

Governor Scott's Education Transformation Proposal

GOVERNANCE

Overview

- Current Context
- Principles for Governance Proposal
- Proposal for Five District Governance Model
- Proposal for Education Ecosystem
- Proposal for Statewide Governance

Intent of Proposal

- The proposed governance model was developed to:
 - Optimize support
 - Promote equitable budgeting
 - Foster local engagement
 - Develop a cohesive education ecosystem built upon strong public schools
- The proposal adopts a systems change approach that centers governance considerations around the goal of equity for students and taxpayers.
- Governance changes are being proposed at the state, district and school levels to promote alignment and build capacity of the whole public education system, fostering shared accountability, responsibility, and creativity.

Education Transformation: How Do We Get There?



Transform education funding



Modernize Governance and Scale



Improve Support and Guardrails for School Boards and Districts



Improve Education Quality and Equity



Tax Relief to Stabilize the System

Summary of Proposal

- 5 district model, with 5 elected part-time school boards and School Advisory Councils for every public school
- Use of Education Support Agencies (ESAs) to increase capacity, coherence and equitable delivery of support and services in key areas of strategic importance
- Reformed roles for Agency of Education and State Board of Education to clarify areas of responsibility and accountability and to ensure support and expertise are aligned to the new system
- Create an education ecosystem with defined public school attendance zones for K-12 and options for school choice that promote shared accountability and create opportunities for students to attend a school that meets their unique needs or interests (public or independent)

Current Context

System Issues

- Highly complex school board governance structure to serve a relatively small number of students
- Top heavy organizational structure creates redundancy and limits resource sharing capabilities
- Staff expertise often not placed at the right level of the state's education system to promote student outcomes
- Hyper-local budgeting within a statewide education funding system distances the voter from local education decisions
- Variability of education standards creates inconsistent expectations and performance outcomes
- Decreased enrollment, rising costs, and statewide affordability issues place significant pressures on schools
- Lack of scale creates competition for funding and tension between districts, career & technical centers and independent schools
- Preference for small schools and small classes often constrains program offerings and ability to hire specialized instructors

Impact of System Issues

- Fragile system where many districts struggle to ensure operational continuity
- High cost of operating school portfolio diverts dollars away from students and limits funding to address deferred building maintenance and capital needs
- Lack of scale limits opportunities, creates competition for dollars, and makes Vermont more vulnerable to shifts in federal funding and state economic changes
- Inequity in terms of students' access to a robust course list, electives, sports and enrichment opportunities
- Lack of incentives and support to address challenges locally

