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Sec. 1. FINDINGS; INTENT; PLAN [passage]	Sec. 1. INTENT [passage]
(a) The General Assembly finds that:	
(1) In 1997, the first piece of law the General Assembly	
enacted in response to the Brigham decision stated, "[t]he right	No changes to (a) (findings)
to public education is integral to Vermont's constitutional form	
of government and its guarantees of political and civil	
rights[and] fundamental for the success of Vermont's children	
in a rapidly-changing society and global marketplace as well as	
the State's own economic and social prosperity." 16 V.S.A. § 1.	
(2) From the very first attempt at creating a basic frame of	
government, Vermont's founders chose to include a right to	
public education, the only governmental service included in	
Vermont's first Constitution of 1777.	
(3) As the U.S. Supreme Court stated in Brown v. Board	
of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), "education is perhaps the	
most important function of state and local governments[i]t is	
required in the performance of our most basic public	
responsibilities[i]t is the very foundation of good citizenship."	
(4) The most enduring legacy of Brigham v. State, 166 Vt.	
246 (1997) is the State's responsibility to ensure substantially	
equal educational opportunities for all Vermont students.	
(5) The education system is still reeling from the effects	
of a global pandemic, yet the same challenges that have faced	
Vermont's education system remain. Thirty to 40 years ago,	
Vermont educated more than 110,000 students each year.	
Today, there are approximately 84,000 students in the public	
education system. Many schools have lost a significant number	
of students and, with them, the ability to offer robust services	

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and programs at every school. Vermont's youth need to be	
prepared for a rapidly evolving future.	
(6) Vermonters deserve an exceptional educational system	
that is stable and predictable and where a student's home address	
does not dictate the quality of education they receive. School	
district size and boundaries, school size, and class size are all	
influential factors in shaping the quality of instruction and	
overall student outcomes. The effectiveness of our schools	
depends on teacher quality, resource availability, and the unique	
strengths of local communities. Change in our educational	
system is needed. Systems are made of people, so change must	
come carefully and thoughtfully, with meaningful engagement	
by all Vermonters.	
(b) Intent; plan.	(b) Intent; plan.
(1) To ensure each student is provided substantially equal	(1) To ensure each student is provided substantially equal
educational opportunities that will prepare them to thrive in a	educational opportunities that will prepare them to thrive in a
21st-century world, it is the intent of the General Assembly to	21st-century world, it is the intent of the General Assembly to
work strategically, intentionally, and thoughtfully to ensure that	work strategically, intentionally, and thoughtfully to ensure that
each incremental change made to Vermont's public education	each incremental change made to Vermont's public education
system provides strength and support to its only constitutionally	system provides strength and support to its only constitutionally
required governmental service.	required governmental service.
(2) It is further the intent of the General Assembly to:	(2) It is further the intent of the General Assembly to:
(A) in the 2026 session:	(A) in the 2026 session:
(i) enact new, larger school district boundaries that	(i) enact new, larger school district boundaries that
would be effective July 1, 2027;	would be effective July 1, 2027;
(ii) enact updates to career and technical education	(ii) enact updates to career and technical education
governance systems, both at the local and statewide levels, that	governance systems, both at the local and statewide levels, that
are reflective of the larger public education governance	are reflective of the larger public education governance
transformation to new, larger school districts;	transformation to new, larger school districts; and

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(iii) create a coordinated and coherent statewide strategy for career and technical education that is responsive to students and the State's workforce needs and that provides opportunities for more integration between career and technical education and traditional high school work; (iv) enact student-centered updates to career and technical education funding within a foundation formula that does not create competition between sending schools and career and technical education programs for available funds; and (v) begin the process to create voting wards within each school district to ensure school board membership is apportioned in such a manner as to achieve substantially equal weighting of the votes of all voters in the election of school board members;	(iii) create a coordinated and coherent statewide strategy for career and technical education that is responsive to students and the State's workforce needs and that provides opportunities for more integration between career and technical education and traditional high school work;
(B) provide or enable the provision of the necessary staffing, resources, and support to the Agency of Education, the Secretary of State's Office, town clerks, and other integral parties to the election system to hold the first school board member elections within the newly created school districts in a special election in March 2028; and (C) provide or enable the provision of the necessary staffing, resources, and support to the Agency of Education, State Board of Education, and other integral parties to ensure that the necessary guidance and funding is in place to allow for a smooth and successful transition between the operation of Vermont's current 119 school districts to the new, larger school districts, with new school districts assuming responsibility for the education of all resident students on July 1, 2029.	(B) provide or enable the provision of the necessary staffing, resources, and support to the Agency of Education, the Secretary of State's Office, town clerks, and other integral parties to the election system to hold the first school board member elections within the newly created school districts in a special election in March 2028; and (C) provide or enable the provision of the necessary staffing, resources, and support to the Agency of Education, State Board of Education, and other integral parties to ensure that the necessary guidance and funding is in place to allow for a smooth and successful transition between the operation of Vermont's current 119 school districts to the new, larger school districts, with new school districts assuming responsibility for the education of all resident students on July 1, 2029.

