

..... 2026 veA

Legislative Agenda



VEA WILL INITIATE LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS TO:

- Strengthen and protect fair labor practices and the right of public employees to organize and collectively bargain.
- Fully implement and fund the recommendations of the Joint Sub committee on Primary and Secondary Education Funding for revising the funding formula.
- Protect school staff from counterproductive and unreasonable liabilities that limit their autonomy, rights, and safety.
- Prohibit Virginia participation in provision of any public funds for private schools through vouchers.
- Ensure public school provides a safe, inclusive environment where LGBTQ+ students are free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying - so that all students can focus on learning.
- 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.
- Provide funding to ensure educator salaries are at or above the national average, so school employees earn a living wage.
- Provide targeted supplemental funding for educators at schools with the highest vacancy rates.
- Create paid student teaching programs statewide to address pipeline/ placement shortages.
- Require certain SOL testing information and questions be regularly released to provide increased transparency for educators, students, and families.
- Eliminate the requirement that students pass standardized tests, such as SOLs, as a condition for earning a high school diploma.
- Require annual state-level reporting of school staff terminations by position and demographic data.
- Update the state's school accountability system so that it more accurately reflects school quality, incorporates multiple measures of student and school success, and provides families and communities with a fuller, fairer picture of school performance.

VEA SUPPORTS LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS THAT:

- Increase state revenue to more adequately support school systems.
- More adequately fund and support special education services and expand the flexibility of state support.
- Increase the fairness and effort of funding for schools with a high share of students living in households experiencing poverty.
- Address evolving facets of school safety concerns for staff and students.
- 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.
- Increase funding for mechanisms to support school construction and modernization.
- 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.
- 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.
- Review the feasibility of a statewide health insurance option for school employees.
- Repeal Virginia's ban on public sector strikes, restoring public employees' ability to advocate collectively for improved working conditions and educational outcomes.
- Endorse the development of a single, streamlined educator application that can be used to apply to any school district in Virginia, helping create a statewide talent pool to better recruit and match educators - especially in high-need divisions.
- End Virginia's right-to-work statute, strengthening workers' rights to organize and collectively bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions.
- Implement new SOLs in different subjects on a staggered, multi-year schedule rather than all at once, reducing the burden on educators.

VEA OPPOSES LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS THAT:

- Undermine public-sector labor rights, including collective bargaining rights.
- 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 re-benchmarking costs for required technical updates and the supplanting of state lottery proceeds being supplanted within the education budget for general fund uses.

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