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## NEWS

### October 18, 2013 – School Board Passes Resolutions

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#### SCHOOL BOARD PASSES RESOLUTIONS

This week, the Staunton City School Board has joined the ranks of many other school divisions in the Commonwealth voicing their concerns over two issues at the forefront of concern in the education community – the Opportunity Educational Institution and the current state and federal accountability systems.

At their October 14 meeting, the Staunton City School Board unanimously approved a resolution in support of the lawsuit brought forth by the Virginia School Boards Association and Norfolk City School Board to declare the Opportunity Educational Institution (OEI) legislation unconstitutional and to enjoin the OEI Board from taking any action to implement that legislation. In passing the resolution, the Board affirmed its belief that, by usurping the role of the local school boards to supervise and manage the public schools, this legislation is clearly in violation of the Constitution of Virginia. VSBA announced in August that they would be filing the lawsuit with the City of Norfolk requesting the Court to invalidate the legislation, enacted by the General Assembly during the 2013 session, creating the OEI and the OEI Board.

The School Board also weighed in with their concerns regarding the current reliance on standardized, high stakes testing as the only assessment of learning considered in the state and federal accountability systems. In their resolution, the Board sent a strong message calling upon the Virginia General Assembly to reexamine the Virginia public school assessments and to improve the current accountability system so that it more accurately reflects student progress and enhances the role of teachers as instructional leaders.

"Our Board strongly believes -- like so many others throughout Virginia -- that both of these issues need to be seriously examined and altered in order to reach our shared goals of continually improving the education of our youth. However well-intentioned, there are serious problems with the OEI plan (which creates another layer of state interference that allows politicians in Richmond to wrest control of a local school from its community), and with the mindset of looking almost totally to standardized tests to decide if children are actually learning," said Ron Ramsey, Chair of the Staunton City School Board. He added, "Hopefully more boards, parents, teachers, and others throughout the Commonwealth will contact their legislators and let them know that we all want what's best for our students, but do not agree with using these methods to accomplish it."