

## **Why We Must Defeat HB 6385**

*By Jan Hochadel, SVFT Vice-President*

On Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, President Rick Tanasi gave testimony to the Education Committee regarding HB 6385. Why is this bill detrimental to the education of our student?

- By dismantling a district, the bill also dismantles standards of performance, student outcomes, and job-place readiness. The Governor has acknowledged the long-term economic health of our state depends on our ability to create new jobs and provide the skilled workers necessary to fill those positions. That task has been our mission for over a century.
- A major portion of the success of our schools is the synergy we get from the connectivity of our system. Collaboration between teachers, administrators, management – the success of the system is based on a shared mission. Ideas and people are allowed to move within the seventeen schools in the system, which increases our vitality.
- If the schools are overseen by local school boards instead of one central office location, we lose those connections between the schools, and could be subjected to major changes to the mission and standards that have made us successful.
  - Local school boards are not going to understand our unique mode of instruction (½ academic, ½ trade); changing it could have serious consequences on our success and educational mission. We have learned as a system how best to balance the needs of both academic and technical instruction.
- We have been successful because teachers that are allowed to work together from different schools, share differing experiences, and use those opportunities to improve instruction throughout the system. Working together, we power our curriculums, create district-wide assessments, and provide professional development as needed.
- The bill will break something that works, and works very well for our students. Our CAPT scores, NOCTI scores, and enrollment growth show that the system is moving in the right direction.
- Where are the cost savings? Will the burden be placed on the already underfunded local public school systems and on the backs of local tax payers? The bill indicates the State will reimburse the towns through grants. In tough economic times, grants disappear. Grants are not guarantees. This reason is one of many that several municipalities are against this proposal.
  - The facilities that house our seventeen schools are owned by the Department of Public Works [DPW] and operate on a minimal budget supplied by DPW. Local towns would incur the operating costs of the building, not the educational costs.
- Where will our highly successful adult education programs – LPNs, Airline Maintenance, and several others – go?
- The teachers, administrators, and support staff at Central Office is intimately in tuned with the unique needs of our system. We have a specialized curriculum and trade consultants who meet our particular needs that will not be understood by local public school staff.
- WE ARE UNIQUE AND NOT LIKE LOCAL SCHOOLS. If disbanded, the students will suffer.