



VSBA Frequently Asked Questions

What is VSBA?

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.

Who is VSBA?

Every school board in the Commonwealth of Virginia is a member of the VSBA. The VSBA Board of Directors has 18 members that represent school boards across Virginia, to include nine regional chairs.

Additionally, VSBA has a staff of employees that support school boards in providing a variety of services to include board development, governance training, policy and legal services, legislative services, communications, and professional development opportunities.

What are VSBA's vision, mission, and goals?

Vision: VSBA is recognized and respected as an innovative leader in public education.

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

Goals:

- To maximize student achievement by taking a leadership role in education reform.
- To advocate effectively for Virginia's public schools and children before all levels of government and the public.
- To increase engaged participation of member boards and stakeholders in all VSBA services and activities.

What does VSBA do?

The VSBA supports school board members in providing a variety of services to include board development, governance training, policy and legal services, legislative services, communications, and professional development opportunities.

Is there any citizen oversight of VSBA?

Yes. VSBA's membership is made up of the publicly elected and appointed school boards in Virginia. Members of those local school board members then vote to elect their peers for service on the VSBA Board of Directors and vote on changes to VSBA bylaws at the VSBA Delegate Assembly which is held annually in November.



What regulatory authority does VSBA have?

None, VSBA has no regulatory authority.

Why does a state association advocate in the legislature?

VSBA's government relations program ensures that the interest of school divisions is represented in formulating state and federal education policy. Educational funding and governance issues are at the top of the VSBA legislative agenda.

Through the work of the VSBA board members and staff, local school officials become directly aware of and involved with federal and state activities affecting education. The association represents the concerns of school divisions during the General Assembly, at meetings of the State Board of Education, and before other state agencies. Concerns on the national level are monitored by the VSBA staff and members of the VSBA Federal Relations Committee, which consists of local school board members from each Congressional District.

VSBA communicates regularly with members of the General Assembly and Congress on high priority issues such as school financing, standards of quality, etc. Efforts include presenting formal testimony at public hearings, providing comments on specific bills before House and Senate committees, and routinely meeting with individual legislators regarding the needs of local school divisions.

How are VSBA's legislative positions determined?

Local school board members are involved in every stage of VSBA's legislative efforts. The Legislative Positions Committee, drawing from proposals submitted by local school divisions, identifies positions and policies to recommend to the VSBA Board of Directors. These recommendations then are voted on by the Delegate Assembly at the Annual Convention and, if approved, become part of the VSBA Legislative Positions Handbook. Each member school board gets one vote in this process.

The Legislative Positions Handbook includes all legislative position statements of the Virginia School Boards Association that have been approved by the Delegate Assembly of the Association at the Annual Convention which is held during the fall of each year. Each spring the Legislative Positions Committee contacts all school boards in Virginia and asks for their recommendations on new legislative positions that should be considered by the Association. Local school boards are not bound to this handbook and can adopt local positions on legislation and policy.

Does VSBA require/mandate training for members?

Virginia state law requires training for every elected school board member on the Freedom of Information (FOIA) and Conflict of Interest Acts. The Virginia's Standards of Quality (SOQs) provide that each school board must require its members to participate annually in



high quality professional development activities at the state, local or national levels on governance. These activities must include, but are not limited to, personnel policies and practices; the evaluation of personnel, curriculum, and instruction; use of data in planning and decision making; and current issues in education.

Each local board must certify that all its members have met this requirement, as well as all the requirements of the SOQs, in its annual SOQ compliance report which is filed each spring. Given the provision of Va. Code § 22.1-253.13:8 which permits the Board of Education to petition local circuit courts to enforce compliance with the Standards of Quality, it is more important than ever that each local board and individual board members meet all legal requirements, and certify that they have done so, in order to avoid the possibility of judicial involvement in the operation of the local division.

If you have any questions about the professional development requirement or the certification process, please contact the Virginia Department of Education.