



Date: February 17, 2026  
To: Senate Education Committee  
Re: Feedback 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. Vermont law reinforces that commitment, guaranteeing all students educational opportunities that are substantially equal (16 V.S.A. § 1).

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.

I would like to begin our suggestions by clarifying 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.

## **Section-by-Section Review**

### **Non-public area of the school site**

We will need greater clarity regarding this designation. We are willing to work with the committee to help refine this distinction. The Attorney General's Office also raised this issue in testimony.

For example, when schools are used as voting sites, public libraries, and for community events, what is the responsibility of the school district surrounding this proposed legislation?

### **Policy Required**

The law should clearly lay out what must be included in a required model policy. Again, this should focus on the “what,” not the “how.” We recommend consultation with the Vermont School Boards Association regarding feedback on the proposed board policy. Both of our Associations can be helpful in appropriately distinguishing what belongs in policy versus procedure. In previous legislation, blurred lines between these two have created confusion and delayed implementation.

### **Distribution of Immigration Resources**

Thank you for recognizing that these resources should not be created district-by-district. Please continue to commit to state-level responsibility for creating resources and training materials. The timeline should realistically reflect the time required for the Attorney General’s Office to develop and vet these materials.

“...at each school the superintendent oversees, designates an officer to serve as a resource for immigration-related matters who shall receive from the superintendent updated information and training material on an ongoing basis.”

Please clarify that these resources will be provided by the Attorney General’s Office and the Agency of Education directly to superintendents, who can then distribute them appropriately within their districts.

### **Guardian Detainment**

“A superintendent or designee shall, to the greatest extent possible, partner with a legal advocacy institution...”

We ask for greater specificity here, including statewide coordination and vetting of resources. Guidance should clearly outline which entities are responsible for what, include a timeline of action, and provide administrators with practical direction. Districts located far from legal advocacy organizations would especially benefit from centralized coordination.

### **Immigration Authorities on Site**

Please amend the language to allow for more than one designee. This provides necessary flexibility if neither the superintendent nor a single designee is available at the time of need.

As the Attorney General’s Office pointed out in their testimony, it is worth considering expanding the conversation of applicability to all law enforcement, not only federal immigration authorities.

### **General 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 Senator Ram Hinsdale 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.