



**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

## **SECTION 9, ACT 73 OF 2025**

### **Statewide Systems & School Construction**

**December 1, 2025**

**Issued by the Vermont Agency of Education**

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## Purpose

Pursuant to [Section 9 of Act 73](#), the Agency of Education must submit a written report on the following topics:

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

Each topic will be addressed in its own section to provide clarity to the reader. Sections 1-2 appear as follows in the report:

1. [Statewide Finance and Student Information Systems](#) (Page 4)
2. [State Aid for School Construction Program](#) (Page 11)

The submission of (3) will be coordinated in tandem with the Transportation Report required in [Section 44 of Act 73](#) on December 15, 2025. Since the work of (4) is closely aligned with and will be informed by the Special Education Strategic Plan required in [Section 30 of Act 73](#), the Agency will be submitting those deliverables together on December 10, 2025.

## Statewide Systems

### Background and Current Context

Historically, supervisory unions and school districts (SU/SDs) have been able to identify and procure their own local business systems. Market share is mostly split between two student information system (SIS) applications and two statewide finance systems (also referred to as Enterprise Resource Planning or ERP) vendors. Additionally, there are a number of smaller ancillary systems in use that often closely integrate with the SIS or ERP system (e.g., special education software, learning management systems, employee time and records management applications or job posting boards). Having multiple systems across the state creates hurdles for consistent and efficient state data reporting for both users in the field and for Agency staff.

SIS data collections have tended to be burdensome and require significant Agency staff capacity and time supporting data quality, including meeting with multiple vendors and district staff. This complexity has resulted in frequent data collection delays, which in turn impact timely release of state assessments and annual accountability reports, as well as the release of Long Term Weighted Average Daily Membership (LTW ADM). The adoption of the Ed-Fi data standard has improved the student data collection process by requiring all SIS vendors to align data to a nationally accepted standard before it is transmitted to Agency. School Year 2025 was the first fully operational year for Ed-Fi data collections, and significant Agency resources were needed to assist SIS vendors and districts with data alignment and quality.

For education finance collections, a data crosswalk process is used that has improved the quality and consistency of data but does require time and effort by business office staff to complete accurately. The Shared School District Data Management System (SSDDMS) effort attempted to bring all districts on to a common ERP system, but only 19 SU/SDs adopted that system before the project was ended. However, even with a common ERP system for those 19 SU/SDs, collected data still shows significant effects of inconsistent system configurations that impact the data collection process, highlighting a potential need for closer alignment across districts.

### Stakeholder Engagement and Considerations

During the Statewide Planning Retreat on November 4, the Agency of Education engaged more than 50 SU/SD administrators, including superintendents, business managers and data managers, to seek feedback on the logistics of adopting a SIS and/or a statewide ERP. Breakout sessions during the day specifically focused on considerations related to adopting a statewide SIS and ERP. Both group conversations were robust, engaging many key stakeholders and gathering important feedback for the Agency. More information about stakeholder thoughts and feedback can be found in [Appendix A](#).

## Statewide Student Information Systems

Among breakout session participants there was broad support for the idea of a statewide SIS. Potential benefits that were identified included data consistency across the state while maintaining the ability for SU/SDs to tailor aspects of the platform to their needs. Potential cost savings were also discussed but would require a statewide cost sharing mechanism or dedicated source of funding for the system at a state level to achieve cost savings for SU/SDs, especially when the cost of staff training time is considered.

Several important factors were identified that would enable SU/SDs to effectively leverage a statewide SIS to meet their needs. SU/SDs require any system to seamlessly integrate and share student data back and forth with ancillary tools and platforms. Additionally, a statewide system must offer well-designed user interfaces for data entry and clear, useful, customizable reports for administrators and educators. There is also a broad desire to move beyond compliance data reporting to better utilize data to improve student experience and support transparent decision making.

The Agency and SU/SD representatives jointly recognize that in order for a statewide SIS to deliver on potential benefits and minimize disruption at both the state and local levels, a meticulous and highly collaborative requirements gathering and request for proposal (RFP) process is critical. To ensure any winning bid meets both state and local needs, a thorough investigation of the capacity of available systems must be completed.



