

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Education to which was referred House Bill No. 454
3 entitled “An act relating to transforming Vermont’s education governance,
4 quality, and finance systems” respectfully reports that it has considered the
5 same and recommends that the Senate propose to the House that the bill be
6 amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu
7 thereof the following:

8 * * * Intent * * *

9 Sec. 1. INTENT

10 It is the intent of the General Assembly to:

11 (1) work strategically, intentionally, and thoughtfully to ensure that each
12 incremental change made to Vermont’s public education system provides
13 strength and support to its only constitutionally required governmental service;

14 (2) ensure each student is provided substantially equal educational
15 opportunities that will prepare them to thrive in a 21st-century world; and

16 (3) while transitioning to a foundation formula and achieving scale,
17 prioritize the following policy goals within the foundation formula and through
18 education transformation:

19 (A) expanding early childhood education;

20 (B) increasing afterschool and summer programs in underserved
21 communities;

1 (C) ensuring every student benefits from essential arts, including
2 music, fine arts, and world languages;

3 (D) providing additional student access to mental health services;

4 (E) extending and enriching college and career pathways, beginning
5 in middle school and culminating in graduates being prepared to take on
6 critical jobs in high-demand industries;

7 (F) raising teacher salaries; and

8 (G) ensuring that the funding provided by different weights actually
9 benefits the students that qualify for weights.

10 * * * Commission on the Future of Public Education * * *

11 Sec. 2. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 1 is amended to read:

12 Sec. 1. THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC
13 EDUCATION; REPORTS

14 (a) Creation. There is hereby created the Commission on the Future of
15 Public Education in Vermont. The right to education is fundamental for the
16 success of Vermont's children in a rapidly changing society and global
17 marketplace as well as for the State's own economic and social prosperity.
18 The Commission shall study the provision of education in Vermont and make
19 recommendations for a statewide vision for Vermont's public education system
20 to ensure that all students are afforded substantially equal educational
21 opportunities in an efficient, sustainable, and stable education system. The

1 Commission shall also make recommendations for the strategic policy changes
2 necessary to make Vermont's educational vision a reality for all Vermont
3 students.

4 (b) Membership. The Commission shall be composed of the following
5 members and, to the extent possible, the members shall represent the State's
6 geographic, gender, racial, and ethnic diversity:

7 (1) the Secretary of Education or designee;

8 (2) the Chair of the State Board of Education or designee;

9 (3) the Tax Commissioner or designee;

10 (4) one current member of the House of Representatives, appointed by
11 the Speaker of the House;

12 (5) one current member of the Senate, appointed by the Committee on
13 Committees;

14 (6) one representative from the Vermont School Boards Association
15 (VSBA), appointed by the VSBA Executive Director;

16 (7) one representative from the Vermont Principals' Association (VPA),
17 appointed by the VPA Executive Director;

18 (8) one representative from the Vermont Superintendents Association
19 (VSA), appointed by the VSA Executive Director;

20 (9) one representative from the Vermont National Education
21 Association (VTNEA), appointed by the VTNEA Executive Director;

1 (10) one representative from the Vermont Association of School
2 Business Officials (VASBO) with experience in school construction projects,
3 appointed by the President of VASBO;

4 (11) the Chair of the Census-Based Funding Advisory Group, created
5 under 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173;

6 (12) the Executive Director of the Vermont Rural Education
7 Collaborative; and

8 (13) one representative from the Vermont Independent Schools
9 Association (VISA), appointed by the President of VISA.

10 (c) Steering group. On or before July 1, 2024, the Speaker of the House
11 shall appoint two members of the Commission, the Committee on Committees
12 shall appoint two members of the Commission, and the Governor shall appoint
13 two members of the Commission to serve as members of a steering group. The
14 steering group shall provide leadership to the Commission and shall work with
15 a consultant or consultants to analyze the issues, challenges, and opportunities
16 facing Vermont's public education system, as well as develop and propose a
17 work plan to formalize the process through which the Commission shall seek
18 to achieve its final recommendations. The formal work plan shall be approved
19 by a majority of the Commission members. The steering group ~~shall form a~~
20 ~~subcommittee of the Commission to address education finance topics in greater~~
21 ~~depth and~~ may form one or more additional subcommittees of the Commission

1 to address ~~other~~ key topics in greater depth, as necessary. ~~The steering group~~
2 ~~may appoint non-Commission members to the education finance~~
3 ~~subcommittee. All other subcommittees shall be composed solely of~~
4 ~~Commission members.~~

5 (d) Collaboration and information review.

6 (1) The Commission ~~shall~~ may seek input from and collaborate with key
7 stakeholders, as directed by the steering group. At a minimum, the
8 Commission shall consult with:

- 9 (A) the Department of Mental Health;
- 10 (B) the Department of Labor;
- 11 (C) the President of the University of Vermont or designee;
- 12 (D) the Chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation or
13 designee;
- 14 (E) a representative from the Prekindergarten Education
15 Implementation Committee;
- 16 (F) the Office of Racial Equity;
- 17 (G) a representative with expertise in the Community Schools model
18 in Vermont;
- 19 (H) the Vermont Youth Council;
- 20 (I) the Commission on Public School Employee Health Benefits; and

1 (J) an organization committed to ensuring equal representation and
2 educational equity.

3 (2) The Commission shall also review and take into consideration
4 existing educational laws and policy, including legislative reports the
5 Commission deems relevant to its work and, at a minimum, 2015 Acts and
6 Resolves No. 46, 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173, 2022 Acts and Resolves
7 No. 127, and 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 76.

8 (e) Duties of the Commission. The Commission shall study Vermont's
9 public education system and make recommendations to ensure all students are
10 afforded quality educational opportunities in an efficient, sustainable, and
11 equitable education system that will enable students to achieve the highest
12 academic outcomes. The result of the Commission's work shall be a
13 ~~recommendation for a statewide vision for Vermont's public education system,~~
14 ~~with recommendations for the policy changes necessary to make Vermont's~~
15 ~~educational vision a reality~~ recommendations for the State-level education
16 governance system, including the roles and responsibilities of the Agency of
17 Education and the State Board of Education. In creating and making its
18 recommendations, the Commission shall engage in the following:

19 (1) Public engagement. The Commission shall conduct not fewer than
20 14 public meetings to inform the work required under this section. At least one
21 meeting of the Commission as a whole or a subcommittee of the Commission

1 shall be held in each county. The Commission shall publish a draft of its final
2 recommendations on or before October 1, 2025, solicit public feedback, and
3 incorporate such feedback into its final recommendations. When submitting its
4 final recommendations to the General Assembly, the Commission shall include
5 all public feedback received as an addendum to its final report. The public
6 feedback process shall include:

7 (A) a minimum 30-day public comment period, during which time
8 the Commission shall accept written comments from the public and
9 stakeholders; and

10 (B) a public outreach plan that maximizes public engagement and
11 includes notice of the availability of language assistance services when
12 requested.

