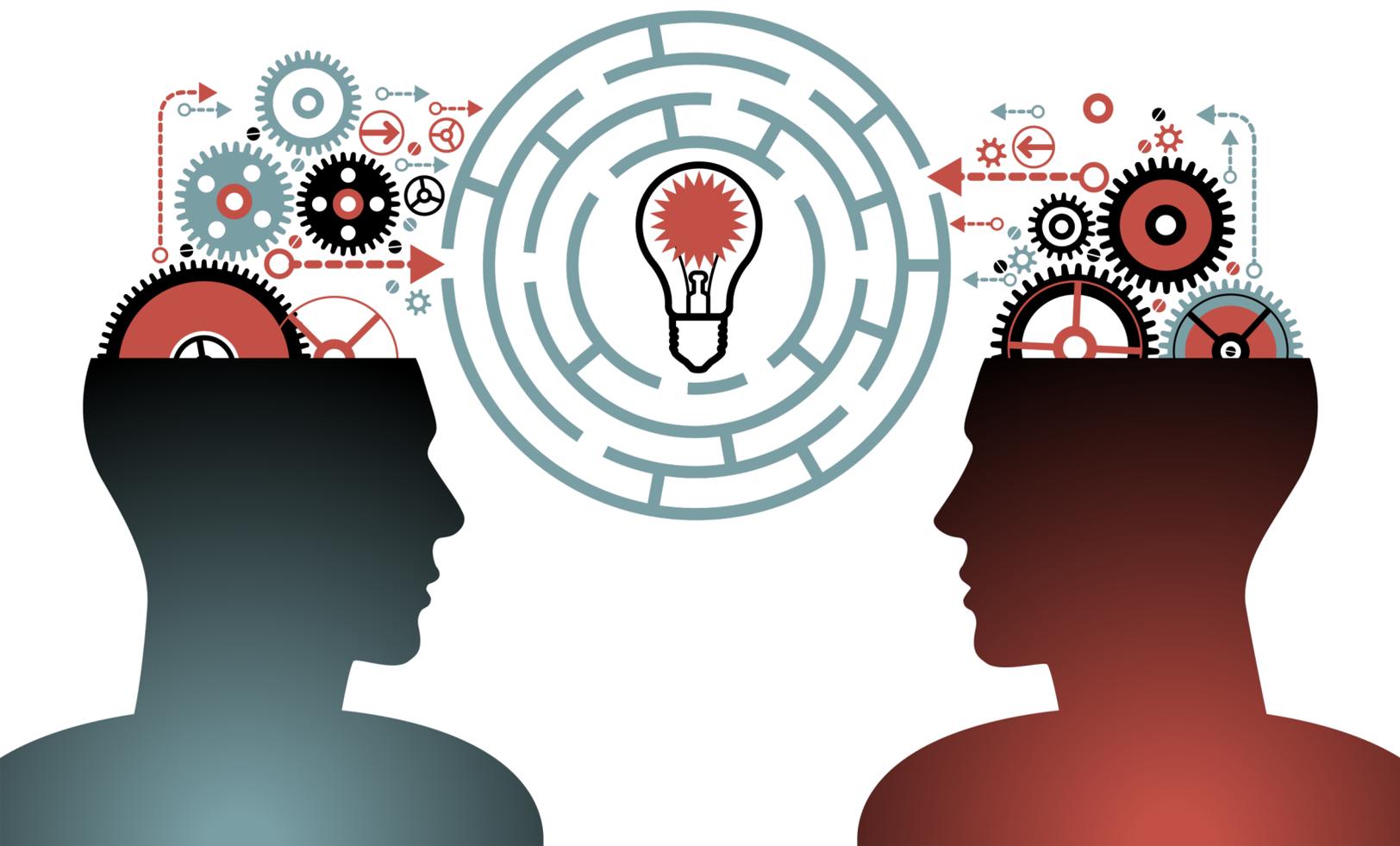


# Learn & Lead

## Self-Guided Joint Training for School Board Chairs and Superintendents

*Pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 561(b)*



# Background

In 2013, the Vermont General Assembly established a legal requirement for school board chairs and superintendents to complete eight hours of joint annual training on key governance topics (16 V.S.A. § 561(b)). Since then, the Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA) and the Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA) have supported districts in meeting this requirement.