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 Sec. 2. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 1 is amended to read: Sec. 1. THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION; REPORTS [passage] Adds 9 nonvoting members to form the school district boundary subcommittee 	 Sec. 2. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 1 is amended to read: Sec. 1. THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION; REPORTS [passage] Removes the 9 nonvoting members
No similar provision	 Amends subdivision (e)(2)(A)(v) to include recommendations for how to maintain and improve community engagement and local decision-making with transitional and new school boards and how to improve voter turnout for school elections throughout the creation and implementation of new school districts and a new school funding formula; Adds subdivision (e)(2)(A)(vi) to include an analysis of the impact of healthcare costs on the Education Fund, including recommendations for whether, and if so, what changes need to be made to contain costs (this language is taken directly from subdivision (e)(2)(D)(ix) which is struck in both versions)
• Subsection (j) creates the school district boundary subcommittee	 Removes subsection (j), the school district boundary subcommittee
Analogous concept appears in Sec. 2, subdiv. (b)(2) and subsec. (j):	Sec. 3. SCHOOL DISTRICT REDISTRICTING TASK FORCE; REPORT [passage]
(b)(2) Nonvoting members. The following nine members shall be nonvoting members of the Commission who shall be appointed on or before July 15, 2025: (A) Nonlegislative members. There shall be five nonlegislative, nonvoting members, all of whom shall have	(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

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extensive experience working within the Vermont public	(1) the Director of the Vermont Center for Geographic
education system. Appointing authorities shall coordinate to	Information:
ensure that, to the extent possible, each of the five nonvoting	(2) the Chair of the Vermont School Boards Association
members represents a different geographic region of the State.	or designee;
(i) Two members, appointed by the Speaker of the	(3) the Secretary of Education or designee;
House, one of whom shall be a retired or former Vermont	(4) the Chair of the Vermont Superintendents Association
superintendent of a supervisory union with multiple member	or designee:
school districts and one of whom shall be either a retired or	(5) the Chair of the Vermont Association of Planning and
former Vermont school business manager or a retired or former	Development Agencies or designee;
school board member.	(6) two members, appointed by the Speaker of the House:
(ii) Two members, appointed by the Committee on	(A) one member who shall be a current member of the
Committees, one of whom shall be a retired or former Vermont	House of Representatives; and
superintendent and one of whom shall be a retired or former	(B) one member with expertise in education data
Vermont school business manager.	analysis who shall not be a current member of the House of
(iii) One member, appointed by the Governor, who	Representatives;
shall be a retired or former Vermont superintendent.	(7) two members, appointed by the Senate Committee on
(B) Legislative members. There shall be four	Committees:
legislative, nonvoting members.	(A) one member who shall be a current member of the
(i) Two current members of the House of	Senate; and
Representatives, not all from the same political party or same	(B) one member with expertise in GIS analysis who
school district, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the	shall not be a current member of the Senate;
House.	(8) the chair of the Commission on the Future of Public
(ii) Two current members of the Senate, not all from	Education or designee; and
the same political party or same school district, who shall be	(9) the Executive Director of the Vermont Association of
appointed by the Committee on Committees.	School Business Officials or designee.
(j) School district boundary subcommittee. There is created	(a) Creation. There is created the School District
a subcommittee of the Commission to be composed of the nine	Redistricting Task Force to recommend new school district
nonvoting members of the Commission that shall determine the	boundaries and configurations to the General Assembly

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most efficient number of school districts and proposed boundary lines, based on educational research; Vermont's geographic and cultural landscape; historic attendance patterns; the distribution of equalized grand list value per pupil; the provision of career and technical education; and a comprehensive analysis of school locations, conditions, and capacity.	
(1) Duties of the district boundaries subcommittee. (A) The subcommittee shall recommend not more than three school district boundary proposals to the General Assembly and may consult with the Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors regarding how to incorporate career and technical education into the proposals. The proposed school district boundaries shall:	 (c) Powers and duties. In consultation with the Commission on the Future of Public Education, the Task Force shall study and consider different configurations for school district consolidation and propose not fewer than three options for new school district boundaries. At least one boundary proposal recommendation shall consider the use of supervisory unions and supervisory districts, allow for the continuation of a tuitioning system that provides continued access to independent schools that have served geographic areas that do not operate public schools for the grades served by the independent schools, and to the extent practical, not separate geographic areas that contain nonoperating school districts shall not have an average daily membership of more than 8,000 prekindergarten through grade 12 students. (2) Proposed new school districts shall also be, to the greatest extent possible, grand list and pupil count balanced,

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	demographically equitable, logistically feasible, and create the
	least amount of disruption to students as possible.
	(3) In creating the proposed districts, the Task Force shall
	consider:
(i) increase equitable access to educational	(A) current school district and town boundaries and
opportunity;	other historic and current community connections, including
(ii) maximize opportunities for modern, regional	access to regional services for students, such as designated
middle and high schools, with the least disruption to students;	agencies;
(iii) provide access to education for their resident	(B) geographic barriers, including mountains and
students in grades kindergarten through 12;	rivers;
(iv) provide access to career and technical education	(C) population distribution;
(CTE) for all eligible students;	(D) location, capacity, and the facility condition index
(v) to the extent practical, not separate towns within	score of current school buildings;
school districts as those boundaries exist on July 1, 2025;	(E) transportation and employment patterns and
(vi) to the extent practical, consider the availability	practices:
of regional services for students, such as designated agencies,	(F) grand list values and current education spending;
and how those services would integrate into the new proposed	(G) student demographics;
school district boundaries;	(H) the debt, liabilities, and assets of current school
(vii) to the extent practical, result in school districts	districts;
with a minimum average daily membership of approximately	(I) staffing levels and salary scales; and
4,000 students; and	(J) any other factor the Task Force deems relevant.
(viii) to the extent practical, consider historic	
attendance patterns in geographic areas that do not operate	
public schools at all grade levels from kindergarten through	
grade 12.	
(B) The subcommittee may consider and make	
recommendations for the optimal location of schools, including	
CTE programs, to meet the requirements contained in	
subdivision (A) of this subdivision (1).	