13 (2) Policy considerations. In developing its recommendations, the
14 Commission shall consider and prioritize the following topics:

15 (A) Governance, resources, and administration. The Commission
16 shall study and make recommendations regarding education governance at the
17 State level, including the role of the Agency of Education in the provision of
18 services and support for the education system. Recommendations under this
19 subdivision (A) shall include, at a minimum, the following:

1 (i) whether changes need to be made to the structure of the
2 Agency of Education, including whether it better serves the recommended
3 education vision of the State as an agency or a department;

4 (ii) what are the staffing needs of the Agency of Education;

5 (iii) whether changes need to be made to the composition, role,
6 and function of the State Board of Education to better serve the recommended
7 education vision of the State;

8 (iv) what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of
9 local control and what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of
10 control at the State level, including a process for the community to have a
11 voice in decisions regarding school closures and, if so, recommendations for
12 what that process shall entail; and

13 (v) ~~the effective integration of career and technical education in~~
14 ~~the recommended education vision of the State~~ an analysis of the impact of
15 health care costs on the Education Fund, including recommendations for
16 whether, and if so, what, changes need to be made to contain costs.

17 (B) ~~Physical size and footprint of the education system. The~~
18 ~~Commission shall study and make recommendations regarding how the unique~~
19 ~~geographical and socioeconomic needs of different communities should factor~~
20 ~~into the provision of education in Vermont, taking into account and building~~
21 ~~upon the recommendations of the State Aid to School Construction Working~~

1 ~~Group. Recommendations under this subdivision (B) shall include, at a~~
2 ~~minimum, the following:~~

3 ~~(i) an analysis and recommendation for the most efficient and~~
4 ~~effective number and location of school buildings, school districts, and~~
5 ~~supervisory unions needed to achieve Vermont's vision for education,~~
6 ~~provided that if there is a recommendation for any change, the~~
7 ~~recommendation shall include an implementation plan;~~

8 ~~(ii) an analysis of the capacity and ability to staff all public~~
9 ~~schools with a qualified workforce, driven by data on class size~~
10 ~~recommendations;~~

11 ~~(iii) analysis of whether, and if so, how, collaboration with~~
12 ~~Vermont's postsecondary schools may support the development and retention~~
13 ~~of a qualified educator workforce;~~

14 ~~(iv) an analysis of the current town tuition program and whether,~~
15 ~~and if so, what, changes are necessary to meet Vermont's vision for education,~~
16 ~~including the legal and financial impact of funding independent schools and~~
17 ~~other private institutions, including consideration of the following:~~

18 ~~(I) the role designation, under 16 V.S.A. § 827, should play in~~
19 ~~the delivery of public education; and~~

20 ~~(II) the financial impact to the Education Fund of public dollars~~
21 ~~being used in schools located outside Vermont; and~~

1 ~~(v) an analysis of the current use of private therapeutic schools in~~
2 ~~the provision of special education services and whether, and if so, what,~~
3 ~~changes are necessary to meet Vermont's special education needs, including~~
4 ~~the legal and financial impact of funding private therapeutic schools.~~

5 [Repealed.]

6 ~~(C) The role of public schools. The Commission shall study and~~
7 ~~make recommendations regarding the role public schools should play in both~~
8 ~~the provision of education and the social and emotional well-being of students.~~
9 ~~Recommendations under this subdivision (C) shall include, at a minimum, the~~
10 ~~following:~~

11 ~~(i) how public education in Vermont should be delivered;~~

12 ~~(ii) whether Vermont's vision for public education shall include~~
13 ~~the provision of wraparound supports and collocation of services;~~

14 ~~(iii) whether, and if so, how, collaboration with Vermont's~~
15 ~~postsecondary schools may support and strengthen the delivery of public~~
16 ~~education; and~~

17 ~~(iv) what the consequences are for the Commission's~~
18 ~~recommendations regarding the role of public schools and other service~~
19 ~~providers, including what the role of public schools means for staffing,~~
20 ~~funding, and any other affected system, with the goal of most efficiently~~
21 ~~utilizing State funds and services and maximizing federal funding. [Repealed.]~~

1 (D) ~~Education finance system. The Commission shall explore the~~
2 ~~efficacy and potential equity gains of changes to the education finance system,~~
3 ~~including weighted educational opportunity payments as a method to fund~~
4 ~~public education. The Commission's recommendations shall be intended to~~
5 ~~result in an education funding system designed to afford substantially equal~~
6 ~~access to a quality basic education for all Vermont students in accordance with~~
7 ~~State v. Brigham, 166 Vt. 246 (1997). Recommendations under this~~
8 ~~subdivision (D) shall include, at a minimum, the following:~~

9 (i) ~~allowable uses for the Education Fund that shall ensure~~
10 ~~sustainable and equitable use of State funds;~~

11 (ii) ~~the method for setting tax rates to sustain allowable uses of the~~
12 ~~Education Fund;~~

13 (iii) ~~whether, and if so, what, alternative funding models would~~
14 ~~create a more affordable, sustainable, and equitable education finance system~~
15 ~~in Vermont, including the consideration of a statutory, formal base amount of~~
16 ~~per pupil education spending and whether school districts should be allowed to~~
17 ~~spend above the base amount;~~

18 (iv) ~~adjustments to the excess spending threshold, including~~
19 ~~recommendations that target specific types of spending;~~

20 (v) ~~the implementation of education spending caps on different~~
21 ~~services, including administrative and support services and categorical aid;~~

1 ~~(vi) how to strengthen the understanding and connection between~~
2 ~~school budget votes and property tax bills;~~

3 ~~(vii) adjustments to the property tax credit thresholds to better~~
4 ~~match need to the benefit;~~

5 ~~(viii) a system for ongoing monitoring of the Education Fund and~~
6 ~~Vermont's education finance system, to include consideration of a standing~~
7 ~~Education Fund advisory committee;~~

8 ~~(ix) an analysis of the impact of healthcare costs on the Education~~
9 ~~Fund, including recommendations for whether, and if so, what, changes need~~
10 ~~to be made to contain costs; and~~