The Agency and field partners recognize that a barrier to effective utilization of data (in this graphic, moving from Data to Knowledge and Wisdom) is the complexity and quality of our shared data. A statewide SIS reduces much of that complexity by providing access to validated data, building a strong foundation and enabling more opportunities to s more opportunities to focus on transforming data into Information, Knowledge and Wisdom.

## Statewide Financial Systems

Within the financial systems breakout session, field partners shared that their concerns were as much with the process for selection and fidelity of implementation as it was for preference for any one system. Since the state has recent experience from the Shared School District Data Management System (SSDDMS) process, there were lessons learned that informed the discussion. Emphasis was placed on the need for thorough vetting of any proposed system (by end users in the field) and an ample timeline to allow for vetting and procurement. Some discussion focused on specific attributes of an RFP process and the need to avoid unintended consequences, which might include state priorities and resource limitations being favored over the priorities and needs of end users in the field. All participants were in agreement that the end users of the system need to be directly involved in all steps of system identification and procurement. There were also questions about the selection of ancillary systems that may or may not integrate with an ERP.

## Key Considerations and Takeaways

Key considerations for both proposed statewide systems include, first and foremost, the need for a meticulous procurement process and thorough vetting of potential products. Robust and meaningful stakeholder engagement in the procurement process will be paramount. Additional considerations for many administrators were the importance of data integration with the many platforms SU/SDs must use, as well as user experience. Ideally, statewide systems would be familiar to many users, which should be possible given that almost all schools use 1 of 3 major vendors. It is important to recognize that the complexity of our governance structure significantly impacts our ability to achieve alignment; the more complex the system, the more challenging that alignment becomes. Furthermore, delays in establishing new districts will place additional pressure on the timeline.

To be successful, resources and time must be invested at the state and local levels in support and training for all system users. With that in mind, there are widespread concerns about the time involved in procurement, implementation, and full adoption of a new system. This potential misalignment between the procurement and district implementation timelines means that districts and the state should plan for some overlap and duplication of systems for a period of time. Short-term costs to support the merging of systems and full adoption should be considered as part of the cost of education transformation and vendor negotiations, commiserate with the level of system integration complexity involved.

## Next Steps

The next steps for the exploration of proposed statewide student and financial information systems are forming a working group, mapping out a concrete timeline, and creating additional opportunities for stakeholder input. Further steps involved in

implementing statewide student and financial information systems include identifying necessary state-level resource and capacity needs; ensuring adequate resources are allocated for SU/SD support, guidance, and training; designing and carrying out RFP processes with robust SU/SD participation; and planning and carrying out potential system transitions with adequate user support.

Based on this rigorous and extended engagement, the Agency will then be able to produce a timeline for a RFP and implementation as well as a proposed budget and cost analysis. This work will naturally be impacted by decisions made around governance and funding structures.

## **Appendix A**

On November 4, 2025, the Agency of Education held a Strategic Planning Retreat in Killington, Vermont. Part of the day included Agency staff-led interactive breakout sessions that provided an opportunity for stakeholders from across Vermont to collaborate and offer their perspective on the steps necessary to cultivate the best education system in the country.

### **Participant Feedback**

The breakout session titled Statewide System Planning: Student Information System & Financial System was focused on developing a unified approach to Vermont's financial and student information systems, aiming to create efficient, transparent, and user-friendly tools that enhance decision-making and strengthen school operations statewide. Participants emphasized the necessity of a meticulous procurement process for any statewide system, highlighting the importance of thorough vetting and stakeholder involvement to ensure the system meets diverse needs. Seamless integration with existing systems, such as Ed-Fi and Harvest Child Nutrition System, was deemed crucial, along with easy data import/export and compatibility with tools like Clever. The ideal system should be familiar to users, offer clear customization options for schools, and support robust data governance to maintain consistency across the state.

