

2024 VEA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

VEA WILL INITIATE LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS TO:

- Fully implement and fund the recommendations and policy options from the 2023 JLARC report on the Standards of Quality.
- 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.
- Provide ongoing state support to establish and sustain community school models.
- Address evolving facets of school safety concerns for staff and students.
- Increase the fairness and effort of funding for schools with a high share of students living in households experiencing poverty.
- Provide funding to ensure teacher salaries are at or above the national average, school employees earn a living wage, and that compensation is provided to student teachers.
- Protect school staff from counterproductive and unreasonable liabilities that limit their autonomy and safety.
- Expand Medicaid reimbursement for school-based medical and mental health services.

VEA SUPPORTS LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS THAT:

- Strengthen and protect fair labor practices and the right of public employees to organize and collectively bargain.
- Require school divisions to provide parental leave and short-term disability, and to fairly compensate employees for unused accrued sick leave upon voluntary separation from employment with the division.
- Guarantee elementary teachers 60 minutes of unencumbered planning time per day.

- 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.
- Increase funding for mechanisms to support school construction and modernization.
- Promote safe, just, and equitable schools that are welcoming for all students and staff, discriminatory toward none, and integrate the social, emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the whole student.
- Reduce and mitigate 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 the implementation of evidence-based policies to proactively prevent gun violence in our schools and communities.
- Attract and retain high-quality teachers and school support professionals and improve professional development opportunities.
- Strengthen the teacher pipeline by investing in more inaccessible 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 subject matter, pedagogy, child development, and learning acquisition.
- 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.
- Improve, implement, and fund professional development for educators that incorporate culturally responsive and trauma-informed restorative justice practices, and address implicit bias.

- Improve equitable access to high-speed Internet and appropriate technology for all students, communities, and school staff.
- Maintain and improve responsible school operational plans that support and protect the safety, mental health, and social and emotional learning of our 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.
- Threaten public school funding or provide public dollars to unaccountable private and religious schools.
- Transfer the authority for granting charter schools or similar non-traditional public schools away from the local school board.
- Undermine or reduce 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 groups.
- Disenfranchise Virginia residents from democratic and civic engagement with state government.
- Supplant any rebenchmarking costs for required technical updates.

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Virginia's Education Union