

February 28, 2023



Dear Allison,  
As Town Meeting Day approaches, many school boards are presenting budgets this week which reflect the goals of school districts across Vermont. We wish you all the best as you review accomplishments of the prior year, identify priorities for the coming year and present your budgets for approval by the voters of your districts.

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#### HOT TOPICS

##### Poll Results - Onboarding New School Board Members

We would like to thank those who completed last week's poll about onboarding new school board members. [HERE](#) are the results. Be sure to register for this week's webinar which covers onboarding new board members and reorganizing your board. Thank you for your time and feedback to continue to make VSBA YOUR association! The next poll will be on March 14.

##### Presentations on Vermont's Tuitioning System

In June of 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court changed the law related to taxpayer funding of private schools. In the Carson v. Makin decision, Chief Justice John Roberts wrote, "A State need not subsidize private education, but once a State decides to do so, it cannot disqualify some private schools solely because they are religious."

In October of 2022, VSBA membership passed a Public Funds Accountability Resolution, stating: "The VSBA advocates that all rules, regulations, policies, quality standards, reporting requirements and laws regarding public schools in Vermont must apply to any school that receives funds from the state-wide education fund, for any reason or for any purpose."

Currently, the Vermont Legislature is considering bills to address the issues raised by the Carson v. Makin decision and establish eligibility for taxpayer funding for K – 12 education. Whether you serve on a school board that operates all grades or tuitions some (or all) grades, it's important to understand Vermont's history of subsidizing private education, how it affects the Education Fund and how it affects school budgets statewide. These informative presentations by VSBA President Neil Odell, developed for his local board and community, explore the history and financing of tuitioning in Vermont.

Vermont's Tuitioning System - A History: <https://youtu.be/VOE5WG2vRf4>

Vermont's Tuitioning System - Financing: [https://youtu.be/XsdJ\\_BMNvK](https://youtu.be/XsdJ_BMNvK)

##### Last Call for Superintendent of the Year Nominations

The Vermont Superintendents Associations (VSA) Frederick H. Tuttle Superintendent of the Year Nomination Process is open to all, with a specific emphasis on alerting members of the Vermont Education Community and inviting their nominations of worthy candidates for the recognition.

The nomination period will close on March 15, 2023 after which nominations will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee comprising superintendents and former superintendents from across Vermont including two former superintendents of the year.

Nominations can be made using the online application available [here](#).

The nomination process emphasizes demonstrated service and accomplishment in the areas of leadership for learning; communications; professionalism; leading for equity; resource management and service to the school district/supervisory union; region; state and the Vermont Superintendents Association. Vermont's Superintendent of the Year becomes the nominee for AASA's - The School Superintendents Association - National Superintendent of the Year.

The recipient of the Frederick H. Tuttle Superintendent of the Year is announced and recognized at VSA's Annual Spring Conference and participates in various leadership activities and events throughout the year.

Nominations may be made [here](#). Any questions should be directed to Kristi Tate at the Vermont Superintendents Association - ktate@vsa.org

#### GOVERNANCE TIP

##### Transparent and Predictable Board Processes

Transparent, predictable board processes promote coherence within the school system and with the community. Clear board priorities and thoughtful, well-written board operating protocols are critically important, but they are not enough. Exceptional governance requires predictability for the board, superintendent, staff, students, and community. "Culture" is often defined as "the way we do things around here."

Organizational scholar Edgar Shein mentions three levels of culture: artifacts, espoused values and beliefs, and underlying assumptions. In high functioning school districts, the board and district leaders ensure there is coherence among these three levels. Artifacts could include policies and procedures, agendas and minutes, and adopted budgets. These items tell a written story of what is most important to the board. Espoused values and beliefs are typically communicated in vision and mission statements and may be found in other written or oral claims. Underlying assumptions are the foundation of culture. This is what you truly believe and expect of yourself and others. What the community, staff, and students believe and expect from the board is a critical indicator of board success.

Consider engaging and involving community stakeholders in examining and improving your board processes. This includes things such as how you adopt policies, evaluate the superintendent, assess the board's performance, negotiate agreements, invite and consider public comment, and establish and publish your meeting agendas. When your board processes are clear, known, and consistent you increase confidence within the community and more thoughtful engagement among your board.

#### EQUITY

##### Black Educators Matter

Reviewing and asking questions about data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender is a necessity of good governance. It's the starting place to address ongoing gaps in student performance. We have been talking about pervasive gaps in student outcomes for decades, yet the classical gaps persist, and some are widening. It is transformative for a board to ask informed questions - it's not micromanaging, and it is fully within the role of a board member. One question can invite more questions and a deeper level of conversation among the board with the superintendent. One of the greatest opportunities we have for closing gaps is to support educators from historically marginalized groups. The board can ask informed questions about recruitment and retention. The board can also work with the administration to ensure not only students and teachers from various backgrounds are supported but administrators and board members as well. For more insight into this topic, check out a recent article: [Literacy Lens: Black Educators Matter](#).