11 ~~(x) implementation details for any recommended changes to the~~
12 ~~education funding system. [Repealed.]~~

13 ~~(E) Additional considerations. The Commission may consider any~~
14 ~~other topic, factor, or issue that it deems relevant to its work and~~
15 ~~recommendations. [Repealed.]~~

16 (f) Reports. The Commission shall prepare and submit to the General
17 Assembly the following:

18 (1) a formal, written work plan, which shall include a communication
19 plan to maximize public engagement, on or before September 15, 2024;

1 (2) a written report containing its preliminary findings and
2 recommendations, including short-term cost containment considerations for the
3 2025 legislative session, on or before December 15, 2024; and

4 (3) a written report containing its final findings and recommendations
5 ~~for a statewide vision for Vermont's public education system and the policy~~
6 ~~changes necessary to make that educational vision a reality~~ based on its
7 analysis of the State-level governance topics contained in subdivision (e)(2)(A)
8 of this section, on or before ~~December 1, 2025; and~~ September 30, 2025

9 ~~(4) proposed legislative language to advance any recommendations for~~
10 ~~the education funding system on or before December 15, 2025.~~

11 (g) Assistance. The Agency of Education shall contract with one or more
12 independent consultants or facilitators to provide technical and legal assistance
13 to the Commission for the work required under this section. For the purposes
14 of scheduling meetings and providing administrative assistance, the
15 Commission shall have the assistance of the Agency of Education. The
16 Agency shall also provide the educational and financial data necessary to
17 facilitate the work of the Commission. School districts shall comply with
18 requests from the Agency to assist in data collections.

19 (h) Meetings.

20 (1) The Secretary of Education shall call the first meeting of the
21 Commission to occur on or before July 15, 2024.

1 (2) The Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore shall
2 jointly select a Commission chair.

3 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

4 (4) Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Vermont's Open
5 Meeting Law pursuant to 1 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 2.

6 (5) The Commission shall cease to exist on ~~December 31, 2025~~ October
7 15, 2025.

8 (i) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Commission shall
9 be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as
10 permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 30 meetings, including
11 subcommittee meetings. These payments shall be made from monies
12 appropriated to the Agency of Education.

13 * * * School District Boundary Task Force * * *

14 Sec. 3. SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARY TASK FORCE; REPORT;
15 MAPS

16 (a) School District Boundary Task Force. There is created the School
17 District Boundary Task Force that shall determine the most efficient number of
18 school districts and supervisory unions and proposed boundary lines, based on
19 educational research; Vermont's geographic and cultural landscape; historic
20 attendance patterns; the distribution of equalized grand list value per pupil; the
21 provision of career and technical education; and a comprehensive analysis of

1 school locations, facility conditions, student capacity, and transportation
2 infrastructure. The Task Force shall also make recommendations for an
3 alternative process to encourage school district consolidation if the General
4 Assembly fails to enact new school district boundaries not later than January
5 31, 2026.

6 (b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following
7 members:

8 (1) four current members of the House of Representatives, not all from
9 the same political party nor from the same school district, who shall be
10 appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

11 (2) four current members of the Senate, not all from the same political
12 party nor from the same school district, who shall be appointed by the
13 Committee on Committees.

14 (c) Powers and duties.

15 (1) Boundary proposal. The Task Force shall recommend not less than
16 one school district and supervisory union boundary proposal to the General
17 Assembly. All recommendations shall consider the use of supervisory unions
18 and supervisory districts. In making its recommendations, the Task Force may
19 also consider and make recommendations for the optimal location of schools,
20 including CTE programs. The Task Force shall also consider and make
21 recommendations for the governance models of the new proposed school

1 districts, including how school board representation models shall be decided.

2 The proposed school district boundaries and supervisory union boundaries
3 shall:

4 (A) increase access to excellent educational opportunities for all
5 students;

6 (B) gain efficiencies and potential cost savings without harming
7 educational opportunities or community connections;

8 (c) maximize opportunities to support local elementary schools,
9 central middle schools, and regional high schools, with the least disruption to
10 students;

11 (C) provide access to education for their resident students in grades
12 kindergarten through 12;

13 (D) provide access to career and technical education (CTE) for all
14 grade-eligible students;

15 (E) to the extent practical, not separate towns within school districts
16 as those boundaries exist on July 1, 2025;

17 (F) to the extent practical, consider the availability of regional
18 services for students, such as designated agencies, and how those services
19 would integrate into the new proposed school district boundaries; and

1 (G) allow for the continuation of a tuitioning system that provides
2 continued access to independent schools that have served geographic areas that
3 do not operate public schools for the grades served by the independent schools.

4 (2) Alternative merger proposal. The Task Force shall also make
5 recommendations for an alternative process to encourage and incentivize
6 school districts to move toward larger, consolidated, and sustainable models of
7 education governance should the General Assembly fail to enact new school
8 district and supervisory union boundaries not later than January 31, 2026. The
9 Task Force’s recommendations shall require the use of the union school district
10 exploration, formation, and organization processes governed by 16 V.S.A.
11 chapter 11. The process recommended by the Task Force shall be designed to
12 encourage local decisions and actions that:

13 (A) provide high-quality, substantially equal educational
14 opportunities statewide;

15 (B) maximize operational efficiencies that result in education costs
16 that parents, voters, and taxpayers can afford; and

17 (C) promote transparency and accountability.

18 (d) Public engagement. The Task Force shall maximize public input and
19 feedback regarding the development of both the proposed new school district
20 and supervisory union boundaries, as well as the alternative consolidation
21 process recommendations.

1 (e) Assistance. The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical,
2 and legal assistance of the Office of Legislative Operations, the Office of
3 Legislative Counsel, the Joint Fiscal Office, and the Agency of Digital
4 Services, Vermont Center for Geographic Information. The Task Force may
5 also retain the services of one or more independent third parties to provide
6 contracted resources as the Task Force deems necessary.

7 (f) Report and map. On or before December 15, 2025, the Task Force shall
8 submit the following to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the
9 House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, the Senate
10 Committee on Government Operation, the House Committee on Ways and
11 Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance:

12 (1) Report. The subcommittee shall submit a written report with a
13 description of the proposed school district and supervisory union boundaries,
14 the recommended governance models and representation considerations, and
15 the alternative consolidation process. The report shall also include details
16 regarding the policy decisions made to arrive at the proposed boundaries and
17 alternative consolidation process, including an explanation of how the
18 proposed boundaries meet the requirements of subdivisions (c)(1)(A)–(G) of
19 this section and the alternative consolidation process meets the goals contained
20 in subdivisions (c)(2)(A)–(C) of this section.

