

# 2023 VEA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

## VEA WILL INITIATE LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS TO:

- Fully implement and fund the revised Standards of Quality and lifting of the support cap as prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education.
- Scale the initial and continuing state supplement for National Board Certification Incentive Awards and cover fees for educators seeking certification to encourage high-quality professional development.
- More adequately fund and support English Learner services and expand the flexibility of state support.
- Account for current inflationary pressures with additional direct aid funding for core school services.
- Provide ongoing state support to establish and sustain community school models

## VEA SUPPORTS LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS THAT:

- Strengthen and protect fair labor practices and the right of public employees to organize and collectively bargain.
- Protect and enhance indoor air quality at school sites, which includes air filtration systems and mold issues, so that students and staff have a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Promotes safe, just, and equitable schools that are welcoming for all students, discriminatory toward none, and integrate the social, emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the whole student.
- Reduces and mitigates child poverty, including through policies that strengthen affordable housing access, food security, comprehensive health coverage, targeted refundable tax credits,

childcare, and early childhood education, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs, and public transportation.

- Promote common sense gun reforms and implement evidence-based policies to proactively prevent gun violence in our schools and communities.
- Provide funding to ensure teacher salaries are at or above the national average and that school employees earn a livable wage.
- Attract and retain high-quality teachers and school support professionals and improve professional development opportunities.
- Invest in more accessible pathways to becoming a certified teacher, while protecting rigorous standards for the profession that include the concepts of high academic performance, extensive clinical practice and field experience, and demonstrated knowledge of the subject matter, pedagogy, child development, and learning acquisition.
- Increase the funding for high-poverty schools through the At-Risk Add-On.
- Support the unique needs and challenges in Virginia's small and rural school divisions.
- Reform Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments to both reduce the total testing time for students annually and offer formative results to inform instructional practice. Reduce Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments to the minimum federal requirements.
- Improve, implement, and fund professional development for educators that incorporate culturally responsive and restorative justice practices, and address implicit bias.
- Increase state support or expand local options for school construction and school modernization.
- Improve equitable access to high-speed Internet and appropriate technology for all students, communities, and school staff.

## VEA OPPOSES LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS THAT:

- Undermine public-sector labor rights, including collective bargaining rights.
- Create any new requirements for our public schools without the appropriate state share of funding to implement them.
- Provide public dollars to unaccountable private and religious schools.
- Transfer the authority for granting charter schools away from the local school board.
- Undermines the health or retirement benefits of school personnel.
- Allow for the arming of school personnel with firearms or repeal/alter any law, rule, or regulation designating school property as a gun-free zone.
- Seek to repeal or restrict the rights and well-being of marginalized student groups.

## We'll Keep You Informed

*Keep up to date with all the latest legislative news impacting VA schools by reading VEA's updates throughout the General Assembly session. You can find them there at <https://vea.link/LegReports>*

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Virginia's Education Union

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