



219 North Main Street | Suite 402 | Barre, VT 05641
(p) 802-479-1030 | (f) 802-479-1835 | education.vermont.gov

INFORMATION PROVIDED TO: Senate Education Committee
FROM: Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary, Agency of Education
TOPIC: Definitions of Supervisory Unions, Supervisory Districts, Regional Education Districts, etc.
DATE: March 16, 2015

Definition of Terms of School Governance Units

A **Supervisory Union** is an administrative, planning, and educational service unit that consists of two or more school districts. In its most general sense, the term supervisory union can be used to include supervisory districts. Supervisory union boards are appointed by school boards of member districts. Chittenden South is a supervisory union containing a number of school districts including Shelburne, Williston and the Champlain Valley Union High School District among others.

A **Supervisory District** is a supervisory union that consists of only one school district. South Burlington is a supervisory district, containing the single school district of South Burlington.

A **School District** can be a town school district, union school district, interstate school district, unified union school district or incorporated school district. School districts are responsible for educating students within an area. School districts can provide education through some combination of operating their own schools, joining union or unified union districts, and tuitioning.

A **Regional Education District (RED)** is created when school districts merge to form a union school district if the merged district has an average daily membership of 1,250 or includes at least four districts. School districts may petition the State Board of Education for a waiver if the district resulting from their merger would not meet either of these size requirements.

A RED is responsible for students in grades PK-12. A RED must operate a school educating students in grades K-6. The RED is responsible for students in grades 7-12. The RED may meet this responsibility by paying tuition. The RED may not pay regular education tuition and operate a school for students in the same grade.

A RED can operate as a single district along with other districts in an SU. A large RED, for example a RED consisting of a former union district and all of its members, could be designated a supervisory district by the State Board of Education. Such a RED would be governed in the same manner as other supervisory districts. The articles of agreement would allow some flexibility in the way district board members are elected, often within boundaries of the former districts consistent with the one-person, one-vote standard. The State Board would consider the size of the RED and its ability to provide the full range of front office services when deciding whether it is more appropriately a district in a supervisory union or a supervisory district.

If they comply with all other provisions of Act 153, districts that tuition students in all grades are permitted to form a RED. A RED created under this provision may not operate any grades nor designate a school that offers the grades. The State Board of Education will determine whether a RED formed under this provision will operate as a district in a supervisory union or as a supervisory district in its own right.

Act 156 of 2012 expanded the consolidated structures eligible for RED incentives. Some provisions were further amended in Act 56 of 2013.

The merger of existing districts into **Two or More Districts Eligible for RED Incentives** is permissible if each of the new districts meets all of the criteria for RED formation except size.

1. One of the new districts provides education in all elementary and secondary grades.
2. Another new district pays tuition in one or more grades.
3. The combined size of the new districts either exceeds an average daily membership of 1,250 or the merger incorporates at least four current districts.

A **Modified Unified Union School District (MUUSD)** is created when a majority of member districts in a union or any number greater than a majority established by a study committee, but not all union member districts, votes to participate in a unified union offering grades PK-12. The districts voting to participate in the unified union merge with the existing union. The district boards of those joining the unified union dissolve. Any districts where voters reject the proposal continue to elect local boards that operate the local schools. Students in grades operated by the original union continue to attend the modified union. Districts operating local schools are represented on the MUUSD board.

Union Elementary School Districts Receiving RED Incentives

If a majority of the elementary school districts in the member towns of an existing union high school district merge to form a union elementary school district, the new union elementary school district is eligible to receive RED incentives. The elementary union school district must operate all grades not operated by the union high school district.