In response to requests from boards for greater flexibility, in 2024, the VSBA and VSA developed this guidance document to help chairs and superintendents meet the requirement through a combination of offerings. Notably, joint attendance at the VSBA/VSA Annual Conference fulfills all eight hours of required training.

## Q Why joint training?

A

When the school board chair and superintendent collaborate effectively as a governance team, they help advance the district or supervisory union's vision. Acknowledging the importance of this partnership, the legislature enacted 16 V.S.A. § 561(b) in 2013.

## Q What does state statute say?

**A** Title 16 of Vermont State law contains the majority of the state's education statutes. Chapter 9 addresses laws governing town school districts, and Subchapter 4, "Other Provisions," includes § 561, which outlines the election of board officers, including the chair and clerk. This section also contains the requirement for joint professional training.

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 requirement?

A Since 2023, the VSBA and the VSA adapted the annual fall conference to meet the statutory requirements when superintendents and board chairs attend together. The conference offers a valuable opportunity for in-person networking with fellow board members and superintendents, collaborative learning, and fresh perspectives on educational leadership.

This guide features a curated selection of VSBA-provided services, including webinars, customized board development, and special programs. Similar to a self-paced course, board chairs and superintendents may choose what, when, and how they learn together. Following participation in a live event or viewing a recording, partners are encouraged to discuss key takeaways to reinforce learning. In addition to increased flexibility, this self-guided approach supports differentiated learning to meet the needs of governance teams with varying levels of experience.

It is recommended that the board chair and superintendent meet after the board's spring reorganization meeting to plan their joint training for the year ahead. This guide is intended to support that planning process.

## Professional Development Programs

When	Title	Training Hours	Mandated Topic
Annually	Policy Governance® Virtual Forum	Up to 8	 
Annually	VSBA/VSA Annual Conference & Preconference Workshop	8+	<b>ALL</b>

## Customized Board Development Training

The VSBA offers customized board trainings that vary in duration depending on the board's wishes. Should a superintendent and board chair attend one of these together, this can count as part of their required joint training.

When	Title	Training Hours	Mandated Topic
On-Demand	Roles & Responsibilities of VT School Boards	1 - 6	 
On-Demand	Board Goal Setting and Monitoring	1 - 6	
On-Demand	Annual Work Planning	1 - 6	
On-Demand	Community Engagement	1 - 6	
On-Demand	Board and Superintendent Partnership	1 - 6	
On-Demand	Board Communication	1 - 6	 
On-Demand	Open Meeting Law & Robert's Rules of Order	1 - 6	

-  Education Leadership
-  Roles & Responsibilities
-  Vermont Open Meeting Law
-  Public Records
-  Collective Bargaining
-  Education Funding

## Lunchtime Webinars

Each year, the VSBA offers a series of one-hour live lunchtime webinars covering timely governance topics. Most webinars fulfill one hour of the eight-hour annual joint training requirement when the board chair and superintendent view it together. If participants are unable to view it live, they will receive the webinar recording for later viewing. In addition, more than 30 recorded webinars are available on the VSBA website and can also count toward the joint training requirement when viewed together.

