

1 Sec. 1. FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION BLUE RIBBON

2 COMMISSION

3 (a) Creation. There is hereby established the Blue Ribbon Commission on
4 the Future of Public Education in Vermont to study the provision of education
5 in Vermont and make recommendations for a statewide vision and goals to
6 strengthen Vermont’s public education system.

7 (b) Membership. The Commission shall be composed of the following
8 members:

9 (1) the Secretary of Education or designee;

10 (2) the Chair of the State Board of Education or designee;

11 (3) two representatives from the Vermont School Boards Association
12 (VSBA), selected by the VSBA Executive Director;

13 (4) two representatives from the Vermont Principals’ Association
14 (VPA), selected by the VPA Executive Director;

15 (5) two representatives from the Vermont Superintendents Association
16 (VSA), selected by the VSA Executive Director;

17 (6) two representatives from the Vermont National Education
18 Association (VTNEA), selected by the VTNEA Executive Director;

19 (7) the Chair of the Census-Based Funding Advisory Group, created
20 under 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173;

1 (8) a faculty member from University of Vermont’s Educational
2 Leadership and Policy Studies program, appointed by the Secretary of
3 Education; and

4 (9) the Executive Director of the Vermont Rural Education
5 Collaborative or designee.

6 (c) Steering group. On or before June 29, 2024, the Speaker of the House
7 and the President Pro Tempore shall jointly appoint three members of the
8 Commission, and the Governor shall appoint two members of the Commission,
9 to serve as members of a steering group. The steering group shall provide
10 leadership to the Commission and shall work with a consultant to analyze the
11 issues, challenges, and opportunities facing Vermont’s public education
12 system, as well as create a formal action plan to drive change and innovation in
13 the public education system. The steering group may form one or more
14 subcommittees of the Commission to address key topics in greater depth.

15 (d) Collaboration. The Commission shall seek input from and collaborate
16 with key stakeholders, as directed by the steering group.

17 (e) Duties of the Commission. The Commission shall study the provision
18 of public education in Vermont and make recommendations for a statewide
19 vision and goals to strengthen Vermont’s public education system. The
20 Commission shall develop recommendations for the statewide vision by
21 engaging in the following:

1 (1) The Commission shall conduct not fewer than 10 public hearings
2 statewide to inform the work required under this section and shall provide
3 opportunities for remote participation during each public hearing. Each public
4 hearing shall be held in a different geographic region of the State with each
5 different geographic region represented at least once.

6 (2) The Commission shall explore and evaluate potential changes that
7 should be implemented in Vermont in order to improve educational outcomes
8 and increase opportunities for all students. In exploring these potential
9 changes, the Commission shall consider the following topics:

10 (A) Governance, resources, and administration. The Commission
11 shall study and make recommendations regarding education governance at the
12 state level, including whether the role of the Agency of Education shall be one
13 of compliance monitor, one of service provider, or a combination of both roles.
14 Recommendations under this subdivision (A) shall include, at a minimum, the
15 following:

16 (i) whether changes need to be made to the structure of the
17 Agency of Education, including whether it better serves the education vision of
18 the State as an agency or a department;

19 (ii) what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of
20 local control and what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of
21 control at the state level;

1 (iii) the utilization of career and technical education in the larger
2 public education system; and

3 (iv) what are the staffing needs of the Agency of Education both
4 in terms of quantity and quality.

5 (B) Physical size and footprint of the system. The Commission shall
6 study and make recommendations regarding how the unique geographical and
7 socio-economic needs of different communities should factor into the
8 provision of education in Vermont. Recommendations under this subdivision
9 (B) shall include, at a minimum, the following:

10 (i) an analysis of the current number and location of school
11 districts and supervisory unions and whether additional consolidation of either
12 system is needed to achieve Vermont’s vision for education, provided that if
13 there is a recommendation for any amount of consolidation, the
14 recommendation shall include a recommended implementation plan; and

15 (ii) an analysis of the current public tuition program and whether,
16 and if so, what, changes are necessary to meet Vermont’s vision for education,
17 including the impact and consequences of public funds going to independent
18 schools and other private institutions.

19 (C) The role of public schools. The Commission shall study and
20 make recommendations regarding the role public schools should play in both
21 the provision of education and the social and emotional well-being of students.

1 Recommendations under this subdivision (C) shall include, at a minimum, the
2 following:

3 (i) how public education in Vermont should be delivered;

4 (ii) whether Vermont’s vision for public education shall include
5 the provision of wraparound supports and collocation of services; and

6 (iii) what the consequences are for the Commission’s
7 recommendations regarding the role of public schools, including what the role
8 of public schools means for staffing, funding, and any other affected system.

9 (D) Education fund. The Commission shall study and make
10 recommendations regarding what costs are currently borne by the Education
11 Fund, what costs should be borne by the Education Fund, and what changes are
12 necessary to ensure sustainable and equitable use of the Education Fund.

13 (E) Additional considerations. The Commission may consider any
14 other topic, factor, or issue that it deems relevant to its work and
15 recommendations.

16 (f) Reports. The Commission shall prepare and submit to the General
17 Assembly the following written reports:

18 (1) a formal action plan on or before September 15, 2024;

19 (2) a report containing its preliminary findings and recommendations on
20 or before January 15, 2025; and

1 (3) a report containing its final findings and recommendations on or
2 before December 1, 2025.

3 (g) Assistance. The Agency of Education shall contract with an
4 independent consultant to provide technical and legal assistance to the
5 Commission for the work required under this section. For the purposes of
6 scheduling meetings and providing administrative assistance, the Commission
7 shall have the assistance of the Agency of Education.

8 (h) Meetings.

9 (1) The Secretary of Education shall call the first meeting of the
10 Commission to occur on or before July 15, 2024.

11 (2) The Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore shall
12 jointly select a Commission chair.

13 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

14 (4) The Commission shall cease to exist on December 31, 2025.

15 (i) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Commission shall
16 be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as
17 permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 30 meetings. These
18 payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Education.

19 (j) Appropriation. The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency
20 of Education from the General Fund in fiscal year 2025 for per diem
21 compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the Commission

1 and for the cost of contracting with a consultant as required under subsection

2 (g) of this section.

3 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

4 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.