



# MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont

FROM: Steering Group

SUBJECT: Work plan

DATE: August 22, 2024

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## Background

The Commission's first deliverable is to prepare and submit by September 15, 2024 a formal, written work plan and communication plan that will maximize public engagement. The Steering Group reviewed the requirements established in law in proposing this recommendation for the Commission's review and consideration.

## Proposed Framework

The proposed framework establishes a clear roadmap, with actional deliverables, while allowing for flexibility and responsiveness to insights collected throughout the research, public engagement, and planning process. The approach is designed to be recursive to arrive at recommendations that are well-researched and contextually relevant.

## Phases

The phased approach defines broad categories of work that will be further refined through the work of sub-committees organized around key content areas. The following phases will support the development of short- mid- and long-term strategies:

- Set Direction: Establish shared understanding of terms, process, and objectives
  - Analyze current state of educational delivery in Vermont.
  - Set clear objectives for the Commission's work.
  - Ensure understanding of how the Commission will conduct its work.
  - Define key terms, including educational equity and affordability.

- Establish Sub Committees: Launch committees to focus on the key content areas.
  - Stagger the formation of committees based on priorities.
  - Study best practices, including Vermont exemplars and promising models from other countries.
  - Engage subject matter experts as volunteers and/or consultants to inform the work.
  
- Promote Public Engagement: Foster broad-based public engagement that is inclusive and captures a diversity of perspectives.
  - Leverage existing community engagement forums to expand the Commission's reach.
  - Organize convenings and facilitate discussions across the state that are accessible.
  - Capture feedback on strategies to dually promote equity & sustainability of Vermont's education system.
  
- Reflect & Synthesize: Organize and publish findings from public engagement, data analysis, and research.
  - Identify key themes that capture the state's educational priorities.
  - Publish report of qualitative and quantitative results.
  - Evaluate the barriers and opportunities to implement promising practices aligned to the Commission's objectives.
  
- Illustrate Future Impact: Model the impact of potential strategies related to educational quality and economic impact.
  - Evaluate how changes to the funding formula, structure, and educational delivery will impact the education system.
  - Consider the variable impact across the state based on demographics and other school and community dynamics.
  
- Policy Recommendations & Considerations: Propose short-, medium-, and long-term strategies to achieve the vision for Vermont's public education system.
  - Prepare initial policy recommendations as early as January of 2024.
  - Factor implementation considerations into proposals, including timing and support required.
  - Provide ongoing testimony as the General Assembly evaluates the efficacy and potential impact of statutory changes.

- Implement & Evaluate Impact: Ensure fidelity of implementation and identify early mid-course corrections as needed.
  - Support the roll out of legislative changes and monitor impact to allow for mid-course corrections.

## **Structural Considerations**

The Steering Group proposes the establishment of three committees in addition to the statutorily required Education Finance Subcommittee to include the Communication & Engagement Subcommittee, Governance, Resources & Administration Subcommittee, and Education Delivery System Subcommittee. The attached work plan delineates the purpose of each subcommittee, expertise needed of its members, timeline, and general considerations about how to approach the work.

## Commission on the Future of Vermont Public Education

### Commission Structure:

- Steering Group:** “shall **provide leadership to the Commission** and **shall work with a consultant or consultants to analyze the issues, challenges, and opportunities** facing Vermont’s public education system, as well as **develop and propose a work plan** to formalize the process through which the Commission shall seek to achieve its final recommendations.

	Communication & Engagement	Education Finance System	Governance, Resources & Administration	Education Delivery System
<b>Possible Charge</b>	<p><i>Design and propose a public outreach plan for Commission, to include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying existing events/opportunities that can be used to share and engage on the Commission’s work</li> <li>The development of a “toolkit” for engagement for member use at other events</li> <li>A framework for engagement sessions that may be added to the Commission meetings as they rotate around the state</li> <li>Drafting a process for the Public Comment 2025 period</li> </ul>	<p><i>Propose recommendations regarding cost containment strategies in the short term and the entire education finance system in the long term, so that the full commission can provide preliminary financial recommendations to the General Assembly by December 2024 and more formal recommendations by December 2025.</i></p>	<p><i>Propose recommendations regarding the structure of the Agency (and whether an agency or department structure is prudent), whether changes need to be made to the composition, role and function of the State Board, and what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of local control and what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of control at the State level</i></p>	<p><i>Propose recommendations regarding “the physical size and footprint of the education system,” workforce development, the role of tuition programs (including designation, therapeutic schools and “the legal and financial impact of funding independent schools and other private institutions”, and the role of public schools - “whether Vermont’s vision for education shall include the provision of wraparound supports and collocation of services”</i></p>
<b>Timeline</b>	Committee will be convened at the August 26th Commission meeting	Preliminary recommendations: December 2024 Formal recommendations: December 2025	Ongoing; group initiates its work early 2025	Ongoing; group initiates its work early 2025
<b>Content Expertise</b>	Requires expertise in facilitation, equitable community engagement and information sharing	7 members to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School business official</li> <li>Superintendent</li> <li>Administration (2)</li> <li>School Board Association</li> <li>Legislative (2)</li> </ul> Utilize consultants as needed	Requires expertise in legal issues relative to governance and decision making	Delivery system (expertise in education quality, etc) Recognition that this work crosses all of the other identified bodies of expertise
<b>Approach</b>	Subcommittee with consultant (subcommittee will draft a scope of work)	Subcommittee identified by the Steering Group	Subcommittee	Full Commission work leveraged/coordinated by the Steering Group Steering Group for agenda planning