View Recorded Webinars

[www.vtvsba.org/webinar-archive-2](http://www.vtvsba.org/webinar-archive-2)

Register for Upcoming Webinars

[www.vtvsba.org/webinars](http://www.vtvsba.org/webinars)

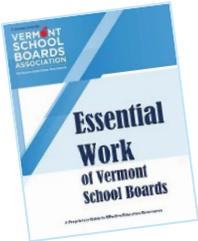
When	Title	Training Hours	Mandated Topic
Nov 19, 2026	Policy Matters	1	
Sep 3, 2026	Shaping the Advocacy Agenda: Proposed 2026-2027 Resolutions	1	
Aug 11, 2026	From Conflict to Cohesion: Turning Board Challenges Into Success	1	
Jun 18, 2026	It's a Wrap! The 2026 Legislative Session and Implications for School Districts	1	
May 14, 2026	Knowledge = Compliance: Vermont's Open Meeting Law	1	
Apr 14, 2026	Elevating Student Voices on the Board	1	
Mar 5, 2026	New Day, New Board!	1	 
Feb 18, 2026	Reach, Listen, Connect: Communication Strategies that Work	1	 
Jan 13, 2026	Advocacy Essentials: Engaging Effectively in Vermont's Legislative Process	1	 
Dec 9, 2025	Making Sense of the December 1st Letter: What School Boards Need to Know for FY27	1	
Aug 12, 2025	Driving Excellence: Goal Setting, Planning & Self-Assessing	1	

When	Title	Training Hours	Mandated Topic
Apr 9, 2025	Sharpening the Saw: Continuous Learning for Boards	1	 
Feb 13, 2025	Understanding the Board's Role in Student Achievement	1	
Nov 14, 2024	Effective Evaluations = Successful Superintendents	1	
Oct 8, 2024	Negotiations Toolkit	1	
Jun 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	
Apr 11, 2024	The Nuts and Bolts of School Construction	1	
Mar 6, 2024	Orientation: Building the Board Team	1	
Jan 18, 2024	Let's Pass a Budget! Communicating Your District's Priority Needs	1	 
Nov 14, 2023	Act 127 and Other Fiscal Dynamics for FY25 Budgeting	1	
Sep 7, 2023	The Opportunity of Governance Standards	1	
Aug 8, 2023	Best Practices for Board Reports	1	 
May 30, 2023	Make the Most of Your Board Retreat	1	

 Education Leadership  
  Roles & Responsibilities  
  Vermont Open Meeting Law  
  Public Records  
  Collective Bargaining  
  Education Funding

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

School board chairs and superintendents may jointly select a book, framework, or National School Boards Association (NSBA) resource aligned with the district's identified needs for shared study and reflection. Examples include the following:



Study the **Essential Work of Vermont School Boards** and the accompanying reflection tools.

[www.vtvsba.org/copy-of-essentials-order-form](http://www.vtvsba.org/copy-of-essentials-order-form)

Review the governance standards found in the **Vermont District Quality Standards** and the accompanying self-assessment.



[education.vermont.gov/vermont-schools/district-quality-standards-self-evaluation](http://education.vermont.gov/vermont-schools/district-quality-standards-self-evaluation)



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, Michael Fullan and Babs Kavanaugh.

View an **NSBA webinar** together and discuss how it applies to the district.

[www.nsba.org/advocacy/federal-advocacy/policy-hour](http://www.nsba.org/advocacy/federal-advocacy/policy-hour)



For more suggested readings or other educational resources, please contact the Vermont School Boards Association ([info@vtbsba.org](mailto:info@vtbsba.org)).

# Suggested Learning Exercises

## KWL Brainstorming

After watching a lunchtime webinar, jot down a point to share with your superintendent or board chair.

What I **know**:

What I **want to know**:

What I **learned**:

## Building a Cohesive Team

For each item listed, fill in your board/superintendent team's current and desired states.

What the superintendent needs from the board chair to best manage the district:	Current State	Desired State
1. One voice leadership of board		
2. Relationship with the board chair		
3. Consistent practice of board by-laws		
4. Confident in board support through evaluations		
5. Shared vision of student success over personal agendas		
6. Lines of engagement with the community		
What the board chair needs from the superintendent to best manage the board:	Current State	Desired State
1. Superintendent effectiveness & tenure		
2. Relationship with superintendent		
3. Alignment of board initiatives & district goals		
4. Lines of engagement with district staff		
5. Compelling board initiatives		
6. Communication plans for the board and the community		

\* Exercise adapted from Franklin Covey & CAFE materials.



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