



# COVID-19 ..... Weekly Update



Week of March 30- April 3, 2020

## Leading During a Crisis

With the onset of COVID-19, every school board is facing a crisis situation. Emotions are high, decisions must be made quickly, and the decisions that are made effect everyone, instantly. School board members across the Commonwealth are anxious to take decisive action in the best interests of their students and staff. But what is the leadership role of a school board during a crisis?

Leadership often requires a choice in the lens we choose to look through. It will shape how we conduct ourselves and the decisions we make. In times of crisis, board members must view the problem as the problem, and never each other. They must work constructively with their superintendents, maintain integrity with community members and be flexible as they navigate an ever-changing landscape.

How the governance team behaves during a crisis will frame and give meaning to this experience. You will ease anxiety -- or increase it. You will make decisions based on facts -- or fear. You will be perceived as acting with integrity, honesty and humanity -- or the opposite.

In a crisis, we all succeed or we all fail. Board members must work in harmony with the superintendent and each other, as well as be unified in supporting the chosen strategies.

In addition to oversight, it is important for boards to ensure that they communicate with the community via agreed-upon lines of communication. While this is important in any situation, a crisis situation heightens the need for good communication. When speaking to the public or the media, the board should work to ensure that there is a consistent message coming from all members, as divergent messages can confuse or even panic stakeholders. Ensure that you know your board protocols on speaking with the media and responding to media inquires. Make sure all members of the governance team are informed of the communication so they are not reading something for the first time in the media.

The is a tough time, but we will get through it all- together. VSBA continues to work for you and provide service to our members, so please do not hesitate to reach out should there be anything we can do to assist you. Take care and stay safe.

-G.P.



A Message from the VSBA Board of Directors



## Q & A Session with Secretary Qarni

Did you miss the live webinar with Secretary Qarni? The recorded session is available below.



### Free Webinar: Updates from Dr. James Lane April 9, 2020 11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Join us next week as we hear from Dr. James Lane, Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction. He will provide some updates, and then answer some of our questions. We look forward to having you join us for this live event, [register now!](#)

## 6 Ways to Be the Best School Board Member You Can Be During the COVID-19 Crisis

1. **Practice good governance.** As the situation changes daily, using best practices in your

role as a member of the governing team is more important than ever. Decisions need to be made, bills still need to be paid, and the staff, students, and community need your consistent and stable presence.

**2. Support your Superintendent.** Your superintendent must manage your division right now. They are trained and equipped for this. Support them by adhering to the chain of command and remaining in close communication as a team.

**3. Unify your message.** It is important for the board and superintendent to share a consistent, positive, and calm message with your community. The superintendent should be the voice of the division with the board supporting their message. Do your best to be factual and reassuring.

**4. Stay updated and educated on emergency mandates.** In this emergency our local, state, and federal governments have been acting swiftly with executive orders that directly apply to your school board. Read and have a clear understanding of emergency measure changes to the FOIA and other laws governing board meetings.

**5. Be flexible and willing to learn and adapt to new virtual meeting venues.** With the importance of social distancing boards will need to find new ways to meet via the internet in one of the many digital venues available. For some this will be a new challenge. Be open to change!

**6. Encourage your team.** This is likely not the first time your team tackled a crisis together, nor will it be the last. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused fear and anxiety among many, perhaps even your board colleagues. Reach out, take care of each other, and be a friend.

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## Resources, News & Updates

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We have compiled a multitude of resources for school board members, and school divisions to consult. **Below you will find the newest additions.** For the entire collection please visit the VSBA COVID-19 resource page available at the link below.

In addition we have compiled a list of at-home learning resources that are available online for students who are home due to COVID-19. This list will be updated as additional resources become available. This is not an exclusive list, nor does this constitute an endorsement by VSBA for any of the included programs.

[Visit the VSBA COVID-19 Resource Page](#)

[Visit the At Home Learning Resources Page](#)

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### Resources Added This Week

- [VHSL- Letter Regarding NCAA Grading](#)
- [What We're Learning from an Early Look at District COVID-19 Response Plans](#)
- [Children and Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Tips to keep children healthy while school's out](#)
- [Letter regarding Federal Intervention to Ensure Bond Market Stability](#)
- [ESS- Distance Education Resources for K-12 Teachers](#)
- [Leading Groups Online](#)
- [Information on Zoom](#)
- [ABM- COVID-19 Information Center](#)
- [Express Scripts: Protecting Patients in Need](#)

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## VSBA Events, Education & Updates

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Here are the latest updates to the VSBA Schedule, and planned development.

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- All Remaining Spring Region Network Forums have been **Cancelled**- view the Board of Directors Resolution [here](#).
- **NEW!** April 8, 2020 Free Webinar: Building a High-Impact School Board: Four Questions You Need to Answer- [register here!](#)
- **NEW!** April 9, 2020 Free Webinar: Updates from Dr. James Lane- [register here!](#)
- April 17, 2020 Hot Topic Conference, **Cancelled**
- May 7, 2020, VSBA Budget Training, **Now Virtual**- [register here!](#)
- June 5, 2020, VSBA School Law Conference, **Now Virtual**- [register here!](#)

Please keep an eye on our upcoming events. As we continue to consult the VDH, CDC, and WHO for guidelines on gatherings we will continue to release updates. See below for opportunities for development you can take advantage of now.

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**Register for an Upcoming Live  
Webinar**

**Listen to the VSBA: School  
Board News**

**Read the Latest VSBA  
Newsletter**

**View the List of Available  
Webinars on Demand**

**Read the Latest Federal  
Advocacy Report**

