

PreK–12 Education Systems – Draft Purpose & Findings

Purpose: To create Pre-K-12 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.

Findings:

(a) Vermont is a unique and special place. It is more than a place to live and work – it is a way of life and a set of values. Among those values are the ability to influence our communities and the local quality of life, and to ensure our children have access to high quality public education.

(b) Our system of educational governance was created in the early 1900s and is not well-suited to meet the demands of 21st Century learners.

(c) Our schools are no longer simply preparing children to live and work within the confines of their town, but to be successful in their region, state, nation, and the world.

(d) To ensure all our children and future generations can acquire the knowledge and skills essential to succeed in a global and technological world and develop their individual talents, they need access to new, broader, more diverse and personalized learning opportunities.

(e) We have an obligation to ensure that our education systems are able to respond nimbly to the changes demanded by advances in technology and brain science.

(f) Educational leadership and stability in educational leadership is critical to respond to these rapidly changing dynamics.

(g) We are facing a crisis of leadership in our districts and supervisory unions, with a quarter of superintendents leaving their positions this year, an annual principal turnover rate of thirty percent, and significant school board member attrition every spring.

(h) Our governance structure contributes to our leadership crisis because it requires our leaders to spend much of their time preparing, attending, and following up on board meetings and less time on improving teaching and learning and enhancing educational opportunities for learners.

(i) Efficient use of resources is essential if we are to continue to receive strong support for public education.

(j) Our governance structure often impedes flexible and efficient use of resources, and contributes to significant volatility in property tax rates due to changes in student population, student needs, and property values.

(k) PreK–12 Systems create a governance model with greater resources that enable more flexibility to fund learners rather than schools.