No. 56. An act relating to making miscellaneous amendments to education law.

(H.521)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

* * * Union School Districts; Regional Education Districts (REDs) * * *

Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 706g is amended to read:

§ 706g. STATE BOARD DESIGNATION OF DISTRICTS AS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT, RECORDING BY SECRETARY OF STATE

Within ten days of the vote 45 days after the vote or 15 days after an unsuccessful vote to reconsider or rescind the original vote under 17 V.S.A. § 2661, whichever is later, the clerk of each district voting on the proposal to establish a union school district shall certify the results of the vote to the commissioner of education Secretary of Education. If a majority of the voters voting in each district which is designated in the final report as necessary to the establishment of the proposed union vote to establish the proposed union district, those districts, together with any district designated in the final report as advisable to be included in the proposed union, which voted by a majority of those voting to establish the proposed union district, shall constitute a union school district. The commissioner of education Secretary of Education shall designate all such districts as a union school district; and shall so certify to the secretary of state Secretary of State, who shall record such certification. Upon this record, the union school district shall become a body politic and corporate with the powers incident to a municipal corporation, shall be known by the name or number given in the certificate, by that name or number may sue and

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be sued, and may hold and convey real and personal estate for the use of the district. The record shall be notice to all parties of the establishment of the union school district with all the powers incident to such a district as herein provided. A certified copy of the record in the office of the secretary of state Secretary of State shall be filed by him or her in the office of the clerk of each school district to be included within the union school district within fifteen 15 days from the date the commissioner of education Secretary of Education certified the existence of the union district to him or her. This filing shall be prima facie evidence that of full compliance with the requirements for the creation of a union school district as herein set forth have been fully complied with in this subchapter.

Sec. 2 [Deleted]

Sec. 3. 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156, Sec. 17(a) is amended to read:

- (a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary:
- (1)(A) if all local elementary school districts in the member towns of an existing union high school or union middle school-high school district ("union high school district") vote whether to establish a unified union school district providing prekindergarten or kindergarten through grade 12; and
- (B) if a majority but not all of the elementary school districts, or any number greater than a majority as required by the report approved under 16 V.S.A. § 706c, including all districts that may be named in the report as

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"necessary," votes in favor of establishing the unified union school district; then, if the warning for the vote clearly provides,

- (2) a new modified union school district (the "modified union school district") shall be established that shall:
- (A) provide to the students residing in the member towns of the union high school district education in those grades provided by the union high school district; and
- (B) provide elementary education to the students residing in the current elementary school districts that voted in favor of the unified union school district.
- * * * Career Technical Education; Public High School Choice * * *
 Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 822a(f) is amended to read:
 - (f) Continued enrollment Enrollment.
- (1) An enrolled nonresident student shall be permitted to remain enrolled in the receiving high school without renewed applications in subsequent years unless:
 - (1)(A) the student graduates;
 - (2)(B) the student is no longer a Vermont resident; or
- (3)(C) the student is expelled from school in accordance with adopted school policy.
- (2) A career technical education (CTE) center serving the region in which a receiving high school district is located shall be the CTE center in

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which a nonresident student under this section is eligible to enroll. The nonresident student shall be eligible to use any transportation the district provides for resident students attending the CTE center.

- Sec. 5. 16 V.S.A. § 1541a(b) is amended to read:
- (b) School boards that maintain secondary schools A school district that maintains a secondary school shall provide the names and addresses of enrolled students to the technical CTE center for its region for the limited purpose of the technical CTE center providing information to students and their parents about technical CTE center offerings. An approved independent school shall provide to the CTE center the names and addresses of enrolled secondary students for whom it receives publicly funded tuition dollars.
- * * * Child Protection Registry; License Renewal * * *
 Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. § 254(e) is amended to read:
- (e) The eommissioner Secretary shall request and obtain information from the child protection registry maintained by the department for children and families and from the vulnerable adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation registry maintained by the department of disabilities, aging, and independent living Child Protection Registry maintained by the Department for Children and Families and from the Vulnerable Adult Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Registry maintained by the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (collectively, the "registries" Registries) for any person for whom a criminal record check is required under subsection (b) of this section and shall

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request updated information for any person seeking renewal of a professional educator's license. The department for children and families and the department of disabilities, aging, and independent living Departments for Children and Families and of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living shall adopt rules governing the process for obtaining information from the registries Registries and for disseminating and maintaining records of that information under this subsection. A person denied a license based upon information acquired under this subsection may appeal the decision pursuant to subsection 1696(f) of this title.

