



Vermont
Superintendents
Association



For Immediate Release – Statewide Health Benefit Could Benefit All

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Public education in Vermont is confronting a wide range of challenges, including a steep decline in student enrollment, high per pupil costs, the expense of current staffing levels, state budget deficits and public concern over high property tax burdens. While education officials can overcome certain issues via high-level policy changes and new teaching methods, solutions to other problems will be linked to more prudent use of available financial resources, which are commonly addressed in labor negotiations.

Our Associations are committed to helping our members manage resources in service of children and in support of the professionals that work with them in a cost-effective manner.

Currently every school board in Vermont is bargaining changes to employee health insurance plans. On January 1, 2018, all school employees will be on new health care plans, and the costs of those new plans are currently being bargained at the supervisory union/district level.

In Vermont, there is variety in total compensation provided to educators, depending on the region of the state and the socioeconomic makeup of a community. In 2017, we have a unique opportunity to ensure equity in the health care coverage available to all school employees, while at the same time delivering millions of dollars in savings to taxpayers.

Because all employees are transitioning to new health plans in January of 2018, our Associations believe that now is the time for school employee health insurance benefits to be established through negotiations at the state level.

“Vermont’s education system depends on a partnership between state and local officials,” said Nicole Mace, Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards

Association. “We support transitioning the responsibility for bargaining health insurance benefits – an increasingly complex negotiations process – to the State in order to achieve savings statewide and equity among school employees.”

“Vermont’s local school leaders take the challenge of creating the best possible learning opportunities for students in the most affordable way very seriously. We believe that it is reasonable to consider new ways of doing business in order to accomplish those goals,” stated Jeff Francis, Executive Director for the Vermont Superintendents Association. “The concept of a common health care benefit seems worth careful analysis by the Administration, the General Assembly, school boards and teachers alike.”

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