

Leadership Expedition



**A Self-Guided Joint
Training Opportunity
for School Board Chairs
and Superintendents**

Pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 561(b)

**VERMONT
SCHOOL
BOARDS
ASSOCIATION**



In 2013, the Vermont General Assembly passed legislation that led to the creation of a mandate for school board chairs and superintendents to complete eight hours of joint training per year on six topics important to school district governance (16 V.S.A. § 561(b)). Since its passage, the Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA) and the Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA) have assisted school districts in understanding the requirement in 16 V.S.A. § 561(b) and offering training aligned with the topics outlined in the law.

Board chairs and superintendents have indicated over the past several years that they would like the VSBA and the VSA to offer more flexible opportunities to fulfill this law to both accommodate busy schedules and to recognize varying levels of experience. To fulfill this request, the VSBA and the VSA have created this guidance document on navigating the requirement together to best fit the needs of the partnership. The guidance outlines different offerings that can be combined to meet the requirements. Of particular note, attendance at the VSBA/VSA Annual Conference (October 24-25, 2024) will satisfy all eight hours of joint training if superintendents and board chairs attend sessions together. (The joint training in the spring will not be offered this year.) The associations welcome feedback on how to best serve members and will evaluate and make adjustments as needed in the future.

Q:

What is this joint training about?

a:

When the school board chair and superintendent work collaboratively as a governance team, they move the district/supervisory union toward its vision. Recognizing the importance of this partnership, in 2013, the legislature adopted 16 V.S.A. § 561(b) mandating at least eight hours of joint training for the superintendent and board chair annually.

Q: Where is this state statute and what does it say?

A: Title 16 in Vermont State law contains the vast majority of education laws for the state. Chapter 9 houses laws related to town school districts. Article § 561 under Subchapter 4 “Other Provisions” describes the election of the board’s officers, namely, the chair and clerk. The provision mandating joint professional training is included here.

**Title 16 Education
Chapter 009: School Districts**

§ 561. Election of school board members; oath; chair; clerk

(b) At least annually, the chairs of each school board within a supervisory union, the chair of the supervisory union board, and the superintendent shall jointly participate in at least eight hours of professional training that, at a minimum, addresses:

- (1) educational leadership;
- (2) the relative roles and responsibilities of the supervisory union board, the school district boards, and the superintendent;
- (3) the Vermont Open Meeting Law, 1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314;
- (4) Vermont law regarding access to public records, 1 V.S.A. §§ 315-320;
- (5) collective bargaining; and
- (6) education funding and school finance laws.

Q:

How can school board chairs and superintendents meet their annual training requirements?



A:

In 2023, the VSBA and the VSA adapted their annual fall conference to fulfill the requirements of the law if the superintendent and board chair attended the conference together. This will be an option again at the 2024 Annual VSBA/VSA Conference at which all eight hours of training can be obtained. This is a wonderful opportunity for those seeking to network in-person with other boards and superintendents and learn from one another, and to get some inspiration and new knowledge about educational leadership.

New this year is a self-guided opportunity as outlined in this booklet. It contains a compilation of VSBA-provided services including webinars, customized board development, and special programs. Similar to a self-paced course, the chair and superintendent may select what, when, and how they learn together. Upon completion of a live event or viewing of a recording, the two can discuss the key takeaways to reinforce their learning. In addition to providing more flexibility, this self-guided option offers differentiated learning to meet the needs of governance teams with varying degrees of knowledge and experience.

It is recommended that the board chair and superintendent meet after the board's reorganization meeting in the spring to map out their joint training for the coming year. This guide serves to support their planning.

VSBA In-Person Programs

Date	Title	Training Hours	Mandated Topic
Jan-June 2024	Policy Governance™ Maintenance Program ¹	4-9	 
October 24-25 2024	2024 VSBA/VSA Annual Conference ²	8	ALL

¹ Supervisory Unions/Districts enrolled in the Policy Governance Maintenance Program may apply four hours from the in-person workshop on January 27, 2024 (assuming the board chair and superintendent were in attendance) as well as an hour from each of the virtual drop-in sessions that run through June.