1 (2) Map. The subcommittee shall also submit one, or if the committee is
2 unable to reach a majority consensus, two, detailed maps for each school
3 district and supervisory union boundary proposal, which, in addition to the
4 boundaries themselves, shall include:

5 (A) average daily membership for each proposed supervisory union
6 or supervisory district, as applicable, for the 2023–2024 school year;

7 (B) the member towns for each supervisory union or supervisory
8 district, as applicable;

9 (C) the location of public schools and nontherapeutic approved
10 independent schools that are eligible to receive public tuition as of July 1,
11 2025, and the grades operated by each of those schools;

12 (D) the five-year facility condition index score for each public
13 school;

14 (E) 10-year change in enrollment between 2013 and 2023 for each
15 school;

16 (F) the transportation infrastructure within each supervisory union or
17 supervisory district, as applicable; and

18 (G) the grand list value within each proposed school district
19 boundary.

20 (g) Meetings.

1 (1) The Office of Legislative Counsel shall call the first meeting of the
2 Task Force to occur on or before July 15, 2025.

3 (2) The Task Force shall select co-chairs from among its members at the
4 first meeting, one a member of the House and the other a member of the
5 Senate.

6 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

7 (4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on January 31, 2026.

8 (h) Compensation and reimbursement. For attendance at meetings during
9 adjournment of the General Assembly, members of the Working Group shall
10 be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant
11 to 2 V.S.A. § 23 for not more than 16 meetings. These payments shall be
12 made from monies appropriated to the General Assembly.

13 (i) Appropriation. The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated to the Office of
14 Legislative Counsel from the General Fund in fiscal year 2026 to hire one or
15 more consultants pursuant to subsection (e) of this section.

16 * * * State Aid for School Construction * * *

17 Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 3440 is added to read:

18 § 3440. STATEMENT OF POLICY

19 It is the intent of this chapter to encourage the efficient use of public funds
20 to modernize school infrastructure in alignment with current educational needs.
21 School construction projects supported by this chapter should be developed

1 taking consideration of standards of quality for public schools under section
2 165 of this title and prioritizing cost, geographic accessibility, 21st century
3 education facilities standards, statewide enrollment trends, and capacity and
4 scale that support best educational practices.

5 Sec. 5. 16 V.S.A. § 3442 is added to read:

6 § 3442. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

7 The Agency of Education shall be responsible for implementing the State
8 Aid for School Construction Program according to the provisions of this
9 chapter. The Agency shall be responsible for:

10 (1) reviewing all preliminary applications for State school construction
11 aid and issuing an approval or denial in accordance with section 3445 of this
12 chapter;

13 (2) adopting rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 pertaining to school
14 construction and capital outlay, including rules to specify a point prioritization
15 methodology and a bonus incentive structure aligned with the legislative intent
16 expressed in section 3440 of this title;

17 (3) including as part of its budget submitted to the Governor pursuant to
18 subdivision 212(21) of this title its annual school construction funding request;

19 (4) developing a prequalification and review process for project delivery
20 consultants and architecture and engineering firms specializing in

1 prekindergarten through grade 12 school design, renovation, or construction
2 and maintaining a list of such prequalified firms and consultants;

3 (5) providing technical assistance and guidance to school districts and
4 supervisory unions on all phases of school capital projects;

5 (6) providing technical advice and assistance, training, and education to
6 school districts, supervisory unions, general contractors, subcontractors,
7 construction or project managers, designers, and other vendors in the planning,
8 maintenance, and establishment of school facility space;

9 (7) maintaining a current list of school construction projects that have
10 received preliminary approval, projects that have received final approval, and
11 the priority points awarded to each project;

12 (8) collecting, maintaining, and making publicly available quarterly
13 progress reports of all ongoing school construction projects that shall include,
14 at a minimum, the costs of the project and the time schedule of the project;

15 (9) recommending policies and procedures designed to reduce
16 borrowing for school construction programs at both State and local levels;

17 (10) conducting a needs survey at least every five years to ascertain the
18 capital construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and other capital needs for
19 all public schools and maintaining such data in a publicly accessible format;

20 (11) developing a formal enrollment projection model or using
21 projection models already available;

1 (12) encouraging school districts and supervisory unions to investigate
2 opportunities for the maximum utilization of space in and around the district or
3 supervisory union;

4 (13) collecting and maintaining a clearinghouse of prototypical school
5 plans, as appropriate, that may be consulted by eligible applicants;

6 (14) retaining the services of consultants, as necessary, to effectuate the
7 roles and responsibilities listed within this section; and

8 (15) notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), annually on or before December
9 15, submitting a written report to the General Assembly regarding the status
10 and implementation of the State Aid for School Construction Program,
11 including the data required to be collected pursuant to this section.

12 Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. § 3443 is added to read:

13 § 3443. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY

14 BOARD

15 (a) Creation. There is hereby created the State Aid for School Construction
16 Advisory Board, which shall advise the Agency on the implementation of the
17 State Aid for School Construction Program in accordance with the provisions
18 of this chapter, including the adoption of rules, setting of statewide priorities,
19 criteria for project approval, and recommendations for project approval and
20 prioritization.

21 (b) Membership.

1 (1) Composition. The Board shall be composed of the following eight
2 members:

3 (A) four members who shall serve as ex officio members:

4 (i) the State Treasurer or designee;

5 (ii) the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services or
6 designee;

7 (iii) the Executive Director of the Vermont Bond Bank or
8 designee; and

9 (iv) the Chair of the State Board of Education or designee; and

10 (B) four members, none of whom shall be a current member of the
11 General Assembly, who shall serve four-year terms as follows:

12 (i) two members, appointed by the Speaker of the House, each of
13 whom shall have expertise in education or construction, real estate, or finance
14 and one of whom shall represent a supervisory union; and

15 (ii) two members, appointed by the Committee on Committees,
16 each of whom shall have expertise in education or construction, real estate, or
17 finance and one of whom shall be an educator.

18 (2) Members with four-year terms.

19 (A) A member with a term limit shall serve a term of four years and
20 until a successor is appointed. A term shall begin on January 1 of the year of
21 appointment and run through December 31 of the last year of the term. Terms

1 of these members shall be staggered so that not all terms expire at the same
2 time.

