

Vermont State Board of Education

Response to the Governor's Education Transformation Proposal

Report to the House Education Committee

February 5, 2025

Board Member General Feedback

- Support Goals of Policy Change
 - Transparency and predictability
 - Fairness, equity, and quality
- Support Specific Outcomes Proposed by Policy Change:
 - Expanding early childhood education
 - Increasing afterschool and summer programs in underserved communities
 - Ensuring every student benefits from essential arts
 - Providing additional access to mental health services for students
 - Extending and enriching college and career pathways
 - Raising teacher salaries
- Support better funding and support for Career and Technical Education and for sending district

Board Statement about Proposal

While the State Board of Education agrees that we need to change how we fund education in Vermont, without more specific details, it is unable to comment on its support or lack of support for the foundation formula contained in the Proposal at this time.

Board Member Comments About Proposal Generally

- It's hard to comment on the Proposal without seeing the full proposal and how everything fits together
- Want more detail about assumptions underlying the foundation formula
- What other formulas were considered and why were they rejected?
- How will revenue be generated?
- How does the Proposal promote fairness and quality?
- How can we ensure that the Proposal is implemented in a way that will not hurt students academically or emotionally?
- Proposal does not take into account the fact that schools can't scale down in a linear fashion
 - Ex: Limiting a 100-student K-8 school to 6 teachers and 1.5 specialists may have the effect of requiring combined classes and *reducing* opportunities
- How will Proposal account for fact that not all students that receive a particular weight actually have the same level of need?
- Whose responsibility will it be to tell a school that it should/must close? How will this decision be made?
- Will there be intra-district choice? How would this work?
- What are we losing by giving up our current system?

Board Member Comments About Proposed Shift in Rule-Making

- General consensus that Board feels that it should retain rule-making authority for some categories of rules
- Acknowledgement that not all rules need to be rules and not all rules benefit from being under SBE authority
- Acknowledgement that SBE does not currently have adequate resources to engage in rule-making
- Want reassurance that rule-making under AOE would be inclusive and responsive to public comment
- Concern about AOE capacity to engage in rule-making
- SBE is an independent and neutral body and open to the public; concern that proposed shift from SBE to AOE will result in less independence and more politicization of education through rule-making
- Concern that increased efficiency in rule-making will come at the expense of decreased equity
- Concern that shifting rule-making consolidates power of AOE in a way that will decrease the stability of our educational system as new governors are elected and appoint new secretaries to execute their initiatives