

Nichols Public Comments
State Board of Education
8/18/23

Good afternoon, for the record, Jay Nichols Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association. The VPA has a deeply shared belief that all Vermont children should be equally valued and that all Vermont children are equally important to our future as a state.

This means that the same set of basic rules for schools should apply for any school, public or private, that is receiving taxpayer supported funds. At the VPA, our Executive Council has dubbed this, "Same Dollars, Same Rules." This is a mantra we hope the State Board and the Legislature will recognize as one of fundamental fairness going forward and that is essential for the educational and economic vitality of our state.

We have heard that private or independent schools should have a different set of rules. We think that is true if a school is truly independent; however, any school that is receiving taxpayer dollars to operate is not independent; but rather dependent; on the state and therefore should follow the same rules. Let's move away from our current publicly segregated system and show all Vermont children that we value them equally. Separate but equal did not work to improve our society when minority students were discriminated against after the civil war and into the modern education era and that approach doesn't work now.

Thank you.

Jay Nichols