- Sec. 7. 16 V.S.A. § 256(a) is amended to read:
- (a)(1) Anyone required to request a criminal record check and a check of the child protection and the vulnerable adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation registries under this subchapter about a person who previously has undergone one or both checks a check, regardless of whether the check was for student teaching, licensure, or employment purposes, shall comply with that requirement by acquiring the results of the previous criminal record check unless:
 - (A) the person refuses to authorize release of the information;
 - (B) the record no longer exists;
- (C) since the record check, there has been a period of one year or more during which the person has not worked for a Vermont school district or a recognized or an approved independent school; or

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- (D) as otherwise required by this chapter.
- (2) Anyone required to request a criminal record check under this subchapter about a person who has previously undergone a check may request a name and date of birth or fingerprint-supported recheck of the criminal record at any time during the course of the record subject's employment in the capacity for which the original check was required. Rechecking criminal records may be accomplished through a subscription service.

Sec. 7a. 33 V.S.A. § 6911(a)(1) is amended to read:

(1) The investigative report shall be disclosed only to: the eommissioner Commissioner or person designated to receive such records; persons assigned by the eommissioner Commissioner to investigate reports; the person reported to have abused, neglected, or exploited a vulnerable adult; the vulnerable adult or his or her representative; the office of professional regulation Office of Professional Regulation when deemed appropriate by the eommissioner Commissioner; the Secretary of Education when deemed appropriate by the Commissioner; a law enforcement agency, the state's attorney, or the office of the attorney general State's Attorney, or the Office of the Attorney General, when the department Department believes there may be grounds for criminal prosecution or civil enforcement action, or in the course of a criminal or a civil investigation. When disclosing information pursuant to this subdivision, reasonable efforts shall be made to limit the information to the minimum necessary to accomplish the intended purpose of the disclosure, and

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no other information, including the identity of the reporter, shall be released absent a court order.

Sec. 7b. 33 V.S.A. § 6911(c) is amended to read:

(c) The commissioner Commissioner or the commissioner's

Commissioner's designee may disclose registry information only to:

* * *

- (7) upon request or when relevant to other states' adult protective services offices; and
- (8) the board of medical practice Board of Medical Practice for the purpose of evaluating an applicant, licensee, or holder of certification pursuant to 26 V.S.A. § 1353; and
- (9) the Secretary of Education or the Secretary's designee, for purposes related to the licensing of professional educators pursuant to 16 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 4 and chapter 51.

Sec. 7c. 16 V.S.A. § 253 is amended to read:

§ 253. CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

- (a) Criminal records and criminal record information received under this subchapter are designated confidential unless, under state or federal law or regulation, the record or information may be disclosed to specifically designated persons.
- (b) The Secretary, a superintendent, or a headmaster may disclose criminal records and criminal record information received under this subchapter to a

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qualified entity upon request, provided that the qualified entity has signed a user agreement and received authorization from the subject of the record request. As used in this section, "qualified entity" means an individual, organization, or governmental body doing business in Vermont that has one or more individuals performing services for it within the State and that provides care or services to children, persons who are elders, or persons with disabilities as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 5119c.

* * * Attendance Registers * * *

Sec. 8. 16 V.S.A. chapter 29 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 29. REGISTERS AND RETURNS

§ 1321. FORM AND CONTENTS OF REGISTER

With the approval of the board of education, the commissioner shall prescribe and procure forms for a school register for keeping a record of the daily attendance of pupils and containing interrogatories for procuring State

Board, the Secretary shall prescribe the content of school registers used to keep records of student enrollment and daily attendance and to obtain statistical and other information from teachers and school officers. School systems keeping their record of attendance of pupils by machine processes approved by the commissioner are exempt from this prescription Schools shall maintain an electronic system for recording enrollment and attendance.

