

CVSD Resolution on Gun-Related Violence Prevention

March 20, 2018

To: Governor Phil Scott, Attorney General TJ Donovan, Lieutenant Governor David Zuckerman, Speaker of the House Mitzi Johnson, Senate President Pro Tempore Tim Ashe
From: Champlain Valley School District School Board
Re: Resolution Related to Action on Gun-Related Violence Prevention

Expressing the sense of the Champlain Valley School District Board of Directors that the Vermont Legislature must enact safer firearms legislation in an ongoing effort to curtail the deaths and injury caused by firearms;

Whereas, gun related violence at American public schools, including frequent mass shootings like the recent outbreak in Parkland, Florida in which 17 staff members and students were killed, have reached epidemic levels; and

Whereas, our schools in Vermont are not immune to both the possibility and reality of such gun related violence and mass shootings, as evidenced by marking the 10-year anniversary of the Essex School shooting, significant threats of violence last year against students at South Burlington High School, and most recently the thwarting of a plan for a mass shooting at Fair Haven High School; and

Whereas, Vermont school children spend increasingly more time participating in lock-down and active shooter drills (now more common than fire drills), detracting from time spent on critical classroom learning and invoking significant anxiety and fear among students and teachers; and

Whereas, Vermont school districts are forced to spend larger and larger portions of their limited budgets on security-related facilities upgrades, security personnel, trainings, and drills to potentially defend our students, staff, and community members against military-style attacks on our students, staff, and school buildings; and

Whereas, students have the right to attend school free from the fear of death or injury as a result of gun-related violence; and

Whereas, parents have the right to send their children to a school in which they have confidence in their children's physical, psychological, and emotional safety; and

Whereas, communities have a right to protection against mass violence and unbelievable tragedy as the result of gun-related violence; and

Whereas, we are local elected officials charged with ensuring the education, health, and safety of students on behalf of parents and our community, and strive to build interpersonal, school, and community connections so that every student feels valued and safe,

We, the Board of the Champlain Valley School District, declare it resolved that our elected officials in the Vermont House and Senate must pass common-sense gun violence prevention legislation during the 2018 legislative session, and that Governor Scott must sign such legislation into law to take effect immediately.

Four relevant pieces of legislation are currently before the VT House or VT Senate: S.6 related to universal background checks; H.422 related to removing guns from the scene of a domestic violence crime; S.221 related to enabling law enforcement officers to get an order to remove guns when a person shows signs of threat and danger; and H. 876 related to prohibiting bump-fire stocks for firearms. We recognize your swift actions on these bills in the aftermath of the Florida shooting, and urge further attention of these and similar bills.

We urge the drafting and passage of legislation that has been proposed in previous legislative sessions, which would prevent the possession, sale, or manufacture of military-style "assault weapons." Such weapons are commonly used in mass shootings at schools resulting in tragic and widespread devastation and death.

In addition, we support the Department of Health and Human Services in their valuable work with the social determinants of health. We believe our strong public education system depends on adequate funding of programs for the prevention of community violence.

We recognize that inaction is ethically or morally unacceptable. We ask you to join us in helping to keep our students and schools safe from gun-related violence.

cc: Senators Debbie Ingram, Ginny Lyons, Christopher Pearson, and Michael Sirotkin
Representatives Jessica Brumsted, William Lippert, Jr., Terence MaCaig,
James McCullough, Kathryn Webb, Michael Yantachka,
Senators Phil Baruth and Becca Balint, Senate Education Committee
Senators Dick Sears and Joe Benning, Senate Judiciary Committee
Representatives Dave Sharpe and Albert Pearce, House Education Committee
Representatives Maxine Grad and Charles Conquest, House Judiciary Committee
Secretary Rebecca Holcombe, Vermont Agency of Education
Nicole Mace, Vermont School Boards Association
Jeff Fannon, Vermont-National Education Association
Jeff Francis, Vermont Superintendents Association

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