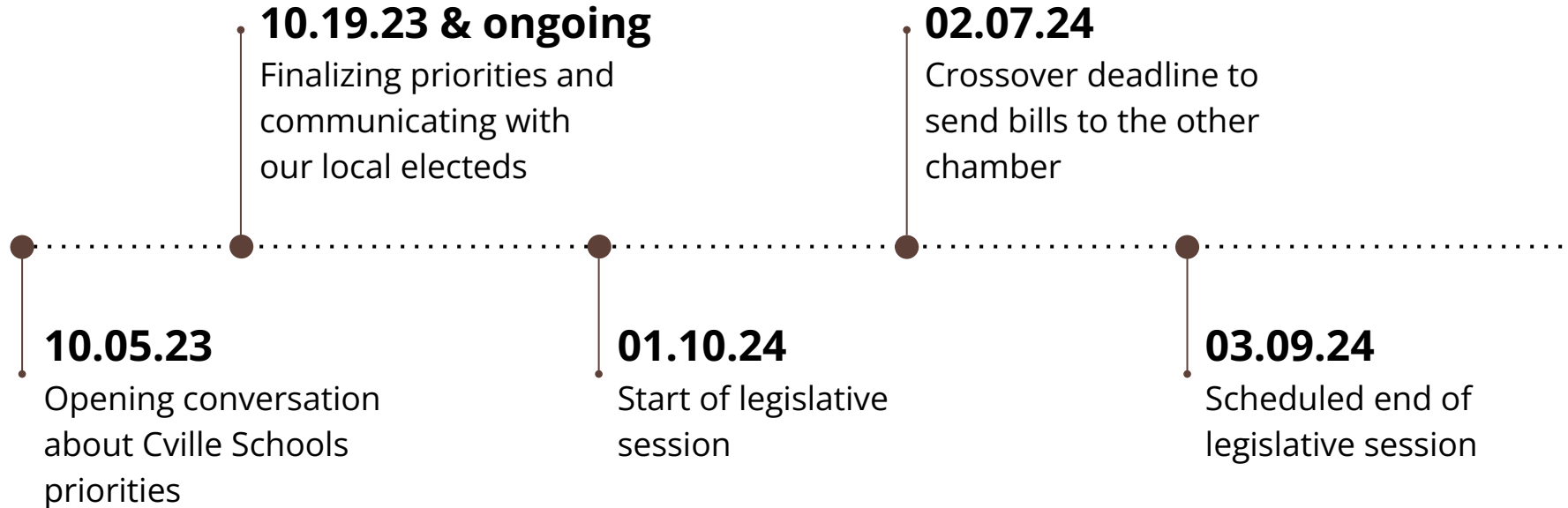




Legislative Priorities for 2024 Session

October 5, 2023

Key Dates for Virginia Legislative Session 2024



Following Other State Education Agencies' Legislative Priorities

VSBA (link to 2024 doc)



2024 VSBA Legislative Priorities

About the Virginia School Boards Association

The Virginia School Boards Association is a voluntary, nonpartisan organization of Virginia school boards that promotes excellence in public education through leadership, advocacy, and services.

Local Control

VSBA opposes any attempts to divest local school boards of their constitutional authority to supervise schools. The VSBA further opposes any efforts that interfere with the day-to-day activities of school boards in performing their constitutional responsibilities.

- VSBA opposes legislation that would attempt to mandate school board composition, school board advisory committees, and removal of school board's authority to regulate public comment period during board meetings.

Funding and Budget

Article VIII of the Virginia Constitution establishes public education as a shared responsibility. School Boards work in partnership with the Virginia General Assembly, Virginia Board of Education, and local appropriating bodies to provide education in the Commonwealth. Past changes to state funding for education widened existing gaps between the actual costs of services at the local level and the state's reimbursement for the provision of these services.

- VSBA encourages the Virginia General Assembly to act favorably on the recommendations of the July 2023 LJCRC Report on Virginia's K-12 Funding Formula.
- VSBA supports the immediate and complete repeal of the SGO position support cap.
- VSBA supports local flexibility for implementing all programs and legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly. VSBA supports full funding of all legislation and programs passed by the Virginia General Assembly. Partial funding or the absence of funding for mandates and programs places an additional burden on local school divisions.
- VSBA opposes any attempts by the Virginia General Assembly to remove revenue streams of local governing bodies that are used to fund school division operations without state resources that hold school divisions harmless from the loss in revenue.

School Safety

School divisions have a responsibility to families, students, and staff to ensure a teaching/learning environment that is safe and free of disruption. There are incidents involving weapons, assaults and threats at schools which require intervention in addition to those school personnel are able and authorized to provide.

- The VSBA supports state government, local communities, law enforcement agencies, and school cooperation to provide appropriate prevention and intervention programs that are effective in addressing violence, and the precursors to violence, in schools and their communities.
- The VSBA supports the authority of local school boards in deciding whether to enter Memorandums of Understanding with local law enforcement agencies to establish a School Resource Officer program in their divisions.

