

Outline for Education System and Financing Work Plan

- I. How has K-12 education in Vermont changed since passage of Act 60?
 - a. Changing instructional and organizational systems
 - b. Increased emphasis on testing
 - c. Increased emphasis on individualized learning
 - d. Growth in paraeducators and provision of special education services
 - e. More of a college-bound emphasis
 - f. Increased expectations of schools and teachers
- II. Comparison to other states' responses to court challenges on equity or adequacy of their education financing system
- III. Analyses of current education and financing system; review of literature (and AOE data?) on effects of school finance reform in Vermont and other states
 - a. What did Act 60 aim to achieve?
 - b. Statutory changes to system since Act 60
 - c. Outcomes for students (relative to 1) targets, 2) pre-Act 60, and/or c) national trends, using available state data)
 - i. Improvements in dropout and graduation rates, particularly among low-income students?
 - ii. Test scores—have they improved?
 - iii. Are kids better off after graduation?
 - d. Spending across districts
 - i. Has the spread in per-pupil spending among towns increased in recent years?
 - ii. Any evidence that rising property tax rates are holding down budgets in low-income towns (need to define) or that high-income towns are spending more? Relationship of property values to spending?
 - iii. Relationship in towns with high incidence of property tax adjustments and per-pupil spending?
 - e. Property tax adjustments (PTA)/Renter rebates (RR)
 - i. Administrative issues--error rates on PTA and RR applications
 - ii. Rate of growth in property tax relief compared to growth in property values
- IV. Analyses of funding sources
 - a. Revenue components of Education Fund
 - i. \$ and % for each year since Act 60
 - b. Education property taxes
 - i. Break down rise in (homestead) education property tax rates—how much due to:
 1. property values,
 2. education spending,
 3. non-property revenues to EF

- c. Evaluation of education funding using lens of principles
 - i. Is the system easy to understand and does it minimize compliance costs?
 - ii. How does the system meet the criteria of fairness and equity (real and perceived) and of being transparent and accountable to taxpayers?

- V. Alternative financing models
 - a. Compilation of models
 - i. Models previously considered by Legislature
 - ii. Models considered by BRTSC
 - iii. Additional models
 - b. Lens of principles and other Vermont priorities/values
 - What are pros and cons of various models

- VI. Equalization study and effect on education property tax rates
 - a. Review recommendations of Almy et al. study (1999)

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