



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE  
**Joint Fiscal Office**

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## Fiscal Note

May 3, 2024

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### **H.630 – An act relating to boards of cooperative education services**

As recommended by the Senate Committee on Education

#### **Bill Summary**

This bill would allow for the creation of boards of cooperative education services (BOCES) to provide shared programs and services on a regional and statewide level. It would also establish the parameters for the BOCES. The bill would appropriate a total of \$1.07 million from the Education Fund to the Agency of Education (AOE) in fiscal year 2025.

#### **Fiscal Impact**

This bill would allow for the creation of boards of cooperative education services (BOCES) to provide shared programs and services on a regional and statewide level. This bill would appropriate \$70,000 from the Education Fund to AOE in fiscal year 2025 to fund the Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) Start-up Grant Program. The bill would also appropriate \$1 million from the Education Fund to AOE in fiscal year 2025 for community schools.

Absent any changes in policy, the homestead property yield and/or uniform nonhomestead property tax rate would need to be adjusted to account for these appropriations.

While there may be potential cost savings in future years from BOCES, the Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) cannot estimate these impacts as they will ultimately depend on school district decisions.

#### **Details on Sections with Fiscal Impact**

##### **Section 2: BOCES**

Section 2 would establish the ability for two or more supervisory unions to form BOCES, with a maximum of seven BOCES across the state. The section includes proposed requirements for the articles of agreement and board of directors, and the statutory powers of BOCES. Each BOCES would be required to establish and manage a fund known as an “education cooperative fund” which would include monies contributed from the member school districts, government grants or gifts, and other contributions.

JFO cannot estimate the fiscal impact of this section, as it will depend on supervisory union decisions and the corresponding establishment of BOCES. However, BOCES may provide opportunities for efficiencies by facilitating shared services or programs among participating schools.

**Section 4: BOCES Grant Program; Appropriation**

Section 4 would establish the Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) Start-up Grant Program to be administered by AOE. Each BOCES would be eligible for a single \$10,000 grant after the Secretary of Education approves the applicant's initial articles of agreement. These grants would be used for start-up costs and may include reimbursement to member supervisory unions for costs incurred during the exploration and formation of the BOCES and articles of agreement. Section 4 includes a \$70,000 appropriation from the Education Fund to AOE in fiscal year 2025 to fund this grant program.

**Section 14: Community Schools Appropriation**

Section 14 would appropriate \$1 million from the Education Fund to AOE in fiscal year 2025 for the purpose of providing funding to school districts for the community schools program. AOE would be permitted to set aside not more than one percent of this appropriation for informational and technical assistance, and not more than two percent of the appropriation for evaluations required in Section 12.