

H.876

An act relating to making miscellaneous amendments and technical corrections to education laws

The Senate proposes to the House to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 8, 16 V.S.A. § 176, in subdivision (d)(1) and in Sec. 9, 16 V.S.A. § 176a, in subdivision (e)(1), by striking out the word “Programs” and inserting in lieu thereof the following: Nondegree-granting and non-credit granting programs

Second: By striking out Sec. 10 (16 V.S.A. § 1075; residency) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new section to be Sec. 10 to read as follows:

Sec. 10. [Deleted.]

Third: In Sec. 19, 16 V.S.A. § 1542(a), in subdivision (5), after the word “employees” by inserting the words employees and of

Fourth: In Sec. 23, in 16 V.S.A. § 1551, by striking out subsection (b) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following: * * *

Fifth: By striking out Sec. 29 (16 V.S.A. § 2282(b); tuition) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 29 to read:

Sec. 29. 16 V.S.A. § 2282(b) is amended to read:

(b) ~~Except for those attending the college of medicine, the amount of tuition for eligible Vermont residents for attendance during each academic year shall be not more than 40 percent of the tuition charged to nonresident~~

~~students. Tuition for eligible Vermont residents for shorter terms shall be no more per credit hour than that charged eligible Vermont residents during the academic year.~~ A Vermont resident who is enrolled in the University as a full-time undergraduate student shall not pay tuition in an amount that exceeds 40 percent of the tuition charged to a nonresident student.

Sixth: In Sec. 30, 16 V.S.A. § 2902, subsection (a), by striking out the final sentence and inserting in lieu thereof a new final sentence to read: The tiered system of supports shall, at a minimum, include an educational support team, instructional and behavioral interventions, and accommodations that are available as needed for any student who requires support beyond what can be provided in the general education classroom.

Seventh: By striking out Sec. 34 (expanded learning opportunities; study) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 34 to read:

Sec. 34. WORKING GROUP ON EQUITY AND ACCESS IN EXPANDED
LEARNING TIME; REPORT

(a) Creation. The Prekindergarten-16 Council shall create a working group from among its membership to review and evaluate issues of equity in and access to Vermont's expanded learning programs, including afterschool and summer programs. The Working Group shall obtain testimony from existing providers of extended learning programs, including the Governor's Institutes of

Vermont and the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps. In particular, the

Working Group shall identify:

(1) ways to increase connections between schools and afterschool and summer learning programs;

(2) ways to coordinate school-run programs and programs sponsored by community-based and statewide organizations;

(3) areas of the State with limited or inequitable access to expanded learning programs, models successfully serving populations in those areas, and barriers to operating programs in those areas;

(4) the key elements of afterschool and summer learning programs that should be encouraged by State policy decisions in order to:

(A) ensure that programs are of the highest quality;

(B) contribute to more effective school-year approaches to educating underserved learners in Vermont and provide program content that reflects Vermont's educational and workforce development priorities;

(C) determine how a more comprehensive statewide strategy to promote high-quality afterschool and summer learning programs could be implemented over time;

(D) consider how changes to the school calendar may affect time available for learning; and

(E) identify how best to coordinate and augment existing funding streams for afterschool and summer learning programs and ensure that programs are cost-effective, effective in reaching and producing outcomes for targeted populations, and nonduplicative.

(b) Report. On or before December 31, 2014, the Working Group shall report to the House and Senate Committees on Education with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

Eighth: By striking out Sec. 36 (16 V.S.A. § 323; audits) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 36 to read:

Sec. 36. [Deleted.]

Ninth: By striking out Sec. 37 (effective date) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof 29 new sections to be Secs. 37 through 65 and related reader assistance headings to read:

* * * Dual Enrollment Program; Privately Funded Students in

Approved Independent Schools * * *

Sec. 37. 16 V.S.A. § 944 is amended to read:

§ 944. DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

* * *

(b) Students.

(1) A Vermont resident who has completed grade 10 but has not received a high school diploma is eligible to participate in the Program if:

(A) the student:

(i) is enrolled in:

(I) a Vermont public school, including a Vermont career technical center;

(II) a public school in another state or an approved independent school that is designated as the public secondary school for the student's district of residence; or

(III) ~~an approved~~ a nonsectarian- or sectarian-approved independent school in Vermont ~~to which the student's district of residence pays publicly funded tuition on behalf of the student;~~

(ii) is assigned to a public school through the High School Completion Program; or

(iii) is a home study student;

* * *

(f) Tuition and funding.

* * *

(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection (f), a district of residence shall not be responsible for payments under this subsection on behalf of a student enrolled in an approved independent school for whom tuition is privately paid; rather, if the approved independent school chooses to participate in the Dual Enrollment Program on behalf its privately tuitioned

students, then the independent school shall pay the school district's portion of a student's dual enrollment tuition as calculated under this subsection.

* * *

* * * Technology; Innovation in Education Task Force * * *

Sec. 38. VERMONT INNOVATION IN EDUCATION TASK FORCE;
REPORT

(a) There is created a Vermont Innovation in Education Task Force to examine barriers to the effective use of technology in Vermont's schools and to support access to that technology through, among other things, the dissemination of best practices and the potential creation of a grant program.

(b) The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) an individual employed as a director of technology in a Vermont public school appointed by the Secretary of Education;

(2) two at-large members appointed by the Secretary;

(3) an individual employed as a teacher in a Vermont public school appointed by the Vermont-NEA;

(4) an individual employed as a principal in a Vermont public school appointed by the Vermont Principals' Association;

(5) an individual employed as a superintendent in a Vermont public school appointed by the Vermont Superintendents Association; and

(6) an individual employed as a library media specialist in a Vermont public school appointed by the Vermont School Library Association.

(c) The Task Force shall:

(1) examine barriers to the effective use of technology in Vermont's schools and solutions to overcome them, including:

(A) methods to ensure that both current teachers and students enrolled in teacher preparation programs are able to use technology effectively;

(B) strategies to create and procure engaging and cost-effective digital content to inspire Vermont students;

(C) strategies to ensure that all students benefit from access to technology, especially students who face learning challenges;

(D) methods to increase operating efficiencies and enhance learning opportunities, especially in rural areas, through the use of technology; and

(E) best practices to assist districts to prepare students to enter the workforce or pursue postsecondary education or training without the need for remediation; and

(2) consider elements necessary for the creation of a grant program to support the effective use of technology in Vermont's schools, including identification of potential funding sources and the criteria on which awards could be based.