Participants also considered potential cost savings, referencing a previous estimate of \$20 per student for a statewide SIS, and stressed the system's capability to support documentation of Hazing, Harassment & Bullying (HHB) and Title IX, integrate statewide IEP and Medicaid data, and facilitate planning and tracking of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for students. Although concerns were raised about aligning the procurement timeline with legislative deadlines for district consolidation, with some questioning whether there is sufficient time for a comprehensive process, the session concluded with consensus on the benefits of a statewide system. This underscored the need for a well-planned, inclusive process that leverages daily data to improve student outcomes beyond mere compliance.



The following information was compiled at the time of the Strategic Planning Retreat:

**Key Themes:**

- Need for meticulous procurement process and thorough vetting
- Timeline concerns – need to match legislated timeline for consolidation; do we have enough time to complete a thorough procurement process?
- Desire for more seamless data integration with ancillary systems and software
- Stakeholder involvement in procurement process is very important. Lots of interest in participation
- Ideal system will be familiar to as many users as possible

**Next Steps:**

- Develop and deliver Act 73 Report
- Map out a concrete timeline
- Put together a working group
- Create additional opportunities for stakeholder input

**SIS System Summary Notes:**

- Integration with current plug-ins/tools (e.g., Clever)
  - Flexibility with Application Program Interfaces (APIs), and who will pay for APIs?
  - Bring in info/data from other systems and be able to export
  - Integration with Ed-Fi
  - Integration with Harvest Child Nutrition System
  - For example, currently SpEd data is isolated—there is no good way to export EdDocVT data and link to other systems
  - Ease of connection with ERP, HR, professional development tracking systems, etc.
  - Need to be able to document HHB and Title IX (FERPA, disciplinary reporting)
  - Statewide IEP and Medicaid—where are we with these? They can/should be integrated
  - Consider/understand ancillary tools owned by SISs
- System should “talk well within itself” and that requires vetting
  - How can we most thoroughly investigate the capacity of a system to meet SU/SD and state needs before entering a contract?
  - Need to consider data governance, Role Based Access Control (RBACs), and avoid double entry (e.g., race/ethnicity can vary from EdDocVT to PowerSchool)
- Cost savings—is this real? Calculated? Potential?
  - Cost was estimated to be about \$20/student when statewide SIS was explored five years ago, for reference
- Data consistency across the state is important



- Example needs are reducing duplicate enrollment data, and better tracking of home schoolers
- What will LEAs see as reports?
- Teacher interface—what will this look like?
- Clarity on what schools can/should customize will be important.
- Think beyond compliance—how do we use data each day to improve student lives (e.g., Student Snapshot for principals)
- Mechanisms to get data (e.g., Assessments) into Ed-Fi, if we want to lean heavily into Ed-Fi as a unifying solution
- Everyone needs time to gather requirements to write a proper RFP. The timeline presented during the session may be too brief.
- System should enable the planning and tracking of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for students
- Session ended with consensus that a statewide system would be beneficial

### **Financial System Summary:**

- Need stakeholders with operational knowledge involved in entire procurement and implementation process
  - System is for the boots on the ground operational staff first, state second
- Need to consider larger digital needs ecosystem, not just the ERP itself (ancillary systems for business needs, procedures, etc.)
  - e.g. single teachers contract, GMS, LMS
  - see list of ancillary systems below
- Need to align knowledge of operational needs to procurement process - things can fall apart in the execution of the RFP process
  - e.g. Prequalify bidders?
  - e.g. take the time necessary (build in time)
- Ensure state involvement does not betray the needs and work of the team members from the field
  - e.g. ensure the AOE is funded and resourced appropriately
  - hire a 3rd party consultant?
- Need for strict standardization in system config
  - e.g. an overlord role?

