

**BYLAWS OF THE Virginia Association of
Science Teachers, Inc.**

Approved: August 27, 1994

Amended: 11/15/1997, 7/21/2000, 11/19/2005, 3/14/2009, 11/18/2011, 1/24/2014,
3/18/2015, 11/20/2015, 3/11/2018, 11/11/2022

**ARTICLE I:
Name of the Organization**

Name: This organization shall be known as the Virginia Association of Science Teachers, Inc. The acronym, VAST, shall be used as the official designation for the organization. "VAST", or "the Association", will be used in referring to the organization in the rest of this document. Effective December 14, 2010, the acronym "VAST" as well as the LOGO are Registered Trademarks (®).

**ARTICLE II:
Objective and Mission**

Objective: The objective of VAST shall be to advance the study of science, to promote excellence in the teaching of science, and provide opportunity for communication among science educators in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Mission: VAST is a community of science educators whose mission it is to:

- o Inspire students
- o Provide professional learning opportunities
- o Build partnerships
- o Advocate for excellence at the school, local, state and national level

**ARTICLE III:
Membership**

Section 1. VAST memberships shall be individual. Members are those currently in the field of science education or other individuals interested in improving science education.

Section 2. All members shall have voting privileges.

Section 3. A VAST membership is for one year except Life Memberships.

**ARTICLE IV:
Elected Officials**

Section 1. The officers of VAST shall be the President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. All officers of VAST shall be elected by the membership, except the President and Immediate Past-President, as provided for in Article X, Sec.4. All officers must be members in good standing with VAST.

Section 2. The President shall: preside at all business meetings of the general membership of VAST, the Executive Committee, and of the Board of Directors; represent VAST to the general public; appoint a member of the Executive Committee to complete the term in the event of a vacancy in the office, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee; appoint members to the Board of Directors subject to the approval of the Executive Committee; co-chair the Professional Development Institute Committee with the appointed PDI Director for the PDI of their presidential year and perform any other duties usually incident to the office. At the conclusion of the President's term of office, they will assume the position of Immediate Past President.

Section 3. The Immediate Past President will be continually available for advice and counsel to see that programs and projects are continued under the new leadership. In addition, the Immediate Past President will chair the Nominating Committee.

Section 4. The President-Elect shall co-chair of the standing PDI Committee of the year in which they will serve as President.

Section 5. The Vice President, as directed by the President, shall oversee all committees except the Executive Committee and Board of Directors; keep a log of meetings and activities of each committee; make the chairpersons aware of their responsibilities; remind committee chairs of their expectations; see that the handbook is kept up to date; remind various leaders, especially new board members, of their responsibilities; and advise the President as needed. The Vice President shall be elected for a term of three years.

Section 6. The Secretary shall keep a permanent record of all business transacted by VAST; keep the minutes of meetings for the general membership, Executive Committee, and Board of Directors; distribute copies of the minutes to members of each group in a timely manner; and, perform such duties as are usually incidental to the office. The Secretary shall be elected for a term of three years.

Section 7. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the collection and recording of membership dues, receive all monies due to VAST, pay all bills legally incurred by VAST (including approved PDI expenses), and arrange for the yearly audit of the financial records (when authorized by the Board of Directors). With input from the President, Board, and the PDI Committee, the Treasurer shall prepare a budget for the current year for approval at the first Board of Directors meeting of the year. The Treasurer shall prepare a report for all meetings of the Board of Directors and for the annual meeting. In addition, the Treasurer will be responsible for the timely preparation of IRS reports, including the filing of taxes and the renewal of tax-exempt status. The Treasurer shall be elected to a term of three years.