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§ 1322. TRANSMISSION TO SUPERINTENDENTS AND TEACHERS

Annually, in the month of June, the commissioner shall transmit to each superintendent a sufficient number of such registers to supply the needs of the schools under his supervision. The superintendent shall thereupon assign a register to each school and the same shall be the register for such school for the following school year; and, within ten days before the opening of each term of school, he shall deliver the assigned register to the teacher Secretary shall provide access to the school register. Superintendents shall ensure that school registrars and other staff have received the register and updated the current student information system at least ten days prior to the beginning of the school year.

§ 1323. REGISTRAR'S DUTIES

A registrar shall be appointed for each school by the superintendent. The registrar shall keep in the prescribed form a record of the daily attendance of each pupil and correct answers to the questions in the registers, and shall deliver such registers to the superintendent by June 30 of each school year.

The superintendent shall appoint a registrar for each school within the supervisory union. Pursuant to the school register, the registrar shall maintain the record of student enrollment, daily attendance, and other requested information and shall oversee transmission of student data to the Secretary on or before July 15 annually.

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§ 1324. SUPERINTENDENT'S DUTIES

- (a) At the end of the school year, the superintendent shall examine the register of each school, and, if it is properly filled out, the superintendent shall verify the accuracy of the information, and notify in writing the chairperson chair of the school board of school directors and the Secretary that the school register for the year is complete and accurate.
- (b) The superintendent shall verify that the register is accurate. The register shall include the name of the registrar for each school, the name of the teacher or teachers of the school during the year for which the register was kept, and the date and character of the license held by the teacher or teachers. On or before August 15, the superintendent shall ensure that the register is filed in a secure location within the supervisory union. The commissioner of education may providing for the central collection and storage of the annual school registers. However, nothing herein shall prohibit the clerk of the school district from keeping the register if the superintendent and the clerk agree.
 - * * * Miscellaneous Outdated Provisions * * *
- Sec. 9. 16 V.S.A. § 1123 is amended to read:

§ 1123. ATTENDANCE MAY BE EXCUSED

(a) The superintendent of a public school may excuse, in writing, any pupil from attendance upon such student from attending the school for a definite time, but for not more than ten consecutive school days and such excuse shall be granted only for emergencies or for absence from town.

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(b) The superintendent of an elementary school held for more than one hundred and seventy five 175 school days in a school year may excuse, in writing, a pupil of such student of the school from attending more than such one hundred and seventy five 175 days.

(c) The superintendent with the consent of a majority of the school board of the town in which the pupil resides, may excuse, in writing, a pupil who has reached the age of fifteen—years and has completed the work required in the first six years of the elementary school course from further school attendance if his services are needed for the support of those dependent upon him, or for any other sufficient reason. [Repealed.]

Sec. 10. 16 V.S.A. § 1386 is amended to read:

§ 1386. HEALTH <u>SERVICE</u> <u>SERVICES</u> FOR CHILDREN OF INDIGENT PARENTS

The board of school directors may expend in any given In any school year, a school board may expend from its funds a sum not to exceed three percent of that year's school budget for eurrent expense for such any necessary health service activities as may be necessary to provide for the improvement of the physical efficiency of school children of indigent parents service for a student whose parents are unable to pay for it. Expenditures for this purpose may include the purchase of milk for underweight or undernourished children, the purchase of ingredients for, hot lunches, eyeglasses, and the provision of dental service, the removal of tonsils and other health services which are

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approved by the town health officer and the teacher or public health nurse school nurse. The right to determine who is an indigent parent covered under this section shall be in the discretion of such the school board.

Sec. 11 [Deleted]

* * * Training; School Board Chairs; Superintendents * * *

Sec. 12. 16 V.S.A. § 242 is amended to read:

§ 242. DUTIES OF SUPERINTENDENTS

The superintendent shall be the chief executive officer for the supervisory union board and for each school board within the supervisory union, and shall:

* * *

- (6) <u>arrange for the provision of the professional training required in</u> subsection 561(b) of this title; and
- (7) provide for the general supervision of the public schools in the supervisory union or district.