### **Data Apps Integration Ecosystem:**

#### **SIS**

- LMS (Schoology, etc.) (EQS, PBL/PBG)
- Special Ed (EdDoc, etc.)
- Nursing/Medicaid (electronic health records)
- School Meals
- Communications/Alert systems
- PLP

**ERP**

- Job Posting Board (School Spring)
- Employee portal (Employee Records, EE Access Center)
- Applicant portal (Applicant Tracking)
- Time management (Frontline, Substitutes mgt)
- Time entry (TimeClockPlus)
- Professional development
- Substitute Calling System
- At least one SU/SD really likes OpenGov budgeting system

## State Aid for School Construction Program

### Current State of State Aid for School Construction Program

The state has taken significant steps to re-establish a State Aid for School Construction Program. This includes the completion of the first statewide facilities condition assessment, which yielded a baseline understanding of the portfolio of public school buildings and validated the increasing cost of deferred maintenance and aging school infrastructure. The Agency has also taken important steps in establishing measures of quality, through the District Quality Standards, for effective and responsible maintenance and capital planning and budgetary practices. These efforts have been important preconditions for the work undertaken by the State Aid for School Construction Aid Taskforce and Working Groups, which yielded the legislative language passed in Act 73.

Act 73 lays out the key principles, framework and roles and responsibilities for a State Aid for School Construction Program. The next phase of this work is to prepare the education system through the establishment of a Division within the Agency of Education to develop resources to provide support, technical assistance to the field and engage in administrative rulemaking to ensure that there is clarity on the parameters and priorities of the program.

### Necessary Next Steps

The following steps are some of the necessary prerequisites to the awarding of school construction aid:

- The creation and recruitment of a School Construction Division with the Agency of Education;
- The development of the rules and regulations that will govern the program, including the establishment of prioritization criteria and bonus incentives;
- The development of a school construction planning guide; and
- The development of minimum required square footage tables for program and service spaces.

### State Aid for School Construction Program Roles and Responsibilities

The successful implementation and sustainability of a robust State Aid for School Construction Program will require collaboration between the following three state-level entities:

- The School Construction Division within the Agency of Education;
- The School Construction Advisory Board; and
- The General Assembly.

Each entity will play an important part in ensuring that state funds are strategically used to ensure that students are learning in safe and healthy environments and that

investments are made in alignment with the vision of educational transformation in order to provide an exceptional educational experience to all students.

### **Role of the Agency of Education**

- Develop and implement the Comprehensive Facilities Master Planning Grant Program;
- Develop the rules and regulations within which the State Aid for School Construction Program will operate;
- After consultation with the School Construction Advisory Board, establish a prioritization schema for approved projects;
- After consultation with the School Construction Advisory Board, establish bonus incentives that align with current state goals;
- Provide technical assistance to districts, architects, engineers and contractors engaged with school construction projects; and
- Approve and recommend for approval school construction projects that have met all the requirements of the rules and regulations under which the construction program operates.

The positions above are tasked with the direct administration and implementation of the school construction program. In addition, the Agency is recruiting a Limited-Service position, as Education Transition Support Specialist in Facilities Management, established through Act 73, to assist districts as they evaluate their building portfolio in light of changes in governance, funding or quality measures resulting from Act 73 or subsequent legislation related to education transformation.

### **Role of the School Construction Advisory Board**

- To advise the School Construction Division on the implementation of the school construction program
  - Advise on rules and regulations
  - Advise on periodic revisions to the Capital Outlay Financing Formula
  - Advise on a prioritization schema for school construction projects that aligns with state goals
  - Advise on bonus incentives that encourage outcomes that align with state goals

### **Role of the Legislature**

- To appropriate funds for the Comprehensive Facilities Master Planning Grant program
- To appropriate funds for the sustained operation of a robust school construction program
- To develop a sustainable revenue source with which to fund a sustainable construction program

## Recommendations for a School Construction Division within the AOE

The Agency will play a significant role in the implementation, oversight and ongoing technical assistance and support that will be critical to the success of the State Aid for School Construction Program. It is essential that this effort is appropriately resourced with highly trained staff to ensure that limited state resources are directed strategically and utilized with fidelity. These staff will work closely with the field throughout the development and planning phases and then provide oversight of approved projects. In addition, this team will serve as a bridge between the field and other Agency teams that have programmatic, operational or fiscal expertise that may be supportive of project planning.

