

1       Sec. 1. FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION BLUE RIBBON

2                   COMMISSION

3           (a) Creation. There is hereby created the Blue Ribbon Commission on the  
4           Future of Public Education in Vermont. The right to education is fundamental  
5           for the success of Vermont’s children in a rapidly changing society and global  
6           marketplace as well as for the State’s own economic and social prosperity.  
7           The Commission shall study the provision of education in Vermont and make  
8           recommendations for a statewide vision for Vermont’s public education system  
9           to ensure that all students are afforded substantially equal educational  
10          opportunities in an efficient, sustainable, and stable education system. The  
11          Commission shall also make recommendations for the strategic policy changes  
12          necessary to make Vermont’s educational vision a reality for all Vermont  
13          students.

14          (b) Membership. The Commission shall be composed of the following  
15          members and to the extent possible, the members shall represent the State’s  
16          geographic, gender, racial, and ethnic diversity:

17                  (1) the Secretary of Education or designee;

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

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

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

3           (5) the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents Association  
4           or designee;

5           (6) two superintendents, appointed by the Executive Director of the  
6           Vermont Superintendents Association, as follows:

7           (A) one superintendent of a supervisory union that operates a career  
8           and technical education center; and

9           (B) one superintendent of a supervisory union with at least one  
10          nonoperating district, appointed in consultation with the Vermont Independent  
11          School Association;

12          (7) two representatives from the Vermont National Education  
13          Association (VTNEA), selected by the VTNEA Executive Director;

14          (8) one representative from the Vermont Association of School Business  
15          Officials (VASBO) with experience in school construction projects, appointed  
16          by the President of VASBO;

17          (9) the Chair of the Census-Based Funding Advisory Group, created  
18          under 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173 or designee;

19          (10) a faculty member from University of Vermont’s Educational  
20          Leadership and Policy Studies program, appointed by the Secretary of  
21          Education; and

1           (11) the Executive Director of the Vermont Rural Education  
2           Collaborative or designee.

3           (c) Steering group. On or before June 29, 2024, the Speaker of the House  
4           and the President Pro Tempore shall jointly appoint three members of the  
5           Commission, and the Governor shall appoint two members of the Commission,  
6           to serve as members of a steering group. Members of the steering group shall  
7           not all be affiliated with the same organization. The steering group shall  
8           provide leadership to the Commission and shall work with a consultant to  
9           analyze the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing Vermont’s public  
10           education system, as well as create a formal action plan to drive change and  
11           innovation in the public education system. The steering group may form one  
12           or more subcommittees of the Commission to address key topics in greater  
13           depth.

14           (d) Collaboration and information review.

15           (A) The Commission shall seek input from and collaborate with key  
16           stakeholders, as directed by the steering group. At a minimum, the  
17           Commission shall consult with:

18                   (i) the Department of Mental Health;

19                   (ii) the Department of Labor; and

20                   (iii) TBD.

1           (B) The Commission shall also review and take into consideration  
2           existing educational laws and policy, including legislative reports the  
3           Commission deems relevant to its work.

4           (e) Duties of the Commission. The Commission shall study Vermont’s  
5           public education system and make recommendations to ensure all students are  
6           afforded quality educational opportunities in an efficient, sustainable, and  
7           equitable education system. The result of the Commission’s work shall be a  
8           recommendation for a statewide vision for Vermont’s public education system,  
9           with recommendations for the policy changes necessary to make Vermont’s  
10           educational vision a reality. In creating and making its recommendations, the  
11           Commission shall engage in the following:

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

17           (2) In developing its recommendations, the Commission shall consider  
18           and prioritize the following topics:

19           (A) Governance, resources, and administration. The Commission  
20           shall study and make recommendations regarding education governance at the  
21           state level, including whether the role of the Agency of Education shall be one

1 of compliance monitor, one of service provider, or a combination of both roles.

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

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

7 (ii) what are the staffing needs of the Agency of Education;

8 (iii) whether changes need to be made to the composition, role,  
9 and function of the State Board of Education to better serve the education  
10 vision of the State;

11 (iii) what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of  
12 local control and what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of  
13 control at the state level; and

14 (iv) the role of career and technical education in the larger public  
15 education system.

16 (B) Physical size and footprint of the system. The Commission shall  
17 study and make recommendations regarding how the unique geographical and  
18 socio economic needs of different communities should factor into the provision  
19 of education in Vermont, taking into account and building upon the  
20 recommendations of the State Aid to School Construction Working Group.

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

3 (i) an analysis of the current number and location of school  
4 buildings, school districts, and supervisory unions and whether additional  
5 consolidation of either system is needed to achieve Vermont’s vision for  
6 education, provided that if there is a recommendation for any amount of  
7 consolidation, the recommendation shall include a recommended  
8 implementation plan;

9 (ii) an analysis of the capacity and ability to staff all public  
10 schools with a qualified workforce, driven by data on class-size  
11 recommendations;

12 (iii) an analysis of the current town tuition program and whether,  
13 and if so, what, changes are necessary to meet Vermont’s vision for education,  
14 including the legal and financial impact of funding independent schools and  
15 other private institutions;

16 (iv) an analysis of the current use of private therapeutic schools in  
17 the provision of special education services and whether, and if so, what  
18 changes are necessary to meet Vermont’s vision for education, including the  
19 legal and financial impact of funding private therapeutic schools.

20 (C) The role of public schools. The Commission shall study and  
21 make recommendations regarding the role public schools should play in both

1 the provision of education and the social and emotional well-being of students.

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

3 following:

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

5 (ii) whether Vermont’s vision for public education shall include

6 the provision of wraparound supports and collocation of services; and

7 (iii) what the consequences are for the Commission’s

8 recommendations regarding the role of public schools and other service

9 providers, including what the role of public schools means for staffing,

10 funding, and any other affected system, with the goal of balancing sustainable

11 and equitable use of State funds with the benefits of maximizing federal

12 funding.

13 (D) Education fund. The Commission shall study and make

14 recommendations regarding what costs are currently borne by the Education

15 Fund, what costs should be borne by the Education Fund, and what changes are

16 necessary to ensure sustainable and equitable use of the State funds.

17 (E) Additional considerations. The Commission may consider any

18 other topic, factor, or issue that it deems relevant to its work and

19 recommendations.

20 (f) Reports. The Commission shall prepare and submit to the General

21 Assembly the following written reports:

1           (1) a formal work plan, which shall include a communication plan to  
2 maximize public engagement, on or before September 15, 2024;

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

5           (3) a report containing its final findings and recommendations for a  
6 statewide vision for Vermont’s public education system and the policy changes  
7 necessary to make that educational vision a reality on or before December 1,  
8 2025.

9           (g) Assistance. The Agency of Education shall contract with an  
10 independent consultant to provide technical and legal assistance to the  
11 Commission for the work required under this section. For the purposes of  
12 scheduling meetings and providing administrative assistance, the Commission  
13 shall have the assistance of the Agency of Education.

14           (h) Meetings.

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

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

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

20           (4) Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Vermont’s Open  
21 Meeting Law pursuant to 1 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 2.



1           (5) The Commission shall cease to exist on December 31, 2025.

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

6           (j) Appropriation. The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency  
7           of Education from the General Fund in fiscal year 2025 for per diem  
8           compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the Commission  
9           and for the cost of contracting with a consultant as required under subsection  
10          (g) of this section.

11          Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

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