Section 8. A Regional Director shall be elected from each of the eight (8) Department of Education regions. Directors shall be elected by the membership to serve a two-year term and may serve more than one term. Directors from even-numbered regions will be elected on even years, and those from odd-numbered regions will be elected on odd years. Directors will, within their region, promote VAST membership, regional professional development activities, and the VAST PDI. Directors will serve as the coordinator of science leaders within their region and encourage an active and viable network within their region. Directors are expected to attend VAST Board meetings and provide a report on activities within their region. Directors shall actively participate as VAST leaders including submission of newsletter articles, awards nominations, and the solicitation of presenters for the VAST PDI.

Section 9. In the event of the death, resignation, removal, or incapacity of an officer of the Association, this succession procedure shall be followed:

- A. **President** - The Immediate Past President shall assume the office of the President for the remainder of the unexpired term which shall include the term of office as Immediate Past President which the President being replaced would normally have served.
- B. **Immediate Past President** -- The Past President shall assume the office of the Immediate Past President for the remainder of the unexpired term. The Past President is the individual who most recently has relinquished the office of Immediate Past President.
- C. **President-Elect, Officers, and Directors**-- The Executive Committee shall assume the responsibility for filling these offices in the most appropriate manner.

Section 10. The Executive Committee may, by majority vote, initiate disciplinary action involving any voting member of the Board of Directors. Any VAST member may recommend the removal of any officer from his/her position. The recommendation must be in writing to the Executive Committee, must detail the reason for said action, and must contain the signatures of at least 3% of the membership. The President (or President Elect, if the President is the subject of the petition) will counsel the officer, provide a written course of action, and set a time-limit (agreed to and signed by both parties) during which the officer in question has an opportunity to correct his/her deficiencies. If, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, the deficiencies have not been corrected by the agreed to time-limit, the Executive Committee will vote to remove said officer. A majority of the Executive Committee must approve the removal and a majority vote of the Board of Directors is needed to make the removal official.

ARTICLE V: Executive Director

Section 1.

- A. The contract of employment details the remuneration and benefits provided to the Executive Director. The anniversary of employment is November 1 and the annual contract will be extended automatically on the anniversary date, providing notice of termination has not been given.
- B. The terms of the contract may be renegotiated, and the contract may be terminated by either party given 60 days' notice.
- C. The Executive Director will supervise the Staff.

**ARTICLE VI:
Meetings**

Section 1. There shall be at least one meeting of the general membership each year. One such meeting shall occur during the annual PDI.

Section 2. The Board of Directors will meet at least four times per year but as often as may be necessary to conduct the business of VAST.

Section 3. The Executive Committee (officers of VAST) shall meet as frequently as may be needed in order to assure that the goals and programs, as well as the business, of VAST are carried out.

Section 4. The Standing Committees shall meet at least two (2) times per year. Additional meetings may be necessary to meet the objectives of the committee, as outlined in VAST Handbook.

Section 5. All members expected to attend a called meeting will be notified at least two weeks in advance, at which time the purpose of the meeting will be made known.

Section 6. The President may call a meeting of the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or of the full membership. In addition, meetings of the full membership may be called by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors, or by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. Meetings of the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors may be called by 50% of the respective group's membership. A meeting of the full membership may be called by 10% of the members.

**ARTICLE VII:
Executive Committee, Board of Directors,
and Invited Representatives**

Section 1 The Executive Committee shall consist of

- A. The Executive Director,

- B. Elected officers: President, Vice President, Immediate Past President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and

- C. appointed positions with voice and no vote: Parliamentarian, Professional Learning and Content Coordinator, and the Regional Director Coordinator.

Section 2. The Executive Committee is responsible for the day-to-day operations of VAST.

Section 3. The Board of Directors shall consist of the following:

- A. Voting Members:
 - 1. Elected officers of VAST: President, Immediate Past President, President-Elect, Treasurer, Vice President, Secretary, Regional Directors, and Standing Committee Chairs.

2. Regional Director Coordinator, VAST representative to Math Science Coalition, Professional Learning and Content Coordinator.
3. Ex officio: Positions ratified by Executive Committee including: *Journal of Virginia Science Education* Editor, *The Science Educator* Editor, Webmaster, PDI Director.