Sec. 13. 16 V.S.A. § 561 is amended to read:

- § 561. ELECTION OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS; OATH; CHAIR; CLERK
- (a) School directors board members shall be sworn before entering upon the duties of their office. At the meeting next following the election of a school board member, the school board shall elect one of their its number to serve as the clerk. The clerk may be paid upon order of the school board. The clerk shall keep a

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permanent record of the proceedings of the school board. In the clerk's absence, another member of the school board shall assume the clerk's duties.

- (b) At least annually, the chairs of each school board within a supervisory union, the chair of the supervisory union board, and the superintendent shall jointly participate in at least eight hours of professional training that, at a minimum, addresses:
 - (A) educational leadership;
- (B) the relative roles and responsibilities of the supervisory union board, the school district boards, and the superintendent;
 - (C) the Vermont Open Meeting Law, 1 V.S.A. §§ 310–314;
- (D) Vermont law regarding access to public records, 1 V.S.A. §§ 315–320;
 - (E) collective bargaining; and
 - (F) education funding and school finance laws.

* * * Secretary's Salary * * *

Sec. 14. 32 V.S.A. § 1003(b)(1) is amended to read:

(1) Heads of the following departments, offices, and agencies:

Base Salary as

of July 1, 2012

* * *

(K) Education

84,834 90,745

* * *

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* * * Repeal * * *

Sec. 15. REPEAL

The following sections of Title 16 are repealed:

- (1) § 1124 ("pupils mentally or physically unfit").
- (2) § 1125a ("pupil without suitable clothing").
- (3) § 1566 (incentive grants; funding source repealed in 2002).
- (4) chapter 75, subchapter 2, §§ 2321–2327 (University of Vermont; Agricultural College; miscellaneous sections).
- (5) § 2361 (University of Vermont; College of Medicine; agreement for practice or refund by resident students).
 - (6) §§ 2531a–2531e and § 2834(b) (senatorial scholarships).
- (7) Chapter 121, §§ 3224–3226 (sale of grammar school lands and related reporting requirements).
 - (8) § 3449 (awards for construction completed 1947–1953).
 - * * * Creation of New Independent Schools * * *
- Sec. 16. PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS; STUDY

 COMMITTEE
- (a) There is created a committee to research and consider both the
 opportunities and challenges created by closing a public school with the
 intention or result of reopening it as an approved independent school that
 serves essentially the same population of students and receives publicly funded
 tuition dollars. The committee shall consult with a wide variety of individuals

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and organizations committed to ensuring high quality education for Vermont students. The members of the committee shall be:

- (1) the chair of the Council on Independent Schools created in 16 V.S.A. § 166(d) or designee;
- (2) the Executive Director of the Vermont Independent Schools

 Association or designee;
- (3) one trustee of an approved independent school in Vermont that receives publicly funded tuition, selected by the Vermont Independent Schools Association;
- (4) one head of an approved independent school in Vermont that receives publicly funded tuition, selected by the Vermont Independent Schools Association;
- (5) one teacher in an approved independent school in Vermont that receives publicly funded tuition, selected by the Vermont Independent Schools Association;
- (6) the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents Association or designee;
- (7) the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards Association or designee;
- (8) the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or designee;

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(9) the Executive Director of the Vermont–National Education
Association or designee;

- (10) the Executive Director of the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators or designee;
 - (11) the chair of the State Board of Education or designee; and
- (12) the Secretary of Education or designee, who shall serve as the committee's chair and convene the first meeting of the committee on or before July 1, 2013.
- (b) Keeping in mind the interests of students, taxpayers, and the Vermont tradition of local control, the committee shall:
- (1) explore the opportunities and challenges that may result from closing a public school and reopening it as an approved independent school, including consideration of:
- (A) the financial consequences to taxpayers in the community in which the school is located, to Vermont taxpayers, and to the Education Fund;
 - (B) the availability of educational opportunities for students;
 - (C) the provision of special education services;
 - (D) the provision of school-based meals programs;
 - (E) teacher licensing requirements;
 - (F) school safety crisis planning; and