3 (B) A vacancy created before the expiration of a term shall be filled
4 in the same manner as the original appointment for the unexpired portion of the
5 term.

6 (C) A member with a term limit shall not serve more than two
7 consecutive terms. A member appointed to fill a vacancy created before the
8 expiration of a term shall not be deemed to have served a term for the purpose
9 of this subdivision (C).

10 (c) Duties. The Board shall advise the Agency on the implementation of
11 the State Aid for School Construction Program in accordance with the
12 provisions of this chapter, including:

13 (1) rules pertaining to school construction and capital outlay;

14 (2) project priorities;

15 (3) proposed legislation the Board deems desirable or necessary related
16 to the State Aid for School Construction Program, the provisions of this
17 chapter, and any related laws;

18 (4) policies and procedures designed to reduce borrowing for school
19 construction programs at both State and local levels;

20 (5) development of a formal enrollment projection model or the
21 consideration of using projection models already available;

1 (6) processes and procedures necessary to apply for, receive, administer,
2 and comply with the conditions and requirements of any grant, gift,
3 appropriation of property, services, or monies;

4 (7) the collection and maintenance of a clearinghouse of prototypical
5 school plans that may be consulted by eligible applicants and recommended
6 incentives to utilize such prototypes;

7 (8) the determination of eligible cost components of projects for funding
8 or reimbursement, including partial or full eligibility for project components
9 for which the benefit is shared between the school and other municipal and
10 community entities;

11 (9) development of a long-term vision for a statewide capital plan in
12 accordance with needs and projected funding;

13 (10) collection and maintenance of data on all public school facilities in
14 the State, including information on size, usage, enrollment, available facility
15 space, and maintenance;

16 (11) advising districts on the use of a needs survey to ascertain the
17 capital construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and other capital needs for
18 schools across the State; and

19 (12) encouraging school districts and supervisory unions to investigate
20 opportunities for the maximum utilization of space in and around the district or
21 supervisory union.

1 (d) Meetings.

2 (1) The Chair of the State Board of Education shall call the first meeting
3 of the Board to occur on or before September 1, 2025.

4 (2) The Board shall select a chair from among its members at the first
5 meeting.

6 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

7 (4) The Board shall meet not more than six times per year.

8 (e) Assistance. The Board shall have the administrative, technical, and
9 legal assistance of the Agency of Education.

10 (f) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Board shall be
11 entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted
12 under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than six meetings per year.

13 (g) Report. On or before December 15, 2025, the Board shall submit a
14 written report to the House Committees on Education and on Ways and Means
15 and the Senate Committees on Education and on Finance on recommendations
16 for addressing the transfer of any debt obligations from current school districts
17 to future school districts as contemplated by Vermont's education
18 transformation.

1 Sec. 7. PROSPECTIVE REPEAL OF STATE AID FOR SCHOOL
2 CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY BOARD

3 16 V.S.A. § 3443 (State Aid for School Construction Advisory Board) is
4 repealed on July 1, 2035.

5 Sec. 8. 16 V.S.A. § 3444 is added to read:

6 § 3444. SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AID SPECIAL FUND

7 (a) Creation. There is created the School Construction Aid Special Fund,
8 to be administered by the Agency of Education. Monies in the Fund shall be
9 used for the purposes of:

10 (1) awarding aid to school construction projects under section 3445 of
11 this title;

12 (2) awarding grants through the Facilities Master Plan Grant Program
13 established in section 3441 of this title;

14 (3) funding administrative costs of the State Aid for School
15 Construction Program; and

16 (4) awarding emergency aid under section 3445 of this title.

17 (b) Funds. The Fund shall consist of:

18 (1) any amounts transferred or appropriated to it by the General
19 Assembly;

20 (2) any amounts deposited in the Fund from the Supplemental District
21 Spending Reserve; and

1 (3) any interest earned by the Fund.

2 Sec. 9. 16 V.S.A. § 3445 is added to read:

3 § 3445. APPROVAL AND FUNDING OF SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION
4 PROJECTS

5 (a) Construction aid.

6 (1) Preliminary application for construction aid. A school district
7 eligible for assistance under section 3447 of this title that intends to construct
8 or purchase a new school, or make extensive additions or alterations to its
9 existing school, and desires to avail itself of State school construction aid shall
10 submit a written preliminary application to the Secretary. A preliminary
11 application shall include information required by the Agency by rule and shall
12 specify the need for and purpose of the project.

13 (2) Approval of preliminary application.

14 (A) When reviewing a preliminary application for approval, the
15 Secretary shall consider:

16 (i) regional educational opportunities and needs, including school
17 building capacities across school district boundaries, and available
18 infrastructure in neighboring communities;

19 (ii) economic efficiencies;

20 (iii) the suitability of an existing school building to continue to
21 meet educational needs; and

1 (iv) statewide educational initiatives.

2 (B) The Secretary may approve a preliminary application if:

3 (i)(I) the project or part of the project fulfills a need occasioned
4 by:

5 (aa) conditions that threaten the health or safety of students
6 or employees;

7 (bb) facilities that are inadequate to provide programs
8 required by State or federal law or regulation;

9 (cc) excessive energy use resulting from the design of a
10 building or reliance on fossil fuels or electric space heat; or

11 (dd) deterioration of an existing building; or

12 (II) the project results in consolidation of two or more school
13 buildings and will serve the educational needs of students in a more cost-
14 effective and educationally appropriate manner as compared to individual
15 projects constructed separately;

16 (ii) the need addressed by the project cannot reasonably be met by
17 another means;

18 (iii) the proposed type, kind, quality, size, and estimated cost of
19 the project are suitable for the proposed curriculum and meet all legal
20 standards;

1 (iv) the applicant achieves the level of “proficiency” in the school
2 district quality standards regarding facilities management adopted by rule by
3 the Agency; and

4 (v) the applicant has completed a facilities master planning
5 process that:

6 (I) engages robust community involvement;

7 (II) considers regional solutions;

8 (III) evaluates environmental contaminants; and

9 (IV) produces a facilities master plan that unites the applicant’s
10 vision statement, educational needs, enrollment projections, renovation needs,
11 and construction projects.

12 (3) Priorities. Following approval of a preliminary application and
13 provided that the district has voted funds or authorized a bond for the total
14 estimated cost of a project, the Agency, with the advice of the State Aid for
15 School Construction Advisory Board, shall assign points to the project as
16 prescribed by rule of the Agency so that the project can be placed on a priority
17 list based on the number of points received.

