Pupil Weighting

Senate Committee on Education

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Outline of talk

- Pupil Demographic Analysis
- Components of a foundation formula
- Pupil weights under current law
- Pupil weights in a foundation formula

VSBA Regions Pupil Demographic Analysis

VSBA Regions

- The Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA) divides the state into 11 regions *"for organization and administrative purposes, [...] generally organized around the following counties"*

ADDISON
Addison Central SD
Addison Northwest SD
Lincoln SD
Mt. Abraham USD
Patricia Hannaford Car. Ctr.

BENNINGTON
Bennington-Rutland SU
Southwest Vt Reg. Tech Ctr.
Southwest Vermont SU

CENTRAL VT
Barre UUSD
Central Vermont SU
Central Vermont Career Center
Harwood UUSD
Lamoille North SU
Lamoille South SU
Montpelier-Roxbury SD
Orange Southwest SD
Washington Central UUSD

EASTERN CHITTENDEN
Champlain Valley SD
Essex-Westford SD
Mt Mansfield UUSD

FRANKLIN/GRAND ISLE
Franklin Northeast SU
Franklin West SU
Grand Isle SU
Maple Run USD
Missisquoi Valley SD

KINGDOM NORTH
Essex North SU
North Country SU
Orleans Central SU

KINGDOM SOUTH
Caledonia Central SU
Kingdom East SD
Orange East SU
Orleans Southwest SU
St. Johnsbury SD
Rivendell Interstate SD

RUTLAND
Greater Rutland County SU
Mill River UUSD
Rutland City SD
Rutland Northeast SU
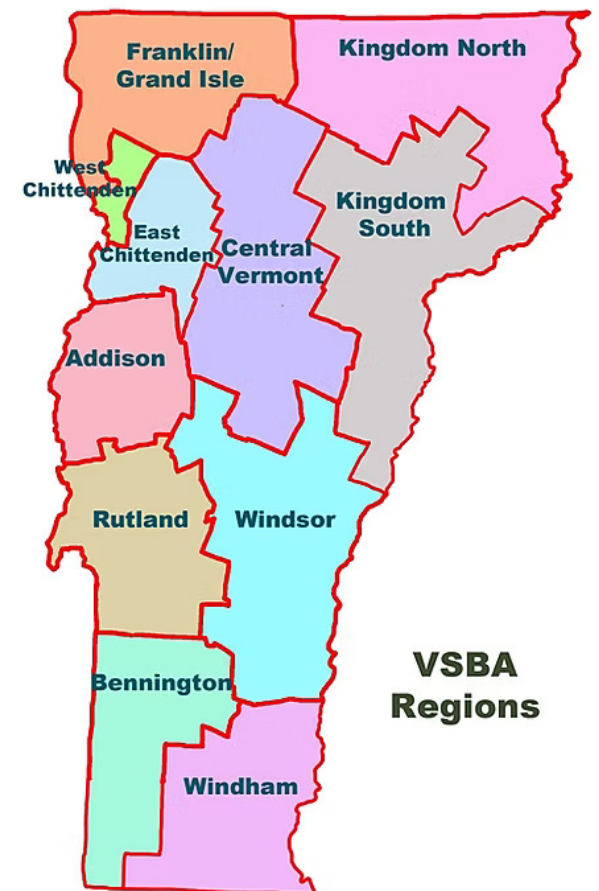Slate Valley USD

WESTERN CHITTENDEN
Burlington SD
Colchester SD
Milton SD
South Burlington SD
Winooski SD

WINDHAM
Windham Central SU
Windham Northeast SU
Windham Southeast SU
Windham Southwest SU

WINDSOR
Hartford SD
Mountain Views SU
River Valley Tech Ctr
SAU 70
Springfield SD
Two Rivers SU
White River Valley SU
Windsor Southeast SU

VSBA Regions

Vermont's Long-term Average Daily Membership (LTADM)

- Long-term Average Daily Membership (LTADM) is essentially the count of students in a school or school district
  - Specifically, it is the average of the district's Average Daily Membership (ADM) over two years, plus the full-time equivalent enrollment of State-placed students for the most recent of the two years
- Fiscal year 2025 LTADM is 83,368
- LTADM has declined over time

VSBA Regions' Total LTADM

- The share of the state's LTADM varies across the VSBA's school districts
  - "Addison" has the lowest percentage of total LTADM at 5%
  - "Central Vermont" has the highest percentage of total LTADM at 14%

