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H.840

Introduced by Representatives Toleno of Brattleboro, Burke of Brattleboro,  
Conquest of Newbury, Evans of Essex, Fay of St. Johnsbury,  
Kupersmith of South Burlington, Lawrence of Lyndon,  
Manwaring of Wilmington, Martin of Springfield, Michelsen of  
Hardwick, Partridge of Windham, Stevens of Shoreham, and  
Zagar of Barnard

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; supervisory unions; school districts; accountability

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to establish a  
Community Educational Accountability Program through which each school  
district develops and implements a unique community accountability plan that  
envisions, implements, and measures educational success according to specific  
goals and values identified by the community and criteria established by State  
and federal law.

An act relating to creating a community educational accountability program

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

1 Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 564 is added to read:

2 § 564. COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM

3 (a) Creation of program. Recognizing the State's long history of respecting  
4 local authority for making education-related decisions, acknowledging that the  
5 Agency is most helpful to communities when it provides guidance and  
6 assistance, and seeking to increase accountability and improve performance at  
7 all levels, there is established a Community Educational Accountability  
8 Program through which each school district develops and implements a unique  
9 community accountability plan (plan) that envisions, implements, and  
10 measures educational success according to specific goals and values identified  
11 by the community and criteria established by State and federal law.

12 (b) Creation of community accountability plans.

13 (1) Each district that operates a school offering one or more grades shall  
14 adopt a plan annually that both adheres to the minimum State and federal  
15 requirements identified by the Agency pursuant to subsection (e) of this section  
16 and supports the community's unique vision, priorities, and standards.

17 (2) A district's school board, administration, and staff shall create the  
18 plan through a public process that solicits the opinions of students, parents,  
19 guardians, and other community members and is approved annually by the  
20 electorate. The plan for each district within a supervisory union shall include  
21 identical components relating to minimum requirements for supervisory unions

1 that are developed in a similar, supervisory-union wide public engagement  
2 process.

3 (3) Although each plan requires final, annual approval by the electorate  
4 pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, different constituencies are  
5 responsible for the creation and preliminary approval of the plan's components  
6 as follows:

7 (A) The school board is primarily responsible for the creation and  
8 preliminary approval of all components related to the mandatory minimum  
9 State and federal requirements identified by the Agency pursuant to subsection  
10 (e) of this section. The board submits these components to the Agency, which  
11 reviews them to ensure compliance with the minimum requirements. The  
12 board publishes the components as part of the annual report required by  
13 subsection (c) of this section.

14 (B) The district's administration and staff are primarily responsible  
15 for the creation and preliminary approval of components addressing internal  
16 plans and metrics, including those designed to measure compliance with the  
17 mandatory minimum State and federal requirements. The administration and  
18 staff submit these components to the school board for review and approval.  
19 To the extent permitted by State and federal privacy protections, the board  
20 publishes these components as part of the annual report required by  
21 subsection (c) of this section.

1           (C) The community, pursuant to the public engagement process  
2 required in subdivision (2) of this subsection (b), is primarily responsible for  
3 the creation and preliminary approval of all other components of the Plan  
4 relating to the community's unique vision, priorities, and standards.

5           (c) Annual report to the electorate. Together with its proposed annual  
6 budget, the school board shall prepare and publicly distribute a report that  
7 includes:

8           (1) the components of the district's current plan, to the extent that they  
9 can be made public under State and federal privacy protections;

10           (2) data measuring the district's success in achieving each component,  
11 to the extent that they can be made public under State and federal privacy  
12 protections, recognizing that some data cannot be published and some may be  
13 published only in the aggregate; and

14           (3) any proposed amendments to the current plan.

15           (d) Annual review and approval by the electorate. On the day on which the  
16 electorate votes on the district's proposed budget, it shall also vote whether to  
17 accept the plan, together with any amendments, for the next fiscal year. If the  
18 electorate fails to approve the plan on or before June 30 of any year, then the  
19 model plan published by the Agency pursuant to subsection (e) of this section  
20 shall be the district's plan for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

1           (e) Model accountability plan. The Agency shall:

2                   (1) identify all State and federal requirements with which school  
3 districts and supervisory unions must comply;

4                   (2) identify the criteria necessary to meet and demonstrate compliance  
5 with each requirement, including identification of minimum standards and data  
6 to be collected;

7                   (3) create and publish on the Agency's website a model accountability  
8 plan for school districts that includes the minimum requirements of both school  
9 districts and supervisory unions; and

10                  (4) update the information in subdivisions (1) through (3) as necessary.

11           (f) Data collection and clearinghouse.

12                   (1) The Agency shall identify the metrics used to measure compliance  
13 with the mandatory minimum State and federal requirements and the districts  
14 shall collect and submit related data to the Agency.

15                   (2) The Agency shall identify the data that may be publicly available  
16 and the data that, because of State and federal privacy protections, are  
17 available solely for internal use within the Agency or a district's schools, or  
18 both.

19                   (3) The Agency shall ensure that the data it collects and has the  
20 authority to make available to the districts has integrity and that districts are  
21 able to access the data in a meaningful way.

1           (4) The Agency shall ensure that all districts have a thorough, common  
2           understanding of State and federal privacy protections as they relate to data  
3           collected and available to the districts through the Agency's common chart of  
4           accounts and student longitudinal data system. Each district shall adopt and  
5           update as necessary a policy that establishes both privacy and public records  
6           protections that are at least as stringent as those required by State and  
7           federal law.

8           Sec. 2. COMMON CHART OF ACCOUNTS; STUDENT LONGITUDINAL  
9           DATA SYSTEM; FULL IMPLEMENTATION

10          (a) On or before July 1, 2016:

11           (1) the Agency of Education shall have fully implemented its systems to  
12           maintain a common chart of accounts and student longitudinal data; and

13           (2) all school districts shall have the technological ability to provide all  
14           requested data to the systems and access all data to which they are entitled  
15           under State and federal privacy laws.

16           (b) The Agency shall identify all technological obstacles inhibiting a  
17           district's ability to comply with subsection (a) of this section and shall provide  
18           assistance in the form of technological support and grants from the funds  
19           appropriated in Sec. 3 of this act.

20           (c) The Agency shall identify districts with atypical financial arrangements  
21           for shared costs where it may be problematic to use the universal chart of

1 accounts to evaluate investment versus educational outcomes and may  
2 authorize districts to adopt a community accountability plan in a different way  
3 or with different components than required by Sec. 1, 16 V.S.A. § 564, of  
4 this act.

5 Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION

6 The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of Education from  
7 the General Fund in fiscal year 2015 for grants to school districts in support of  
8 the technology advancements pursuant to Sec. 2 of this act.

9 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATES

10 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2014; provided, however, that:

11 (1) the Agency of Education shall fully comply with the requirements of  
12 Sec. 1, 16 V.S.A. § 564(b) (model accountability plan), on or before  
13 July 1, 2015; and

14 (2) school districts subject to Sec. 1 shall adopt a community  
15 accountability plan pursuant to the requirements of that section on or before  
16 July 1, 2016, which shall apply to the 2016-2017 academic year and after.