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 (C) The subcommittee shall provide regular updates to the Commission regarding its work. (D) The subcommittee shall have the sole authority to determine the contents of the report and maps required under subdivision (4) of this subsection (j). The Commission may provide its own comments to the subcommittee and the relevant committees of jurisdiction, either as an addendum to the report of the subcommittee or as a separate report. (2) Public engagement. The district boundary subcommittee shall engage and coordinate with the Commission's public engagement subcommittee and the public engagement consultant to maximize public input and feedback regarding the development of the proposed new school district boundaries. (3) Assistance. The district boundary subcommittee shall have the assistance of the Agency of Digital Services, Vermont Center for Geographic Information, which may also retain the services of one or more independent third parties to provide facilitation and mediation services to the subcommittee. 	 (5) The Task Force shall hold not fewer than two public hearings to receive and consider feedback from members of the public regarding school district consolidation and proposed boundaries and may coordinate with the Commission on the Future of Public Education's public engagement process to maximize public input regarding the development of the proposed new school district boundaries. (d) Assistance. The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Agency of Digital Services, Vermont Center for Geographic Information. The Task Force may also retain the services of one or more independent third parties to provide contracted resources as the
(4) Report and maps. On or before December 1, 2025, the district boundary subcommittee shall submit the following to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, the Senate Committee on Government Operations, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance:	<u>(e) Report and maps. On or before November 1, 2025, the</u> <u>Task Force shall submit a written report to the House</u> <u>Committees on Education and on Government Operations and</u> <u>Military Affairs and the Senate Committees on Education and on</u> <u>Government Operations with its proposals for new consolidated</u> <u>school district boundaries. The report shall include how each</u> <u>proposal meets the requirements contained in subdivisions (c)(1)</u>

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 (A) Report. The district boundary subcommittee shall submit a written report with the subcommittee's proposed new school district boundaries. The report shall detail how each proposed option meets the requirements of subdivision (1)(A) of this subsection (j). (B) Maps. The subcommittee shall also submit detailed maps for each school district boundary proposal, which, in addition to the school district boundaries themselves, shall include: (i) average daily membership for each proposed school district for the 2023–2024 school year; (ii) the member towns for each school district; (iii) the location of public schools and nontherapeutic approved independent schools that are eligible to receive public tuition as of July 1, 2025, and the grades operated by each of those schools; (iv) the five-year facility condition index score for each school; (v) PCB testing score for each school; and (vi) 10-year change in enrollment between 2013 and 	and (2) of this section, how the considerations in subdivision (c)(3) of this section factored into each proposal, and the pros and cons of each proposal. The detailed maps required under subdivision (c)(4) of this section shall also be included with the report. (4) The report of the Task Force shall include detailed maps for each proposal, which shall include: (A) boundaries of the new proposed school districts: (B) average daily membership for the new proposed school districts; (C) grand list value of the new proposed school districts; and (D) the pros and cons for each proposal.
2023 for each school.	(f) Meetings. (1) The Chair of the Vermont School Boards Association shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before July 15, 2025. (2) The Chair of the Vermont School Boards Association shall be the chair.

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	 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum. (4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on May 31, 2026. (g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Task Force shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than eight meetings. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Digital Services. (h) Appropriation. The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated to the Office of Legislative Counsel from the General Fund in fiscal year 2026 to hire one or more consultants pursuant to subsection (d) of this section.
 Sec. 2a. SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTING WARD TASK FORCE; REPORT; MAPS [passage] (a) Creation. There is created the School District Voting Ward Task Force to create voting district wards within the new school districts contemplated by this act, to ensure school board membership is apportioned in such a manner as to achieve substantially equal weighting of the votes of all voters in the choice of school board members. (b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members who shall have substantial understanding of Vermont geography, trade, travel, social interaction, and Vermont's public education system: (1) the Secretary of State or designee, who shall be the chair; (2) three members, who shall be appointed by the 	Sec. 3a. TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS; TRANSITION GRANTS [7/1/26] (a) Definitions. As used in this section: (1) "Base amount" means a per pupil amount of \$15,033.00, which shall be adjusted for inflation annually on or before November 15 by the Secretary of Education. As used in this subdivision, "adjusted for inflation" means adjusting the base dollar amount by the National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA) implicit price deflator for state and local government consumption expenditures and gross investment published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, from fiscal year 2025 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined, and rounding upward to the nearest whole dollar amount. (2) "Forming districts" means all school districts, including union school districts, that are located within the geographical boundaries of a

