation, this bill is about ensuring that every child can access a public education safely and without fear. As the Agency of Education pointed out in their testimony, the U.S. Supreme Court made that principle clear in *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982), holding that public schools may not deny access to students based on immigration status.

For Vermont's superintendents, this is not theoretical. It is a daily responsibility. Ensuring that every child feels safe, welcomed, and able to fully participate in school is central to their work. Superintendents across the state take this obligation seriously and have been actively working within their districts to prepare for the evolving landscape.

At the same time, we recognize that we can and should do better and that meaningful improvement requires partnership. The more the state can step in to provide coordinated training, ongoing guidance, vetted resources, and clear leadership, the better positioned school districts, particularly those with limited administrative capacity, will be to meet this essential responsibility.

As with everything in Vermont, with 119 school districts, there are 119 different ways of doing things at the local level. Legislation that establishes clear fundamentals while allowing appropriate flexibility for local context is ideal.

Between November 2024 and January 2025, many superintendents worked within their districts to develop administrative procedures specific to their local contexts. VSA collected and shared examples to support this work to facilitate cross-district collaboration. We lean heavily on our national organization, AASA, for up-to-date briefings and trainings, leveraging their broader capacity and resources. We are ready to support implementation should this bill become law, but we cannot do it alone. Further statewide legal guidance and coordination is needed.

The intent of the following suggestions is to ensure that the law is written in a way that best supports implementation. Thus, it is important to clarify the distinction between school board policy and administrative procedures, so that the remainder of our testimony, which poses questions and suggests technical changes, is grounded in that framework.

School board policies are formally adopted, binding, broad statements of direction set by the board. Administrative procedures are the specific, step-by-step actions developed by the superintendent to implement those policies. Policies define what is required; procedures define how that policy is carried out day-to-day. In general, we hope that the majority of this work can live within administrative procedures, aligned with clear training for all employees, especially those who interface directly with building security and entry.

While significant progress has been made thus far to clearly delineate between board policy and administrative procedure, there is still work that can be done to ensure that the intent is clear and implementable.

Preliminary Recommendations:

Sec 2. b(3) foster, to the greatest extent possible, a relationship with a legal or immigration advocacy institution that will provide assistance to a student with regard to immigration-related concerns, including a situation where a guardian of the student has been detained by immigration authorities while the student is in school.

Please consider rewording this provision to the following and including it in a section that would not imply that the superintendent would provide all of the services.

Sec 2. b(3) provide wraparound support, to the greatest extent possible, ~~a relationship with a legal or immigration advocacy institution that will provide assistance to a student with regard to immigration-related concerns, including a situation where a guardian of the student has been detained by immigration authorities while the student is in school.~~, such as connecting the student and family to immigration advocacy institutions, providing access to school mental health professionals, or other supports deemed necessary to directly support the student in school

Sec 2. C. “(c) Student records. Schools are prohibited from using policies or procedures to engage in practices that have the effect of excluding a student from school...”

“Schools” are likely not the appropriate term and it should be at the level of the school district. It is also important to note that data privacy and limitations on what is collected is critical at all levels of the system. As such, this Committee should expand data provisions of this bill to include State entities, where appropriate.

Sec. 2 g. Policy Required. Currently, the language only specifies that a model policy “reflects the requirements set forth in this section.” This clause is vague and may be construed to mean that all of the provisions are to be added to a model policy as written or any other range of interpretations. The section includes provisions that would be more appropriate for administrative procedure and not school board policy.

Though all of the specifics are not included in this testimony, VSA is willing to support the Committee in ensuring that the bill is appropriately sequenced and delineated based on how implementation will occur in school districts. For example, it might be more appropriate to sequence the language as four distinct sections – 1. Definitions; 2. State Resources; 3. Required Policy; 4. Administrative Procedures.

Concluding Comments

The more clearly the bill spells out state-level support, the better implementation will be. The state should provide the necessary resources and coordination to ensure districts can properly carry out this law. Vermont’s students deserve clarity and well-supported schools to ensure their safety and rights.

This cannot be unfunded. As other witnesses and legislators have noted, managing this work in isolation is costly and burdensome. Let us ensure this is a coordinated statewide effort. Vermont’s students depend on it.