

1       Sec. X. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PAYMENT TASK FORCE

2           (a) Creation. There is created the Educational Opportunity Payment Task  
3       Force to recommend an implementation plan for the enactment of weighted  
4       educational opportunity payments to fund public education in Vermont.

5           (b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following  
6       members:

7           (1) the Secretary of Education or designee;

8           (2) the Commissioner of Taxes or designee;

9           (3) three current members of the House of Representatives, not all from  
10       the same political party, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House;

11          (4) two current members of the Senate, not from the same political  
12       party, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees;

13          (5) the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards Association or  
14       designee;

15          (6) the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals Association or  
16       designee;

17          (7) the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents Association  
18       or designee;

19          (8) the Executive Director of the Vermont National Education  
20       Association or designee; and

1           (9) the President of the Vermont Association of School Business  
2           Officials.

3           (c) Educational opportunity payments. For the purposes of the Task  
4           Force’s work, the educational opportunity payment shall be a base amount,  
5           increased by the most recent New England Economic Project Cumulative Price  
6           Index, as of November 15, for state and local government purchases of goods  
7           and services from fiscal year 2025 through the fiscal year for which the amount  
8           is being determined, multiplied by a district’s weighted long-term membership  
9           as determined under 16 V.S.A. § 4010.

10          (d) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall recommend an  
11          implementation plan for the enactment of weighted educational opportunity  
12          payments utilizing the statewide grand list. The Task Force’s  
13          recommendations shall be intended to result in an education funding system  
14          designed to afford substantially equal access to a quality basic education for all  
15          Vermont students in accordance with *State v. Brigham*, 166 Vt. 246 (1997).

16          (1) Process. In developing its recommendations, the Task Force shall:

17                (A) align its recommendations with Vermont’s educational policies,  
18                including the work and recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on  
19                the Future of Public Education in Vermont; and

20                (B) base its analysis and recommendations for base funding on the  
21                evidence-based model developed by Picus Odden & Associates in 2024.

1           (2) Policy considerations. The Task Force shall make recommendations  
2           for the following:

3                   (A) allowable uses for the educational opportunity payments;

4                   (B) the method for setting tax rates to sustain the educational  
5           opportunity payments, which shall be set in advance of budget cycles to allow  
6           taxpayers and school officials to anticipate tax rates prior to finalizing school  
7           district budgets;

8                   (C) the source of revenue for educational opportunity payments;

9                   (D) how to treat nonoperating districts that tuition their students to  
10          public and approved independent schools outside of the district;

11                  (E) how to allocate categorical aid;

12                  (F) an adequate and sustainable excess spending reserve amount  
13          within the Education Fund, including recommendations for when excess  
14          reserve amounts could be transferred to a school construction aid special fund;

15                  (G) how excess spending above the educational opportunity payment  
16          is funded and the method for setting tax rates based on excess spending; and

17                  (H) a transition mechanism to move from the current funding system  
18          to educational opportunity payments, including an implementation timeline.

19                  (e) Assistance. The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical,  
20          and legal assistance of the Department of Taxes.

1        (f) Public engagement. The Task Force shall publish its preliminary  
2        recommendations on or before November 1, 2024, solicit public feedback, and  
3        incorporate such feedback into its final recommendations. When submitting its  
4        final recommendations to the General Assembly, the Task Force shall include  
5        all public feedback received.

6        (g) Proposed legislation. On or before December 15, 2024, the Task Force  
7        shall submit its findings and final recommendations in the form of proposed  
8        legislation to the General Assembly.

9        (h) Meetings.

10        (1) The Commissioner of Taxes shall call the first meeting of the Task  
11        Force to occur on or before July 1, 2024.

12        (2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the  
13        first meeting.

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

15        (4) The Chair may establish subcommittees within the Task Force to  
16        perform the work set forth in this section.

17        (5) The Task Force shall cease to exist on December 31, 2024.

18        (i) Compensation and reimbursement.

19        (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General  
20        Assembly, a legislative member of the Task Force serving in the member's  
21        capacity as a legislator shall be entitled to per diem compensation and

1 reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23 for not more than 20  
2 meetings. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the  
3 General Assembly.

4 (2) Other members of the Task Force shall be entitled to per diem  
5 compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A.  
6 § 1010 for not more than 20 meetings. These payments shall be made from  
7 monies appropriated to the Department of Taxes.