

To: The Vermont House Education Committee
From: Aliyah Ivey-Leake, Member of The Vermont State Youth Council,
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Date: February 28th, 2025
Re: Education in Vermont

Hi, my name is Aliyah Ivey-Leake. I am a 9th grader at MAU from Shaftsbury, in Bennington county, Vermont. I want to say thank you for all you do for the State and our communities. And thank you for listening to me today. A Little background knowledge about me. I have gone to public school my whole life, during my 1st grade year I was diagnosed with dyslexia, a reading and writing disability, and have been on reading services my whole life. I am a 3-season athlete and am very involved in the theatrical arts. I have been in the VT state youth council since my 7th grade year. I am here to talk about my perspective on education in Vermont.

In Vermont, we are ranked low in both reading and math averages nationally. Many graduating seniors are performing below grade level in one of these two subjects. We need to raise these percentages so that we can send capable individuals into our future community. Public education should also be more adaptive to students depending on their needs. Also, districts need to better communicate and create connections with parents of students.

If I had the opportunity to design a public school system from Vermont from scratch it would look similar to the system that we have in place today but with some major differences.

1. Having more certified teachers in school.
2. Having more options for kids who don't want to pursue higher education.
3. Every single grade K through 12 gets a recess or at least an outside break every day.
4. More case managers and reading and math specialists in schools to help underperforming students.
5. A mandatory home economics class that will teach students basic life skills like budgeting money, cooking, basic living needs.
6. Have a more adaptable curriculum that can be tailored to individual students depending on their needs, weaknesses, and strengths.

Having larger and smaller schools in the state, although it may not be cost-effective, can help students depending on their needs. If you have a student who gets stressed in a large environment, then maybe a small school would fit them better.

While smaller schools can build a stronger community within the school in town. Larger schools can offer more opportunities in more diverse classes for students to take. Larger schools can also offer more diverse and wider peer groups.

Thank you so much for listening and thank you again for all that you do.