VSBA Regions	FY2025 LTADM	Percentage of State's LTADM
Addison	4,044	5%
Bennington	5,467	7%
Central Vermont	11,936	14%
Eastern Chittenden	10,347	12%
Franklin/Grand Isle	9,122	11%
Kingdom North	4,117	5%
Kingdom South	7,372	9%
Rutland	7,112	9%
Western Chittenden	10,591	13%
Windham	5,121	6%
Windsor	8,138	10%
Total	**83,368**	**100%**

VSBA Regions – Count of Students from Different Grades

- The largest cohort of students is students in grades K – 5
  - This is also the widest range for grades

VSBA Regions	Student Counts in Certain Grades				Total
	PK	Elementary: K-5	Middle: Grades 6 - 8	Secondary: Grades 9 - 12	
Addison	397	1,623	832	1,167	4,020
Bennington	364	2,088	1,087	1,863	5,401
Central Vermont	1,025	4,831	2,547	3,425	11,829
Eastern Chittenden	983	4,062	2,087	3,142	10,274
Franklin/Grand Isle	781	3,807	1,986	2,460	9,035
Kingdom North	352	1,686	883	1,177	4,098
Kingdom South	549	2,838	1,592	2,335	7,315
Rutland	535	2,929	1,510	2,123	7,097
Western Chittenden	971	4,332	2,117	3,015	10,436
Windham	442	2,062	1,057	1,521	5,082
Windsor	715	3,333	1,722	2,326	8,096
Total	7,114	33,592	17,421	24,555	82,682

Note: For data privacy, EEE student counts have been suppressed

VSBA Regions – Percentage Share of Students from Different Grades

- Generally, regions have similar distributions of students in certain grades
  - The widest distribution is in Bennington which has 5% of the state's PreK population, and 8% of the state's Secondary Grade population

VSBA Regions	Percentage of State's Students in Certain Grades				Total
	PK	Elementary: K-5	Middle: Grades 6 - 8	Secondary: Grades 9 - 12	
Addison	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Bennington	5%	6%	6%	8%	7%
Central Vermont	14%	14%	15%	14%	14%
Eastern Chittenden	14%	12%	12%	13%	12%
Franklin/Grand Isle	11%	11%	11%	10%	11%
Kingdom North	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Kingdom South	8%	8%	9%	10%	9%
Rutland	8%	9%	9%	9%	9%
Western Chittenden	14%	13%	12%	12%	13%
Windham	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Windsor	10%	10%	10%	9%	10%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Note: For data privacy, EEE student counts have been suppressed

VSBA Regions – Students from Economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds

- The share of LTADM identified from Economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds varies by region

- Among regions:
  - "Kingdom North" has the highest percentage
  - "Eastern Chittenden" has the lowest percentage

- Statewide:
  - "Central Vermont" has the highest share
  - "Addison" has the lowest share

VSBA Regions	Regions' Students from Economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds		Percentage of State's Total Students from Economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds
	Count of LTADM	Percentage of Region's LTADM	
Addison	1,220	30%	3%
Bennington	2,694	49%	7%
Central Vermont	5,282	44%	15%
Eastern Chittenden	2,288	22%	6%
Franklin/Grand Isle	4,315	47%	12%
Kingdom North	2,463	60%	7%
Kingdom South	3,796	51%	10%
Rutland	3,681	52%	10%
Western Chittenden	4,352	41%	12%
Windham	2,628	51%	7%
Windsor	3,484	43%	10%
Total	**36,203**	**43%**	**100%**

VSBA Regions – English Learning Students

- The share of LTADM identified as English Learners varies by region

- Among regions:
  - "Western Chittenden" has the highest percentage
  - "Kingdom North" has the lowest percentage

- Statewide:
  - "Western Chittenden" has the highest share
  - "Kingdom North" has the lowest share

VSBA Regions	Regions' English Learning Students		Percentage of State's Total English Learning Students
	Count of LTADM	Percentage of Region's LTADM	
Addison	40	1%	2%
Bennington	54	1%	3%
Central Vermont	140	1%	7%
Eastern Chittenden	296	3%	16%
Franklin/Grand Isle	63	1%	3%
Kingdom North	11	0.3%	1%
Kingdom South	26	0.3%	1%
Rutland	57	1%	3%
Western Chittenden	1,054	10%	56%
Windham	60	1%	3%
Windsor	72	1%	4%
Total	**1,873**	**2%**	**100%**

Pupil Weights Under Current Law

Pupil Weights Under Current Law

- Under current law, statutory pupil weights are used to adjust student counts to address different student needs or circumstances
- After Long Term Average Daily Membership (LTADM) is reported, weights are applied to certain types of students to account for the potential higher costs to school districts to educate these students
- These weights are added to the LTADM to calculate the Weighted Long Term Weighted Average Daily Membership (LTWADM)
- Under current law, pupil weights are used to determine district taxing capacity.
  - Pupil weights are *not* used to calculate the amount of funding a school district receives

Pupil Weights Under Current Law cont.

