



Statement from the Vermont School Boards Association:
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Vermont Education Transformation Bill

May 29, 2026

The Education Transformation Bill approved by the House and Senate represents a step in the right direction and includes several provisions for which VSBA has advocated strongly. However, the legislation also presents new challenges for school districts and raises significant questions, particularly with respect to funding for our public schools.

We are proud of our advocacy work over the past several years that influenced this legislation, including testimony and data provided by our members and staff. We are encouraged that the bill that will be presented to Governor Scott to sign into law reflects many of the principles, priorities, and recommendations in the [VSBA Position Paper on Act 73](#) that we released in November 2025.

In particular, the legislation:

- provides **voluntary and incentivized district mergers** rather than forced consolidation, including participation on merger committees to assess viable paths forward;
- recommends **district size parameters** intended to balance operational efficiency with strong community connection;
- promotes regional collaboration by requiring school districts to participate in **Cooperative Education Service Areas (CESA)**, aimed at expanding educational opportunity, including high-quality, cost-efficient special education services; and
- preserves an important role for **local governance and community engagement**.

At the same time, VSBA has significant concerns about other aspects of the proposed law that will require further analysis and deliberation before they can be implemented effectively. For example:

- The **implementation timelines** prescribed in the bill are aggressive and may not allow sufficient planning time for communities, districts, and the state.
- Districts are being asked to **manage several major changes** at once: CESA formation, service delivery transitions, merger study work, cost-containment efforts, and a new finance formula. Each of these is complex on its own. Together, and on an accelerated timeline, they create significant operational risks and capacity challenges for districts.

- While the shift to a **foundation formula** on July 1, 2029 may prove to be advantageous for some districts, the state has not conducted adequate analysis or committed sufficient funding to ensure that the new formula will be workable for all districts.
- The legislation does not address the **primary cost drivers** that are straining district budgets, including healthcare, special education services, workforce challenges, aging infrastructure, and student transportation.

When Governor Scott signs the legislation into law, VSBA will remain deeply involved in every step of design and implementation, urging state leaders to conduct a process that reflects the practical realities facing school districts and the priorities, needs, ideas, and concerns of school boards and the communities we serve. We are hopeful that together, we can chart a course forward that minimizes the impact on taxpayers, strengthens the effectiveness of our schools, and ultimately provides an outstanding public education to every student in Vermont.