

1 Sec. 1. FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION BLUE RIBBON

2 COMMISSION

3 (a) Creation. There is hereby created the Blue Ribbon Commission on the
4 Future of Public Education in Vermont. The right to education is fundamental
5 for the success of Vermont’s children in a rapidly-changing society and global
6 marketplace as well as for the State’s own economic and social prosperity.
7 The Commission shall study the provision of education in Vermont and make
8 recommendations for a statewide vision for Vermont’s public education system
9 to ensure that all students are afforded substantially equal educational
10 opportunities in an efficient, sustainable, and stable education system. The
11 Commission shall also make recommendations for the strategic policy changes
12 necessary to make Vermont’s educational vision a reality for all Vermont
13 students.

14 (b) Membership. The Commission shall be composed of the following
15 members:

16 (1) the Secretary of Education or designee;

17 (2) the Chair of the State Board of Education or designee;

18 (3) two representatives from the Vermont School Boards Association
19 (VSBA), selected by the VSBA Executive Director;

20 (4) two representatives from the Vermont Principals’ Association
21 (VPA), selected by the VPA Executive Director;

1 (5) two representatives from the Vermont Superintendents Association
2 (VSA), selected by the VSA Executive Director;

3 (6) two representatives from the Vermont National Education
4 Association (VTNEA), selected by the VTNEA Executive Director;

5 (7) the Chair of the Census-Based Funding Advisory Group, created
6 under 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173;

7 (8) a faculty member from University of Vermont’s Educational
8 Leadership and Policy Studies program, appointed by the Secretary of
9 Education; and

10 (9) the Executive Director of the Vermont Rural Education
11 Collaborative or designee.

12 (c) Steering group. On or before June 29, 2024, the Speaker of the House
13 and the President Pro Tempore shall jointly appoint three members of the
14 Commission, and the Governor shall appoint two members of the Commission,
15 to serve as members of a steering group. The steering group shall provide
16 leadership to the Commission and shall work with a consultant to analyze the
17 issues, challenges, and opportunities facing Vermont’s public education
18 system, as well as create a formal action plan to drive change and innovation in
19 the public education system. The steering group may form one or more
20 subcommittees of the Commission to address key topics in greater depth.

1 (d) Collaboration. The Commission shall seek input from and collaborate
2 with key stakeholders, as directed by the steering group.

3 (e) Duties of the Commission. The Commission shall study Vermont’s
4 public education system and make recommendations to ensure all students are
5 afforded substantially equal, quality educational opportunities in an efficient,
6 sustainable, and stable education system. The result of the Commission’s work
7 shall be a recommendation for a statewide vision for Vermont’s public
8 education system, with recommendations for the policy changes necessary to
9 make Vermont’s educational vision a reality. In creating and making its
10 recommendations, the Commission shall engage in the following:

11 (1) The Commission shall conduct not fewer than 10 public hearings
12 statewide to inform the work required under this section and shall provide
13 opportunities for remote participation during each public hearing. Each public
14 hearing shall be held in a different geographic region of the State with each
15 different geographic region represented at least once.

16 (2) In developing its recommendations, the Commission shall consider
17 the following topics:

18 (A) Governance, resources, and administration. The Commission
19 shall study and make recommendations regarding education governance at the
20 state level, including whether the role of the Agency of Education shall be one
21 of compliance monitor, one of service provider, or a combination of both roles.

1 Recommendations under this subdivision (A) shall include, at a minimum, the
2 following:

3 (i) whether changes need to be made to the structure of the
4 Agency of Education, including whether it better serves the education vision of
5 the State as an agency or a department;

6 (ii) what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of
7 local control and what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of
8 control at the state level;

9 (iii) the utilization of career and technical education in the larger
10 public education system; and

11 (iv) what are the staffing needs of the Agency of Education both
12 in terms of quantity and quality.

13 (B) Physical size and footprint of the system. The Commission shall
14 study and make recommendations regarding how the unique geographical and
15 socio-economic needs of different communities should factor into the
16 provision of education in Vermont. Recommendations under this subdivision
17 (B) shall include, at a minimum, the following:

18 (i) an analysis of the current number and location of school
19 districts and supervisory unions and whether additional consolidation of either
20 system is needed to achieve Vermont’s vision for education, provided that if

1 there is a recommendation for any amount of consolidation, the
2 recommendation shall include a recommended implementation plan; and

3 (ii) an analysis of the current public tuition program and whether,
4 and if so, what, changes are necessary to meet Vermont’s vision for education,
5 including the impact and consequences of public funds going to independent
6 schools and other private institutions.

7 (C) The role of public schools. The Commission shall study and
8 make recommendations regarding the role public schools should play in both
9 the provision of education and the social and emotional well-being of students.

10 Recommendations under this subdivision (C) shall include, at a minimum, the
11 following:

12 (i) how public education in Vermont should be delivered;

13 (ii) whether Vermont’s vision for public education shall include
14 the provision of wraparound supports and collocation of services; and

15 (iii) what the consequences are for the Commission’s
16 recommendations regarding the role of public schools, including what the role
17 of public schools means for staffing, funding, and any other affected system.

18 (D) Education fund. The Commission shall study and make
19 recommendations regarding what costs are currently borne by the Education
20 Fund, what costs should be borne by the Education Fund, and what changes are
21 necessary to ensure sustainable and equitable use of the Education Fund.

1 (E) Additional considerations. The Commission may consider any
2 other topic, factor, or issue that it deems relevant to its work and
3 recommendations.

4 (f) Reports. The Commission shall prepare and submit to the General
5 Assembly the following written reports:

6 (1) a formal work plan on or before September 15, 2024;

7 (2) a report containing its preliminary findings and recommendations on
8 or before January 15, 2025; and

9 (3) a report containing its final findings and recommendations for a
10 statewide vision for Vermont’s public education system and the policy changes
11 necessary to make that educational vision a reality on or before December 1,
12 2025.

13 (g) Assistance. The Agency of Education shall contract with an
14 independent consultant to provide technical and legal assistance to the
15 Commission for the work required under this section. For the purposes of
16 scheduling meetings and providing administrative assistance, the Commission
17 shall have the assistance of the Agency of Education.

18 (h) Meetings.

19 (1) The Secretary of Education shall call the first meeting of the
20 Commission to occur on or before July 15, 2024.

1 (2) The Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore shall
2 jointly select a Commission chair.

3 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

4 (4) The Commission shall cease to exist on December 31, 2025.

5 (i) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Commission shall
6 be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as
7 permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 30 meetings. These
8 payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Education.

9 (j) Appropriation. The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency
10 of Education from the General Fund in fiscal year 2025 for per diem
11 compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the Commission
12 and for the cost of contracting with a consultant as required under subsection
13 (g) of this section.

14 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

15 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.