The Agency of Education recommends a School Construction Division be comprised of the following personnel:

- School Construction Program Director
- Financial Manager
- School Construction Coordinator
- Architectural Design Reviewers/Educational Facility Planners
- Additional Reviewers/Planners recruited to match workload

The job descriptions with associated salary ranges for the above positions are described below.

### School Construction Program Director

**\$74,000-\$116,000 annually**

The School Construction Program Director is a high-level leadership position within the Agency of Education. This position is responsible for the overall management of the state school construction aid program. They will serve as the senior expert in the design and development of a new school construction program that complies with school construction legislative mandates. They will lead the following efforts:

- Developing and implementing rules and regulations that provide clear guidance for school districts hoping to engage in school construction.
- Developing and implementing minimum space requirements for educational facilities.
- Developing and implementing a Master Planning Grant Program.
- Recommending periodic unit cost updates to the Capital Outlay Financing Formula.
- Collaborating with the School Construction Advisory Board.
- Collaborating with the State Board of Education.
- Providing recommendations for funding of projects that have successfully met the requirements of the school construction approval process.

Their duties will be performed under the general supervision of an administrative supervisor with wide latitude to exercise independent judgement to achieve results.

### **Financial Manager I**

**\$62,000-\$97,760 annually**

The Financial Manager I position involves managerial or senior professional-level accounting work focused on maintaining, reviewing, and reconciling financial records to ensure compliance with accepted accounting principles and standards. This role serves as a senior expert in the school construction aid fiscal program and involves performing highly complex and specialized fiscal analysis or auditing. Key responsibilities include:

- Analyzing financial reports, programs, costs, payments, and accounting processes.
- Managing specific complex fiscal functions such as budget development, sub-recipient audits, and federal program fiscal administration.

Duties are performed under the general supervision of an administrative supervisor.

### **School Construction Coordinator**

**\$60,630-\$92,200 annually**

Under the general direction of the School Construction Program Director or designee, perform a wide variety of complex, specialized, and technical duties in support of the activities, services, and functions of the school construction department; serve as liaison between the Director of School Construction and internal and external individuals, groups, and agencies; and prepare, review, and proof a variety of documents, records, and forms for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with applicable rules and regulations. Key responsibilities include:

- Periodic updating of the Vermont School Construction Planning Guide as revisions are warranted.
- Develop, post, and disseminate documentation related to school construction rules, regulations, and updates.
- Provide information requested by districts, architects, engineers, consultants and the general public as it relates to school construction.
- Plan, schedule, and organize meetings between construction team members and architects, engineers, planners, districts, and sister agencies.
- Maintain comprehensive project folders for all construction projects from inception to completion.

**Architectural Design Reviewer/Educational Facility Planner(s)****\$70,000 - \$103,000 annually**

This position involves senior professional-level architectural and engineering review work for PK-12 school construction projects, ensuring conformity to state rules and regulations. The role serves as the senior expert in administering the school construction process as outlined in the school construction rules and regulations and the Vermont School Construction Planning Guide. Key responsibilities include:

- Leading and supervising the development and implementation of guidance materials and forms for districts applying for school construction aid, including periodic updates of cost per square foot and space allowances.
- Providing technical assistance in the planning, design, and construction of high-performing school construction projects.
- Reviewing and interpreting master plans and detailed design drawings for new schools, additions, substantial rehabilitation projects, and modernization projects.
- Conducting plan review meetings with school districts undertaking construction projects.
- Ensuring all districts have submitted a capital improvement plan and monitoring capital expenditures to ensure compliance with school construction regulations.
- Reviewing construction documents at various stages of project completion as well as commissioning agent reports and other necessary documents for administering the school construction program.

Duties are performed under the general supervision of an administrative supervisor, with wide latitude to exercise independent judgment to achieve results.