B. Voice but no vote:

1. Executive Director and Parliamentarian, and PDI Treasurer.
2. Invited Representatives: The invited representatives of organizations related to science education that support the mission of VAST. Organizations include but are not limited to: National Science Teaching Association District VIII Director, Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Earth Science Teachers Association, Virginia Instructors of Physics, Virginia Junior Academy of Science, Virginia Resource Use Education Council, and Virginia Science Education Leadership Association.

Section 4. The President may appoint other VAST members and/or nonmembers, who support science education, to serve on the Board of Directors, with voice but no vote, pending Board approval.

Section 5. The Board of Directors will support the mission of VAST and act upon the recommendations of the Executive Committee. In addition, the Board of Directors must approve the operating budget submitted by the Executive Committee, through the Treasurer, and may amend said budget.

Section 6. A conflict-of-interest document will be presented and acknowledged by all board members annually.

ARTICLE VIII: Committees

Section 1. The President will appoint the Committee Chairs approved by the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. Committee Chairs will support the mission of VAST by contributing to activities including professional development, publications, and regional support.

Section 2. The Standing Committees of VAST shall be:

- Advocacy
- Awards/Grants
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Colleges and Universities
- Communications
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
- Earth Science
- K-2 Elementary
- 3-5 Elementary
- Environmental Literacy
- Informal Learning

- Membership
- Middle
- PDI Committee
- Physics
- Policy
- Technology

Section 3. Additional ad hoc committees may be appointed or abolished by the President as needed.

ARTICLE IX: Parliamentary Authority

Section 1. Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as a guide to conduct meetings.

Section 2. Those voting members in attendance at any duly called meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business of VAST.

ARTICLE X: Amendments

Section 1. A proposed amendment or revision of the VAST Bylaws may originate in the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, or through a petition submitted to the Board of Directors, bearing the signatures of not less than 5% of the VAST membership.

Section 2. A proposed amendment or revision to the Bylaws, if approved by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Executive Committee of VAST, and approved by two-thirds of the Board of Directors shall be submitted to the membership of the Association for adoption or rejection.

Section 3. The Bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any publicized meeting of the membership, provided that the proposed amendment has been published for all members of VAST at least 60 days prior to the said meeting, and provided that provision is made for absentee ballots. Amendments may be also approved by mail-ballot or electronic ballot, providing the return deadline is 60 days after publication of proposed amendments.

Section 4. The Executive Committee, with approval of the Board of Directors, shall have the authority to make technical and non substantive changes in the Bylaws without submitting such changes to a vote of the membership of the association.

Section 5. Any changes shall be circulated at meetings of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. The Vice President shall incorporate approved changes into the handbook, in the official copy of the Bylaws, and in any applicable sections of the handbook.

ARTICLE XI: Elections

Section 1. The officers of VAST and the Regional Directors shall be nominated by a nominating committee appointed by the President and chaired by the Immediate Past President.

Section 2. Ballots and lists of candidates, including credentials, shall be published at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting held at the PDI. Absentee ballots must be returned at least one (1) week prior to the annual meeting. Electronic voting will be available to all VAST members and polls will close one week prior to the VAST PDI.

Section 3. The President-Elect shall be elected for a term of one year and will automatically succeed in turn to the office of President for one year and Immediate Past President for one year. The Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected to terms of three years. The terms of office for Secretary, Vice President and Treasurer will begin on three successive years, so that only one of the three will be elected in any one year. Consecutive terms shall be permitted for Secretary, Vice President and Treasurer.

Section 4. The terms of all officers will begin January 1 after the annual meeting at which they were elected.

Section 5. Regional Directors shall be elected for a term of two years. Directors from Regions 1, 3, 5, and 7 will be elected in odd years and Directors from Regions 2, 4, 6, and 8 will be elected in even years. A Regional Director may be elected to more than one term.

