1   S.249

2   Introduced by Senators Westman, Collamore, and Flory

3   Referred to Committee on

4   Date:

5   Subject: Education; school choice

6   Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to permit a

7   unified union school district meeting certain conditions to provide secondary

8   school education by both operating one or more grades and offering to pay

9   tuition for the same grade or grades.

10   An act relating to the authority of a unified union school district meeting
11   certain conditions to operate a school and pay tuition

12   It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

13   Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 822 is amended to read

14   § 822. SCHOOL DISTRICT TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS OR

15   PAY TUITION

16   * * *

17   (d) A unified union school district may provide secondary school education

18   by both operating one or more grades and offering to pay tuition for the same

19   grade or grades if each of the following conditions is met:

1   (1) Between July 1, 2016 and July 1, 2019 the district began to operate

2   as a unified union school district that is either:

3   (A) a preferred education governance structure as set forth in

4   2015 Acts and Resolves No. 46, Sec. 5(b), pursuant to Sec. 6 or 7 of that

5   act; or

6   (B) a regional education district (RED) or any other district eligible

7   to receive RED incentives pursuant to 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, as

8   amended by 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156 and 2015 Acts and Resolves

9   No. 46.

10   (2) Prior to merger, at least one of the merging districts operated a

11   school that included the grade or grades for which the authority in this section

12   is granted, and at least one of the merging districts paid tuition for the same

13   grade or grades for which the authority in this section is granted and the

14   authority is used only for that grade or grades.

15   (3) Tuition is paid, as specified in the electorate-approved articles of

16   agreement creating the district, to a public high school, an approved

17   independent high school, or an independent school meeting school quality

18   standards to be selected by the parents or guardians of the student, within or

19   outside the State.

1   (4) For each grade for which the authority in this section is granted, the

2   opportunity either to enroll in the district-operated school or to obtain a tuition

3   voucher shall be available equally to each resident student in that grade.

4   (5) The electorate-approved articles of agreement creating the district

5   authorize the district to operate a secondary school and pay tuition as provided

6   in this section, and the articles specify:

7   (A) the grade or grades to which the authority applies;

8   (B) whether the district shall pay tuition to one or more specified

9   public schools or to any public school selected by the parents or guardians

10   of the student;

11   (C) whether the district shall pay tuition to one or more public high

12   schools, approved independent high schools, independent schools meeting

13   school quality standards, selected by the parents or guardians of the student,

14   or any or all of these options;

15   (D) whether the district shall pay tuition to one or more schools

16   located within or outside the State, or both; and

17   (E) any other element the electorate wishes to decide concerning the

18   manner, method, and amount of tuition payments.

19   (e) Notwithstanding any provision of chapter 11 of this title to the contrary,

20   the electorate-approved articles of agreement creating a unified union school

21   district with the authority set forth in this section may also include provisions

1   by which a member town that paid tuition for a grade or grades prior to merger

2   can ensure that in the future the merged district cannot limit the tuition options

3   available prior to merger to students residing in that town unless voters in that

4   town agree to the limitation. Nothing in this subsection shall authorize the

5   district to violate the requirement of subdivision (d)(4) of this section.

6   Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

7   This act shall take effect on passage.