District Governance Proposal

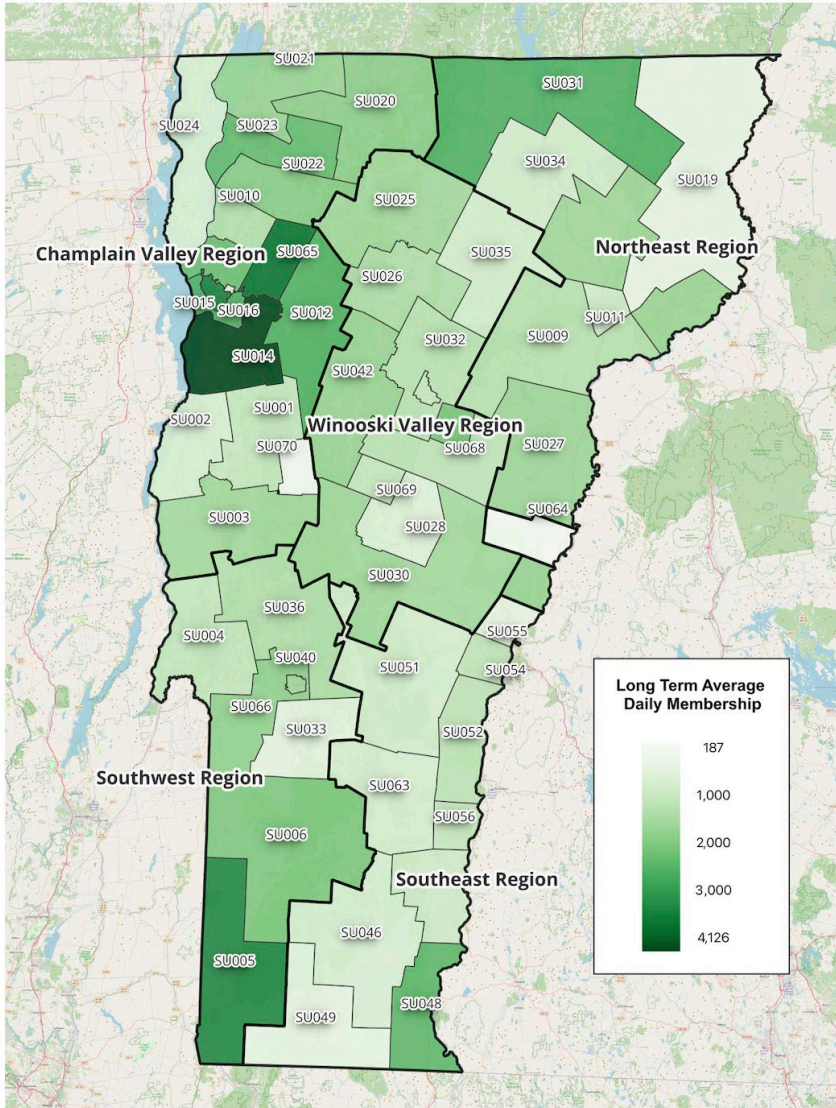
Goals

- Achieve scale to reduce administrative burden and increase opportunities for educational leadership;
- Expand access to specialized services by ensuring that every district can hire experts in key areas including curriculum, preK, facilities management, Special Education and professional development;
- Promote equitable decision-making by creating larger communities that are home to students with diverse needs and characteristics; and
- Achieve similar tax capacity by creating districts that are closer to parity in property wealth.

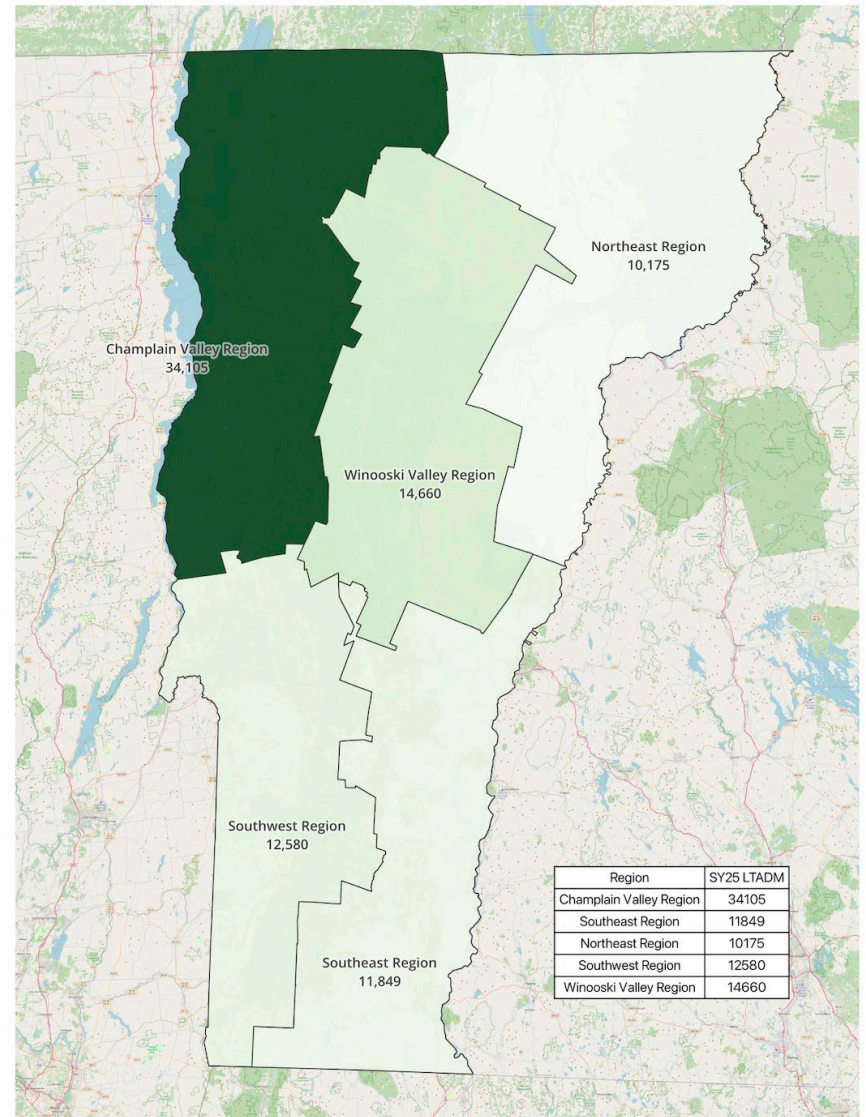
5 District Model

- Eliminates the supervisory union structure, moving from 119 school districts to 5 regional districts
- Each school district would be governed by an elected, part-time board and operated by 5 district offices for a total of 5 school boards and 5 central offices across the state
- Considerations: inter-state districts and exceptions for out-of-state tuition in remote areas

Long Term Average Daily Membership by SU (SY25)



Long Term Average Daily Membership by Region (SY25)



Proposed Districts: ADM, Demographics and Wealth

District	Two-Year Average ADM	FRL %	EL %	Net GL/ADM
Champlain Valley Region	34,104.77	36%	4%	1,276,529
Southwest Region	12,579.76	51%	1%	1,181,238
Northeast Region	10,174.70	55%	0%	917,317
Winooski Valley Region	14,659.62	45%	1%	1,362,387
Southeast Region	11,849.26	47%	1%	1,937,837
State	83,368.11	43%	2%	\$1,327,400

