



Handout for House Committee on Education for RSCA Testimony February 13, 2026

Based on research, data, and Vermont specific evidence, RSCA believes that:

- Cooperative educational services areas (CESAs) and Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) are the right direction for Vermont.
- Strategic, voluntary mergers of districts and supervisory unions should be encouraged and incentivized, with local and regional decision-making grounded in data and analysis.
- Supervisory unions in rural regions of the state continue to be effective and should be maintained where they are desired.
- Communities that no longer operate public schools in some or all grades need flexibility in school options.
- Planning for sustainability and the management of declining enrollment must be done in partnership with communities.

Making These Principles a Reality: Major Components

1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Statewide Map of Cooperative Education Service Areas <i>CESA boundaries established by the state that build on existing regional collaborations</i> <i>All SUs and SDs provisionally assigned to a CESA, with realignment possible</i>★ Comprehensive District and SU Data Analysis, supported by Agency of Education <i>Establishes foundation for a research-based, data-driven, evaluative process to assist districts and SUs</i> <i>Determines effective practices along with statewide variation in spending & outcomes</i> <i>Develops systems for continued educational monitoring, including sustainability planning for districts experiencing enrollment instability or decline</i>
2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Voluntary Strategic Mergers at District and SU level <i>Data analysis will identify beneficial service/administrative sharing options</i> <i>Cost sharing through CESAs will suggest further voluntary merger opportunities</i> <i>School construction incentivization: strategic mergers that expand high school and CTE access and quality can be prioritized</i>
3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Professional Judgement Panels: Guidance and Refinement of Funding Formula <i>Use data and analysis, site visits, etc., to inform funding formula impacts on districts and SUs</i> <i>Identify adjustments to formula or funding changes needed before implementation</i>

Existing Collaborative Partnerships

The map at right reflects several current examples of cooperative educational service area models in place in Vermont, including:

- the **Vermont Rural Education Collaborative**
- the Vermont Learning Collaborative (as of January 6, the **Southeast Vermont BOCES**), and
- the **Champlain Valley Educator Development Center**.

This map shows the scale of these three current collaboratives.