18 (4) Request for legislative appropriation. The Agency shall submit its
19 annual school construction funding request to the Governor as part of its
20 budget pursuant to subdivision 212(21) of this title. Following submission of
21 the Governor’s recommended budget to the General Assembly pursuant to

1 32 V.S.A. § 306, the House Committee on Education and the Senate
2 Committee on Education shall recommend a total school construction
3 appropriation for the next fiscal year to the General Assembly.

4 (5) Final approval for construction aid.

5 (A) Unless approved by the Secretary for good cause in advance of
6 commencement of construction, a school district shall not begin construction
7 before the Secretary approves a final application. A school district may submit
8 a written final application to the Secretary at any time following approval of a
9 preliminary application.

10 (B) The Secretary may approve a final application for a project
11 provided that:

12 (i) the project has received preliminary approval;

13 (ii) the district has voted funds or authorized a bond for the total
14 estimated cost of the project;

15 (iii) the district has made arrangements for project construction
16 supervision by persons competent in the building trades;

17 (iv) the district has provided for construction financing of the
18 project during a period prescribed by the Agency;

19 (v) the project has otherwise met the requirements of this chapter;

20 (vi) if the proposed project includes a playground, the project
21 includes a requirement that the design and construction of playground

1 equipment follow the guidelines set forth in the U.S. Consumer Product Safety
2 Commission Handbook for Public Playground Safety; and

3 (vii) if the total estimated cost of the proposed project is less than
4 \$50,000.00, no performance bond or irrevocable letter of credit shall be
5 required.

6 (C) The Secretary may provide that a grant for a high school project
7 is conditioned upon the agreement of the recipient to provide high school
8 instruction for any high school pupil living in an area prescribed by the Agency
9 who may elect to attend the school.

10 (D) A district may begin construction upon receipt of final approval.
11 However, a district shall not be reimbursed for debt incurred due to borrowing
12 of funds in anticipation of aid under this section.

13 (6) Award of construction aid.

14 (A) The base amount of an award shall be 20 percent of the eligible
15 debt service cost of a project. Projects are eligible for additional bonus
16 incentives as specified in rule for up to an additional 20 percent of the eligible
17 debt service cost. Amounts shall be awarded annually.

18 (B) As used in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (6), “eligible debt
19 service cost” of a project means the product of the lifetime cost of the bond
20 authorized for the project and the ratio of the approved cost of a project to the
21 total cost of the project.

1 (b) Emergency aid. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section,
2 the Secretary may grant aid for a project the Secretary deems to be an
3 emergency in the amount of 30 percent of eligible project costs, up to a
4 maximum eligible total project cost of \$300,000.00.

5 Sec. 10. 16 V.S.A. § 3446 is added to read:

6 § 3446. APPEAL

7 Any municipal corporation as defined in section 3447 of this title aggrieved
8 by an order, allocation, or award of the Agency of Education may, within 30
9 days, appeal to the Superior Court in the county in which the project is located.

10 Sec. 11. TRANSFER OF RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; TRANSFER OF
11 RULES

12 (a) The statutory authority to adopt rules by the State Board of Education
13 pertaining to school construction and capital outlay adopted under 16 V.S.A.
14 § 3448(e) and 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 is transferred from the State Board of
15 Education to the Agency of Education.

16 (b) All rules pertaining to school construction and capital outlay adopted by
17 the State Board of Education under 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 prior to July 1, 2026
18 shall be deemed the rules of the Agency of Education and remain in effect until
19 amended or repealed by the Agency of Education pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter
20 25.

1 (c) The Agency of Education shall provide notice of the transfer to the
2 Secretary of State and the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules in
3 accordance with 3 V.S.A. § 848(d)(2).

4 Sec. 12. REPEALS

5 (a) 16 V.S.A. § 3448 (approval of funding of school construction projects;
6 renewable energy) is repealed on July 1, 2026.

7 (b) 16 V.S.A. § 3448a (appeal) is repealed on July 1, 2026.

8 * * * Tuition to Approved Schools * * *

9 Sec. 13. 16 V.S.A. § 828 is amended to read:

10 § 828. TUITION TO APPROVED SCHOOLS; AGE; APPEAL

11 (a) A school district shall not pay the tuition of a student except to:

12 (1) a public school; located in Vermont;

13 (2) an approved independent school; ~~an independent school meeting~~
14 ~~education quality standards, that:~~

15 (A) is located in Vermont;

16 (B) is approved under section 166 of this title on or before July 1,
17 2025;

18 (C) is located within either :

19 (i) supervisory district that does not operate a public school for
20 some or all grades as of July 1, 2025; or

1 (ii) a supervisory union with one or more member school districts
2 that does not operate a public school for some or all grades as of July 1, 2025;
3 and

4 (D) has at least 25 percent of its Vermont resident student enrollment
5 composed of students attending on a district-funded tuition basis pursuant to
6 chapter 21 of this title during the 2023–2024 school year;

7 (3) a tutorial program approved by the State Board;

8 (4) an approved education program, or;

9 (5) an independent school in another state or country approved under the
10 ~~laws of that state or country,~~ that a public school located within 25 miles of the
11 Vermont board in a bordering state or province, provided that the school is
12 approved under the laws of that state or province and complies with the
13 reporting requirement under subsection 4010(c) of this title;

14 (6) an independent school located within 25 miles of the Vermont board
15 in a bordering state or province that:

16 (A) is approved under the laws of that state or province;

17 (B) has at least 25 percent of its Vermont resident student enrollment
18 composed of students attending on a district-funded tuition basis pursuant to
19 this chapter during the 2023–2024 school year; and

20 (C) complies with the reporting requirement under subsection
21 4010(c) of this title; or

1 (7) a therapeutic approved independent school located in Vermont or
2 another state or country that is approved under the laws of that state or country.

3 (b) ~~nor shall payment~~ Payment of tuition on behalf of a person shall not be
4 denied on account of age.

5 (c) Unless otherwise provided, a person who is aggrieved by a decision of a
6 school board relating to eligibility for tuition payments, the amount of tuition
7 payable, or the school the person may attend, may appeal to the State Board
8 and its decision shall be final.

9 (d) As used in this section, “therapeutic approved independent school”
10 means an approved independent school that limits enrollment for publicly
11 funded students residing in Vermont to students who are on an individualized
12 education program or plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of
13 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794, or who are enrolled pursuant to a written agreement
14 between a local education agency and the school or pursuant to a court order.