Table 3. District-level Staffing in Adjusted EB Model Base

- The EB Model is based on a district of 3,900 students, and recommends a total of 29 district-level staff positions
- Larger districts would have more staff and be staffed differently but would cost the same amount per student

Office	Position	FTE
Superintendent's Office	Superintendent	1.00
	Secretary/Clerical	1.00
Business Office	Business Manager	1.00
	Directors	1.00
	Secretary/Clerical	5.00
Curriculum and Support	Assistant Supt. for Instruction	1.00
	Directors: Pupil Service/ Assessment/ Evaluation	2.00
	Psychologist	3.90
	Secretary/Clerical	3.00
Technology	Director of Technology	1.00
	Secretary/Clerical	1.00
	Network/Systems Supervisor	2.00
	School Computer Technician	4.00
Operations & Maintenance	Director of O&M	1.00
	Secretary/Clerical	1.00

School Boards

- The five new districts will each have a board with school board members
 - Members will be elected by voting districts, or wards, with one from each district/ward
 - Given the size of the Champlain Valley District there may be reason to add two additional board members, elected by voting district
 - Voting districts or wards will be balanced for purposes of proportional representation

School Advisory Committees

- Every public school required to have a School Advisory Committee, led by the building-level principal with membership that includes: parents/caregivers, students, educators, community members
- Duties will include:
 - Provide input to the District School Board on equitable budgeting parameters and feedback on the proposed school budget
 - Development of the School Improvement Plan, required by state and federal law
 - Direction over a discretionary amount within the budget that the school board will be required to set aside for that purpose

Proposal for an Education Ecosystem

School Choice Schools

- Eliminate Average Announced Tuition and exceptions for higher tuition, move to Base + Weight
- No non-operating districts
- Attendance zones drawn so that each student has an assigned K-12 public school
- Future considerations include any administrative support for the district office (portion of Base + Weight)
- Criteria for school choice approval (shared accountability with public schools)
- Consideration around allowing public schools to also be a School Choice School (SCS) - (opportunity to create special programs that all students in a district could access)
- Enrollment process for SCS may include preferences for geography and siblings

Education Service Agencies

1. Build capacity in the education system to deliver key services and support that cannot otherwise be met by the districts or the AOE;
2. Increase coherence across the system and should include close collaboration and alignment between the ESA and the AOE to limit mixed messaging or the creation of competing priorities;
3. Increase equity through the consistent delivery of high-quality services and support in a small, rural state; and
4. Support key areas of strategic importance where a statewide or cross-district approach yields specific, measurable benefits

Policy Considerations should include amendment to Act 168 to align with proposed governance structure and principles and goals outlined above.

Statewide Governance

Current Role and Organization of the AOE

- The Agency of Education has a large number of specifically enumerated duties. The most high-leverage of those include:
 - Serving as the sole state agency to administer federal funds for education
 - Identifying the educational goals for the education system
 - Evaluating the performance of the education system
 - Overseeing compliance with all education laws and regulations
 - Administering statewide educational data and reporting
 - Licensing professional educators

Current Role and Organization of State Board of Education

- 10 appointed members, including 2 students, appointed by the Governor
- Historically responsible for regulation and governance of:
 - Student attendance records
 - Student performance
 - Adult basic education
 - Approval of independent schools
 - Postsecondary approvals
 - Disbursement of funds, and;
 - Ensuring equitable access to quality education
- [State Board Rules | Agency of Education \(vermont.gov\)](#)

Current System: Responsibility and Accountability

- Vermont's current statewide accountability and responsibility for education is shared between the Agency of Education and the State Board of Education.
- For purposes of federal regulation, AOE is the governmental unit primarily responsible for the supervision of elementary and secondary education in the state
- The Agency is the single state-level entity that is **accountable** to the federal government for federal programs and requirements.

Current System: Responsibility and Accountability

- Authority of the Agency over certain federally-mandated activities is limited by the terms of rules adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE)
 - Special education
 - Student achievement standards and assessment through EQS and CTE
- Significant overlap of key areas including vision/goal setting and evaluation of district attainment of student outcomes and in meeting standards
- The statutory assignment of duties to the SBE or to the Agency is the result of an incomplete division of statutory functions at the time when the General Assembly created the Agency out of the former Department

Proposed Role of the State Board of Education

- Align responsibility and accountability to places in the system where board-driven support and oversight will be most effective.
 - Oversight of appeals process for schools of choice
 - Annual review of district school board District Quality Standards relevant to district school boards (Rule 113.1-113.3 in [Rule Series 100](#))
 - Approve equity budget model for each district
 - Develop and maintain model policies for school boards
 - Contract for and ensure delivery of school board annual training

Proposed Role of the AOE

- The Agency will retain its current responsibilities and will include increased supports to the field.
- New responsibilities through rulemaking that are intended to ensure strong implementation of the new finance, governance and education quality systems, and to improve district implementation of education quality standards and district quality standards.

Questions?

