

Act 73 of 2025

Presentation for Washington Central School District Board, Sept. 17, 2025

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Commission on the Future of Public Education

Reduces the charge of the Commission to:

- Defining roles for local vs. state control
- Updating school district boards' roles and responsibilities, and those of the electorate
- Establishing a process for community voice in decisions regarding school closures and recommendations for what that process shall entail.
- A monitoring process for implementing the act in a transparent and public-facing way.

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School District Redistricting Task Force

- Charge: to recommend new school district boundaries
- Legislator-majority task force; includes retired education leaders
- Up to 3 options for new school district boundaries
    - At least one option to include supervisory unions, and continuation of tuitioning system
- Mandates at least two public hearings
- District size: ~ 4,000-8,000 PK-12 ADM
- Report and maps due: Dec 1, 2025
- Task Force dissolves: June 30, 2026

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School District Voting Ward Working Group

- Purpose: apportion board membership fairly through creation of voting wards in new districts
- Chaired by Secretary of State with two members appointed by the VSBA and others
- Must align with legislative apportionment principles
- Recommendations to include:
    a. optimal number of school board members per board to maximize public representation and democratic input while maintaining effective school board size;
    b. boundaries for school district voting wards within each school district, with alternative options if necessary, including detailed maps clearly and unambiguously delineating ward boundaries that respect current municipal boundary lines.
- Working Group dissolves: June 30, 2026

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Class Size Minimums (Effective July 1, 2026)

- Grade 1: ≥10 students
- Grades 2–5: ≥12
- Grades 6–8: ≥15 (required content)
- Grades 9–12: ≥18 (required content)
- Multiage classes limited to 2 grades
- Exclusions and waiver process available

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Statewide Standards, Calendars, and Systems

- Graduation requirements begin 2027-2028 school year for graduating class of 2031
- Statewide calendar for public schools and CTE centers begins 2028–2029 school year
- AOE to provide report by Dec. 1, 2025 on 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
    - Addressing collective bargaining agreements for both educators and staff
    - How the AOE will provide support for the consolidation process and the cost

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School Construction Aid Program

- Program created
- No funding allocated
- State Aid for School Construction Advisory Board created to advise AOE on implementation of the program

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Tuition to Independent Schools & Tuition Transition

- Limited to VT schools
- Only in districts/SUs without public schools as of July 1, 2024
- Must have 25% public enrollment as of the 2023-2024 school year
- Must meet enrollment and class size criteria
- Grandfathered tuition for those currently enrolled and those accepted for enrollment as of July 1, 2025

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State Board Appointments

- New appointments by House and Senate (1 each)
- No expansion of the Board
- Effective July 1, 2025

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Tuition Calculation (Effective July 1, 2028)

- Base + weights
- Extra 5% for grades 9–12 if approved by all sending districts
- Must charge equally to all sending districts
- Full tuition required for tech centers

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Special Education Studies

- AOE report due Sept 1, 2025 on cost growth and delivery
- Strategic plan due Dec 1, 2025

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AOE Transformation Appropriation

- $2.865M in FY26 for:
  - Governance support
  - Staff positions
  - Consolidation and quality initiatives

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Foundation Formula (Effective July 1, 2028)

- Base: $15,033 + inflation
- Weights for:
  - Special Education Disability Categories
  - English learners proficiency level + newcomer status
  - Economic disadvantage (1.02)
- Small/sparse school grants

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Supplemental Spending & Taxation

- Phased caps: 10% (2029) → 5% (2038+)
- Property tax mechanism based on property values
  - Higher property values = greater local tax input to get the supplemental spending

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Homestead and Property Tax Reform

- Homestead exemption for incomes ≤$115K
- Non-homestead split into residential & non-residential

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Regional Assessment Districts

- 12 regions
- Reappraise every 6 years
- Effective Jan 1, 2029

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Implementation Timeline Highlights

- 2025: Reports and appointments begin; Tuition eligibility
- 2026: Class size, district lines must be voted on to proceed with foundation formula
- 2028–2029 School Year: Statewide calendar, foundation formula, new districts in operation

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QUESTIONS