

\*Sec. originated in H.Ed  
\*\*Sec. originated in H.Ed and amended by HWM

H.454 W&M amendment, draft 4.1  
Section by Section Summary  
April 8, 2025

Sec.	Citation/Section Heading	Summary
* * * Findings and Intent * * *		
1**	Findings; Intent; Plan	<p>Intent &amp; Plan for the legislature's work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2026 session: create new, larger school district boundaries; begin the process to create voting wards; update CTE governance and funding systems</li><li>• March 2028: initial school board member election</li><li>• July 1, 2029: new school districts are operational</li></ul> <p><i>Effective on passage</i></p>
2**	Commission on the Future of Public Education	<p>Adds 5 nonvoting members to the Commission, all either retired superintendents, retired school business officials, or former school board members; 2 appointed by the House, 2 appointed by the Speaker; 1 appointed by the Governor</p> <p>Creates a subcommittee composed of the 5 nonvoting members which shall determine the most efficient number of school districts and proposed boundary lines, based on educational research, Vermont's geographic and cultural landscape, historic attendance patterns, the distribution of equalized grand list value per pupil, the provision of CTE, and an analysis of school locations, conditions, and capacity. The subcommittee shall submit not more than 3 boundary proposals to the GA not later than Dec. 1, 2025, in the form of a map and a detailed report explaining how the proposed boundaries meet specified criteria. The subcommittee is solely responsible for their work. The Commission as a whole may submit separate recommendations as they see fit.</p> <p>Amends the Commission's duties to include just an analysis and recommendations regarding state-level education governance, including the role of AOE, the role of SBE, and local vs. state decision making. All previous topics in the Commission's duties are repealed. The finance subcommittee is also repealed.</p> <p><i>Effective on passage</i></p>

\*Sec. originated in H.Ed  
\*\*Sec. originated in H.Ed and amended by HWM

Sec.	Citation/Section Heading	Summary
* * *Scale* * *		
3*	Scale; Intent	<p>Legislative intent language to transform education in Vermont by leveraging scale to increase equity, efficiency, and affordability</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>
4**	16 V.S.A. § 165	<p>Adds average class size minimum standards to the education quality standards statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kindergarten—12 students</li><li>• Grades 1 through 4—15 students</li><li>• Grades 5 through 12—18 students</li><li>• Multiage classrooms for K-8 shall be limited to 2 grade levels per classroom</li><li>• <b>Prek</b>, CTE classes, flexible pathways, terminal courses, AP courses, courses requiring specialized equipment, and drivers ed excluded from minimums</li><li>• Small groups for special education, EL instruction, and specialized intervention also excluded from minimums</li></ul> <p>Creates a waiver process for schools that are geographically isolated or have a plan to come into compliance to request a waiver from the SBE, who is also required to adopt rules defining “geographic isolation”</p> <p>Failure to comply with class size minimums would subject a school district/school to the same process in current law for failure to comply with education quality standards</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2026</i></p>
5*	Failure to Comply with EQS; SBE Action	<p>Prohibits the SBE from ordering school district consolidation or school consolidation for failure to comply with class size minimums if the resulting consolidation would require school construction costs in excess of the applicable district’s capital reserve account, until the GA establishes new school district boundaries and takes further action regarding the consequences for failure to meet EQS</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2026</i></p>

\*Sec. originated in H.Ed  
\*\*Sec. originated in H.Ed and amended by HWM

Sec.	Citation/Section Heading	Summary
6*	SBE; Rules; Report	<p>Requires the SBE to update the EQS 2000 series rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On or before Aug. 1, 2026 to comply with class size minimum changes to 16 V.S.A. § 165; and</li><li>• On or before July 1, 2027, adopt standards for statewide graduation requirements which shall take effect in the 2027-2028 school year for the graduating class of 2031 and every class thereafter</li></ul> <p>Requires the SBE to update the Approved Independent School 2200 series rules to include class size minimum requirements and a process for review by the SBE for failure to meet class size minimums and the corresponding consequences, which shall provide an independent school a substantially similar opportunity to come into compliance with class size minimums as it would provide a public school</p> <p>Requires the SBE to submit a written report to the GA on or before Dec. 1, 2025 with proposed standards for schools to be deemed “small by necessity.”</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>
7*	School Size; Intent	<p>Legislative intent language to set the goal of public schools that operate grades 6-12 to have a minimum average daily membership of at least 450 students, made possible at least in part by a staid aid for school construction</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>
8*	Prohibition on School Closure and Transition to Paying Tuition	<p>Requires a school district that closes a school to designate up to 3 public schools located outside the district to educate the affected resident students if the school district is unable to educate the affected students in a different school or schools within the district. The designation process in current law (16 V.S.A. § 827) would apply.</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>
9-17**	State Aid for School Construction Program	<p>Sec. 9: school construction policy language (<i>effective July 1, 2026</i>)</p> <p>Sec. 10: establishes a state aid for school construction program within the AOE (<i>effective July 1, 2026</i>)</p>