² The VSBA and VSA annual joint conference will be held at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee on October 24-25. Keynote speakers will deliver pertinent messages and share provocative ideas, while the workshops will provide a deep dive into effective governance and the essential work of school boards. This year’s conference, “Together Toward Tomorrow: A Public Education Expo and the VSBA/VSA Annual Conference” will focus on school boards’ visioning and community engagement work. Board chairs and superintendents should attend sessions together to fulfill the joint training requirement.


















VSBA Customized Board Development Service















In 2024, the VSBA is offering eight customized board development workshops. These vary in duration depending on the needs of the board. Should a superintendent and board chair attend one (or more) of these together, this can count as part of their required training.

Date	Title	Training Hours	Mandated Topic
On-demand	Governance Standards	TBD	 
On-demand	Educational Excellence & Equity	TBD	
On-demand	Board Self-Assessment	TBD	
On-demand	Community Engagement	TBD	
On-demand	Roles, Responsibilities & Teamwork	TBD	
On-demand	What to Expect as a Policy Governance Board	TBD	 
On-demand	Open Meeting Law & Robert’s Rules of Order	TBD	
On-demand	Priority Planning	TBD	

VSBA Lunchtime Webinars

Each year, the VSBA offers eleven one-hour live webinars as part of its [“School Board U Online”](#). These cover a variety of topics pertinent to the time of year when it is offered (e.g. board orientation or board reorganization in March, budgeting in November). Most VSBA webinars satisfy one hour of the 8-hour annual board chair/superintendent joint training requirements provided both parties attend together. If after registering to attend a webinar, it’s not possible to attend it live, an email with a link to the recording, handouts and any follow-up materials will be sent to registrants for viewing at their convenience. In addition, there are more than 30 recorded webinars on the VSBA’s website, if watched together, count toward the board chair/superintendent joint training.

Date Recorded	Title	Training Hours	Mandated Topic
November 14, 2024	Effective Evaluations = Successful Superintendents	1	
October 8, 2024	Key Components for Collective Bargaining	1	
September 12, 2024	VSBA Proposed Resolutions	1	
August 6, 2024	Establishing Policy to Support the Vision	1	
June 13, 2024	Implementation & Quality Review Process of DQS Governance Standards	1	
May 14, 2024	Becoming an Effective Board Member: A Guide to Roles & Responsibilities	1	
April 11, 2024	The Nuts and Bolts of School Construction	1	
March 6, 2024	Orientation: Building the Board Team	1	
January 18, 2024	Let’s Pass a Budget! Communicating Your District’s Priority Needs	1	 
November 14, 2023	Act 127 and Other Fiscal Dynamics for FY25 Budgeting	1	
September 7, 2023	The Opportunity of Governance Standards	1	
August 8, 2023	Best Practices for Board Reports	1	 
May 30, 2023	Make the Most of Your Board Retreat	1	
April 25, 2023	Board Officer 101	1	
March 2, 2023	New Board Member & Reorganizing the Board	1	

February 2, 2023	How School Boards Can Support Student Achievement and Close Gaps	1	
January 12, 2023	The Governance Core	1	 
August 30, 2022	Robert's Rules of Order	1	
June 2, 2022	Strategic Planning	1	 
June 9, 2022	Policy Governance	1	 
April 7, 2022	Board Chair 101	1	 
March 3, 2022	Supporting Equity: A Webinar for Vermont Education Leaders	1	
October 7, 2021	Budgeting & Financial Oversight	1	
December 3, 2020	VSBA Contract Database	1	
May 7, 2020	Open Meeting Law & Executive Session	1	

Joint Study of Books, Frameworks, or National School Boards Association (NSBA) Resources

School board chairs and superintendents may choose to identify a book, framework, or NSBA resource based on the perceived needs of the school district to study and reflect on together. Some examples of this could include the following:

- Study the *Essential Work of School Boards* and the accompanying reflection tools,
- Review the new governance standards found in the Vermont District Quality Standards and the accompanying self-assessment,
- Read and discuss *Building a High-Impact Board-Superintendent Partnership* by Doug Eadie or *The Governance Core: School Boards, Superintendents, and Schools Working Together* by Davis Campbell and Michael Fullan, or
- View an [NSBA webinar](#) together and discuss how it applies to the district.

For more suggested readings or other educational resources, please contact the [Vermont School Boards Association](#).

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