

***- #8 with its note at the bottom, #6 & #17 are critical questions the entire committee would like addressed. The rest of the list are questions by individual members that may be supported by others as well.

H.883 [Education Governance]
List of House Appropriations Committee Questions

April 2014

1. Should findings go back into the bill?
2. Should there be computer modeling of the cost benefit after the preliminary plan is proposed?
3. Is there clearer language around maintaining choice and the effect on the governance structure be included?
4. Should the public hearings be conducted by the WHOLE design team?
5. Should the purpose be stronger?
- *** 6. Should the approval process be changed....many not comfortable with not having affirmative approval by the legislature of the final plan?
7. Should the number of districts and the size of the districts have some leeway.....something like "or a similar number that the design team determines is optimal"?
- *** 8. Both the VSBA and the Secretary of Education have suggested moving the timeline out by at least 9 months to allow more time for REDs to happen. Should this be done? -See comment below
9. Should transition issues be better spelled out including collective bargaining?
10. Should there be a section that provides for a change in ownership to the town if a school is no longer going to be operated?
11. Before final adoption, should there be a robust statewide conversation about the education students need for the 21st century?
12. Should anything be said about Local School Councils?
13. How will the tax hold harmless provisions be paid for?
14. Is the Research Team still needed? If not, who will answer the many questions from board representation to creating grand lists for the new taxing entities?
15. Who writes the Articles of Agreement when a new governance structure is determined by the Design Team (as opposed to through a RED process)?
16. Should the Design Team create a process and criteria through which requests for changes to the preliminary plan can be made?
- *** 17. We would like to see language around a system of measurement of quality, opportunity and costs which allows for district to district comparison done by 7/1/16.
18. As one of the driving reasons behind the bill is quality, can we accelerate (or make a statement on) the Agency of Education's ability to collect and use quality data that is "apples to apples"?
19. Can school choice wording be strengthened to be beyond interpretation?
20. Is there a way to address the issue of protecting participation of small towns in new district boards?
21. How is the direction of this bill compatible with where we want Vermont education to be?
22. What is the net effect of low-spending schools increasing their spending and high spending schools decreasing their spending?
23. If consistency and opportunity is one of the goals, is there a plan to establish consistent standards for opportunity and performance for schools to live up to?

On question 8: How can we give communities more time to come up with their own solutions? What remaining barriers to consolidation or sharing efficiencies can we eliminate/reduce?

How will federal forest revenues going to Sunderland, Woodford, Ripton (and others) be effected? will the revenues go to the town or district? Are there other unique revenue sources to consider?

Should the design team be required to go to individual districts who request an audience?

Does the present distribution of dollars from the Ed Fund promote equity in education?