**School Construction Division Duties**

The School Construction Division within the Agency of Education shall be responsible for the following duties:

- Reviewing all preliminary applications for State school construction aid with the Secretary ultimately issuing an approval or denial for each;
- With advice from the School Construction Advisory Board, adopting rules pertaining to school construction and capital outlay, including rules to specify a point prioritization methodology and a bonus incentive structure aligned with legislative intent;
- Developing the annual school construction funding request as part of the overall Agency of Education budget submitted to the Governor by the Secretary;
- In consultation with the Department of Buildings and General Services, developing a prequalification and review process for project delivery consultants and architecture and engineering firms specializing in prekindergarten through grade 12 school design, renovation, or construction and maintaining a list of such prequalified firms and consultants;



- Providing technical assistance and guidance to school districts and supervisory unions on all phases of school capital projects. Development of a new School Construction Planning Guide will be part of the technical guidance documentation to be provided;
- Providing technical advice and assistance, training, and education to school districts, supervisory unions, general contractors, subcontractors, construction or project managers, designers, and other vendors in the planning, maintenance, and establishment of school facility space;
- Maintaining a current list of school construction projects that have received preliminary approval, projects that have received final approval, and the priority points awarded to each project;
- Collecting, maintaining, and making publicly available quarterly progress reports of all ongoing school construction projects that shall include, at a minimum, the costs of the project and the time schedule of the project;
- Conducting a needs survey at least every five years to ascertain the capital construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and other capital needs for all public schools and maintaining such data in a publicly accessible format;
- Developing a formal enrollment projection model or using projection models already available;
- Annually on or before December 15, submitting a written report to the General Assembly regarding the status and implementation of the State Aid for School Construction Program, including the data required to be collected pursuant to this section.

### **Role of the Agency within the State Aid for School Construction Program**

The Agency of Education has been heavily involved for the past 5 years in laying the groundwork for reinstating school construction aid and will have a multi-faceted role within the State Aid for School Construction Program. Some foundational work to support a future school construction program has already been successfully undertaken, with several key highlights of note:

- As required by Act 72 of 2021, the Agency completed a facilities assessment of the entire portfolio of school buildings across the state in 2023 with the aim of informing legislators of the magnitude of school building facilities needs across the state;
- The Agency launched a publicly accessible and searchable Dashboard of the findings resulting from the facilities assessment in early 2024;
- As required by Act 72 of 2021, the Agency of Education was tasked with updating the Capital Outlay Financing Formula (COFF) to reflect current construction sector pricing for K-12 school building construction. The Agency

updated the COFF, which was approved by the State Board of Education in late 2023;

- As required by Act 72 of 2021, to ensure that personnel designated by Superintendents as responsible for facilities management possess the foundational requisite skills required to lead facilities management departments, the Agency developed a Facility Manager training curriculum with certification. The implementation is still to be worked out;
- As required by Act 72 of 2021, every school district shall develop a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. Toward this end, the Agency of Education has developed and deployed a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan template for all districts to use or reference as they choose;
- As required by Rule Series 100, (District Quality Standards) every SU/SD is to have a comprehensive Operations and Maintenance Manual for each school building. To this end, the Agency of Education has developed and deployed an Operations and Maintenance Manual template for districts to use or reference as they choose.

Going forward, the Agency of Education will embark upon several key areas of work required for a successful rollout of a robust school construction program and its ongoing operation. Among these key areas of focus are the following:

- The creation of a new Vermont School Construction Planning Guide that will be revised to reflect modern design for K-12 schools. New pedagogies and learning styles (visual, kinetic, contemplative and collaborative) are shaping not only how teachers teach but the way spaces are designed in spaces in which education flourishes;
- Developing strong relationships with both the School Construction Advisory Board and State Board of Education so that new school design approaches can be optimized within funding realities while successfully implementing both Educational and District Quality Standards;
- Assisting districts that look to engage in Comprehensive Educational Facilities Master Planning by developing a list of pre-approved Architectural/Engineering firms that have experience and expertise in this arena;
- Periodic revision of bonus incentives for school construction aid as required in order to align with state goals;
- Stay abreast of current trends in K-12 school construction design and incorporate improvements, if achievable, after consultation with the School Construction Advisory Board;
- Provide assistance in whatever ways the field requires as they work through education transformation initiatives; and
- Support schools in evaluating their physical plant to strengthen security and safety.

## Future State of Agency Facilities and Construction Resources