(d) On or before October 1, 2014, the Task Force shall publish on the Agency of Education's website and submit to the Governor and the House and Senate Committees on Education a written report detailing:

(1) the results of its examination under subdivision (c)(1) of this section;

(2) the results of its considerations regarding creation of a grant program; and

(3) any recommendations for legislative action.

(e) The Secretary of Education shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before June 1, 2014, at which meeting the members shall select their own chair.

(f) The Task Force shall cease to exist on July 1, 2015.

* * * Privatization of Public Schools * * *

Sec. 39. PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS; MORATORIUM;

REPEAL

(a) Privatization of public school. Notwithstanding the authority of a school district to cease operating an elementary or secondary school and to begin paying tuition on behalf of its resident students, a school district shall not cease operation of a school with the intention, for the purpose, or with the result of having the school building or buildings reopen as an approved independent school serving essentially the same population of students.

(b) State Board approval. The State Board of Education shall not approve an independent school under 16 V.S.A. § 166 if, on or after the effective date of this act, a school district votes to cease operating a school that at the time of the vote serves essentially the same population of students as the independent school proposes to serve and is located in the building or buildings in which the independent school proposes to operate.

(c) Publicly funded tuition. An approved independent school shall not be eligible to receive publicly funded tuition dollars if, on or after the effective date of this act, a school district votes to cease operating a school that at the time of the vote serves essentially the same population of students as the independent school proposes to serve and is located in the building or buildings in which the independent school proposes to operate.

(d) Repeal. This section is repealed on July 1, 2016.

Sec. 40. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION; PRIVATIZATION STUDY;
REPORT

(a) The Secretary of Education shall research:

(1) the constitutional and other legal consequences of a school district's decision to cease operating a school with the intention, for the purpose, or with the result of having the school building or buildings reopen as an approved independent school serving essentially the same population of students (privatization); and

(2) the constitutional and other legal consequences if the General Assembly chose to prohibit privatization of public schools.

(b) Among other issues, the Secretary shall examine the Vermont and U.S. Constitutions, federal civil rights law, and the Vermont Supreme Court's decision in Brigham v. State and shall consider issues of delegation of authority and the proper use of State funds.

(c) On or before January 15, 2015, the Secretary shall report the results of the research required by this section to the Senate and House Committees on Education and on Judiciary, together with any recommendations for legislative amendments.

* * * Student Enrollment in School of Former Residency * * *

Sec. 41. 16 V.S.A. § 1093 is amended to read:

§ 1093. NONRESIDENT STUDENTS

(a) A school board may receive into the schools under its charge nonresident students under such terms and restrictions as it deems best and money received for the instruction of the students shall be paid into the school fund of the district.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, if a student has legal residence in a Vermont school district and is enrolled in and attending a school maintained and operated by that district, and if at any time after completion of the annual census period defined in subdivision 4001(1)(A) of this title the

student moves to a different Vermont school district with the intention of remaining there indefinitely as contemplated in subsection 1075(a) of this title, then, after a meeting at which the student, the student's parent or legal guardian if the student is a minor, and representatives of both school districts discuss the educational advantages and disadvantages of the student remaining in the original district, the student or the student's parent or guardian may choose to remain enrolled in the school maintained by the original district for the remainder of the school year by notifying both school districts of the decision to do so.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to eliminate State or federal requirements for a district to enroll eligible students residing outside the district under the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11301 et seq., as may be amended.

* * * Principals; Nonrenewal of Contracts * * *

Sec. 42. 16 V.S.A. § 243 is amended to read:

§ 243. APPOINTMENT; SUPERVISION; RENEWAL; DISMISSAL

(a) Appointment; supervision.

(1) The school board of each school district operating a school, after recommendation by the superintendent, may designate a person as principal for each public school within the district, except that a principal may be selected to serve more than one school. In the case of a career technical education center,

only the school board ~~which~~ that operates the center may designate a person as director. ~~For purposes of~~ As used in this section, the word “principal” shall include a principal and the director of career technical education, and the term “public school” shall include a career technical education center.

(2) The superintendent shall supervise each principal within the supervisory union in the performance of duties and the implementation of school-based initiatives. The superintendent shall evaluate a principal during the year in which the principal’s contract shall expire and may evaluate the principal at other times during the contract term. Together with the evaluation provided to the principal in the year in which the contract shall expire, the superintendent shall indicate in writing whether he or she intends to recommend to the school board that the contract be renewed or not renewed. If the superintendent intends to recommend nonrenewal, then the written notification shall also indicate on which of the three categories set forth in subdivision (c)(2) of this section the recommendation is based.

(b) Length of contract. ~~The~~ A principal shall be employed by written contract for a term of not less than one year nor more than three years. Based upon the superintendent’s most recent written evaluation of the principal, a superintendent shall recommend to the school board whether or not to renew the initial and any subsequent contract with a principal.

(c) Renewal and nonrenewal.

(1) A principal who has been continuously employed for more than two years in the same position has the right either to have his or her contract renewed; or to receive written notice of nonrenewal at least 90 days before the existing contract expires;

(A) on or before February 1, if the principal has been continuously employed for more than two years in the same position;

(B) on or before April 1, if the principal has been continuously employed for two years or less in the same position; and

(C) at least 90 days before the existing contract expires, if the final day of the existing contract is other than June 30.

(2) Nonrenewal may be based upon elimination of the position, unresolved performance deficiencies, or other reasons affecting the educational mission of the district. The written notice shall recite the grounds for nonrenewal. If nonrenewal is based on ~~performance deficiencies, the written notice shall be accompanied by an evaluation performed by the superintendent.~~ At its discretion, any reason other than the elimination of the position then, at its discretion, the school board may allow a period of remediation ~~of performance deficiencies prior to issuance of the written notice~~ its final decision on nonrenewal.