15 Sec. 14. TUITION TRANSITION

16 A school district that pays tuition pursuant to the provisions of 16 V.S.A.
17 chapter 21 in effect on June 30, 2025 shall continue to pay tuition on behalf of
18 a resident student enrolled for the 2024–2025 school year in or who has been
19 accepted for enrollment for the 2025–2026 school year by an approved
20 independent school subject to the provisions of 16 V.S.A. § 828 in effect on
21 June 30, 2025, until such time as the student graduates from that school.

* * * Reports and Rule Updates * * *

Sec. 15. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; RULES; REPORT

(a) Rules. On or before August 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall initiate rulemaking to amend the approved independent school rule 2200 series, Agency of Education, Independent School Program Approval (22-000-004), pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25, to ensure compliance with the requirements of 16 V.S.A. § 828 applicable to approved independent schools.

(b) Report. On or before December 1, 2025, the State Board of Education shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education with proposed standards for schools to be deemed “small by necessity.”

Sec. 16. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; REVIEW OF RULES;
APPROPRIATION

(a) The State Board of Education shall review each rule series the State Board is responsible for and make a determination as to the continuing need for, appropriateness of, or need for updating of said rules. On or before December 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education with its recommendation for rules that are no longer needed and a plan to update rules that are still necessary, including the order in which the Board proposes to update the rules and any associated costs or staffing needs.

1 (b) The sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
2 Agency of Education in fiscal year 2026 to provide the State Board of
3 Education with the contracted resources necessary to review and update the
4 Board's rules.

5 Sec. 17. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; REPORTS

6 (a) On or before January 1, 2026, the Agency of Education shall submit a
7 written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education and the State
8 Board of Education with recommended standards for statewide proficiency-
9 based graduation requirements based on standards adopted by the State Board.

10 (b) On or before December 1, 2025, the Agency of Education shall submit
11 a written report and recommended legislative language, as applicable, to the
12 House and Senate Committees on Education with the following:

13 (1) In consultation with educators and administrators, a proposed
14 implementation plan for statewide financial data and student information
15 systems.

16 (2) Recommendations for a school construction division within the
17 Agency of Education, including position descriptions and job duties for each
18 position within the division, a detailed description of the assistance the division
19 would provide to the field, and the overall role the Agency would play within a
20 State aid to school construction program.

1 (3) A progress report regarding the development of clear, unambiguous
2 guidance that would be provided to school officials and school board members
3 regarding the business processes and transactions that would need to occur to
4 facilitate school district mergers into larger, consolidated school districts,
5 including the merging of data systems, asset and liability transfers, and how to
6 address collective bargaining agreements for both educators and staff. The
7 report shall include a detailed description of how the Agency will provide
8 support and consolidation assistance to the field in each of these areas and an
9 estimate of the costs associated with such work.

10 (4) An analysis of how education payments are allocated within school
11 districts and what, if any, changes are necessary to ensure students who receive
12 weights are actually benefiting from the additional funding associated with the
13 applicable weights.

14 (c) On or before December 1, 2026, the Agency of Education, in
15 consultation with the Office of Workforce Strategy and Development, shall
16 submit a written report with recommendations on how to increase flexible
17 pathways opportunities for students in the commercial and nonprofit sectors.

18 * * * Special Education Delivery * * *

19 Sec. 18. STATE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION DELIVERY; AGENCY OF
20 EDUCATION; REPORT

1 (a) On or before September 1, 2025, the Agency of Education shall submit
2 a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House
3 Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance
4 addressing the factors contributing to growth in extraordinary special education
5 reimbursement costs. The report shall include detailed information regarding
6 the current state of special education delivery in Vermont, including an update
7 on the implementation of special education changes enacted pursuant to 2018
8 Acts and Resolves No. 173 (Act 173). The report shall include a description of
9 the current state of support for students with disabilities in Vermont and
10 recommended changes to structure, practice, and law with the goal of:

11 (1) improving the delivery of special education services and managing
12 the rising extraordinary special education costs;

13 (2) ensuring better, more inclusive services in the least restrictive
14 environment in a way that makes efficient and effective use of limited
15 resources while resulting in the best outcomes;

16 (3) responding to the challenges of fully implementing Act 173 and the
17 lessons learned from implementation efforts to date;

18 (4) ensuring adequate staffing to deliver special education that is
19 responsive to student needs;

20 (5) addressing the root causes leading to the workforce shortage of
21 special educators; and

1 (6) addressing drivers of growth of extraordinary expenditures in special
2 education.

3 (b) The report shall include:

4 (1) An analysis of the costs of and services provided for students with
5 extraordinary needs in specialized settings, separated by school-district-
6 operated specialized programs, independent nonprofit programs, and
7 independent for-profit programs. The report shall include a geographic map
8 with the location of all specialized programs within the State of Vermont, as
9 well as the following information for each individual specialized program:

10 (A) disability categories served;

11 (B) grade levels served;

12 (C) the number of students with IEPs and the average duration of
13 time each student spent in the program over the last 10 years;

14 (D) average cost per pupil, inclusive of extraordinary spending and
15 any costs in excess of general tuition rates;

16 (E) years of experience, training, and tenure of licensed special
17 education staff;

18 (F) a review of the findings of all investigations conducted by the
19 Agency of Education; and

1 (G) a review of the Agency’s public assurance capabilities, with
2 respect to special education programs in all settings, and an analysis of the
3 effectiveness of current oversight or rule, and recommended changes if needed.

4 (2) An evaluation of the state of implementation of Act 173, including
5 examples of where implementation has been successful, where it has not, and
6 why.

7 (3) Identification of drivers of accelerating costs within the special
8 education system.

9 (4) Identification of barriers to the success of students with disabilities.

10 (5) A description of how specialized programs for students with
11 extraordinary needs operated by school districts, independent nonprofit
12 schools, and independent for-profit schools are funded, with an analysis of the
13 benefits and risks of each funding model.

14 (6) An assessment of whether Vermont’s current special education laws
15 ensure equitable access for all students with disabilities to education alongside
16 their peers in a way that is consistent with the Vermont education quality
17 standards for public schools and the right to a free appropriate public education
18 (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C.
19 §§ 1400–1482.

