

2024-2025 VSBA Resolutions Board Report
October 17, 2024

According to the VSBA Bylaws, 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 our members.

Each year, the VSBA Resolutions Committee considers all resolutions submitted by a member school district board, develops resolutions on issues of importance that are not otherwise addressed in existing or submitted resolutions, and reviews all continuing and regular resolutions.

The VSBA Resolutions Committee and the VSBA Board make a recommendation to "Pass", "Do Not Pass" or "Take No Position" on any resolution submitted by a member school district board. All resolutions submitted by member boards will be submitted to the membership at our Annual Meeting, regardless of the recommendation of the Resolutions Committee or the VSBA Board.

After careful consideration of the resolutions submitted by member boards, and a review of all continuing and regular VSBA Resolutions, the VSBA Resolutions Committee submits the following Resolutions Report to the VSBA Board.

The Resolutions Committee Members were:

Tara Sweet, Chair
Linda Smith
Bart Bezio
Suzanne Buck
Dan MacArthur
Tara Arneson
Gaston Bathalon
Melanie Virgilio
Mark Kaufman
Nancy Russell
Laura Williams

VSBA Board Recommendations for the Resolutions Submitted
by Member School Boards and the VSBA Resolutions Committee

The VSBA Board reviewed all resolutions submitted by member school boards and by the Resolutions Committee.

<u>Res #</u>	<u>Submitted By</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Board Recommendation</u> <i>(Pass/Do Not Pass/Take No Action)</i>
1	Norwich School District	Residential and Non-Residential Property Tax Rates	Pass as a Continuing Resolution
2	Lake Region Union High School	Data Collection and Reporting	Take No Position
3	Resolutions Committee	Artificial Intelligence	Pass as a Continuing Resolution
4	Resolutions Committee	Cell Phones in Schools	Pass as a Continuing Resolution
5	Resolutions Committee	Secretary of Education, Qualifications	Pass as a Continuing Resolution
NOTE: Pages 8-13 is the list of existing regular and continuing resolutions that the board considered.			

Resolution Proposal
#1: Norwich School Boards
Section II, Subsection X
Residential and Non-Residential Property Tax Rates

WHEREAS, in 2023 there were 85 towns where the Homestead Education Property Tax Rate was higher than the Non-Residential Education Property Tax Rate; and

WHEREAS, this property tax rate disparity can incentivize non-residential homeownership in these towns; and

WHEREAS, this property tax rate disparity places an increased burden on homestead property owners; and

WHEREAS, many Vermont towns are already facing high property costs and an acute shortage of housing; therefore

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: The VSBA calls upon the General Assembly to examine the impact and feasibility of raising the Non-Residential Tax Rate to the same rate as the Homestead Tax Rate in every town where the Non-Residential Tax Rate is lower than the Homestead Tax Rate.

The VSBA calls upon the General Assembly to examine the impact of Non-Residential Tax Rate and Homestead Tax Rates in every town where the Non-Residential Tax Rate is lower than the Homestead Tax Rate.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: PASS as a Continuing Resolution

Resolution Proposal
#2: Lake Region Union High School
Amendment to: Resolution Section V, Subsection B
Data Collection and Reporting

WHEREAS, the passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act as well as state and local needs make the necessity for accurate and informative data more important than ever; and.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly should continue to fund the integration and close linkage of state and local information systems to maximize the efficiency and productivity of data collection, analysis and reporting at both levels.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: The passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act as well as state and local needs make the necessity for accurate and informative data more important than ever. The General Assembly should continue to fund the integration and close linkage of state and local information systems to maximize the efficiency and productivity of data collection, analysis and reporting at both levels.

1. The State Agency of Education should promulgate consistent and understandable definitions of data.
2. The Agency must analyze and coordinate all its requests for data from local districts to assure that all such data are needed and utilized in a way that improves student learning and provide an explanation and statistical justification for the collection of such data.
3. All requirements for information from local districts should be accompanied by a streamlined and easy-to-use mechanism for collection and submission with the goal of reducing the negative impact on local districts.
4. The Agency should gather input regularly from local districts to ascertain how the data collection process could be improved in order to:
 - a. make it more useful for informing curriculum and program development
 - b. make it more useful for evaluation of curriculum and programs
 - c. evaluate the usefulness of the data and identify possible ways to streamline the data gathering process and reduce the burden on local districts.
5. The Agency should report regularly to policy makers, educators, and the public on what the input was and how it was used.