(3) After receiving ~~such~~ a notice of nonrenewal, the principal may request in writing, and shall be granted, a meeting with the school board. Such request shall be delivered within ~~45~~ 10 calendar days of delivery of notice of nonrenewal, and the meeting shall be held within 15 calendar days of delivery of the request for a meeting. At the meeting, the school board shall explain its position, and the principal shall be allowed to respond. The principal and any member of the board may present written information or oral information through statements of others, and the principal and the board may be represented by counsel. The meeting shall be in executive session unless both parties agree in writing that it be open to the public. After the meeting, the school board shall decide whether or not to offer the principal an opportunity to renew his or her contract. The school board shall issue its decision in writing within five days. The decision of the school board shall be final.

* * *

(e) Inclusion in contract. Every principal's contract shall be deemed to contain the provisions of this section. Any contract provision to the contrary is without effect. Each written contract shall include a reference to chapter 5, subchapter 3 of this title; provided, however, that failure to do so shall not give rise to a private right of action.

(f) Notification by principal. On or before May 1 of the year in which a principal's contract expires, the principal shall notify the school board in writing if he or she intends not to enter into a new contract with the district.

* * * Physical Education and Nutrition Task Force * * *

Sec. 43. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND NUTRITION TASK FORCE;
REPORT

(a) There is created a Vermont Physical Education and Nutrition Task Force to examine and recommend ways for schools to improve wellness, physical education, activity, and nutrition in Vermont schools.

(b) The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) a member appointed by the Secretary of Education;

(2) a member appointed by the Commissioner of Health.

(3) an individual employed as a teacher in a Vermont public school appointed by the Vermont National Education Association;

(4) an individual employed as a physical education teacher in a Vermont public school appointed by the Vermont Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance;

(5) an individual employed as a food service director in a Vermont public school appointed by the School Nutrition Association of Vermont;

(6) an individual employed as a principal in a Vermont public school appointed by the Vermont Principals' Association;

(7) an individual employed as a superintendent in a Vermont public school appointed by the Vermont Superintendents Association;

(8) an individual employed as a school nurse in a Vermont public school appointed by the Vermont State School Nurses Association;

(9) a representative of the American Heart Association; and

(10) a representative of the American Cancer Society.

(c) The Task Force shall:

(1) examine barriers to good nutrition and to adequate time for physical education, breakfast, and lunch and explore possible solutions to overcome the barriers, including review of:

(A) wellness councils and policies;

(B) minimum time limits for meals;

(C) the availability of snacks and beverages;

(D) the provision of physical education, including minimum

instructional time;

(E) other opportunities for physical activity; and

(F) employee wellness; and

(2) recommend and share best practices for Vermont schools.

(d) On or before October 1, 2014, the Task Force shall publish on the Agency of Education's website and submit to the Governor and the House and

Senate Committees on Education a written report detailing the results of its examination and any recommendations for legislative action.

(e) The Secretary of Education shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before June 1, 2014, at which meeting the members shall select their own chair.

(f) The Task Force shall cease to exist on July 1, 2015

* * * Governance * * *

* * * Intent; Enhanced Opportunity and Efficiency * * *

Sec. 44. INTENT; ENHANCED OPPORTUNITY AND EFFICIENCY

2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153 put Vermont on a path toward voluntary mergers of education governing units – mergers designed both to increase 21st-century educational opportunities and to achieve necessary economies of scale in an age of declining enrollments. It is the General Assembly's intention to maintain the careful balance previously struck between local control and management efficiency, while significantly strengthening the impact of current statute. To that end, this act seeks to substantially increase the incentives of Act 153 and 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156. In addition, it requires of supervisory unions a new and greater coordination with regard to the business aspects of education. It empowers the Secretary of Education to form supervisory union service regions, regional units that will contract for goods and procure services jointly. Sections that clarify and amend the

responsibilities of supervisory unions and school districts will assist the State as larger governing units emerge by supporting operational efficiencies, more equitable deployment of resources, and the sharing of best practices.

* * * Supervisory Union and School District Responsibilities * * *

Sec. 45. 16 V.S.A. § 268 is added to read:

§ 268. DUTIES OF A SUPERVISORY UNION BOARD

A supervisory union board shall:

- (1) adopt supervisory union-wide policies, including truancy policies that are consistent with model protocols developed by the Secretary;
- (2) adopt a supervisory union-wide curriculum that meets the requirements adopted by the State Board under subdivision 165(a)(3)(B) of this title, by either developing the curriculum or directing the superintendent to assist the member districts to develop it jointly;
- (3) on or before June 30 of each year, adopt a supervisory union budget for the ensuing school year;
- (4) employ, at its discretion, a superintendent pursuant to the provisions of section 270 of this title and evaluate and oversee the performance of the superintendent;
- (5) employ all licensed and nonlicensed employees of the supervisory union pursuant to the provisions of section 271 of this title, including a person

or persons qualified to provide financial and student data management services for the supervisory union and the member districts;

(6) negotiate with the licensed employees of the supervisory union and school districts, pursuant to chapter 57 of this title, and with other school personnel, pursuant to 21 V.S.A. chapter 22, at the supervisory union level; provided that:

(A) contract terms may vary by district; and

(B) contracts may include terms facilitating arrangements between or among districts to share the services of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel; and

(7) pursuant to criteria established by the State Board, establish and direct the superintendent to implement a plan for receiving and disbursing federal and State funds distributed by the Agency, including funds awarded under P.L. 89-10, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended.

Sec. 46. 16 V.S.A. § 269 is added to read:

§ 269. DUTIES OF A SUPERVISORY UNION

(a) A supervisory union shall have sole responsibility to:

(1) provide professional development programs or arrange for the provision of them, or both, for teachers, administrators, and staff within the supervisory union, which may include programs offered solely to one school or

other component of the entire supervisory union to meet the specific needs or interests of that component; a supervisory union has the discretion to provide financial assistance outside the negotiated agreements for teachers' professional development activities;

(2) provide special education services on behalf of the member districts and, except as provided in section 144b of this title, compensatory and remedial services, and provide or coordinate the provision of other educational services as directed by the State Board or local boards;

(3) provide financial and student data management services on behalf of the member districts and perform the districts' business and human resources functions;

(4) provide transportation or contract for the provision of transportation, or both in any districts in which it is offered within the supervisory union;

(5) procure and distribute goods and operational services used by the member districts, including office and classroom supplies and equipment, textbooks, and cleaning materials; and

(6) manage all construction projects within the supervisory union.