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(3) two members, appointed by the Vermont School	new school district created by the General Assembly during the 2026
Boards Association; and	session, prior to the operational date of the new school district.
(4) the Director of the Vermont Center for Geographic	(3) "New school district" means a larger, consolidated school
Information or designee.	district created by the General Assembly during the 2026 session.
(c) Powers and duties. On or before October 15, 2025, the	(4) "New school district school board" means the elected school
Task Force shall consult with the school district boundary	board of a new school district.
subcommittee created in Sec. 2 of this act to gain an	(5) "Operational date" means the date on which the new school
understanding of the status of the work of the subcommittee and	district will assume full and sole responsibility for the education of all
to determine whether the subcommittee has one or more	resident students in the grades for which it is organized.
boundary proposals ready for the Task Force to begin the work	(b) Creation of transitional school boards. On or before January 1,
of creating voting wards. Using the boundary proposals of the	2027, a transitional school board shall be formed for each new school
subcommittee, the Task Force shall, following the principles of	district created by the General Assembly during the 2026 session. Each
apportionment followed by the legislative apportionment board,	transitional school board shall be composed of the chair of each school
make recommendations to the General Assembly to achieve	board from each of the forming districts, as such school boards existed
voting districts within each school district that are compact,	on December 31, 2026; provided, however, that by majority vote the
contiguous, and drawn to achieve substantially equal weighting	board of a forming district may designate another board member to
of votes and that meet the requirements of applicable State and	serve on the transitional board instead of the chair.
federal law. If at any time during the work of the Task Force the	(c) Initial meeting of transitional board. The superintendent of the
General Assembly enacts new school district boundaries, or it	supervisory union with the forming district with the highest average
appears clear the General Assembly is focused on only one	daily membership shall convene the first meeting of the transitional
proposal, the Task Force shall focus its work and	board to occur not later than 14 days after the organizational meeting of
recommendations to align with the work of the General	the new school district. The agenda for the first meeting of the
Assembly. The Task Force's recommendations shall include:	transitional board shall include the election by the transitional board
(1) the optimal number of school board members per	members of:
school board to maximize public representation and democratic	(1) one of their members to serve as chair of the transitional
input while maintaining effective school board size; and	board; and
(2) boundaries for school district voting wards within	(2) one of their members to serve as clerk of the transitional
each school district, with alternative options if necessary,	board.

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including detailed maps clearly and unambiguously delineating	(d) Duties and authority of transitional board. During the period of
ward boundaries that respect current municipal boundary lines.	its existence, the transitional board shall serve as the new district's
(d) Assistance. The Task Force shall have the	school board and shall perform all functions required of and have all
administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Secretary of	authority granted to the transitional board and the new school district
State's office and the technical assistance of the Agency of	school board, including:
Digital Services, Vermont Center for Geographic Information.	(1) preparing an initial budget for the new school district;
The Task Force may contract for such expert services as may be	(2) following the principles of apportionment followed by the
necessary to carry out its duties.	legislative apportionment board, create voting districts within each new
(e) Meetings.	school district that are compact, contiguous, and drawn to achieve
(1) The Secretary of State shall call the first meeting of	substantially equal weighting of votes and that meet the requirements of
the Task Force to occur on or before July 15, 2025.	applicable State and federal law to allow for initial elections of the new
(2) The Secretary of State shall be the chair.	school district school board members to occur in March 2028; and
(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a	(3) performing all necessary transitional processes, including:
<u>quorum.</u>	(A) the transitional processes enumerated in 16 V.S.A. § 716;
(4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on June 30, 2026.	(B) the hiring of a superintendent; and
(f) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Task	(C) any other business process necessary to ensure the new
Force shall be entitled to per diem compensation and	school district is ready to assume the full and sole responsibility for the
reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010	education of all resident students in the grades for which it is organized
for not more than 10 meetings. These payments shall be made	<u>on July 1, 2029.</u>
from monies appropriated to the Secretary of State's office.	(e) New school district school board. The transitional board shall
	cease to exist and the new school district school board shall be solely
	responsible for the governance of the new school district upon the
	swearing in of all new school district school board members, which
	shall occur within 14 days after the initial election of new school district
	school board members in March 2028.
	(f) Transition facilitation grants.
	(1) Upon notice of formation of a transitional school board
	pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, the Secretary of Education
	shall pay the transitional school board of each new school district a

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	transition facilitation grant from the Education Fund equal to the lesser of: (A) five percent of the base amount, as defined in subdivision (a)(1) of this section, multiplied by the greater of either the combined enrollment or the average daily membership of the forming districts on October 1, 2026; or (B) \$250,000.00. (2) Grants awarded under this subsection shall be used by new school districts for the legal and other consulting services necessary ensure new school districts are fully operational on July 1, 2029.
Sec. 3. SCALE; INTENT [7/1/25]	Sec. 4. SCALE; INTENT [7/1/25]
	No changes
Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 165 is amended to read: [7/1/26]	Sec. 5. 16 V.S.A. § 165 is amended to read: [7/1/26]
 § 165. EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS; EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES; INDEPENDENT SCHOOL MEETING EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS (a) In order to carry out Vermont's policy that all Vermont children will be afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality, each Vermont public school, including each career technical center, shall meet the following education quality standards: * * * 	 § 165. EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS; EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES; INDEPENDENT SCHOOL MEETING EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS (a) In order to carry out Vermont's policy that all Vermont children will be afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality, each Vermont public school, including each career technical center, shall meet the following education quality standards:
(9) The school complies with average class size minimum standards; provided, however, that when class size minimums apply to content areas, an individual class may be smaller than the minimum	(9) The school complies with average class size minimum standards; provided, however, that when class size minimums apply to content areas, an individual class may be smaller than the minimum

