

Potential Timeline: PreK-12 Education Systems (draft 4.2; 2/20/14)

Purpose: To create PreK-12 Education Systems that will provide students with more equitable access to world-class learning opportunities, greater flexibility in the management of public resources, and less volatility for taxpayers, while maintaining strong community involvement and support for our schools.

1. 2014 General Assembly Enacts Law:

- a. Declares that on July 1, 2019:
 - i. SUs will cease to exist
 - ii. All districts will be realigned into PreK–12 Education Districts that take into account practical & geographical issues, historical boundaries, etc.
- b. Requires that a new or continuing PreK–12 Education District shall:
 - i. Offer PreK-12 educational opportunities
 - ii. Be designed to achieve (“the 8 Criteria”):
 - I. Equitable access to world-class learning opportunities;
 - II. Fiscal efficiency;
 - III. Conditions for stable leadership;
 - IV. A connected, professional workforce;
 - V. Strong community involvement;
 - VI. Stability and sustainability for taxpayers;
 - VII. A responsive accountability system; and
 - VIII. Flexibility in the deployment of resources
 - iii. Enroll at least 1250 students or consist of at least 4 pre-existing districts, provided that the SBE may grant a waiver to one or more districts demonstrating that #1b(i) and #1b(ii) above are met
 - iv. Have one elected school board for each new district
 - v. Operate with one budget based on district-wide grand list & tax rate
 - vi. Negotiate district-wide collective bargaining agreements
 - vii. Include school-based community councils appointed by the principals that are:
 - I. Made up of parents and other community members;
 - II. Representative of diverse voices within the community; and
 - III. Responsible for advising the principal on school-based initiatives that are designed to build partnerships among families, school staff, and the community and that improve student achievement
- c. Directs a Legal/Fiscal Work Group [*membership identified in bill*] (ceases to exist June 30, 2016) to facilitate and inform decisionmaking in #1a & #1b above by:
 - i. Analyzing and developing guidelines intended to address:
 - I. *Brigham* considerations
 - II. School choice
 - III. Tax rate implications
 - IV. Voting / representation issues
 - ii. Reporting in January 2015 to the GA, AOE, SBE, [& DT?] (incl. legislation)

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- d. Creates a Design Team (“DT”) (exists July 2014 – June 2017):
 - i. Secretary of AOE appoints members who are geographically representative and committed to overseeing a process of complex change, including experts on the organization of the VT education system and VT communities, and former education practitioners and officials
 - ii. The DT shall (*see also* #3):
 - I. Conduct activities to engage the public in order to inform the design process, including targeted outreach to school boards and officials
 - II. Monitor progress of voluntary mergers (#2 below)
 - III. Develop the criteria, process, and overall plan for the move by 2019 to PreK-12 Ed Systems statewide
 - IV. Submit the plan to the SBE for approval through the formal rulemaking process, including public comment – submit by July 2017; rules adopted by April 1, 2018
 - V. Report regularly to GA, AOE, and SBE
 - iii. Costs funded by Education Fund
 - iv. Administrative and technical support from AOE
- e. Ensures [*how?*] AOE has capacity to provide technical support to [*whom? to both DT and local districts?*]:
 - i. Legal services
 - ii. Development of indicators to measure the 8 Criteria (#1b(ii) above)
 - iii. Analysis of data and indicators
- f. Amends RED provisions as necessary (*see* #2 below)

2. June 2014 – March 2017 — Current Districts:

- a. May design their own new districts that:
 - i. Meet the 8 Criteria established for PreK–12 Systems (#1b above) **AND:**
 - I. Operate PreK-12 for all resident students **OR**
 - II. Provide education by agreement with one of 4 historic “academies” for all resident students in those grades and operate school(s) for all resident students in other grades **OR**
 - III. Receive a waiver from the SBE to vary from (I) or (II) above pursuant to legal guidance provided by the Legal/Fiscal Work Group (#1c) [*and, where appropriate, guidance provided by the DT?*]
 - ii. Follow process for unified union district formation in 16 V.S.A. ch. 11 **PLUS:**
 - I. SBE, in consultation with DT, reviews proposed plan/articles of agreement for consistency with #2a(i) above
 - II. Plan cannot be presented to the voters unless SBE approves it

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- III. SBE will not approve a plan that leaves a current district stranded in a way that would make it difficult to move ahead with a statewide plan
- b. Electorate must approve articles of agreement no later than Town Meeting 2017
- c. Districts merging under the provisions of this #2 would receive
 - i. Act 153 incentives
 - ii. [??] School construction aid (moratorium lifted for these)

NOTE re: #2:

- (1) Explicitly recognize that this new PreK-12 Education Systems law is furthering the purposes of Act 153 and 156 and building on the work that districts have done in response to those acts **AND**
- (2) Repeal all relevant Act 153/156 provisions except the incentives (this would be done for purposes of clarity because REDs are versions of unified union school districts and all pertinent RED provisions will be included in this new law) **AND**
- (3) [??] Repeal / delay requirement that SpEd move to the SUs on July 1, 2014

3. July 2014 – June 2017 — Design Team:

(required in #1d(ii) above)

- a. Conducts public engagement activities
- b. Monitors progress of voluntary mergers (*see #2 above*)
- c. Establishes criteria and process for assigning remaining districts to new districts
- d. Designs a statewide plan that includes both new voluntarily-merged districts and pre-existing districts that did not voluntarily form a new district under #2 above
- e. Submits plan to SME for review and approval through the rulemaking process
- f. Report regularly to GA, AOE, and SBE

4. September 2017 – April 2018 — State Board:

- a. SBE pursues rulemaking process to adopt DT's proposed plan
- b. Rulemaking complete by April 2018

5. April 2018 – June 2019:

- a. Process unfolds to bring all districts into the statewide plan approved by rulemaking
- b. New districts prepare and adopt budgets to go into effect on July 1, 2019

6. July 1, 2019:

- a. All new districts are in place (some may have begun earlier)

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- b. All pre-existing districts and SUs cease to exist

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