(b) A supervisory union shall submit to the board of each member school district, on or before January 15 of each year, a summary report of financial operations of the supervisory union for the preceding school year, an estimate of its financial operations for the current school year, and a preliminary budget

for the supervisory union for the ensuing school year. This requirement shall not apply to a supervisory district. For each school year, the report shall show the actual or estimated amount expended by the supervisory union for special education services, including:

(1) a breakdown of that figure showing the amount paid by each school district within the supervisory union; and

(2) a summary of the services provided by the supervisory union's use of the expended funds;

(c) A supervisory union may provide other appropriate services if requested by a member district, including grant writing and fundraising.

Sec. 46a. 16 V.S.A. § 269a is added to read:

§ 269a. WAIVERS; SUPERVISORY UNION DUTIES

(a) Notwithstanding the requirement in subsection 269(a) of this title that a supervisory union is solely responsible for the duties set forth in that subsection, a supervisory union may request the Secretary of Education to grant it a waiver from the requirements of subdivision (a)(2) (special education), (4) (transportation), (5) (goods and services), or (6) (construction management).

(b) The Secretary shall identify standards and criteria by which he or she shall determine whether the services will be performed most efficiently and cost-effectively at the supervisory union level or in some other manner. The

Secretary shall publish the standards and criteria on or before October 1, 2014 together with guidelines for submitting a waiver request.

(c) A waiver granted pursuant to this section shall be for no more than one year, but may be renewed at the Secretary's discretion.

Sec. 46b. REPEAL

16 V.S.A. § 269a (waiver; supervisory union duties) is repealed on July 1, 2019.

Sec. 47. 16 V.S.A. § 241 is redesignated to read:

§ ~~241~~ 270. APPOINTMENT OF SUPERINTENDENT

Sec. 48. 16 V.S.A. § 242 is redesignated and amended to read:

§ ~~242~~ 271. DUTIES OF SUPERINTENDENTS

The superintendent shall be the chief executive officer for the supervisory union board and for each school board within the supervisory union, and shall:

* * *

(6) arrange for the provision of the professional training required in subsection 561(b) of this title; ~~and~~

(7)(A) ensure implementation of the supervisory union-wide curriculum adopted by the supervisory union board;

(B) assist each school in the supervisory union to follow the curriculum; and

(C) if students residing in the supervisory union receive their education outside the supervisory union, periodically review the compatibility of the supervisory union's curriculum with those other schools;

(8) perform all the duties required of a supervisory union in section 269 of this title or oversee the performance of those duties by employees of the supervisory union;

(9) ensure that the school districts and supervisory union are in compliance with State and federal laws; and

(10) provide for the general supervision of the public schools in the supervisory union or district.

Sec. 49. 16 V.S.A. § 242a is redesignated to read:

§ ~~242a~~ 272. INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROLS

Sec. 50. 16 V.S.A. § 563 is amended to read:

§ 563. POWERS OF SCHOOL BOARDS; ~~FORM OF VOTE IF BUDGET EXCEEDS BENCHMARK AND DISTRICT SPENDING IS ABOVE AVERAGE~~

The school board of a school district, in addition to other duties and authority specifically assigned by law:

* * *

(2) May take any action, ~~which~~ except actions explicitly reserved to the supervisory union pursuant to chapter 7 of this title, that is required for the

~~sound~~ administration of the school district. The Secretary, with the advice of the Attorney General, upon application of a school board, shall decide whether any action contemplated or taken by a school board under this subdivision is required for the ~~sound~~ administration of the district and is proper under this subdivision. The Secretary's decision shall be final.

(3) Shall own and have the possession, care, control, and management of the property of the school district, subject to the authority vested in the electorate or any school district official.

(4) ~~[Repealed.]~~

~~(5)~~ Shall keep the school buildings and grounds in good repair, suitably equipped, insured, and in safe and sanitary condition at all times.

~~(5)~~ ~~The school board shall~~ Shall regulate or prohibit firearms or other dangerous or deadly weapons on school premises. At a minimum, a school board shall adopt and implement a policy at least consistent with section 1166 of this title and 13 V.S.A. § 4004, relating to a student who brings a firearm to or possesses a firearm at school.

(6) Shall have discretion to furnish instruction to pupils who have completed a secondary education and to administer early educational programs.

(7) May relocate or discontinue use of a schoolhouse or facility, subject to the provisions of sections 821 and 822 of this title.

(8) ~~Shall~~ Subject to the duties and authority of the supervisory union pursuant to subdivision 263(a)(3) of this title, shall establish and maintain a system for receipt, deposit, disbursement, accounting, control, and reporting procedures that meets the criteria established by the State Board pursuant to subdivision 164(15) of this title and that ensures that all payments are lawful and in accordance with a budget adopted or amended by the school board. The school board may authorize a subcommittee, the superintendent of schools, or a designated employee of the school board to examine claims against the district for school expenses and draw orders for such as shall be allowed by it payable to the party entitled thereto. Such orders shall state definitely the purpose for which they are drawn and shall serve as full authority to the treasurer to make such payments. It shall be lawful for a school board to submit to its treasurer a certified copy of those portions of the board minutes, properly signed by the clerk and chair, or a majority of the board, showing to whom, and for what purpose each payment is to be made by the treasurer, and such certified copy shall serve as full authority to the treasurer to make the payments as thus approved.

* * *

(14) ~~Shall provide, at the expense of the district, subject to the approval of the superintendent, all text books, learning materials, equipment and supplies.~~ [Repealed.]

* * *

Sec. 50a. 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, Sec. 18, as amended by 2011 Acts and Resolves No. 58, Sec. 18, and by 2013 Acts and Resolves No. 56, Sec. 23, is further amended to read:

Sec. 18. TRANSITION

(a) Each supervisory union shall provide for any transition of employment of special education and transportation employees by member districts to employment by the supervisory union, ~~pursuant to Sec. 9 of this act, 16 V.S.A. § 261a(a)(6), and (8)(E)~~ by:

* * *

Sec. 50b. TRANSITION; INTENT

Nothing in this act shall be construed to repeal or amend provisions in 2013 Acts and Resolves No. 56, Secs. 23–27, relating to the transition of special education and transportation employees to employment by supervisory unions.