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average. As used in this subdivision, "content area" means a group of	average. As used in this subdivision, "content area" means a group of
courses within a specific licensing endorsement area.	courses within a specific licensing endorsement area.
(A) Class size standards.	(A) Class size standards.
(i) The average class size minimum for kindergarten classes	(i) The average class size minimum for kindergarten and
shall be 12 students.	first grade classes shall be 10 students.
(ii) The average class size minimum for grades one through	(ii) The average class size minimum for grades two through
four shall be 15 students.	five shall be 12 students.
(iii) The average class size minimum for grades five	(iii) The average class size minimum for grades six through
through 12 in all required content area classes shall be 18 students.	eight in all required content areas shall be 15 students.
	(iv) The average class size minimum for grades nine
	through 12 in all required content area classes shall be 18 students.
(iv) Multiage classrooms for grades kindergarten through	(v) Multiage classrooms for grades kindergarten through
eight shall be limited to two grade levels per classroom.	eight shall be limited to two grade levels per classroom.
(v) Prekindergarten, career and technical education, flexible	(vi) Prekindergarten, career and technical education,
pathways, terminal courses, advanced placement courses, courses that	flexible pathways, terminal courses, advanced placement courses,
require specialized equipment, and driver's education classes shall be	courses that require specialized equipment, and driver's education
excluded from the class size minimum requirements in this subdivision	classes shall be excluded from the class size minimum requirements in
(9). Small group services for the purpose of providing special	this subdivision (9). Small group services for the purpose of providing
education, supplemental or targeted academic intervention, or English	special education, supplemental or targeted academic intervention, or
learner instruction shall also be excluded from the class size minimum	English learner instruction shall also be excluded from the class size
requirements in this subdivision (9).	minimum requirements in this subdivision (9).
(vi) Class sizes shall not exceed the maximum occupancy	(vii) Class sizes shall not exceed the maximum occupancy
limits established by local and State fire codes, including egress and	limits established by local and State fire codes, including egress and
safety requirements.	safety requirements.
(B) Waivers. If a school board determines that it operates a	(B) Waivers. If a school board determines that it operates a
school that is unable to comply with the class size minimum standards	school that is unable to comply with the class size minimum standards
due to geographic isolation, or a school has developed an	due to geographic isolation, or a school has developed an
implementation plan to meet the standards contained in this subdivision	implementation plan to meet the standards contained in this subdivision
(9) that may include consolidation or merger, the school board may ask	(9) that may include consolidation or merger, the school board may ask

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the State Board of Education to grant it waiver from this subdivision (9).	the State Board of Education to grant it waiver from this subdivision (9).
The State Board shall define what qualifies as geographic isolation in its	The State Board shall define what qualifies as geographic isolation in its
rules adopted pursuant to subdivision (a)(3) of this section. The State	rules adopted pursuant to subdivision (a)(3) of this section. The State
Board's decision shall be final.	Board's decision shall be final.
(C) State Board action. If the Secretary determines that a	(C) State Board action. If the Secretary determines that a
school is not meeting the class size minimum standards set forth in this	school is not meeting the class size minimum standards set forth in this
subdivision (9) over the course of two consecutive school years, the	subdivision (9) over the course of three consecutive school years, the
Secretary shall recommend to the State Board one or more of the actions	Secretary may recommend to the State Board one or more of the actions
listed in subsection (b) of this section, regardless of whether the school	listed in subsection (b) of this section, regardless of whether the school
is meeting all other education quality standards. The State Board shall	is meeting all other education quality standards. The State Board shall
then follow the procedure of subsection (c) of this section.	then follow the procedure of subsection (c) of this section.
Sec. 5. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS; STATE BOARD ACTION [7/1/26]	Sec. 6. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS; STATE BOARD ACTION [7/1/26] No change
Sec. 6. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; RULES; REPORT [7/1/25]	Sec. 7. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; RULES; REPORT [7/1/25]
(a) Rules.	(a) Rules. On or before August 1, 2026, the State Board of
(1) The State Board of Education shall initiate rulemaking to	Education shall initiate rulemaking to amend:
amend the Education Quality Standards rule 2000 series, Agency of	
Education, Education Quality Standards (22-000-003), pursuant to 3	
V.S.A. chapter 25:	
(A) on or before August 1, 2026, to ensure compliance with	(1) The Education Quality Standards rule 2000 series, Agency of
the class size minimum standards set pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 165(a)(9);	Education, Education Quality Standards (22-000-003), pursuant to 3
and	V.S.A. chapter 25 to ensure compliance with the class size minimum
(B) on or before July 1, 2027, to adopt standards for statewide	standards set pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 165(a)(9).
proficiency-based graduation requirements based on standards adopted	