The VSBA strongly supports the protection of student privacy rights. Any data collection, maintenance or distribution system must be developed with the primary objective of protecting personally identifiable information about students.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: TAKE NO POSITION

Resolution Proposal
#3: Resolutions Committee
Section III, Subsection L
Artificial Intelligence

WHEREAS, only 7% of school systems in the United States have provided guidance on the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (“AI”) or have banned the latest AI tools.¹

WHEREAS, 81% of parents and 72% of students believe that guidance on the responsible use of generative AI for schoolwork would be helpful.²

WHEREAS, engagement with communities in developing thoughtful guidance, an education system may realize the potential benefits of AI to improve learning outcomes, support teacher instruction and quality of life, provide students with critical skills, and enhance educational equity.³

WHEREAS, it is necessary for schools to be able to take advantage of the extraordinary benefits of AI while guarding against its hazards, schools must be able to access and implement an effective and responsible AI Model Policy.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: The VSBA advocates for legislation that would require the Agency of Education, in consultation with the Agency of Digital Services, Division of Artificial Intelligence, to take all needed actions necessary for the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence in Vermont schools. This may include: model policies, Guidelines for Use, and a Code of Ethics.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: PASS as a Continuing Resolution

¹ Taken from independent, non-partisan research center, PACE’s “AI Policy Guidance for Schools.” See <https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/ai-policy-guidance-schools>

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

Resolution Proposal
#4: Resolutions Committee
Section III, Subsection M
Cell Phones in School

WHEREAS, the use of social media platforms via cell phones and other personal electronic devices to access social media has the potential for positive and negative consequences on students.

WHEREAS, the Surgeon General of the United States has stated that, “The mental health crisis among young people is an emergency — and social media has emerged as an important contributor.” The Surgeon General notes that “Adolescents who spend more than three hours a day on social media face double the risk of anxiety and depression symptoms, and the average daily use in this age group, as of the summer of 2023, was 4.8 hours.”⁴

WHEREAS, students also report that “they post about their accomplishments on social media, while 44% say they post about their family. Around one-third (34%) say they share things related to their emotions and feelings on these sites, while 22% report posting about their dating life.”⁵

WHEREAS, schools use technology to communicate with students individually and collectively for curricular and non-curricular activities related to the school. Technology is an important element of many individualized education plans. Schools also use social media platforms as a means of developing and maintaining a learning community.

WHEREAS, this complexity requires thoughtful engagement with students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the wider community, local school districts are best positioned to adopt model policy.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: The VSBA supports legislation that would require school districts to adopt a policy concerning use of cell phones and other personal electronic devices in schools. The policy shall address, at a minimum, the specific circumstances or time periods during which cell phone or personal electronic device use is permitted, when their use is prohibited, and any relevant exceptions for instances such as disability accommodation, medical need, or other emergency.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: PASS as a Continuing Resolution

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/17/opinion/social-media-health-warning.html>

⁵ <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/11/28/teens-and-their-experiences-on-social-media/>

Resolution Proposal
#5: Resolutions Committee
Section I, Subsection Q
Secretary of Education

WHEREAS, education in Vermont is of the highest priority, being necessary to foster both a vibrant democracy and a vibrant economy.

WHEREAS, Vermont is faced with unprecedented challenges to schools, including mental health needs, funding, enrollment, transportation, consolidation, and the need for the highest level of achievement for our students to compete/participate in the global marketplace.

WHEREAS, the Vermont Agency of Education represents the most important oversight and regulatory body of education in the state, the Agency needs to be led by a Secretary equal to its many tasks/demands. Minimum qualifications for the position of Secretary best ensures that the Secretary will be able to meet the challenges of the day.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Vermont School Board Association proposes the following language be added to 3 V.S.A. § 2702:

§ 2702. Secretary of Education

(a) With the advice and consent of the Senate, the Governor shall appoint a Secretary of Education from among no fewer than three candidates proposed by the State Board of Education. The Secretary shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

(b) The Secretary shall report directly to the Governor and shall be a member of the Governor's Cabinet.

