



To: House Education Committee

From: Mark Koenig, Director of Policy Services and Legislative Affairs, VSBA

Re: S.227

Date: April 7, 2026

Thank you for the invitation to testify on S.227. For the record, my name is Mark Koenig and I am the Director of Policy Services and Legislative Affairs for the Vermont School Boards Association. Before we start discussing this bill, I want to take a moment to state that the VSBA does support the intent of this bill. The following suggestions are only being presented to make it easier for school districts and superintendents to implement the intention of S.227.

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 whereas procedures define how that policy should be carried out day-to-day. In general, we believe that the majority of this work should live within administrative procedures, aligned with clear training for all employees, especially those who interface directly with building access and security.

Both VSBA and VSA testified before Senate Education last month regarding a prior draft of this bill. Many of our concerns and suggestions have been incorporated into and addressed by the version which is now in front of you. Therefore, aside from general support from the VSBA, we offer only a few suggestions at this time.

In general, throughout this bill information flows from the Office of the Attorney General to superintendents. It seems more appropriate for the AG's Office to work with the AOE and then have the Secretary circulate information to the field.

In section a(3) "School," we suggest the inclusion of "volunteers" along with employees and independent contractors. School volunteers undergo background checks, so they should feel safe when they are in schools. Also, if you agree with this suggestion, "volunteers" should be included in section d(3) regarding the protection of information.

We are concerned that the last sentence in Section (e) does not reflect the law. 20 V.S.A. § 4652 states that "only the Governor, in consultation with the Vermont Attorney General, is authorized to enter into, modify, or extend an agreement pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1357(g)

[Performance of immigration officer functions by State officers and employees] or 19 U.S.C. § 1401(i) [Officer of the customs; customs officer].” Therefore, it seems inaccurate to say that a “school superintendent is the sole individual to approve an agreement required by federal or State law.”

A number of school districts across the state have already implemented policies or procedures that align with the intent of this bill, but S.227 helps to provide congruency statewide as well as support to those districts that feel isolated on this matter.