Sec. 51. REPEAL

16 V.S.A. § 261a is repealed.

* * * Collaboration Among Supervisory Unions * * *

Sec. 52. SUPERVISORY UNION SERVICE REGIONS

On or before July 1, 2015, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Education and with the supervisory union boards and superintendents of the State, shall establish supervisory union service regions,

each of which shall be a group of supervisory unions that jointly provide the services as required by 16 V.S.A. § 269(d).

Sec. 53. 16 V.S.A. § 269(d) is added to read:

(d) The supervisory unions in each supervisory union service region, as established by the State Board, shall jointly provide the services required under the following subdivisions of subsection (a) of this section unless, upon petition of one or more supervisory unions within a region, the Secretary determines that it would be more costly or less effective to do so:

(1) subdivision (1) (professional development);

(2) subdivision (4) (transportation); and

(3) subdivision (5) (goods and operational services).

Sec. 54. 16 V.S.A. § 267(a) is amended to read:

(a) ~~Supervisory~~ In addition to the joint agreements required in subsection 269(d) of this title, supervisory unions, or administrative units not within a supervisory union, in order to provide services cooperatively, may at any annual or special meeting of the supervisory unions, by a majority vote of the directors present and eligible to vote, enter into a joint agreement to provide joint programs, services, facilities, and professional and other staff that are necessary to carry out the desired programs and services.

* * * Supervisory Unions; Merger; Governance * * *

Sec. 54a. SUPERVISORY UNIONS; MERGER PLANS

On or before April 1, 2015, each supervisory union, including a supervisory district, shall explore the possibility of merger with at least one other neighboring supervisory union and shall present to the State Board of Education either a detailed plan by which it shall implement the merger or a detailed explanation of the reasons that it believes that merger would inhibit the effective and efficient use of financial and human resources or diminish educational quality and opportunities in the district. If a supervisory union is unable to identify a neighboring supervisory union that is willing to explore the possibility of merger with it, then the State Board may facilitate a meeting or meetings with one or more neighboring supervisory unions on the supervisory union's behalf.

* * * Voluntary Mergers * * *

Sec. 55. 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, Sec. 2(a), as amended by 2012

Acts and Resolves No. 156, Sec. 1, is further amended to read:

(a) Program created. There is created a school district merger incentive program under which the incentives outlined in Sec. 4 of this act shall be available to each new unified union school district created pursuant to Sec. 3 of this act and to each new district created under Sec. 3 of this act by the merger of districts that provide education by paying tuition; and to the Vermont

members of any new interstate school district if the Vermont members jointly satisfy the size criterion of Sec. 3(a)(1) of this act and the new, merged district meets all other requirements of Sec. 3 of this act. Incentives shall be available, however, only if the ~~effective date of merger is on or before~~ electorate approves the merger prior to July 1, 2017.

Sec. 56. 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, Sec. 3 is amended to read:

Sec. 3. VOLUNTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT MERGER INCENTIVE
PROGRAM

(a) Size.

(1) School districts, which may include one or more union school districts, may merge to form a union school district pursuant to 16 V.S.A. chapter 11 ~~of Title 16~~ (a “Regional Education District” or “RED”) that shall have an average daily membership of at least ~~1,250~~ 1,000 or result from the merger of at least four districts, or both.

(2) School districts interested in merger may request the ~~state board of education~~ State Board of Education to grant them a waiver from the requirements of subdivision (1) of this subsection, which shall be granted if the districts can demonstrate that the requirements would not be cost-effective, would decrease educational opportunities, or would diminish student achievement, or any combination of these.

* * *

Sec. 57. 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, Sec. 4, as amended by 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156, Sec. 13, is further amended to read:

Sec. 4. VOLUNTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT MERGER; INCENTIVES

* * *

(e) Consulting services reimbursement grant. From the ~~education fund~~ Education Fund, the ~~commissioner of education~~ Secretary of Education shall pay up to \$20,000.00 to the merger study committee established under 16 V.S.A. § 706 to reimburse the participating districts for legal and other consulting fees necessary for the analysis and report required by 16 V.S.A. § 706b. The ~~study committee~~ Study Committee shall forward invoices to the ~~commissioner~~ Secretary on a quarterly basis. The ~~commissioner~~ Secretary shall reimburse one-half of the total amount reflected in each set of invoices and the remaining one-half upon completion of the final report, provided that no payment shall cause the total amount paid to exceed the \$20,000.00 limit. ~~In addition, any transition facilitation grant funds paid to the RED pursuant to subsection (g) of this section shall be reduced by the total amount of reimbursement paid under this subsection (e).~~

* * *

(g) Transition facilitation grant.

(1) After voter approval of the plan of merger, the ~~commissioner of education~~ Secretary of Education shall pay the RED a transition facilitation

grant from the education fund equal to the lesser of:

(A) five percent of the base education amount established in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(13) multiplied by the greater of either the combined enrollment or the average daily membership of the merging districts on October 1 of the year in which the successful vote is taken; or

(B) between \$150,000.00 and \$500,000.00, as determined by the Secretary based on projected annual post-merger savings that do not decrease the quality of education.

(2) ~~A transition facilitation grant awarded under this subsection (g) shall be reduced by the total amount of reimbursement paid under subsection (e) of this section.~~ Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection, a transition facilitation grant paid to a modified unified union school district created pursuant to 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156, Sec. 17 shall not exceed \$150,000.00.

(h) ~~This section is repealed on July 1, 2017.~~ The incentives provided in this section shall be available only if the electorate approves the plan of merger prior to July 1, 2017.

Sec. 58. VOLUNTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT MERGER BETWEEN

JULY 1, 2017 AND JUNE 30, 2019; INCENTIVES

(a) July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2019. A regional education district (RED) approved by the electorate pursuant to the provisions of 16 V.S.A.

chapter 11 between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2019 shall be eligible for the incentives provided in this section, provided that the RED complies with all other provisions of 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, Sec. 2(a), as amended by 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156, Sec. 1, and as further amended by Sec. 55 of this act and of 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, Sec. 3.