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(G) the provision of 504 services, the application of the Family

Education Rights and Privacy Act, and the effect, if any, on other federal rights

of students and families connected to a school's receipt of federal funding; and

- (2) consider whether the decision to close a public school and reopen it as an approved independent school raises issues addressed by the Vermont Constitution or by the U.S. Constitution or other federal law; and
- (3) examine the impetus for and results of those instances in which a former public school was or will be reopened as an approved independent school in Vermont.
- (c) By December 15, 2013, the Secretary shall report the results of the study required by this section to the House and Senate Committees on Education and on Appropriations, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance.
 - (d) The committee shall cease to exist on December 15, 2013.

Sec. 17. [Deleted.]

Sec. 18. [Deleted.]

* * * Teacher Advisory Groups * * *

Sec. 19. TEACHER ADVISORY GROUPS; BEST PRACTICES
GUIDELINES

(a) In order to increase the prevalence and value of teacher advisory groups in Vermont secondary schools, the Secretary of Education shall convene a

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working group to consist of the representatives of the Vermont Principals

Association and other interested parties to:

- (1) identify the Vermont secondary schools that use teacher advisory groups and other similar groups designed to ensure that every student has a personal relationship with at least one adult in the school;
- (2) explore how each of these schools implements its teacher advisory system; and
- (3) develop best practices guidelines for the creation and operation of teacher advisory systems.
- (b) On or before January 15, 2014, the working group shall publish the best practices guidelines on the Agency of Education's website and in any other manner it chooses.
 - * * * Compact for Military Children * * *
- Sec. 20. 16 V.S.A. § 806m.E is amended to read:
- E. The Interstate Commission may not assess, levy, or collect from Vermont in its annual assessment more than \$100 \$2,000.00 per year. Other funding sources may be accepted and used to offset expenses related to the state's State's participation in the compact.

Sec. 21. AGENCY OF EDUCATION BUDGET

There shall be no separate or additional General Fund appropriation to the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2014 for purposes of funding the increased assessment to be paid pursuant to Sec. 20 of this act.

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* * * Adult Basic Education * * *

Sec. 22. 16 V.S.A. § 164 is amended to read:

§ 164. STATE BOARD; GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES

The state board State Board shall evaluate education policy proposals, including timely evaluation of policies presented by the governor Governor and secretary Secretary; engage local school board members and the broader education community; and establish and advance education policy for the state State of Vermont. In addition to other specified duties, the board Board shall:

* * *

(13) Constitute Be the state board State Board for the program of adult education and literacy and perform all the duties and powers prescribed by law pertaining to adult education and literacy and to act as the state approval agency for educational institutions conducting programs of adult education and literacy.

* * *

* * * Special Education Employees; Transition to Employment
by Supervisory Unions * * *

Sec. 23. 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, Sec. 18, as amended by 2011 Acts and Resolves No. 58, Sec. 18, is further amended to read:

Sec. 18. TRANSITION

(a) Each supervisory union shall provide for any transition of employment of special education and transportation staff employees by member districts to

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employment by the supervisory union, pursuant to Sec. 9 of this act, 16 V.S.A. § 261a(a)(6), and (8)(E) by:

- (1) providing that the supervisory union assumes all obligations of each existing collective bargaining agreement in effect between the member districts and their special education employees and their transportation employees until the agreement's expiration, subject to employee compliance with performance standards and any lawful reduction in force, layoff, nonrenewal, or dismissal;
- (2) providing, in the absence of an existing recognized representative of its employees, for the immediate and voluntary recognition by the supervisory union of the recognized representatives of the employees of the member districts as the recognized representatives of the employees of the supervisory union;
- (3) ensuring that an employee of a member district who is not a probationary employee shall not be considered a probationary employee upon transition to the supervisory union; and
- (4) eontaining an agreement negotiating a collective bargaining agreement, addressing special education employees, with the recognized representatives of the employees of the member districts that is effective on the day the supervisory union assumes obligations of existing agreements regarding how the supervisory union, prior to reaching its first collective bargaining agreement with its special education employees and with its transportation employees, will address issues of seniority, reduction in force,

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layoff, and recall, which, for the purposes of this section, shall be: the
exclusive representative of special education teachers; the exclusive
representative of the special education administrators; and the exclusive
bargaining agent for special education paraeducators if the supervisory union
has elected to employ special education paraeducators pursuant to subdivision
(b) of this section. The supervisory union shall become the employer of these
employees on the date specified in the ratified agreement.