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by the State Board and recommendations from the Agency of Education, which shall take effect beginning in the 2027–2028 school year for the graduating class of 2031 and every graduating class thereafter. (2) 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 require approved independent schools that intend to accept public tuition to comply with the class size minimum standards set pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 165(a)(9). The amendments shall also create a process for review by the State Board for failure to meet the class size minimum requirements and the corresponding actions the Board may take for such noncompliance; provided, however, that the Board shall provide an approved independent school a substantially similar opportunity to come into compliance with class size minimum standards that it would provide to a public school. (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	 (2) 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 require approved independent schools that intend to accept public tuition to comply with the class size minimum standards set pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 165(a)(9). The amendments shall also create a process for review by the State Board for failure to meet the class size minimum requirements and the corresponding actions the Board may take for such noncompliance; provided, however, that the Board shall provide an approved independent school a substantially similar opportunity to come into compliance with class size minimum standards that it would provide to a public school. (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."	deemed "small by necessity."
Sec. 7. SCHOOL SIZE; INTENT [7/1/25]	No similar provision
Sec. 8. PROHIBITION ON SCHOOL CLOSURE AND TRANSITION TO PAYING TUITION [7/1/25] Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a school district shall be prohibited from closing an existing public school and	Sec. 8. PROHIBITION ON SCHOOL CLOSURE AND TRANSITION TO PAYING TUITION [7/1/25] Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a school district shall be prohibited from closing an existing public school and
then providing for the education of its resident students by paying	then providing for the education of its resident students by paying

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tuition for its students to attend a public or approved independent school chosen by the parents of the district's students. If a school district that closes an existing public school is unable to provide for the education of its affected resident students in a different school or schools operated by the district, the school district shall provide for the education of its resident students by designating three or fewer public schools to serve as the public school or schools of the district. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, if designation is required pursuant to this section, the designation process contained in 16 V.S.A. § 827 shall apply to schools operating grades kindergarten through grade 12, or any subset of grades therein.	tuition for its students to attend a public or approved independent school chosen by the parents of the district's students. If a school district that closes an existing public school is unable to provide for the education of its affected resident students in a different school or schools operated by the district, the school district shall provide for the education of its resident students by designating three or fewer public schools to serve as the public school or schools of the district; provided, however, that if the closed public school is located in a geographically isolated area, as defined by the State Board of Education, and there is no reasonably accessible public school to designate, the applicable school district may provide for the education of its affected resident students by offering tuition pursuant to 16 V.S.A. chapter 21. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, if designation is required pursuant to this section, the designation process contained in 16 V.S.A. § 827 shall apply to schools operating grades kindergarten through grade 12, or any subset of grades therein.
(School Construct) Sec. 9. 16 V.S.A. § 3440 is added to read: [7/1/26] § 3440. STATEMENT OF POLICY	(School Construct) Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 3440 is added to read: [7/1/26] § 3440. STATEMENT OF POLICY No changes
Sec. 10. 16 V.S.A. § 3442 is added to read: [7/1/26] § 3442. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM	Sec. 5. 16 V.S.A. § 3442 is added to read: [7/1/26] § 3442. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM No changes
Sec. 11. 16 V.S.A. § 3443 is added to read: [7/1/25]	Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. § 3443 is added to read: [7/1/25]

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<u>§ 3443. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION</u>	§ 3443. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION
ADVISORY BOARD	ADVISORY BOARD
<u>AD VISORT DOTIRD</u>	No changes
Sec. 12. PROSPECTIVE REPEAL OF STATE AID FOR	Sec. 7. PROSPECTIVE REPEAL OF STATE AID FOR SCHOOL
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY BOARD [7/1/25]	CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY BOARD [7/1/25]
	No changes
Sec. 13. 16 V.S.A. § 3444 is added to read: [7/1/26]	Sec. 8. 16 V.S.A. § 3444 is added to read: [7/1/26]
§ 3444. SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AID SPECIAL FUND	§ 3444. SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AID SPECIAL FUND
	No changes
Sec. 14. 16 V.S.A. § 3445 is added to read: [7/1/26]	Sec. 9. 16 V.S.A. § 3445 is added to read: [7/1/26]
§ 3445. APPROVAL AND FUNDING OF SCHOOL	§ 3445. APPROVAL AND FUNDING OF SCHOOL
CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS	<u>CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS</u>
	No changes
Sec. 15. 16 V.S.A. § 3446 is added to read: [7/1/26]	Sec. 10. 16 V.S.A. § 3446 is added to read: [7/1/26]
§ 3446. APPEAL	§ 3446. APPEAL
	No changes
Sec. 16. TRANSFER OF RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; TRANSFER	Sec. 11. TRANSFER OF RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; TRANSFER
OF RULES [7/1/26]	OF RULES [7/1/26]