(b) Equalized homestead property tax rates or RED incentive grant. A RED's plan of merger shall provide whether, upon merger, the RED shall receive an equalization of its homestead property tax rates during the first four years following merger pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection or an incentive grant during the first year following merger pursuant to subdivision (2).

(1)(A) Equalized homestead property tax rates. Subject to the provisions of subdivision (C) of this subdivision (1) and notwithstanding any other provision of law, the RED's equalized homestead property tax rate shall be:

(i) decreased by \$0.04 in the first year after the effective date of merger;

(ii) decreased by \$0.03 in the second year after the effective date of merger;

(iii) decreased by \$0.02 in the third year after the effective date of merger; and

(iv) decreased by \$0.01 in the fourth year after the effective date of merger.

(B) The household income percentage shall be calculated accordingly.

(C) During the years in which a RED's equalized homestead property tax rate is decreased pursuant to this subsection, the rate for each town within the RED shall not increase or decrease by more than five percent in a single year. The household income percentage shall be calculated accordingly.

(2) RED incentive grant. During the first year after the effective date of merger, the Secretary of Education shall pay to the RED board a RED incentive grant from the education fund equal to \$200.00 per pupil based on the combined enrollment of the participating districts on October 1 of the year in which the successful vote was taken. The grant shall be in addition to funds received under 16 V.S.A. § 4028.

(3) Common level of appraisal. Regardless of whether a RED chooses to receive an equalization of its homestead property tax rates or a RED incentive grant, on and after the effective date of merger, the common level of appraisal shall be calculated independently for each town within the RED for purposes of determining the homestead property tax rate for each town.

(c) Sale of school buildings.

(1) if a RED closes a school building and sells the school building, or an energy saving measure within it as contemplated in 16 V.S.A. § 3448f(g), then neither the RED nor any other entity shall be required to refund a percentage of the sale price to the state pursuant to 16 V.S.A. chapter 123; and

(2) if a participating district retains ownership of and closes a school building as part of the electorate-approved plan for merger and the participating district sells the school building or energy saving measure associated with the building, then neither the district nor any other entity shall be required to refund a percentage of the sale price to the State pursuant to 16 V.S.A. chapter 123.

(d) Merger support grant; small school support grant. If the merging districts of a RED included at least one “eligible school district,” as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4015, that had received a small school support grant under section 4015 in the fiscal year two years prior to the first fiscal year of merger, then the RED shall be eligible to receive a merger support grant in each of its first five fiscal years in an amount equal to one-half of the small school support grant received by the eligible school district in the fiscal year two years prior to the first fiscal year of merger. If more than one merging district was an eligible school district, then the merger support grant shall be in an amount

equal to the total of one-half of each small school support grant they received in the fiscal year two years prior to the first fiscal year of merger.

(e) Consulting services reimbursement grant. From the Education Fund, the Secretary shall pay up to \$10,000.00 to the merger study committee established under 16 V.S.A. § 706 to reimburse the participating districts for legal and other consulting fees necessary for the analysis and report required by 16 V.S.A. § 706b. The study committee shall forward invoices to the Secretary on a quarterly basis. The Secretary shall reimburse one-half of the total amount reflected in each set of invoices and the remaining one-half upon completion of the final report, provided that no payment shall cause the total amount paid to exceed the \$10,000.00 limit.

(f) Multiyear budgets.

(1) In addition to the option of proposing a single-year budget on an annual basis pursuant to the provisions of 16 V.S.A. chapter 11 and notwithstanding any other provision of law, a RED formed pursuant to this section shall have the option to propose one or both of the following:

(A) A multiyear budget for the first two fiscal years of its existence that will be included as part of the plan that must be approved by the electorate in order to create the RED.

(B) A multiyear budget for the third and fourth fiscal years of its existence that is presented to the electorate for approval at the RED's annual meeting convened in its second fiscal year.

(2) The plan presented to the electorate to authorize creation of the RED may contain a provision authorizing the RED, beginning in the fifth fiscal year of its existence to present multiyear proposed budgets to the electorate once in every two or three years.

(g) Transition facilitation grant. After voter approval of the plan of merger, the Secretary shall pay the RED a transition facilitation grant from the education fund equal to the lesser of:

(1) two and one-half percent of the base education amount established in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(13) multiplied by the greater of either the combined enrollment or the average daily membership of the merging districts on October 1 of the year in which the successful vote is taken; or

(2) between \$75,000.00 and \$250,000.00, as determined by the Secretary based on projected annual post-merger savings that do not decrease the quality of education; provided, however, that a transition facilitation grant paid to a modified unified union school district created pursuant to 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156, Sec. 17 shall not exceed \$75,000.00.

Sec. 59. MERGER SUPPORT GRANT; SMALL SCHOOL SUPPORT
GRANT

The provisions of 2014 Acts and Resolves No. ____ (H.889) that limit payment of small school support grants under 16 V.S.A. § 4015 to schools that are eligible due to geographic necessity shall not prevent payment of the grants as merger support grants pursuant to 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, Sec. 4(d) and subsection 20(d) of this act; provided, however, that the merger support grants shall be used solely to support programs and activities in the small school or schools after transitioning to the new governance structure.

Sec. 60. EXPEDITED PROCESS; RED FORMATION

Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. chapter 11 or any other provision of law to the contrary:

(1) if:

(A) on or before the effective date of this act the electorate of two or more districts voted whether to change their governance structure pursuant to 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, Secs. 2–4, as amended by 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156; and

(B) one or more of the districts did not vote in favor of the plan of merger (the Plan) presented at the most recent meeting warned to vote on the Plan (the Meeting); and

(C) after the effective date of this act and before July 1, 2017, upon approval of the school boards of all districts identified as “necessary” in the Plan, each of the “necessary” districts that did not vote in favor of the Plan at the Meeting votes on the Plan at a meeting warned for that purpose and the new vote is favorable in each district;

(2) then:

(A) the affirmative votes of the districts that voted in favor of the Plan at the Meeting shall continue without the need to vote again; and

(B) the change to the districts’ governance structure shall occur pursuant to terms set forth in the Plan.