\*Sec. originated in H.Ed  
\*\*Sec. originated in H.Ed and amended by HWM

Sec.	Citation/Section Heading	Summary
		<p>Sec. 11: creates the State Aid for School Construction Advisory Board to advise the AOE on the implementation of the state aid for school construction program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Composed of Treasurer, BGS Commissioner, ED of VT Bond Bank, chair of SBE, 2 members w/relevant experience appointed by House, 2 members w/relevant experience appointed by Senate</li> <li>1<sup>st</sup> meeting Sept. 1, 2025, called to order by chair of SBE</li> <li>Report due to GA on or before Dec. 1, 2025 with recommendations for addressing the transfer of any debt obligations from current school districts to future school districts</li> <li>Effective July 1, 2025</li> </ul> <p>Sec. 12: Advisory Board sunset July 1, 2035 (<i>Effective July 1, 2025</i>)</p> <p>Sec. 13: creates School Construction Aid Special Fund, administered by AOE, to award state aid for school construction projects, grants for Facilities Master Plan Grants, admin costs, and emergency aid; consists of amounts transferred to it, amounts deposited from the Supplemental District Spending Reserve, and interest; <i>Effective July 1, 2026</i></p> <p>Sec. 14: project approval process and considerations; final awards shall be 20% of eligible debt service cost of a project, awarded annually; <i>Effective July 1, 2026</i></p> <p>Sec. 15: school district aggrieved by a school construction award may appeal to the Superior Court in the county in which the project is located; <i>Effective July 1, 2026</i></p> <p>Sec. 16: transfers rulemaking authority and existing rules related to school construction from the SBE to AOE; <i>Effective July 1, 2026</i></p> <p>Sec. 17: repeal of current statutes governing approval of funding of school construction projects and appeal language; <i>Effective July 1, 2026</i></p>
18*	16 V.S.A. § 828	<p>Amends the statute that dictates which educational programs a school district is allowed to pay tuition to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public school, located in VT or another state</li> </ul>

\*Sec. originated in H.Ed  
\*\*Sec. originated in H.Ed and amended by HWM

Sec.	Citation/Section Heading	Summary
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved independent schools that are located in Vermont, approved on or before July 1, 2025, has at least 51% of its enrolled students attending on public tuition during the 24-25 school year, and complies with class size minimum requirements in 16 V.S.A. § 165(a)(9)V.S.A. (similar waiver process to public schools)</li> <li>Independent schools meeting EQS standards</li> <li>Tutorial program approved by SBE</li> <li>Approved education program</li> <li>Therapeutic approved independent schools located in VT, another state, or another country</li> </ul> <p>Creates definition of therapeutic schools</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>
19*	Tuition Transition	<p>Allows students that are attending an approved independent school in the 24-25 school year, or who are enrolled for the 25-26 school year, to receive tuition to that school until the student graduates, regardless of whether the approved independent school would qualify for tuition under the changes made to 16 V.S.A. § 828</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>
* * *Statewide Cohesion* * *		
20*	Statewide Cohesion; Intent	<p>Indicates the GA's intent to consolidate structures and systems that are foundational to the administration of education</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>
21*	AOE; School Calendar; Grad Requirements; Report	<p>Requires AOE to recommend statewide grad requirements to the SBE on or before Jan. 1, 2026</p> <p>Requires AOE to create a statewide calendar for public schools to take effect in the 28-29 school year</p> <p>Requires AOE to submit a report to the GA, on or before Dec. 1, 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed implementation plan for statewide financial data and student information systems</li> </ul>

\*Sec. originated in H.Ed  
\*\*Sec. originated in H.Ed and amended by HWM

Sec.	Citation/Section Heading	Summary
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendations for a school construction division with AOE, with position descriptions</li> <li>Progress report regarding the development of guidance that will be provided to the field for the transition processes that will need to occur to transition to new, larger school districts, how the AOE will provide assistance during the transition, including estimated costs of such work</li> <li>Recommendations for the need of cooperative education services and the oversight of therapeutic schools at both state and local levels</li> </ul> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>
* * *State-Level Governance * * *		
22*	State-Level Governance; Intent	<p>Indicates the GA's intent to ensure that the SBE is the independent, transparent, and public facing body for public education</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>
23*	16 V.S.A. § 161	<p>Changes the appointment process for the State Board of Education. Currently, the Governor appoints all 10 board members. This amendment would have the Gov. appoint 8 members, including the 2 student members, and then the House would appoint 1 member and the Senate would appoint 1 member. The original appointing authority would make subsequent appointments when there are vacancies.</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>
24*	Transition Period Appointments; SBE	<p>All current SBE members would finish out their terms. The first vacant seat after July 1, 2025 would filled by the House, the 2<sup>nd</sup> vacancy would be filled by the Senate, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and subsequent vacancies would be filled by the Governor.</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>
25*	16 V.S.A. § 162	<p>Retains Governor's ability to remove members of the SBE, but amends the power to fill the vacancy to the original appointing authority. So if the Governor removed a member appointed by the House, the House would fill that vacancy.</p>

\*Sec. originated in H.Ed  
\*\*Sec. originated in H.Ed and amended by HWM

Sec.	Citation/Section Heading	Summary
		<i>Effective July 1, 2025</i>
26*	SBE; Review of Rules; Appropriation	<p>Requires the SBE to review all of their rules and determine which rules could be sunset/are no longer needed, which rules should be updated, and a prioritized plan for how those updates will be made.</p> <p>\$200,000 appropriation from the General Fund to AOE to provide SBE with contracted resources to complete the review and update the rules.</p> <p><i>Effective July 1, 2025</i></p>