(c) At the time of appointment, the Secretary holds an advanced degree in education, public administration, or a related field. Shall have held a position of teacher, professor, educational administrator, or equivalent position. The Secretary shall have expertise in public education management and policy and demonstrated leadership and management abilities, including knowledge of public educational policy and practice, and a familiarity with school governance structures.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: PASS as a Continuing Resolution

Board Recommendations for Existing Resolutions

<u>Res #</u>	<u>Resolution Name</u>	<u>Board Recommendation</u> <i>(Retain, Amend, Repeal)</i>
I.J	Timely/Reliable Information*	Retain
I.N.	Governance Standards*	Retain
I.O.	Collaboration to Benefit All Students*	Repeal
II.U.	Separation of Church and State*	Retain
V.E.	Universal Meals*	Retain
I. E.	Roles of the State in Education	Amend
II.Q.	Emotional Wellness of Students	Amend to Merge
V.A.A.	Social and Medical Services in Schools	Amend to Merge
V.F.	Youth Mental Health	Amend to Merge
III. B.	Student Assessment	Amend
III. E.	Prekindergarten	Retain
IV. G.	Healthcare for School Employees	Retain

Note: Resolutions marked with an asterisk () will sunset if no action is taken by the membership at the annual meeting.*

Resolution I. J. TIMELY AND RELIABLE INFORMATION & IMPLEMENTATION*

The VSBA will prioritize and use its influence to support Vermont School Boards in ensuring that Business Managers, Superintendents, and School Boards receive required, useful and timely information from the Agency of Education.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Retain as a regular resolution, given the work of the Task Force on Collaboration to Benefit All Students.

Resolution I. N. GOVERNANCE STANDARDS*

The VSBA advocates for significant input on the school district quality standards adopted by rule of the AOE regarding the business, facilities management, and governance practices of school districts. Further, the VSBA advocates for collaboration with the AOE on implementation of the District Quality Standards.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Amend and retain as a regular resolution.

Resolution I. O. COLLABORATION TO BENEFIT ALL STUDENTS*

That VSBA convene a task force to assess concerns regarding and failures of the State Board of Education and/or the Agency of Education, and thereafter provide to the Governor and the legislature no later than January 2025 a list of recommended actions they should take in order to provide appropriate support toward the education of Vermont's students. This task force may include support from groups such as the Vermont Superintendents Association, the Vermont Principals Association, the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, and the Vermont Business Managers Association.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Repeal because (1) Task Force on Collaboration to Benefit All Students will have finished its work by October and (2) Commission on the Future of Public Education has begun its work.

Resolution II. U. SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE*

The General Assembly must act to bring Vermont tuition reimbursement policy and practice into compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the Carson v. Makin without violating the Compelled Support Clause in Article III of Chapter I of the Vermont Constitution.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Retain as a regular resolution because this has not been resolved.

Resolution V.E. UNIVERSAL MEALS*

VSBA supports Universal School Meals in Vermont schools. The funding should come from a source other than the education fund.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Retain as a continuing resolution because this has not been resolved.

Resolution I. E. Roles of the State in Education recommend rewrite:

Current: The VSBA believes that the role of the State Board of Education and the State Agency of Education is:

1. To guide the creation of a broad design for the education system in a rapidly changing world where information is no longer confined to books or geographic locations. The broad design must include a focus on: assuring success for every student; supporting a new vision for teaching and learning; engaging and supporting families and communities; delivering and using world-class technology; and providing effective leadership.
2. To provide support for local boards in their efforts to design and implement the best possible educational program.
3. To promote equity of educational opportunity for students throughout Vermont.
4. To provide assistance when requested by individual school districts and local boards to help them meet statewide per-pupil spending goals.

In order to accomplish these goals, the Agency of Education must be properly staffed and resourced. VSBA desires to be a strong partner with the State Board of Education in overseeing Vermont's education system. VSBA believes that the State Board should include an active school board member, an administrator and a teacher. The Governor should consult with the VSBA in the selection of the school board member.