- Act 127 (2022) updated Vermont's pupil weights and weighting categories in statute
- The weights are additive across categories

Current Law Pupil Weights by Weighting Category

Weighting Category		Weight
Grade level weights	PreK/Essential Early Education (EEE)	-0.54
	K-5	0
	6-8	0.36
	9-12	0.39
Economically deprived background weight		1.03
English language learners (EL) weight		2.49
Sparsity weight (Number of people in district per square mile)	< 36 persons	0.15
	36 – 54 persons	0.12
	55 – 100 persons	0.07
Small school enrollment weight (Only applicable for districts also receiving sparsity weight <55 persons)	< 100 pupils	0.21
	100 – 249 pupils	0.07

Components of the Education Opportunity Payment

Determination of the Education Opportunity Payment

- A district's Education Opportunity Payment is calculated by multiplying the base amount by the weighted pupil count.

- Multiple factors and policy decisions impact the Education Opportunity Payment
    - The **base amount** determines the fixed-dollar amount per student, regardless of circumstances or characteristics
    - The **student count** determines the manner for calculating the numbers of pupils regardless of circumstances or characteristics
    - The **pupil weights** determine adjustments to the base amount and/or student count based on student or district circumstances or characteristic

Pupil Weights in a Foundation Formula

Pupil Weights in a Foundation Formula

- In a foundation formula, pupil weights directly impact the amount of funding a school district receives
  - All else equal, the greater a district's weighted pupil count, the more funding it would receive
- Pupil weights are relative to the base funding amount
  - They represent additional funding above the base for certain circumstances or categories

Pupil Weights in H.454 As Passed by the House

- H.454 As Passed by the House includes the base and cost adjustments from the 4/3/25 memo from Dr. Kolbe and Dr. Baker

Exhibit 2. Base Cost Per Student, Cost Adjustments, and Student Weights for Vermont (FY2025)

	Cost Adjustments Identified in 2019 Pupil Weighting Study	FY2025 Dollars[1]	Student Weights
Base cost per student[2]		$15,033	
Cost adjustments			
Student Needs	Students experiencing economic disadvantage[3]	$15,334	1.02
	English Learners[4]	$20,896	1.39
School Enrollment[5]	<100 students	$3,157	0.21
	101-250 students*	$0	No weight
Population Density	<36 persons per square mile[6]		
	36 to <55	$1,954	0.13
	55 to <100*	$0	No weight
Grade Range	% Middle grades enrollment (grades 6-8) *	$0	No weight
	% Secondary grades enrollment (grades 9-12) *	$0	No weight

*Notes a cost adjustment that is weighted in Vermont's current education funding formula, but for which a weight is no longer needed based on the updated analyses.

VSBA Regions' LTWADM in H.454 As Passed by the House

- After applying weights, the percentage share of the State's pupil count shifts across districts

VSBA Regions	LTADM (FY2025)		H.454 As Passed by the House (FY2025)	
	LTADM	Percentage of State's LTADM	LTWADM	Percentage of State's LTWADM
Addison	4,044	4.9%	5,344	4.3%
Bennington	5,467	6.6%	8,347	6.8%
Central Vermont	11,936	14.3%	17,518	14.2%
Eastern Chittenden	10,347	12.4%	13,092	10.6%
Franklin/Grand Isle	9,122	10.9%	13,612	11.1%
Kingdom North	4,117	4.9%	6,644	5.4%
Kingdom South	7,372	8.8%	11,279	9.2%
Rutland	7,112	8.5%	10,947	8.9%
Western Chittenden	10,591	12.7%	16,495	13.4%
Windham	5,121	6.1%	7,885	6.4%
Windsor	8,138	9.8%	11,792	9.6%
Total	83,368	100%	122,955	100%

Considerations

- Pupil weights are inherently linked with the base amount
  - The pupil weights represent the additional funding for certain categories in proportion to the base
- Under a foundation formula, pupil weights directly impact the amount of funding – both at the State and district level
- All else equal, a change to a weight or weighting category results in a change in funding

Resources

- 4/3/25 memo from Dr. Kolbe and Dr. Baker
  - https://ljfo.vermont.gov/assets/Subjects/H-454-As-recommended-by-House-Ways-and-Means-Draft-4-1/weighting-update-memo-to-JFO-revised-4_8_25.pdf