

# Commission on the Future of Vermont Public Education

## Guiding Principles

[Act 183](#) convenes the Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont. “The Commission shall study the provision of education in Vermont and make recommendations for a statewide vision for Vermont’s public education system to ensure that all students are afforded substantially equal educational opportunities in an efficient, sustainable, and stable education system. The Commission shall also make recommendations for the strategic policy changes necessary to make Vermont’s educational vision a reality for all Vermont students.”.

The Commission believes that it is important to identify a set of overarching principles and common understandings that guide its decision making. While all decisions will be thoroughly vetted and affirmed by the Commission, it is instructive for the Commission to clearly articulate the basis for its decisions and communicate that to the public.

### State Responsibility and Authority for Education in Vermont

In the *State vs. Brigham* 166 Vt. 164 (1997), the Vermont Supreme Court held that the State has a constitutional obligation to provide public education, and while “[t]he state may delegate to local towns and cities the authority to finance and administer the schools within their borders; it cannot, however, abdicate the basic responsibility for education by passing it on to local governments, which are themselves creations of the state.”

### Equity

The Commission is committed to decision making that centers equity for Vermont students. While there is a recognition that operationalizing the term “equity” is a complex and varied task, the Commission is committed to the following core understandings of equity:

- Equity does not mean equal/same.
- Solutions with an equity focus must be differentiated by need
- Equity must be considered both in terms of inputs (access) and outputs (outcomes).

### Quality

In Vermont, education best practices are specific and defined in [Rule Series 2000: Education Quality Standards](#). The Education Quality Standards (EQS) were recently updated to ensure “that all Vermont students are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality and are equitable, anti-racist, culturally responsive, anti-discriminatory, and inclusive, thus enabling each student to achieve or exceed the performance standards approved by the State Board of Education” and go into effect on July 1, 2025. The Commission is committed to defining education best practices/quality according to Rule Series 2000. The Commission acknowledges that the EQS focuses primarily on inputs and that accountability & outcomes for adherence to the EQS is critical.

### Sustainability

The Commission understands that public education in Vermont must be sustainable and affordable for Vermont taxpayers, so that the commitment to Equity and Quality can be sustained over time. This requires a comprehensive look at the education funding system, including both inputs (revenue sources, uses of the education fund, etc) and outputs (cost containment).