Recommended: The role of the State Board of Education and the State Agency of Education is to guide the creation of a broad design for the education system in a rapidly changing world. The broad design must assure success for every student that includes delivering and using world-class education while engaging and supporting families and communities. The Agency must also promote equity of educational opportunity for students throughout Vermont. In addition, the Agency should provide assistance to school districts and local boards to help them meet statewide per-pupil spending goals. In order to accomplish these goals, the Agency of Education must be properly staffed and resourced to fulfill the statutory obligations.

The State Board of Education should be composed of members who have insight and experience with the delivery and administration of public education and school systems in

Vermont. The State Board should model good governance by complying with the governance standards outlined in the District Governance Standards and include an active school board member, a school administrator, and a licensed educator. As school boards are in the best position to assess the needs of Vermont schools, the Governor should consult with the VSBA prior to the nomination of the school board member.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Amend and continue.

Resolution II. Q. EMOTIONAL WELLNESS OF STUDENTS

The VSBA urges the General Assembly to expand funding support to local schools to increase the availability of mental health counseling, emotional wellness, and psychological supports. These efforts will further support schools to meet Vermont's Agency of Education's Education Quality Standards, specifically Healthy and Safe Schools through the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model's domains 4 and 7.

AND

Resolution V.A. A. SOCIAL AND MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDED IN SCHOOLS

VSBA supports the delivery of social and medical services in public schools, by use of contracted services for which Vermont schools are reimbursed at full actual cost.

AND

Resolution V. F. YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH *

The VSBA urges the General Assembly and Congress to champion the health and well-being of Vermont's youth by enacting legislation that supports our youth's mental health and protects them against intentional self-harm, and ensures adequate funding for any programs or requirements that are mandated by enacted legislation. Further, the VSBA calls upon the Governor to develop a comprehensive plan to support and protect youth mental health through meaningful collaboration among the Administration, schools, Designated Agencies, and other community partners.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Merge these three resolutions and emphasize funding other than the Education Fund for mental health and emotional wellness of students, thus:

In support of efforts to meet Vermont's Agency of Education's Education Quality Standards, the VSBA urges the General Assembly and Congress to champion the health and well-being of Vermont's youth. Legislation must be enacted to ensure adequate funding for all mental health support services and programs. Further, the VSBA advocates for an approach that supports and protects youth mental health through

meaningful collaboration among the Agency of Education and Department of Mental Health, schools, Designated Agencies, and other community partners.

Resolution III. B. STUDENT ASSESSMENT

The VSBA recognizes the value of standardized assessments as one tool to be used in evaluating student performance. It must be used in conjunction with other means of evaluation to present an accurate picture of student achievement. The VSBA does not support the use of standardized assessments alone to determine the success of schools, to evaluate teacher performance, to promote students from grade to grade or as a final “gate” to a high school diploma. State standardized assessments should be designed to provide information about student growth over time, and should include interim assessments so that students and educators are able to measure student performance throughout a school year, rather than just once a year. The Vermont Agency of Education should also continue to support development and administration of local assessment plans which may include national norm-referenced achievement and/or aptitude tests as well as other locally administered evaluation methods. As the reliability of additional local assessments is assured, it may be of value to give more weight to local assessments, and other tools, in the State’s Accountability System.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Amend and continue.

Resolution III. E. PRE-KINDERGARTEN

The VSBA encourages the General Assembly to support fully-funded, full-day pre-kindergarten education through a system that emphasizes equity, high-quality, ~~and~~ simplicity, and sustainability regardless of type or location of the setting. School districts must ensure equitable access, quality and accountability in public funded pre-kindergarten education.

Consideration: Should there be an amendment to 1) address full-day for four-year-olds, and 2) require the most cost-effective statewide model? What about public dollars across state lines?

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Amend and continue to reflect the work of the Act 76 (2023) Prekindergarten Implementation Committee.

Resolution IV. G. HEALTH CARE FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Any legislative approach to addressing health care for school employees must: demonstrate that it will reduce costs to school districts, and thus tax payers, over the near and long term; reflect the health insurance plan norms for the majority of Vermonters.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Amend and continue.