#### SAVE THE DATE

##### 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. Leave this webinar with key insights to ensure your district has excellent practices for onboarding and working well with new members. Too many boards leave this to hope and happenstance. Nearly no one automatically knows how to be an effective school board member. We have to be shown the ropes, coached along the way, learn from our mistakes, and know that we are part of a team that has the best interest at heart. The way you provide information, resources, and encouragement in the first sixty days to a new school board is critical for them to contribute meaningfully to the board and its work. Consider ways your board can be intentional about bringing new members onto the team and supporting the long term success of your board.

This webinar includes practical tips to consider when reorganizing your board including qualities to look for in board officers and mistakes to avoid.

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

The speakers will be Ben Niehaus, George Steffen and Pat Mans from the Wisconsin Association of School Boards and Phil Gore the VSBA Director of Board Services.

[REGISTER HERE](#) FREE WEBINAR

##### 3/3/23

##### BIPOC Affinity Group Meeting

3:30-5:00 pm

If you are a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) school board member and would like to consider participation in an affinity group, [please click here to be added to the contact list](#). VSBA is launching its first Affinity Group, exclusively for BIPOC School Board Members. The first meeting will be by Zoom on Friday, March 3, 3:30-5:00 pm. During the meeting, participants will discuss the direction and guidelines they want for their group. Bonnie Johnson-Alten, a well-respected Vermont administrator and experienced facilitator, will help get the group off to a great start. Affinity Groups are spaces where individuals can relate with each other, share ideas and suggestions, and receive mutual support to help them do their work. We know how important it is to provide support for BIPOC teachers and administrators. We believe it is also valuable for school board members.

##### 4/1/23 - 4/3/23

##### National School Boards Association

##### Annual Conference and Exposition

Orlando, FL

The [NSBA 2023 Annual Conference and Exposition](#) brings together education leaders to learn about best governance practices, gain insight into child development and learn about new programs and technology that can help enrich student learning.

NSBA's Annual Conference offers world-class programming, inspirational keynotes, and networking opportunities. Plus, registering for the in-person event grants you access to the online offering. #NSBA23

**4/7/23 Zoom Forum**  
**Board Chairs & Vice Chairs**  
**9:00 - 10:00am**

We are convening a meeting for current board chairs and vice chairs on Friday, April 7 at 9:00am. The intent is to discuss common challenges and opportunities. You may be interested in sharing questions or suggestions for navigating uncertainties, running effective meetings, receiving public comments, or other aspects of your role. Come prepared to contribute and learn. [Click here to register](#) or for more information. This networking will not be recorded. Please register if you can attend live. Participation will be limited to the first 40 registrants.

**4/25/23 Webinar**  
**Board Officers 101**  
**Noon - 1:00**

Are you a new officer on your board or a veteran, who would like to add to our conversation and gain new insights? If so, this webinar is for YOU! It is critically important who serves as board chair and also important who serves in other officer positions. The board leadership team needs to represent the interests of the full board, work well with the superintendent, and function as a cohesive, focused unit. They are typically involved in developing agendas and meeting with the superintendent in between business meetings when needed. The ideal board officers have the time to serve, are generally available on short notice, and are experienced leaders. Gain insights into effective practices for serving as a board officer.

[REGISTER HERE](#) -- FREE REGISTRATION

**5/8/23 & 5/15/23 Webinars**

**WELCOME To Your**  
**First Year Journey**  
**on Your School Board**  
**5:00-7:00pm**

The journey begins with a series of two webinar sessions on May 8 and May 15 from 5:00pm until 7:00pm created exclusively for newly elected and newly appointed school board members. Join VSBA staff and state experts as we grapple with defining the work of school boards and their members, including governance issues, policy, the role of the board, expectations, financial basics, and board operations.

The First Year Journey sessions will be conducted virtually in 2023. There is no cost to attend, and we encourage all new members to register and attend both sessions. As soon as the VSBA staff are notified of new school board members they are mailed a copy of The Essential Work of Vermont School Boards. This book will be referenced substantially throughout this series. If you have not received one as a new school board member, please contact our office.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

**5/30/23 Webinar**

**How to Make the Most of a Summer Board Retreat**  
**Noon - 1:00pm**

Does your board get bogged down in routine work at your regular business meetings throughout the year? A summer retreat is the perfect opportunity to step back and focus on the big picture. In this webinar we'll address the value of board self assessment, goal setting, and developing an annual work plan. We will also discuss how important it is for the board to have clear and agreed priorities written down. This can help give direction to the superintendent, assistant in their evaluation, and focus the system for improved student outcomes.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

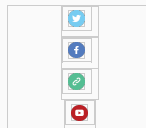
If you have any thoughts about the VSBA Weekly Updates, please let us know. We always welcome your feedback.

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

Sincerely,



Sue Ceglowski  
VSBA Executive Director



Our mailing address is:  
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You can [unsubscribe from this list](#)