News Release
For Immediate Release

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First Annual VSBA Student Essay Contest Winners Announced
Winners Recognized at the VSBA Conference on Education

July 20, 2021 – Three students received recognition for their submissions to the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) First Annual Student Essay Contest. The first through third place students were recognized at the VSBA Conference on Education, which took place virtually earlier today. This was the first year the contest was held and the theme of the contest was "Can and Should Freedom of Expression and Civility Co-exist?". The sponsor of the awards was VACORP.

Maggie Madara (pictured above), rising junior at Smithfield High School in Isle of Wight County took the first-place award. In second place was Larina Yu student in Loudoun County, and third place was awarded to Anish Aradhey from Harrisonburg City Schools. Winners were selected by a panel of judges who were presented the written essay as well as a recorded speech. To view Maggie's winning speech please visit: https://vimeo.com/561441132.

"This contest provides a wonderful opportunity for school board members from across the state to hear student voices on subjects of importance to them," said executive director Gina Patterson. Mandara attended the Virtual Conference live and delivered her speech to the audience of Virginia school board members and superintendents.

About the Virginia School Boards Association
The Virginia School Boards Association, a voluntary, nonpartisan organization of Virginia school boards, promotes excellence in public education through advocacy, training, and services. The Association offers conferences, information, training, and counseling designed to meet the needs of the Commonwealth's educational leaders.

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