



Virginia School for the Deaf Alumni Association (VSDAA)



President

Michele P. VanBoxlaere
VSDAAPresident@gmail.com

Vice-President

Earl L. Wright
lewright3022@gmail.com

Secretary

Rhonda Jennings-Arey
vsdaasecretary@gmail.com

Treasurer

Rusty L. Thompson
vsdaatreasurer@gmail.com

Boards at Large Members:

Janet Wright
VSDB8I@gmail.com

Richard Goode
good4I8enator@gmail.com

Darin Gillis
Razell66I0@gmail.com

16Jan2022

Dear Legislators,

Virginia School for the Deaf Alumni Association (VSDAA) is writing to encourage you all to support and pass LEADK Bill (HB 649 and SB 265). VSDAA has the biggest membership of Deaf adults in Virginia and we support this bill so that Deaf children can grow up with good English literacy.

Many of us grew up without signs in our homes, and many of us struggle to this day with English. It's disheartening to see in 2021 that Deaf children's parents are told by the 'professionals' NOT to sign and these children, like us older folks, are struggling with literacy skills.

This bill is the first step towards stopping this epidemic number of Deaf children who are language delayed and/or language deprived by gathering DATA on Deaf children's language acquisition in English and ASL (or whichever the language the child uses). This bill will also call for resources to be made available to Families whose Deaf child is lagging behind age-appropriate Language acquisition.

For all of the Deaf children in the Commonwealth of Virginia, it would be great to have the LEADK Bill pass this year and have the Virginia Governor sign it into law, it unquestionably would be very beneficial for them.

Sincerely yours,

Michele VanBoxlaere
Michele VanBoxlaere

VSDAA President