

# Welcome to the Vermont Learners Association



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## What is the VLA?

The Vermont Learners Association (VLA) is a non-profit organization comprised of student representatives from school boards across the state. We currently have 24 members from 14 school districts. 10 representatives make up the Leadership Team and lead committees on a variety of topics relating to empowering student voice. The VLA's main mission is to "understand and amplify the voices of Vermont's students." By amplifying student voices, we strive for an education system shaped by the needs, ideas, and leadership of those it serves. Through collaboration between students and decision-makers, we aim to build a more inclusive and student-driven future in Vermont Education.

## What are we working on?

The Leadership Team is currently planning several initiatives aimed at promoting youth voice in the changing landscape of Vermont education. Throughout budget season, we continually informed each other on updates in our respective districts to understand the range of situations statewide. To document this, some

Some of our Leads members can be found as panelists at The Vermont School Boards Association lunchtime webinar on April 14th: "Elevating Student Voices on the Board. From the VSBA, "This webinar explores the growing role students play in school board governance—and why their perspectives matter. As the people most directly impacted by board decisions, students bring insight, creativity, and honesty that can strengthen decision-making and school climate. More Vermont school boards are recognizing that when students are meaningfully included, boards benefit from fresh thinking, clearer connections to school communities, and stronger trust. This webinar offers practical guidance for boards that want to make student voice a real part of governance. Learn how boards can empower student representatives, create student seats where none exist, and support intergenerational collaboration so students and adults work together as partners. You'll also explore ways to remove barriers, help young leaders succeed in their roles, and ensure student input leads to meaningful, positive change. This webinar will be useful to boards who are considering/planning to

We are also running a workshop at the annual Up for Learning Power<sup>2</sup> conference on May 5th at the Main Street Landing in Burlington. The workshop is: "Led by student leaders from the Vermont Learners' Association, this workshop breaks down the education policies shaping Vermont schools and equips attendees with real tools to get involved. Through hands-on activities like affinity mapping and drafting a letter to your legislator, participants will explore what's most urgent in the coming biennium and how to take action. Whether you're a student, educator, or policymaker, this session is built on one core belief: nothing about us without us." We hope to see you at one of our many events coming up!

## What are our future goals?

As many of our Leads Team members look toward graduation this spring, we've also turned our focus to the continuation of our organization by connecting with younger students through our Opposite Person Protocol. The protocol aims to promote the longevity and diversity of the organization through partnership and mentorship in our Leads

districts collected student testimonials on the things they appreciate most about their schools. This information is informing our advocacy efforts as we monitor the tumultuous legislative landscape following the passage of Act 73. In preparation for town meeting days in March, the group worked to inform 18-year-old students of their voting rights and the importance of exercising them.

create student board member seats and those that are looking to improve the opportunities for their current student board members to contribute more meaningfully."

In addition, a committee of Lead Team members is planning a conference for this spring focused on informing administrators, educators, and board members on the importance of youth representation while empowering students to make their voices heard in their districts. All community members interested in this are encouraged to attend. More information about this is coming soon!

positions. We intend for the VLA to continue to grow in scope and influence going forward. We will continue to advocate for students as the aftermath of Act 73 unfolds, with our focus on ensuring that every district in Vermont has at least one student representative with voting power.