VASS (2024 pending)

2021-2022 VASS Legislative Priorities

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged schooling within the Commonwealth of Virginia as perhaps no other event. During this time, VASS has been and remains committed to seeking positive changes in public education and schooling what is best for students and staff in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

There are certain fundamental principles that are required in supporting proposed legislation. They are:

- All mandates passed by the General Assembly and required by the Virginia Board of Education need to be fully funded.
- Local school boards should have primary authority in the implementation of these mandates and how resources associated with mandates from State Government are utilized at the local level.

Equity of Opportunity for All Virginia Learners: The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the inherent inequities among student groups, schools, and school divisions in providing educational services to children in the Commonwealth.

- The Support Staff Cap was implemented during the Great Recession as a means of saving the Commonwealth needed funds to weather that crisis and it has remained in place since that point. The Virginia Board of Education has prescribed in the Standards of Quality that the Support Cap be removed. Now that the Commonwealth is seeing a record increase in funding, it is time to fully remove the Support Cap to the benefit of students and teachers. VASS recommends removing the cap, but would support this being done in phases if necessary.
- SGO staffing requirements by the State Board and contained in the revised SOLs must be accompanied by appropriate state funding, as well as staffing flexibility when qualified applicants cannot be found to fill these added positions.
- Positions identified in the Standards of Quality should be funded by function (i.e., curriculum development, instructional support, instructional technology, school leadership, student support and counseling) rather than individual position title.

State Budget: School Divisions have received significant federal funds in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, these funds are restricted in their use and obligation time frame. State funds remain a critical factor in providing educational services to students now and in the future.

- The 2022-2024 formula-based re-benchmarking should be maintained without any negative changes for the biennium.
- School divisions should be held harmless for the 2022-2024 biennium in terms of both ADM (Average Daily Membership) and L1 (Local Composite Index) changes regarding their impact on Basic Aid.
- It is essential that additional state funds for broadband/Internet access be provided. There is a need for a consistent source for these funds to be part of the State Budget. This will allow for funding to be provided in an on-going manner and be used for students, staff and school-based needs.
- Research has shown that the condition of school facilities impacts both student outcomes and teacher attitudes. State funding for renovation and construction of school facilities is vital if schools are to better manage critical learning needs and changing student population.

VEA (2024 pending)

2023 VEA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

VEA WILL INITIATE LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS THAT:

- Fully implement and fund the revised Standards of Quality and bring the Support Cap as prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education.
- Scale the initial and continue state support for National Board Certification incentive awards and cover fees for educators seeking certification to encourage high-quality teachers and school support professionals and improve professional development.
- Allow adequate funding and support English learner services and expand the flexibility of state support.
- Accurate for current inflationary pressures with additional direct and indirect for core school service.
- Provide ongoing state support to establish and sustain community school models.
- Increase the funding for high-poverty schools through the de-hat Act-08.

VEA SUPPORTS LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS THAT:

- Strengthen and protect labor practices and the right of public employees to organize and collectively bargain.
- Protect and enhance indoor air quality in schools, which reduces air filter costs and indoor issues, so that students and staff have a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Promotes safe, just, and equitable schools that are welcoming to all students, discriminate-free zones, and integrate the social, emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual needs of all students.
- Reduce and mitigate child poverty through targeted investments that strengthen affordable housing, food security, comprehensive health care coverage, and mental health services.

VEA OPPOSES LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS THAT:

- Promote common sense gun reforms and implement evidence-based policies to proactively prevent gun violence in our schools and communities.
- Provide funding to ensure teachers and school support professionals and improve professional development.
- Undermine the steady or retirement benefits of school personnel.
- Allow for the amping of school personnel with hearings or appeal after any law, rule, or regulation (regarding school property) is a just-time zone.
- Seek to repeal or restrict the rights and well-being of marginalized student groups.

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 grants via charter schools away from the local school board.
- Undermine the steady or retirement benefits of school personnel.
- Allow for the amping of school personnel with hearings or appeal after any law, rule, or regulation (regarding school property) is a just-time zone.
- Seek to repeal or restrict the rights and well-being of marginalized student groups.

We'll Keep You Informed

Keep us in the loop with the latest legislative news impacting VA schools by joining VEA's updates throughout the General Assembly session. You can find them here at

VEA VIRGINIA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
Virginia's Education Union



Past Issues of Concern

- 1% sales tax option for school construction
 - After-school care regulations
 - Teacher licensure & alternative paths to certification
 - Cultural flashpoints
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Upcoming Areas of Interest

- Future school accountability metrics (perhaps more of Board of Ed issue than a legislative issue)
- Virginia Literacy Act
- State preschool funding
- Possible modernization funds for solar projects
- Funding to improve services for students with special ed needs/IEP's
- Support for students learning English
- Rolling back or removing support cap for staffing standards (SOQ's)
- Reinstating pandemic-era exceptions to the 90-day maximum for temporary teachers or long-term substitutes

Off Year?

All Seats Open in Virginia Legislature in Fall 2023!

Regardless of your party or perspective, one way to support our schools is to make your voice heard. All 140 seats in the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates will be decided this fall.

Registration deadline is October 16.

Early voting is open now.

Election Day is November 7.

NEXT STEPS

- This presentation is a conversation-starter.
- Continue the conversation by sending suggestions to cheukb1@charlottesvilleschools.org.
- We'll finalize priorities at the work session on October 19.
- Following the election, the Board will meet with local elected officials.