

January 24, 2023



Dear Alison,

VSBA Director of Board Services, Phil Gore, has resigned for personal, family reasons. His last day at the VSBA will be March 17. All of us at the VSBA will miss Phil greatly. He has contributed so much to improving school board governance in Vermont during his time here. We value his generous and caring nature and will continue to learn from him even after he leaves. Please see the Governance section below for a link to his most recent article which was published in the American School Board Journal this month.

VSBA has begun the search for a new Director of Board Services. Please see [the VSBA home page](#) for the job description and more information about the search process.

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HOT TOPICS

Bill Suspending School District Budget Approval Language Passed By General Assembly; Awaits Action by Governor

[H.42](#), which suspends the requirement for the mandatory, specified school district budget ballot language in 16 VSA Section 563(1)(D), passed the House and Senate last week and is currently awaiting action by Governor Scott. The Governor has until Thursday this week (January 27) to take one of three actions: 1) sign the legislation into law; 2) let the legislation become law without his signature; or 3) veto the legislation. As soon as we learn of the Governor's action, we will pass that information along.

With respect to actions by individual school districts related to H.42 and how to manage the timing, signing and posting of the school district warning and wording of ballot language, we refer you to your respective school district counsel.

H.42 also provides temporary authority until July 1, 2024 that: (1) permits a municipal legislative body to move the date of the annual municipal meeting, apply the Australian ballot system to annual and special meetings, and hold electronic informational meetings in the days preceding the annual meeting; and (2) permits a public body to hold electronic meetings without designating a physical location and without requiring staff to be physically present at that location.

Employer Healthcare Commissioners Tap New Leader

The Employer Commissioners of the Commission on Public School Employee Health Benefits have unanimously selected Mark Koerig of Vergennes as their new Chair. Mark moves into the position previously held by Elizabeth Fitzgerald of South Burlington, whose term expired after serving on the Commission since its inception in 2018.

[PRESS RELEASE](#)

Applications For Act 11 Bargaining Commission Due February 1

Act 11 requires the Vermont School Boards Association to appoint representatives to the Statewide Bargaining Commission on School Employee Health Benefits (five commissioners and two alternate commissioners). VSBA is currently accepting applications to fill two vacancies in alternate commissioner seats. The term for the alternate seats is the remainder of the two alternate members' terms (4 years).

Applicants must meet the following statutory criteria:

- an understanding of health care,
- an understanding of employer-employee relations, and
- a demonstrated willingness to work collaboratively.

VSBA Resolution N., H requires the VSBA to give priority to applicants who provide regional representation, have experience on a negotiations council, and demonstrate willingness to participate in training and professional development regarding negotiations.

The application form for appointment to the Commission can be accessed [here](#). The deadline for submission of applications is 5:00 p.m. on February 1, 2023.

The VSBA Board of Directors will appoint the alternate representatives to the Commission based on the above criteria. Applicants may be interviewed by the Board at its February 8, 2023 board meeting from 5:00-8:00pm.

VSBA in Washington DC!

Sue Ceglowski and Sandra Cameron are attending the National School Board Association's Equity Symposium and Advocacy Institute in Washington DC from January 27th through February 1st.

Equity Symposium breakout sessions include Equity for Rural Students, Opportunities to Diversify Board Leadership, Electric School Buses: Advancing Equity with Cleaner Air for Students and Communities, Developing and Implementing a Districtwide Equity Policy, Public Education: the Foundation for a Just, Multiracial Democracy, Special Education Update, Approaching Misconceptions Around Equity, Oppression and Marginalization within a Community, Making ESSER Dollars Count for Equity and many more.

During the Advocacy Institute, attendees will hear from a lineup of federal, national, and state figures who will discuss actions impacting schools. In addition to legislative and legal advocacy updates, the program will feature panel discussions, general sessions, and breakout sessions on teacher shortages; lobbying and relationships; learning recovery; COVID relief; student mental health; IDEA; homework gap/broadband; parent engagement; Parental Rights Bills (state & national); vouchers (state & national); child nutrition; and rural education.

2023 Summer Intern

The VSBA is seeking a part-time summer intern whose work will focus on communications. Please [click here](#) for the Communications Internship job description and application information. Applications are being accepted through the end of February. Questions: contact Sandra Cameron scameron@vnsba.org

ELSEWHERE IN EDUCATION

VEHI Health Plan Rates Approved For FY 24

VEHI's health rates were filed for FY 24 on October 28, 2022, with the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation (DFR). Click [here](#) to read that announcement. **DFR has now approved those rates as filed.** Please click [here](#) to review the FY 24 rates and see the cost breakdown of VEHI premium contributions.

[See email.](#)

GOVERNANCE TIP

Achievement, Culture, and What Comes Next: Article by Phil Gore

Last week, the American School Board Journal published an article by VSBA's Director of Board Services, Phil Gore: "Achievement, Culture, and What Comes Next."

"When boards focus their work—conversations and actions—on these three areas, it is highly probable that their students are doing well and that the board is doing well. If school boards focus on distractions like politics, trivial concerns, or administrative issues, it is likely that their students are not doing well and that the board is not doing well either."

Working together as an effective school board/superintendent team is not accidental. Improving student success is not coincidental. When school boards and superintendents focus on the things that matter most, they are more likely to be aligning their work with what they want to see happen in the classroom. They are more likely to set ambitious goals that inspire the system to reach greater heights. When they monitor student progress throughout the year, they help the whole system focus and achieve desired outcomes. [Read the article here](#) to learn about the three core areas of focus for school boards that can inspire your district to reach greater heights.

EQUITY

Vermont School Board Member Affinity Group

We are excited to announce the launch of Vermont's first Affinity Group for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) school board members. We are using grant funds to pay for an initial facilitator to help the group get off to a great start. We all know how important it is to provide support for BIPOC teachers and administrators. We believe it is also valuable for school board members. Affinity Groups are places where individuals can relate with each other, share ideas and suggestions, and receive mutual support to help them do their work. If you or one of your fellow board members meet the criteria to participate in this group, be looking for more information about this in the next two weeks.

SAVE THE DATE



2/2/23 Webinar
How School Boards Can Support Student Achievement and Close Gaps
Noon - 1:00pm

How does your board...

- Ensure the district is accountable for the well-being and success of all students?
- Assure high expectations for student learning?
- Demonstrate responsible and inclusive governance?
- Engage and involve your local community?

• Create conditions for the success of all students and staffs?

[REGISTER HERE](#) FREE WEBINAR

3/2/23 Webinar

The New 2023 School Board: Onboarding New Board Members and Reorganizing the Board
Noon - 1:00pm

Town Meeting Day is coming quickly. You will walk away from this webinar with knowledge and materials to ensure your district has the best practices for onboarding and working well with new members and reorganizing your new board.

This webinar is open to all central office staff as well as school board members.

[REGISTER HERE](#) FREE WEBINAR

If you have any thoughts about the VSBA Weekly Updates, please let us know. We always welcome your feedback.

Thank you for your dedicated service as school board members. **What you do makes a difference!**

Sincerely,



Sue Cegłowski
VSBA Executive Director



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