1 (7) A review of the capacity of the Agency to support and guide school
2 districts on the effective support of students with disabilities, as well as
3 compliance with federal law, which shall include:

4 (A) a review of final reports of investigations conducted by the
5 Agency in school-district-operated specialized programs, independent
6 nonprofit programs, and independent for-profit programs in the previous 10
7 years and an evaluation of what practices could reduce adverse findings in
8 these settings;

9 (B) an assessment of the ability of the State to ensure State resources
10 are used in the most efficient and effective way possible to support the success
11 of students with disabilities and their access to a free and appropriate public
12 education;

13 (C) a review of any pending and recent federal findings against the
14 State or school districts, as well as progress on corrective actions;

15 (D) a review of the Agency's staffing and capacity to review and
16 conduct monitoring and visits to schools;

17 (E) a description of the process and status of reviews and approvals
18 of approved independent schools that provide special education and therapeutic
19 schools; and

20 (F) recommendations for the oversight of therapeutic schools within
21 the school governance framework both at a State and local level, including

1 whether the Agency has capacity to ensure timely review of approved
2 independent schools and provide sufficient oversight for specialized programs
3 in nonprofit independent schools and for-profit independent schools.

4 (8) Recommendations for needed capacity at the Agency to provide
5 technical assistance and support to school districts in the provision of special
6 education services.

7 (9) If warranted, a review of options for changes to practice, structure,
8 and law that ensure students with disabilities are provided access to quality
9 education, in the least restrictive environment, in a cost-effective way that is
10 consistent with State and federal law, which may include a review of the
11 possible role of BOCES and the impact of larger districts on effective, high-
12 quality support for students with disabilities.

13 Sec. 19. SPECIAL EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN; AGENCY OF
14 EDUCATION

15 (a) Strategic plan. In consultation with the State Advisory Panel on Special
16 Education established under 16 V.S.A. § 2945, the Agency of Education shall
17 develop a three-year strategic plan for the delivery of special education
18 services in Vermont. The strategic plan shall include unambiguous measurable
19 outcomes and a timeline for implementation. The strategic plan shall be
20 informed by the analysis and findings of the report required of the Agency
21 under Sec. 20 of this act and be designed to ensure successful implementation

1 of 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173 (Act 173). The strategic plan shall also
2 include contingency recommendations for special education funding in the
3 event federal special education funding under the Individuals with Disabilities
4 Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400–1482, is no longer available or transitions
5 to a system that requires more planning and management on the part of the
6 State to ensure funds are distributed equitably.

7 (b) Reports.

8 (1) On or before December 1, 2025, the Agency shall submit the three-
9 year strategic plan created pursuant to subsection (a) of this section to the
10 House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Ways
11 and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance.

12 (2) On or before December 1 of 2026, 2027, 2028, and 2029, the
13 Agency shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on
14 Education, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate
15 Committee on Finance with a detailed update on the Agency's implementation
16 of its strategic plan and any recommendations for legislative changes needed to
17 ensure continued successful implementation of Act 173.

18 Sec. 20. POSITION; AGENCY OF EDUCATION

19 (a) Establishment of one new permanent, classified position is authorized
20 in the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2026, to support development and

1 implementation of the three-year strategic plan required under Sec. 19 of this
2 act.

3 (b) The sum of \$150,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
4 Agency of Education’s base budget in fiscal year 2026 for the purposes of
5 funding the position created in subsection (a) of this section. The Agency shall
6 include funding for this permanent position in their annual base budget request
7 in subsequent years.

8 * * * Tuition to Approved Independent Schools Functioning as Area CTE

9 Centers * * *

10 Sec. 21. 16 V.S.A. § 1546 is amended to read:

11 § 1546. COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

12 (a) In the sections referenced in this section, when applied to an
13 independent comprehensive high school, the term “school board” or “school
14 district” means “the school’s board of trustees.”

15 (b) A comprehensive high school shall charge and receive tuition pursuant
16 to section ~~824~~ 823 of this title. A comprehensive high school shall be a career
17 technical center for the purposes of receiving funding for grants per full-time
18 equivalent student under section 1561 of this title, for tryout classes under
19 section 1562 of this title, and for reporting requirements under section 1568 of
20 this title. Funds received under this section shall be used for support of career
21 technical education programs within the comprehensive high school.

1 (c) Two or more comprehensive high schools for which the State Board has
2 designated a service region shall be a career technical center for the purposes
3 of accountability to the State Board under subchapter 2 of this chapter,
4 responsibilities of the career technical center under subchapter 3 of this
5 chapter, and receiving State financial assistance under subchapter 5 of this
6 chapter, excluding the general State support grant under subsection 1561(b) of
7 this title. The regional advisory board shall determine how funds received
8 under subchapter 5 shall be distributed. A comprehensive high school
9 aggrieved by a decision of the regional advisory board may appeal to the
10 Secretary who, after opportunity for hearing, may affirm or modify the
11 decision.

12 (d) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, an
13 approved independent school functioning as an area career and technical
14 education center may charge a sending school district a CTE fee, on a per pupil
15 basis, of not more than 10 percent of the base amount contained in subdivision
16 4001(16) of this title, in addition to the tuition charged pursuant to subsection
17 (b) of this section.

18 * * * Effective Dates * * *

19 Sec. 22. EFFECTIVE DATES

20 (a) This section and the following sections shall take effect on passage:

21 (1) Sec. 1 (intent);

1 (2) Sec. 2 (Commission on the Future of Public Education);

2 (3) Sec. 3 (School District Boundary Task Force);

3 (b) The following sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025:

4 (1) Sec. 6 (16 V.S.A. § 3443);

5 (2) Sec. 7 (School Construction Advisory Board sunset);

6 (3) Sec. 13 (16 V.S.A. § 828);

7 (4) Sec. 14 (tuition transition);

8 (5) Sec. 15 (SBE rules; report);

9 (6) Sec. 16 (SBE rule review; appropriation);

10 (7) Sec. 17 (AOE reports);

11 (8) Sec. 18 (special education report);

12 (9) Sec. 19 (AOE special education strategic plan); and

13 (10) Sec. 20 (AOE position).

14 (c) The following sections shall take effect on July 1, 2026:

15 (1) Sec. 4 (school construction policy);

16 (2) Sec. 5 (16 V.S.A. § 3442);

17 (3) Sec. 8 (16 V.S.A. § 3444);

18 (4) Sec. 9 (16 V.S.A. § 3445);

19 (5) Sec. 10 (16 V.S.A. § 3446);

20 (6) Sec. 11 (transfer of rulemaking authority); and

21 (7) Sec. 12 (school construction program repeals).

1 (d) Sec. 22 (16 V.S.A. § 1546) shall take effect on July 1, 2027.

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7 (Committee vote: _____)

8

9

Representative _____

10

FOR THE COMMITTEE