

To: House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs
From: Ezra Tane, Education Committee member of Vermont State Youth Council,
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Hello, my name is Ezra Tane, I am 14 years old and I am a freshman who attends Hartford High School in Hartford, Vermont. I would first like to thank you for taking the time today to listen to these important recommendations from not only the education committee, but all of the committees today. I am here today to give you some recommendations based on what the education committee thinks will benefit the youth of Vermont in a positive way.

The first recommendation we make is to act 73 the education reform bill. While we support certain aspects of act 73, such as the funding formula, the council recommends that this law should not continue to be implemented in its current state without having reforms and edits. I would now like to share a couple of the edits we came up with and these are not all just some.

1. Stress on teachers/staff/administrators/special ED teachers as well as many others. By consolidating schools you make the big decision to change the lives of many of the people who hold those job titles. Many of them will be laid off and without a job with no chance of teaching in Vermont. The ones who are still employed will be under tons of stress with many new students, bigger classes, and possibly new areas of Vermont they've never been to before which can weigh heavy on their mental health.
2. Distance: bus routes- 2 hours on a bus is too long for many reasons. For one it prohibits students from participating in afterschool activities because they are already thinking they gotta get home and have a 2 hour bus ride ahead of them. 45 minutes seems like a more reasonable time to spend on a bus but even that is a long time.
3. Last one: the last aspect I would like to talk about is Preserving Vermont's community (small schools)
By eliminating those small schools, you risk heavily tanking Vermont's community because where some people are from, that's the only school in the area so it's a nice sense of community for everyone who lives around there. It gives the chance for everyone to know everyone and really build and bond and small town community wherever they are.

The second recommendation we would like to make today is that we recommend that Financial Literacy and Life Skills (Home Economics) classes be required in schools; additionally, allowing all High School students access to alternative learning pathways (Tech Centers).

With access to these classes and alternative learning pathways, you open up the world of possibilities for many students. It's a chance for students who may not possess the skills in the



STATE YOUTH COUNCIL

classroom to show off their real talent and give them hope and a sense of belonging. If college isn't something that a student wants to do and they go to a tech center and find out they really want to work on cars, then they now have the opportunity to go right into the workforce after high school, while giving them experience and training to be the very best in their field. Additionally the life skills class can be a game changer for a lot of students as it teaches them skills that are a necessity for living after high school.

And the last recommendation we would like to make today is an Increase the number of specialist teachers (paraeducators, reading, writing and math interventionists, certified teachers, equity scholar, counselors/clinicians, Student assistance Provider, translators and ect.) in school:

These specialist teachers are necessities for every school everywhere. For many students they can make the difference between effective learning and sitting in class, staring blankly into space, not learning anything. The problem here is there isn't enough of these teachers in schools in Vermont and it's not even close. One statistic I can give you is that there are less than 50 Student assistance providers in schools in Vermont. A Student Assistance Provider is a trusted adult in the community who is funded to do prevention with youth like coalition leaders. That means that an SAP is vital in a community when we talk about prevention and since there are less than 50 in the state, many schools are sharing or are without an SAP. This is concerning because if there is no one to lead prevention in the community, then there will be no prevention period. I use that as one example and I could speak all day about how these specialized teachers really help but I just don't have the time right now.

I want to thank you for taking the time today to listen and engage with me and on behalf of the education committee, we really appreciate it.