(b) For purposes of this section and Sec. 9 of this act, "special education employee" shall include a special education teacher, a special education administrator, and a special education paraeducator, which means a teacher, administrator, or paraeducator whose job assignment consists of providing special education services directly related to students' individualized education programs or to the administration of those services. Provided, however, that "special education employee" shall include a "special education paraeducator" only if the supervisory union board elects to employ some or all special education paraeducators because it determines that doing so will lead to more effective and efficient delivery of special education services to students. If the supervisory union board does not elect to employ all special education paraeducators, it must use objective, nondiscriminatory criteria and identify specific duties to be performed when determining which categories of special education paraeducators to employ.

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(c) Education-related parties to negotiations under either Title 16 or 21 shall incorporate in their current or next negotiations matters addressing the terms and conditions of special education employees.

- (d) If a supervisory union has not entered into a collective bargaining agreement with the representative of its prospective special education employees by August 15, 2015, it shall provide the Secretary of Education with a report identifying the reasons for not meeting the deadline and an estimated date by which it expects to ratify the agreement.
- Sec. 24. 16 V.S.A. § 1981(8) is amended to read:
- (8) "School board negotiations council" means, for a supervisory district, its school board, and, for school districts within a supervisory union, the body comprising representatives designated by each school board within the supervisory union and by the supervisory union board to engage in professional negotiations with a teachers' or administrators' organization.

 Sec. 25. 21 V.S.A. § 1722(18) is amended to read:
- (18) "School board negotiations council" means, for a supervisory district, its school board, and, for school districts within a supervisory union, the body comprising representatives designated by each school board within the supervisory union and by the supervisory union board to engage in collective bargaining with their school employees' negotiations council.

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Sec. 26. APPLICABILITY

Only school districts and supervisory unions that have not completed the transition of special education employees to employment by the supervisory union or have not negotiated transition provisions into current master agreements as of the effective dates of Secs. 23 through 25 of this act are subject to the employment transition provisions of those sections.

Sec. 27. REPORT

On or before January 1, 2017, the Secretary of Education shall report to the House and Senate Committees on Education regarding the decisions of supervisory unions to exercise or not to exercise the flexibility regarding employment of special education paraeducators provided in Sec. 23 of this act and may propose amendments to Sec. 23 or to related statutes as he or she deems appropriate.

* * * Out-of-State Career Technical Education * * *

Sec. 28. 16 V.S.A. § 1531(c) is amended to read:

(c) For a school district which that is geographically isolated from a Vermont technical center, the state board State Board may approve a technical center in another state as the technical center which that district students may attend. In this case, the school district shall receive transportation assistance pursuant to section 1563 of this title and tuition assistance pursuant to section 1561(c) of this title. Any student who is a resident in the Windham Southwest supervisory union Supervisory Union and who is enrolled at public expense in

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the Charles H. McCann Technical School at public expense or the Franklin County Technical School shall be considered to be attending an approved technical center in another state pursuant to this subsection, and, if the student is from a school district eligible for a small schools support grant pursuant to section 4015 of this title, the student's full-time equivalency shall be computed according to time attending the school.

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 29. EFFECTIVE DATES

- (a) Sec. 28 of this act (out-of-state career technical education) shall take effect on July 1, 2013 and shall apply to enrollments in academic year 2013–2014 and after.
- (b) This section and all other sections of this act shall take effect on passage; provided, however, that Sec. 14 of this act (salary) shall apply retroactively beginning on January 2, 2013.

Date the Governor signed the bill: May 30, 2013