Sec. 60a. 2012 Acts and Resolves No.156, Sec. 5 is amended to read:

Sec. 5. REIMBURSEMENT OF FEES FOR CONSULTING SERVICES;
MERGER; SUPERVISORY UNIONS; SUNSET

(a) From the ~~education fund~~ Education Fund, the ~~commissioner of education~~ Secretary of Education shall reimburse:

(1) up to \$20,000.00 \$40,000.00 of fees paid prior to July 1, 2017 by two or more supervisory unions for legal and other consulting services necessary to analyze the advisability of the merger into a fewer number of supervisory unions and to prepare a petition to the ~~state board of education~~ State Board of Education requesting adjustment of supervisory union boundaries; or

(2) up to \$20,000.00 of fees paid after June 30, 2017 and prior to July 1, 2019 by two or more supervisory unions for legal and other consulting services necessary to analyze the advisability of the merger into a fewer number of supervisory unions and to prepare a petition to the State Board of Education requesting adjustment of supervisory union boundaries.

(b) Each group of supervisory unions shall forward invoices to the ~~commissioner~~ Secretary on a quarterly basis. The ~~commissioner~~ Secretary shall reimburse one-half of the total amount reflected in each set of invoices and the remaining one-half upon submission of either a petition to the ~~state board~~ State Board requesting that the boundaries be redrawn or a written statement of the entities' analysis supporting preservation of the current boundaries, provided that no payment shall cause the total amount paid to exceed the ~~\$20,000.00~~ limit set forth in subsection (a) of this section. A group of supervisory unions shall not be eligible for reimbursement under both subdivisions (1) and (2) of subsection (a).

(c) ~~Any transition facilitation grant funds paid pursuant to Sec. 6 of this act shall be reduced by the total amount of reimbursement provided under this section.~~

~~(d)~~ This section is repealed on July 1, ~~2017~~ 2019.

Sec. 60b. 2012 Acts and Resolves No.156, Sec. 6 is amended to read:

Sec. 6. TRANSITION FACILITATION GRANT; MERGER;
SUPERVISORY UNIONS; SUNSET

(a) After ~~state board of education~~ State Board of Education approval of the petition of two or more supervisory unions to merge into a fewer number of supervisory unions, the ~~commissioner of education~~ Secretary of Education shall pay to the new supervisory union board or the new group of boards a transition facilitation grant from the ~~education fund~~ Education Fund of:

(1) between \$150,000.00, less reimbursement funds received under Sec. 5 of this act and \$750,000.00, as determined by the Secretary based on projected annual post-merger savings that do not decrease the quality of education if the State Board approves the petition prior to July 1, 2017; and

(2) between \$75,000.00 and \$375,000.00, as determined by the Secretary based on projected annual post-merger savings that do not decrease the quality of education if the State Board approves the petition after June 30, 2017 and prior to July 1, 2019.

(b) This section is repealed on July 1, ~~2017~~ 2019.

Sec. 61. RED FORMATION PROCESS; AGENCY OF EDUCATION;

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Agency of Education shall:

(1) provide technical support to districts exploring or engaged in the RED formation process at their request;

(2) revise and add to the existing template developed for use in the RED process to provide meaningful guidance to districts and flexible, alternative models for their use;

(3) develop a technical assistance handbook to support RED formation; and

(4) update these materials as necessary until expiration of the RED incentive program.

* * * Chart of Accounts * * *

Sec. 62. STATEWIDE INTEGRATED FINANCIAL AND STUDENT
DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS; POSITION;
APPROPRIATION

(a) Systems. On or before July 1, 2016, the Agency of Education shall have fully implemented statewide, integrated systems to maintain financial reporting and accounting data and longitudinal student data that:

(1) enable and support compliance with federal reporting requirements;

(2) provide data necessary to make education-related decisions at the State and local levels;

(3) are designed to measure and to compare on a district-to-district basis;

(A) the quality and variety of educational opportunities available to students throughout the State;

(B) student outcomes; and

(C) financial costs of education-related decisions;

(4) enable each supervisory union and school district to provide all requested data to both data systems and access all data to which they are entitled under State and federal privacy laws; and

(5) account for and report financial information in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

(b) Position. The General Assembly authorizes the establishment in fiscal year 2015 of one (1) new limited service Education Analyst position for a period not to exceed three (3) years in the Agency of Education to assist the Agency to establish the systems required in subsection (a) of this section, including development of:

(1) specifications for school software;

(2) a detailed transition plan;

(3) training materials and guidance documents for each supervisory union and school district; and

(4) an updated, more comprehensive, consolidated, business manager handbook that includes uniform business rules, and comprehensive information on federal and State funds and compliance.

(c) Appropriation and expenditure authorization. The sum of \$1,500,000.00 is appropriated in fiscal year 2015 from the Supplemental Property Tax Relief Fund created in 32 V.S.A. § 6075 to the Agency of Education for the purposes of this section. Of this appropriation, the Agency may expend the sum of \$500,000.00 in fiscal year 2015; the remaining appropriation shall be carried forward to be used for the purposes of this section in future fiscal years upon authorization of the General Assembly.

(d) Compliance by districts. On or before July 1, 2017, each supervisory union and school district shall be fully compliant with the requirements of both the financial reporting and accounting system and the longitudinal student data system.

(e) Reporting. The Agency shall report on the progress of the work required by this section to the Joint Fiscal Committee at its September meetings and to the General Assembly in January until full implementation of both data systems.

(f) Transition planning. In January 2015, the Agency shall provide to the General Assembly an initial plan for the transition of districts to the new system, which shall include cost estimates for providing financial assistance to districts that need to modify existing or acquire new fiscal reporting systems.

* * * REDs and Supervisory Unions;

Positions; Incentives; Appropriations * * *

Sec. 63. POSITIONS; AGENCY OF EDUCATION

The General Assembly authorizes the establishment in fiscal year 2015 of two (2) new limited service Analyst positions for a period not to exceed three (3) years in the Agency of Education to provide technical assistance to school districts as they explore voluntary realignment under the RED process and to supervisory unions as they work together collaboratively and explore voluntary merger.