ARTICLE XII: Tax Exempt Status

Section 1. VAST is organized exclusively for educational and scientific purposes in such a manner as to qualify as a tax exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) or the corresponding provisions of the I.R.S. Code.

Section 2. The activities of VAST shall in no way support or promote political campaigns or candidates or participate in any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a tax exempt organization according to Internal Revenue Service guidelines, Section 501 (c) (3).

Section 3. The Executive Committee is authorized to employ (part-time or full-time) such persons as the Board deems necessary to accomplish the goals and mission of the Association, providing that such action does not adversely affect VAST's 501 (c) (3) status and providing that the positions can be justified in the budget. All positions under this section shall require a written contract (annual) detailing all duties expected of the employee, and all contracts must be approved by the Board. Employment may include, but is not limited to:

A. the services of an Executive Director: Selection of qualified candidates is to be determined by the Executive Committee, based upon an approved job description. The Executive Director shall be under the direct supervision of the Executive Committee;

B. members whose services to VAST are of such magnitude that they should be compensated, providing that the Board has approved and budgeted the compensation in advance; and,

C. persons (members or nonmembers) or organizations that will provide technical services (e.g. a CPA) that the Board of Directors deems necessary for the operation of the association.

ARTICLE XIII: Distribution of Assets Upon Termination

Section 1. Upon dissolution of VAST, the officers shall pay all liabilities and dispose of any remaining assets by donating them to its parent organization, the National Science Teaching Association (NSTA), which is a recognized tax exempt group. However, if NSTA is not then in existence or no longer a qualified distributee, or unwilling or unable to accept the distribution, then the assets of VAST shall be distributed to a fund, foundation or corporation organized and operated exclusively for the purposes specified in sections 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of the federal tax code.)

ARTICLE XIV: Relationship with Other Organizations

Section 1. Upon recommendation by the Executive Committee and approval by the Board of Directors, VAST may join as an affiliate of other organizations or groups whose mission and goals do not conflict with those of VAST.

Section 2. As a State Chapter of the National Science Teaching Association, VAST is an affiliate of NSTA.

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- First Presented to the Advisory Board February 26, 1994.
 - Revisions Presented & Approved by the Advisory Board April 30, 1994 as well as changes recommended by legal counsel May 10, 1994.
 - Amended to add Directors and remove Affiliated Group Presidents, 11/15/97.
 - By-Laws amended February 6, 1999 to amend dues rates and provide BaP discounts
 - Non substantive changes made Jan 2000.
 - Additional Revisions approved by the Board 2/26/00, & by the membership 7/21/00.
 - By-Laws amended by Executive Committee 9/17/05.
 - Major committee revisions to Operating Procedures 6/23/05, approved by Board 9/17/05 & by membership 11/19/05.
 - Non substantive changes made 9/6/11.

- A standing Committee (Environmental Science, Natural Resources, & Stewardship) was approved by the Board 9/10/11, and by the membership 11/18/11. (name was changed to “Environmental Literacy” in 2012).
Committees “Outreach” and “Professional Concerns” were combined and approved by the Board 11/8/12.
- A standing committee (Advocacy) was approved by the Board 11/8/12 and Membership 11/16/13.
- A major edit of the Operating Procedures and the By Laws was completed in February 2015, resulting in the addition of multiple entries previously approved by the Board over the last several years.
- PDI Chair, Regional Director Coordinator, and assistant (PDI) treasurer were added 11/20/2015.
- Mission statement was changed on 11/20/2015.
- Bylaws and Operating Procedures were separated and Bylaws reorganized on 3/11/18.
- A major edit of the By Laws was completed in September 2022 and approved in November 2022 by the membership resulting in sections moving to operating procedures and new positions including the Professional Learning and Content Coordinator, and committee chairs: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion; K-2 Elementary; 3-5 Elementary; and PDI Committee.
- Non substantive changes made November 2023.