

1 Introduced by
2 Referred to Committee on
3 Date:
4 Subject: Education; school district; designation; tuition; approved independent
5 schools; recognized independent schools; education quality standards;
6 State Board of Education; class size
7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to <Purpose>

8 An act relating to <Title>

9 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

10 * * * Class Sizes * * *

11 Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 165 is amended to read:

12 § 165. EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS; EQUAL EDUCATIONAL
13 OPPORTUNITIES; INDEPENDENT SCHOOL MEETING
14 EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS

15 (a) In order to carry out Vermont’s policy that all Vermont children will be
16 afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality, each
17 Vermont public school, including each career technical center, shall meet the
18 following education quality standards:

19 * * *

1 (3) The school substantially meets standards adopted by rule of the State
2 Board regarding conditions, practices, and resources of schools. The standards
3 shall address those aspects of the following that are most closely associated
4 with improving student performance:

5 (A) school leadership, staffing, and support services;

6 (B) instructional practices and curriculum leadership, content, and
7 coordination;

8 (C) educational materials and school facilities;

9 (D) access to current technology; and

10 (E) class size minimums.

11 * * *

12 Sec. 2. EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS; RULEMAKING; STATE
13 BOARD OF EDUCATION

14 On or before July 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall amend the
15 Education Quality Standards rule 2000 series, Agency of Education, Education
16 Quality Standards (22-000-003), pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25, to include
17 the following:

18 (1) class size minimum standards for elementary schools, middle
19 schools, and high schools, as follows; provided, however, the State Board may
20 create exceptions for specialized high school and career and technical
21 education courses:

1 (A) minimum average class sizes, to be effective beginning fiscal
2 year 2027, shall be:

3 (i) for kindergarten, the minimum average class size shall be 12
4 students;

5 (ii) for grades one through five, the minimum average class size
6 shall be 15 students; and

7 (iii) for grades six through 12, the minimum average class shall be
8 18 students; and

9 (B) multi-age classrooms for grades kindergarten through eight shall
10 be limited to two grade levels per classroom and shall be prohibited in grades
11 nine through 12; and

12 (2) statewide proficiency based graduation requirements that shall be
13 based on standards adopted by the State Board.

14 Sec. 3. STATEWIDE SCHOOL CALENDAR

15 (a) On or before September 1, 2026, the Secretary of Education shall
16 develop and publish a statewide calendar for the public schools of the State,
17 including career and technical centers, that shall be in effect in the
18 2026–20267academic year and after.

19 (b) On or before January 15, 2026, the Secretary shall present to the House
20 and Senate Committees on Education a list of the statutory amendments
21 necessary to effect the intent of this section.

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* * * School Sizes * * *

Sec. 4. SCHOOL SIZE; INTENT

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly to encourage the efficient use of public funds to modernize school infrastructure to deliver identified 21st century educational goals.

(b) It is further the intent of the General Assembly that on or before [TBD] each public school operating grades six through 12, or some subset of those grades, shall have a minimum average daily membership of at least 600 students, at least in part by providing a robust State aid for school construction program that is driven by standards for quality for public schools, geographic accessibility, statewide enrollment trends, and capacity and scale that support substantially equal educational opportunities for all Vermont students.

Sec. 5. STATEWIDE SHARED DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

(a) Financial data.

(1) On or before July 1, 2027, all Vermont school districts and independent tech center districts shall utilize the same school finance and financial data management system. The system shall be selected by the Agency of Education per State procurement guidelines.

(2) The Agency shall work with school districts to:

(A) improve the comparability, consistency, and timeliness of school financial data;

1 (B) enhance the abilities of the General Assembly, Agency of
2 Education, and school districts to better understand and manage cost centers
3 and related school expenditures; and

4 (C) categorize expenditures in a way that draws a distinction between
5 direct educational expenses and expenses that are primarily human or social
6 services expenses.

7 (b) Student data. On or before July 1, 2027, all Vermont school districts
8 and independent career technical education districts shall utilize the same
9 student information system, which shall be a single, centralized software
10 platform to manage all student data, including academic records,
11 demographics, attendance, grades, and other relevant student information. The
12 system shall be designed to ensure consistency and accessibility across entire
13 school districts and allow all staff members to access the same information
14 from one source. The system shall be selected by the Agency of Education per
15 State procurement guidelines.

16 * * * School Designation * * *

17 Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. § 820 is added to read:

18 (a) Under this chapter, a school district may designate a school to provide
19 education for resident students of the district who would spend:

20 (1) more than 45 minutes being transported from the resident's home to
21 a public elementary school located within the district; or

1 (2) more than 75 minutes being transported from the resident’s home to
2 a public high school located within the district.

3 (b) A school shall only be eligible for designation if it complies with the
4 following:

5 (1) General characteristics. The school shall be an independent school
6 approved under section 166 of this title that meets at least three of the
7 following four criteria:

8 (A) The approved independent school serves as a regional CTE
9 center as defined in section 1522 of this title.

10 (B) The approved independent school was established through the
11 granting of a charter by the Vermont General Assembly.

12 (C) The approved independent school qualified as a public school
13 under the definition of “public school” in effect on June 30, 1991 under
14 subdivision 11(a)(7) of this title.

15 (D) The approved independent school is designated under section
16 1935 of this title as an employer of teachers within the meaning of chapter 55
17 of this title (State Teachers’ Retirement System of Vermont).

18 (2) School and class size. The school shall comply with the following
19 school and class size minimums, as applicable:

20 (A) An approved independent elementary school shall have a
21 minimum:

- 1 (i) school size of 450 students;
- 2 (ii) average class size of 12 students for kindergarten; and
- 3 (iii) average class size of 15 for grades one through five.

4 (B) An approved independent high school shall have a minimum:

- 5 (i) school size of 600 students; and
- 6 (ii) average class size of 18 students.

7 (c) This section shall not apply to an approved independent school that
8 limits enrollment to students who are on an individualized education program
9 (IEP) or plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C.
10 § 794 and who are enrolled pursuant to a written contract between a local
11 education agency (LEA) and the school.

12 Sec. 7. PROHIBITION ON SCHOOL CLOSURE AND TRANSITION TO
13 PAYING TUITION

14 Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a school district shall
15 be prohibited from closing an existing public school and then providing for the
16 education of its resident students by paying tuition for its students to attend a
17 public or approved independent school chosen by the parents of the district’s
18 students. A school district that closes an existing public school shall provide
19 for the education of its resident students by designating three or fewer of the
20 following schools to serve as the public school or schools of the district, in
21 accordance with 16 V.S.A. § 827:

1 (1) a public school located outside the district; or
2 (2) an independent school approved under 16 V.S.A. § 166 that meets at
3 least three of the following four criteria:

4 (A) the approved independent school serves as a regional career and
5 technical education center as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 1522;

6 (B) the approved independent school was established through the
7 granting of a charter by the Vermont General Assembly;

8 (C) the approved independent school qualified as a public school
9 under the definition of “public school” in effect on June 30, 1991, under 16
10 V.S.A. § 11(a)(7) of this title; or

11 (D) the approved independent school is designated under 16 V.S.A.
12 § 1935 of this title as an employer of teachers within the meaning of 16 V.S.A.
13 chapter 55 (State Teachers’ Retirement System of Vermont).

14 *** School District Size ***

15 **Sec. 8. [SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE]**

16 *** State Board of Education Responsibilities ***

17 **Sec. 9. [STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RESPONSIBILITIES]**

18 *** Effective Date ***

19 Sec. 10. EFFECTIVE DATE

20 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.