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	No changes
Sec. 17. REPEALS [7/1/26]	Sec. 12. REPEALS [7/1/26]
	No changes
Sec. 18. 16 V.S.A. § 828 is amended to read: [7/1/25]	Sec. 18. 16 V.S.A. § 828 is amended to read: [7/1/25]
§ 828. TUITION TO APPROVED SCHOOLS; AGE; APPEAL	§ 828. TUITION TO APPROVED SCHOOLS; AGE; APPEAL
(a) A school district shall not pay the tuition of a student	(a) A school district shall not pay the tuition of a student
except to:	except to:
(1) a public school, located in Vermont;	(1) a public school, located in Vermont;
(2) an approved independent school, that:	(2) an approved independent school, that:
(A) is located in Vermont;	(A) is located in Vermont;
(B) is approved under section 166 of this title on or	(B) is approved under section 166 of this title on or
before July 1, 2025;	before July 1, 2025;
	(C) is located within either:
	(i) a supervisory district that does not operate a
	public school for some or all grades as of July 1, 2024; or
	(ii) a supervisory union with one or more member
	school districts that does not operate a public school for some or all grades as of July 1, 2024;
(C) has at least 51 percent of its student enrollment	(D) had at least 25 percent of its Vermont resident
composed of students attending on a district-funded tuition basis	student enrollment composed of students attending on a district-
pursuant to chapter 21 of this title during the 2024–2025 school	funded tuition basis pursuant to chapter 21 of this title during the
year; and	2023–2024 school year; and
(D) complies with the minimum class size	(E) complies with the minimum class size
requirements contained in subdivision 165(a)(9) of this title and	requirements contained in subdivision 165(a)(9) of this title and
State Board rule; provided, however, that if a school is unable to	State Board rule; provided, however, that if a school is unable to

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 comply with the class size minimum standards due to geographic isolation or a school has developed an implementation plan to meet the class size minimum requirements, the school may ask the State Board to grant it a waiver from this subdivision (D), which decision shall be final; (3) an independent school meeting education quality standards; (4) a tutorial program approved by the State Board; (5) an approved education program, or; (6) an independent school in another state or country approved under the laws of that state or country, that complies with the reporting requirement under subsection 4010(c) of this title, a public school located in another state; or (7) a therapeutic approved independent school located in Nermont or another state or country. (b) nor shall payment Payment of tuition on behalf of a person shall not be denied on account of age. (c) Unless otherwise provided, a person who is aggrieved by a decision of a school board relating to eligibility for tuition payments, the amount of tuition payable, or the school the person may attend, may appeal to the State Board and its decision shall be final. 	 comply with the class size minimum standards due to geographic isolation or a school has developed an implementation plan to meet the class size minimum requirements, the school may ask the State Board to grant it a waiver from this subdivision (E), which decision shall be final; (3) an independent school meeting education quality standards; (4) a tutorial program approved by the State Board; (5) an approved education program, or; (6) an independent school in another state or country approved under the laws of that state or country, that complies with the reporting requirement under subsection 4010(c) of this title, a public school located in another state; or (7) a therapeutic approved independent school located in Vermont or another state or country that is approved under the laws of that state or duder the laws of that state or sproved under the laws of a person shall not be denied on account of age. (c) Unless otherwise provided, a person who is aggrieved by a decision of a school board relating to eligibility for tuition payments, the amount of tuition payable, or the school the person may attend, may appeal to the State Board and its decision shall be final. (d) As used in this section, "therapeutic approved independent school that limits enrollment for publicly funded students residing in
individualized education program or plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794, or who are enrolled	Vermont to students who are on an individualized education program or plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794, or who are enrolled pursuant to a written

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pursuant to a written agreement between a local education agency and	agreement between a local education agency and the school or
the school or pursuant to a court order.	pursuant to a court order.
Sec. 19. TUITION TRANSITION [7/1/25]	Sec. 19. TUITION TRANSITION [7/1/25]
	No changes
Sec. 20. STATEWIDE COHESION; INTENT [7/1/25]	Sec. 20. STATEWIDE COHESION; INTENT [7/1/25]
	No changes
Sec. 21. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; SCHOOL CALENDAR;	Sec. 21. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; REPORT [7/1/25]
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS; REPORT [7/1/25]	
(a) <u>Statewide graduation requirements</u> . On or before January 1, 2026, the Agency of Education shall recommend to the State Board of	
Education standards for statewide proficiency-based graduation	
requirements based on standards adopted by the State Board.	
(b) Statewide school calendar.	
(1) On or before January 15, 2027, the Secretary of	
Education shall develop and publish a statewide calendar for the	
public schools of the State, including career and technical	
centers, that shall be in effect in the	
2028–2029 academic year and after.	
(2) On or before January 15, 2027, the Secretary shall	
present to the House and Senate Committees on Education a list	
of the statutory amendments necessary to effect the intent of this	
subsection.	
(c) Report. On or before December 1, 2025, the Agency of	On or before December 1, 2025, the Agency of Education shall
Education shall submit a written report and recommended legislative	submit a written report and recommended legislative language, as

