

Act 46 Overview

House Committee on Ways and Means

Jim Des Marais, Legislative Council

Goals and Structure

- 13 types of school district governance structures; over 250 school districts
- Move to sustainable models of governance
- Goals
 - Equity in educational opportunities
 - Increase student achievement
 - Maximize operational efficiencies
 - Promote transparency and accountability
 - Deliver cost at value
- Provides tax and other incentives for mergers
- Directs State Board of Education to realign unmerged districts into more sustainable models of governance to the extent necessary to achieve the goals
- School districts cannot be forced to give up tutoring or operating models
- Not the intent to close small schools

Voluntary Mergers

Phase 1: Accelerated Mergers

- Phase 1 deadline has passed; district vote required by July 1, 2016 and operational by July 1, 2017
- Preferred structure/Education District
- Merger of districts within supervisory union (or with neighboring supervisory district); responsible for K-12; ADM of 900 or more; operates K-12 or K-6 or -8 and tuitions other grades
- Eligible for highest level of incentives

Phase 2: REDs and RED Variations

- Phase 2 incorporates the processes and incentives enacted by Act 153 of 2010 for Regional Education Districts (REDs) and in Act 156 of 2012 for Side-by-Side Mergers, Layered Mergers, and Modified Unified Union School Districts – three variations on REDs that are eligible to receive incentives available to REDs.
- District vote required by July 1, 2017 and operational by July 1, 2019

Phase 3: Later Conventional Mergers

- Phase 3 provides incentives to a new district formed by the merger of two or more districts and must become operational as a supervisory district after July 1, 2017 and on or before July 1, 2019
- Conditions are similar to Preferred structure/Educational District, but districts do not need to be contiguous or within same supervisory union

Alternative Structures

- Act 46 requires a district with a governance structure different than the preferred Education District model and that does not expect to become an Education District before July 1, 2019, to complete three tasks by November 30, 2017:
 - Evaluate its current ability to meet or exceed the State goals;
 - Meet with other districts in the area to discuss ways promote improvement in the goals throughout the region; and
 - Submit a proposal to the State Board, individually or with other districts, to maintain its current structure, work with other districts in some way other than merger, or merge with other districts to form a different governance structure.

Statewide Governance Proposal and Final Plan

- **Secretary's Proposal**
 - Act 46 requires the Secretary of Education to develop a proposal to realign unmerged districts into more sustainable models of governance
 - This proposal is required to be presented to the State Board of Education by June 1, 2018.
- **State Board's Final Statewide Plan**
 - Act 46 requires the State Board to issue a final statewide plan by November 30, 2018
 - This plan may require the merger and realignment of districts and supervisory unions where deemed necessary to meet State goals.
 - This plan cannot force districts to give up their tutoring or operating models
 - The plan does not apply to unified union school districts created through the voluntary merger processes, to CTE districts, and to interstate school districts.