

**H.883 – Prekindergarten–Grade 12 Education Districts**  
**Key Provisions – as Passed by the House (4/30/2014) – *DRAFT!***

Purpose: To encourage and support:

- Increased equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities
- Operational efficiencies, more equitable deployment of resources, and sharing of best practices
- Stronger relationships between schools and the community

7/1/2020 – Districts are Realigned:

- ~45–55 Prekindergarten–grade 12 Education Districts (operate and/or tuition)

7/1/2014 – 7/1/2017 – Voluntary Realignment of Districts:

Districts continue voluntary realignment through RED / Union School District formation

- Communities create study committee (includes non-board members & board members)
- Public engagement to create plan (“Report”)
  - Statutory issues – *e.g.*, representation on board, manner of voting, property ownership
  - Issues of particular concern – *e.g.*, protection of small school district by, *e.g.*, requiring a unanimous vote on issues of particular concern (school closure)
  - Transitional issues – election of initial board before first day of RED’s existence to prepare initial proposed budget, enter into contracts, etc.
- Report becomes RED’s Articles of Agreement if approved by voters (as w/ any Union School)
- Act 156 incentives are available if voters approve RED by 7/1/2017
- RED will not be realigned by Statewide Realignment Plan
  - except if another district is “stranded”

7/1/2014 – 7/1/2018 – Design Team (“DT”):

- 9 members with:
  - Broad range of knowledge of and experience in the VT education system and communities
  - Diverse representation of points of view, opinions, and interests
- To ensure broad diversity, selected in collaborative process by Speaker, COC, and Governor

Statewide Realignment Plan (“Plan”) / Education Districts (“EDs”) – Elements:

- Plan informed by public engagement and research (details below in Process)
- Plan must recognize ea. community’s unique character, traditions, relationships, geography, ...
- EDs are responsible for education of resident pre–grade 12 students
  - 1,000 min ADM OR 4 districts (but flexibility in Plan if size criterion is impossible)
  - One elected governing board / one budget / one tax rate (adjusted by local CLA)
  - Operate or enter into agreement with at least one career technical education center
  - Designed to maximize flexible, efficient use of resources; foster stable leadership, etc.

- *Articles of Agreement*: Plan includes one or more models prepared for the EDs until each ED adopts its own amended articles reflecting specific community concerns and preferences
- (see examples of types of issues under Voluntary Realignment above)
- *Transition*: Plan includes guidance and procedures to assist with transition, e.g.
  - election of initial board to prepare 1st proposed budget
  - transition of employees to new employer
  - creation, at the ED's option, of school-based councils designed to build strong community involvement (and which could perform any duty identified by community – e.g., preparation of a school-based budget to ED board for consideration; acting as a liaison between school and ED board; etc.)
- 5% hold-harmless provisions for first 3 years of ED's operation

#### Statewide Realignment Plan – Process:

- *Preliminary Plan* (7/1/2014 – 4/1/2017) – the Design Team:
  - Consults w/school boards, parents, teachers, students, community members, etc. throughout VT
  - Attends 10+ facilitated public engagement meetings designed to solicit public comments identifying individual and community visions, values, and goals and to provide Vermonters an opportunity to comment on and inform preliminary Plan
  - Conducts independent research
  - Creates preliminary Plan, reflecting public comments and research
    - includes process by which a district can request a change in its proposed placement by the preliminary Plan or voice other unique concerns
  - Makes preliminary Plan available for public / GA / SBE for review by 4/1/2017
  - JFO prepares fiscal note for GA on details of preliminary Plan
- *Final Plan* (4/1/2017 – 1/1/2018) – the Design Team:
  - Consults w/ local stakeholders statewide; 10+ more public engagement meetings; research
  - Conducts process for districts to request change in proposed placement within ED
  - Amends preliminary Plan into a final Plan, reflecting additional public comment & concerns
  - Gives final Plan to SBE for review by 11/1/2017
  - SBE gives final Plan (unchanged) w/ its comments to GA by 1/1/2018
- *Enactment* – Plan effective (as is or amended) when GA enacts it into law
- *Flexibility of Plan* – Plan can be flexible to accommodate situations where the size of a district or Choice/Operating protections (below) necessitate

Nonoperating Districts / Operating Districts: *Nothing* in Statewide Realignment Plan (or in entire bill) can require:

- A Nonoperating District to give up or change any aspect of tuition payments
- An Operating District to pay tuition instead of / as well as operate school(s)

Accountability & Guidance Documents:

- 7/1/2016:
  - AOE fully implements the statewide integrated systems to maintain
    - financial reporting and accounting data and
    - longitudinal student data that measure and permit district-to-district comparison of the quality and variety of available educational opportunities, student outcomes, and financial costs
  - Districts have technological ability to provide / access data
- AOE & the Design Team prepare & update guidance documents / models for districts
- 1/1/2015: AOE develops ways to measure compliance with goals and less-easily quantifiable criteria

(*NOTE*: appropriations, increased staffing at AOE, and uniform chart of accounts provisions not included in this overview)