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language, as applicable, to the House and Senate Committees on	applicable, to the House and Senate Committees on Education with the
Education with the following:	following:
(1) In consultation with educators and administrators, a proposed	(1) In consultation with educators and administrators, a proposed
implementation plan for statewide financial data and student	implementation plan for statewide financial data and student
information systems.	information systems.
(2) Recommendations for a school construction division within	(2) Recommendations for a school construction division within
the Agency of Education, including position descriptions and job duties	the Agency of Education, including position descriptions and job duties
for each position within the division, a detailed description of the	for each position within the division, a detailed description of the
assistance the division would provide to the field, and the overall role	assistance the division would provide to the field, and the overall role
the Agency would play within a State aid to school construction	the Agency would play within a State aid to school construction
program.	program.
(3) A progress report regarding the development of clear,	(3) A progress report regarding the development of clear,
unambiguous guidance that would be provided to school officials and	unambiguous guidance that would be provided to school officials and
school board members regarding the business processes and transactions	school board members regarding the business processes and transactions
that would need to occur to facilitate school district mergers into larger,	that would need to occur to facilitate school district mergers into larger,
consolidated school districts, including the merging of data systems,	consolidated school districts, including the merging of data systems,
asset and liability transfers, and how to address collective bargaining	asset and liability transfers, and how to address collective bargaining
agreements for both educators and staff. The report shall include a	agreements for both educators and staff. The report shall include a
detailed description of how the Agency will provide support and	detailed description of how the Agency will provide support and
consolidation assistance to the field in each of these areas and an	consolidation assistance to the field in each of these areas and an
estimate of the costs associated with such work.	estimate of the costs associated with such work.
(4) In consultation with superintendents, directors of therapeutic	(4) In consultation with superintendents, directors of therapeutic
independent schools, special education directors, and, in the opinion of	independent schools, special education directors, and, in the opinion of
the Agency, other experts, recommendations for the need for	the Agency, other experts, recommendations for the need for
cooperative education services and the oversight of therapeutic schools	cooperative education services and the oversight of therapeutic schools
within the school governance framework both at a State and local level.	within the school governance framework both at a State and local level.
Sec. 22. STATE-LEVEL GOVERNANCE; INTENT [7/1/25]	Sec. 22. STATE-LEVEL GOVERNANCE; INTENT [7/1/25]

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	No changes
Sec. 23. 16 V.S.A. § 161 is amended to read: [7/1/25] § 161. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS; TERM; VACANCY	Sec. 23. 16 V.S.A. § 161 is amended to read: [7/1/25] § 161. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS; TERM; VACANCY
	No changes
Sec. 24. TRANSITION PERIOD APPOINTMENTS; STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION [7/1/25]	Sec. 24. TRANSITION PERIOD APPOINTMENTS; STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION [7/1/25]
	No changes
Sec. 25. 16 V.S.A. § 162 is amended to read: [7/1/25] § 162. REMOVAL OF BOARD MEMBERS	Sec. 25. 16 V.S.A. § 162 is amended to read: [7/1/25] § 162. REMOVAL OF BOARD MEMBERS
	No changes
Sec. 26. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; REVIEW OF RULES; APPROPRIATION [7/1/25]	Sec. 26. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; REVIEW OF RULES; APPROPRIATION [7/1/25]
	No changes
Sec. 27. 16 V.S.A. § 823 is amended to read: [contingently 7/1/29] § 823. ELEMENTARY TUITION	Sec. 27. 16 V.S.A. § 823 is amended to read: contingently 7/1/29 § 823. ELEMENTARY TUITION
	No changes
Sec. 28. REPEALS [contingently 7/1/29]	Sec. 22. REPEALS; TUITION [contingently 7/1/29]

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	No changes
Sec. 29. 16 V.S.A. § 4011 is amended to read: [passage] § 4011. EDUCATION PAYMENTS	<i>No similar provision</i> (language/concept is traveling in the budget)
Sec. 30. ADULT EDUCATION; FUNDING; REPORT [passage]	<i>No similar provision</i> (language/concept is traveling in the budget)
Sec. 31. STATE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION DELIVERY; AGENCY OF EDUCATION; REPORT [7/1/25]	Sec. 29. STATE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION DELIVERY; AGENCY OF EDUCATION; REPORT [7/1/25]
	No changes
Sec. 32. SPECIAL EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN; AGENCY OF EDUCATION [7/1/25]	Sec. 30. SPECIAL EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN; AGENCY OF EDUCATION [7/1/25]
	No changes

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Sec. 33. POSITION; AGENCY OF EDUCATION [7/1/25]	Sec. 31. POSITION; AGENCY OF EDUCATION [7/1/25]
	No changes
No similar provision	Sec. 32. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; TRANSFORMATION APPROPRIATION [passage] The sum of \$3,517,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2026 to support education transformation work as follows: (1) \$200,000.00 to support school boards transitioning to new governance models as contemplated in this act; (2) \$562,500.00 for positions established in Sec. 33 of this act; and (3) \$2,637,500.00 for contracted services to support school districts with administrative activities relating to consolidation, including accounting, budget and operational practice, and to support education quality activities including the alignment of curricula, instructional materials, and teaching activities.

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No similar provision	Sec. 33. EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION; POOL POSITIONS [passage] The General Fund appropriation in Sec. 32 of this act shall fund five limited service classified positions taken from the position pool. The pool positions shall be used to establish the following limited service classified positions at the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2026 to support education transformation work: (1) one Business Operations Support Specialist; (2) one Data Integration Support Specialist; (3) one Curriculum and Education Quality Standards Integration Specialist; (4) one Learning and Teaching Integration Specialist; (5) one School Facilities Field Support Specialist.