

..... 2025 VEA Legislative Agenda



VEA WILL INITIATE LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS TO:

- Fully implement and fund the top remaining 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 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.
- 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.
- Provide targeted supplemental funding for educators at schools with the highest vacancy rates.
- Protect school staff from counter-productive and unreasonable liabilities that limit their autonomy, rights, and safety.
- Expand Medicaid reimbursement for school-based medical and mental health services.
- Strengthen and protect fair labor practices and the right of public employees to organize and collectively bargain.
- Increase state revenue to more adequately support school systems.
- Improve air quality and safety standards in school buildings.
- Expand support for mathematics education opportunities and services for students.
- Require state collection of Education Support Professional salary data from all school divisions.

VEA SUPPORTS LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS TO:

- Provide ongoing state support to establish and sustain community school models.
- Ensure that all earned income by school employees is counted towards creditable compensation.
- 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.
- 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 prevent gun violence in our schools and communities proactively.
- 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 incorporates culturally responsive and trauma-informed restorative justice practices, and addresses 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.
- Disallow the supplanting of state lottery proceeds being supplanted within the education budget for general fund uses.
- Offer resources and state guidance for a play-based curriculum.
- Review the feasibility of a statewide health insurance option for school employees.
- Offer fair compensation for classroom coverage due to the absence of the regular teacher.
- Offers duty-free lunch for all school employees that does not infringe on planning time.
- Provide a minimum of 20 minutes of recess for all middle school students.
- Ensure superintendent candidates all have backgrounds in education and experience.
- Require all school buses to have signs in Spanish and English.
- Mandate that all classrooms and buses must not be allowed to exceed 80 degrees Fahrenheit when staff and students are present.

VEA OPPOSES LEGISLATION AND BUDGET ITEMS TO:

- 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 re-benchmarking costs for required technical updates.



Virginia's Education Union