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H.267

Introduced by Representative Rachelson of Burlington

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; education spending; ballots; supervisory union  
assessments

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require that  
warnings for proposed school district budgets identify the amount of the total  
budget that is attributable to expenditures assessed by the supervisory union.

An act relating to supervisory union assessments and ballot language

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

Sec. 1. 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:

\* \* \*

1           (11)(A) Shall prepare and distribute annually a proposed budget for the  
2 next school year according to such major categories as may from time to time  
3 be prescribed by the Secretary.

4           (B) ~~If the proposed budget contains education spending in excess of~~  
5 ~~the Maximum Inflation Amount, and the district's education spending per~~  
6 ~~equalized pupil in the fiscal year preceding the year for which the budget is~~  
7 ~~proposed was in excess of the statewide average district education spending~~  
8 ~~per equalized pupil in that same fiscal year, as determined by the Secretary,~~  
9 ~~then in lieu of any other statutory or charter form of budget adoption or budget~~  
10 ~~vote, the board shall present the budget to the voters by means of a divided~~  
11 ~~question, in the form of vote provided in subdivision (ii) of this subdivision~~  
12 ~~(11)(B).~~

13           (i) ~~“Maximum Inflation Amount” in this section means:~~

14           ~~(I) the statewide average district education spending per~~  
15 ~~equalized pupil, as defined in subdivision 4001(6) of this title, in the fiscal year~~  
16 ~~preceding the year for which the budget is proposed, as determined by the~~  
17 ~~Secretary, multiplied by the New England Economic Project Cumulative Price~~  
18 ~~Index percentage change, as of November 15 preceding distribution of the~~  
19 ~~proposed budget, for state and local government purchases of goods and~~  
20 ~~services for the fiscal year for which the budget is proposed, plus one~~  
21 ~~percentage point; plus the district's education spending per equalized pupil in~~

1 the fiscal year preceding the year for which the budget is proposed, as  
2 determined by the Secretary;

3 (II) ~~multiplied by the higher of the following amounts as~~  
4 ~~determined by the Secretary: (aa) the district's equalized pupil count in the~~  
5 ~~fiscal year preceding the year for which the budget is proposed; or (bb) the~~  
6 ~~district's equalized pupil count in the fiscal year for which the budget is~~  
7 ~~proposed.~~

8 (ii) ~~The ballot shall be in the following form:~~

9 ~~"The total proposed budget of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is the amount determined~~  
10 ~~by the school board to be necessary to support the school district's educational~~  
11 ~~program. State law requires the vote on this budget to be divided because (i)~~  
12 ~~the school district's spending per pupil last year was more than the statewide~~  
13 ~~average and (ii) this year's proposed budget is greater than last year's budget~~  
14 ~~adjusted for inflation.~~

15 ~~"Article #1 (School Budget):~~

16 ~~Part A. Shall the voters of the school district authorize the school~~  
17 ~~board to expend \$ \_\_\_\_\_, which is a portion of the amount the school board~~  
18 ~~has determined to be necessary?~~

19 ~~Part B. If Part A is approved by the voters, shall the voters of the~~  
20 ~~school district also authorize the school board to expend \$ \_\_\_\_\_, which is the~~

1 ~~remainder of the amount the school board has determined to be necessary?"~~

2 [Repealed.]

3 (C) At a school district's annual or special meeting, the electorate  
4 may vote to provide notice of availability of the school budget required by this  
5 subdivision to the electorate in lieu of distributing the budget. If the electorate  
6 of the school district votes to provide notice of availability, it must specify how  
7 notice of availability shall be given, and such notice of availability shall be  
8 provided to the electorate at least 30 days before the district's annual meeting.

9 The proposed budget shall be prepared and distributed at least ten days before  
10 a sum of money is voted on by the electorate. Any proposed budget shall show  
11 the following information in a format prescribed by the Secretary:

12 (i) all revenues from all sources, and expenses, including as  
13 separate items any assessment for a supervisory union of which it is a member  
14 and any tuition to be paid to a career technical center; and including the report  
15 required in subdivision 242(4)(D) of this title itemizing the component costs of  
16 the supervisory union assessment;

17 (ii) the specific amount of any deficit incurred in the most recently  
18 closed fiscal year and how the deficit was or will be remedied;

19 (iii) the anticipated homestead tax rate and the percentage of  
20 household income used to determine income sensitivity in the district as a

1 result of passage of the budget including those portions of the tax rate  
2 attributable to supervisory union assessments; and

3 (iv) the definition of “education spending,” the number of pupils  
4 and number of equalized pupils in the school district, and the district’s  
5 education spending per equalized pupil in the proposed budget and in each of  
6 the prior three years.

7 (D) The board shall present the budget to the voters by means of a  
8 ballot in the following form:

9 “Article #1 (School Budget):

10 The total proposed budget of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is the amount determined by  
11 the school board to be necessary to support the school district’s educational  
12 program. Of the total proposed budget, the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is the portion  
13 of supervisory union expenditures for which the supervisory union has  
14 assessed this district. Shall the voters of the school district approve the school  
15 board to expend \$ \_\_\_\_\_, which is the amount the school board has  
16 determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?”

17 Sec. 2. REPEAL

18 16 V.S.A. § 4001(6)(A) (divided voted; exceptions to education spending)  
19 is repealed on July 1, 2015.

20 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

21 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2015.