Sec. 64. APPROPRIATIONS; INCENTIVES; POSITIONS

(a) The sum of \$329,000.00 in unexpended monies appropriated to support the purposes of 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153 and 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156 shall be carried forward to fiscal year 2015 for the purpose of providing reimbursement payments and incentive grants to school districts and supervisory unions pursuant to those Acts, as amended by this act.

(b) The sum of up to \$5,000,000.00 from the Supplemental Property Tax Relief Fund created in 32 V.S.A. § 6075 shall be used for the purpose of providing incentives for mergers and other joint activity by school districts and supervisory unions pursuant to 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, as amended by 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156, and as further amended by this act, and for the purpose of funding the two analyst positions authorized in Sec. 63 of

this act. Of this amount, the sum of \$175,500.00 is appropriated to the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2015 for the purpose of funding the two analyst positions during that year.

Sec. 64a. CONSTRUCTION AID; REPORT

The Secretary of Education shall examine ways to use school construction aid for consolidation of school buildings in order to encourage school districts to explore voluntary consolidation of governance structures or other joint activity. On or before January 15, 2015, the Secretary shall present his or her conclusions and any recommendations for legislative action to the General Assembly.

* * * Special Education Funding; Pilot * * *

Sec. 65. SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPENDITURES; PILOT PROGRAM;
REPORT

(a) There is created a three-year pilot program designed to encourage reduced special education expenditures through the use of best practices to provide special education services in the general classroom setting. Pursuant to a process and criteria to be developed by the Secretary of Education and based upon the Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT), the districts comprising the four supervisory unions currently engaged in implementing the SWIFT model may expend special education mainstream block grant funds received pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 2961 in a

manner other than as required by State Board of Education Rule 2366.2.

(b) To be eligible for the pilot program, all districts within a supervisory union shall submit a joint application providing information prescribed by the Secretary on or before September 1, 2014. The joint application shall:

(1) describe how the districts' special education spending plan under the SWIFT model will be less costly than special education spending without using the SWIFT model;

(2) describe how the districts will serve students on individual education programs in a general classroom setting using the SWIFT model;

(3) describe the manner in which the districts shall measure student performance; and

(4) demonstrate how the use of the SWIFT model shall result in fewer students found to be in need of special education services at the end of the three-year pilot program.

(c) Beginning in 2015, annually on or before January 15 for the duration of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit a report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance regarding the results of the pilot project and any recommendations for legislative action.

(d) This section is repealed on July 1, 2017.

* * * Public High School Choice; Tuition * * *

Sec. 65a. PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL CHOICE

In the January 2015 report on the status of the public high school choice program as required in 16 V.S.A. § 822a(m), the Secretary shall examine the funding impact of the program on receiving schools and provide recommendations to the General Assembly for amendments to the tuitioning system that are equitable to both the sending and receiving districts.

* * * Education; Statewide Public Engagement Dialogue * * *

Sec. 65b. EDUCATION; STATEWIDE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

DIALOGUE; REPORT

(a) Facilitator; request. The General Assembly requests the Vermont Council on Rural Development, a neutral facilitator with deep experience in public policy at the community and State levels, to conduct a statewide dialogue about the future of education in Vermont. If the request is accepted, the work shall proceed as set forth more fully in this section.

(b) Community meetings. The facilitator shall convene no fewer than 25 community meetings throughout the State, designed to elicit thoughtful testimony on the strengths and weaknesses of, and opportunities for, Vermont's education system and the impacts of rising school costs. At the community meetings, the facilitator shall:

(1) present key points from the 2009 report of the Education Transformation Policy Commission and a situational analysis of the current state of prekindergarten–grade 12 educational opportunity in Vermont; and

(2) solicit public comments that identify individual and community visions, values, and goals relating to Vermont’s education system.

(c) Targeted meetings. The facilitator shall conduct additional, targeted meetings of identified stakeholders, including youths; parents of students; teachers; principals; school board members; superintendents and administrative staff; municipal boards and staff; business leaders; social service and nonprofit leaders; ethnically diverse Vermonters; economically diverse Vermonters; arts and cultural leaders; representatives of higher education; the Agency of Education and other State employees; alternative and independent school leaders, parents, and youths; and experts in technology, curriculum, and innovation in education.

(d) The facilitator shall convene a Process Team of 15 to 20 community leaders representing the regions, demographics, and diversity of Vermont. The team shall represent the people of Vermont and shall be solely responsible for the proposed recommendations requested by this section. The facilitator shall meet with the Team at least monthly to report on work completed to date and plans for future activity and to receive comments and suggestions from the Team.

(e) Analysis and recommendations.

(1) With leadership from the facilitator, the Process Team shall:

(A) reflect upon public comments;

(B) identify excellent practices, programs, and models that are already occurring in the State and consider how best to replicate them;

(C) identify and evaluate pertinent educational research and related models;

(D) identify themes; and

(E) develop a proposed description of the State's vision for the characteristics and delivery of education in Vermont and recommendations for achieving the vision.

(2) In performing their respective responsibilities, the facilitator and Process Team shall consider how best:

(A) to use existing resources to prepare students to be engaged global citizens;

(B) to contain costs without compromising quality; and

(C) to encourage local communities to work toward the identified State goals for educational opportunities and strengthened outcomes for every Vermont child.

(3) The Process Team's recommendations shall include:

(A) strategies to enhance educational opportunities for all Vermont students; and

(B) any necessary related changes to Vermont's education funding and governance systems.

(f) The facilitator shall seek funding sources as necessary to complete the work requested by this section.

(g) On or before January 15, 2016, the Process Team and the facilitator shall deliver a report to the General Assembly that is representative of the testimony received and that identifies the vision, values, goals, and strategies for enhancing student opportunities pursuant to subsection (d) of this section.

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 66. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) Secs. 45–51 of this act (supervisory unions and school district responsibilities) shall take effect on July 1, 2014

(b) Secs. 52–54 (collaboration among supervisory unions) shall take effect on July 1, 2014 and shall apply beginning in academic year 2016–2017.

(c) This section and all other sections shall take effect on passage; provided, however, that Sec. 29 (tuition for graduate and distance education programs) shall not apply to students who are enrolled as of that date in the University of Vermont in:

- (1) a distance education course or program; or
- (2) a graduate program other than in the College of Medicine.