



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE
Joint Fiscal Office

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Fiscal Note

March 17, 2026

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H.931 – An act relating to miscellaneous changes in education law

As introduced by the House Committee on Education¹

Bill Summary

This bill would introduce several additions and amendments to education law. Two of these, Vermont’s adoption of the Interstate Compact for Education, and the requirement that some new Agency of Education (AOE) employees or contractors pay for a criminal information request, have fiscal implications for the State. This bill would become effective July 1, 2026.

Fiscal Impact

The Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) estimates that this bill would have a net-neutral impact on State expenditures and revenues.

This bill would codify Vermont’s entry into the Interstate Compact for Education. Member states pay dues to the Compact. Vermont currently pays these dues through the AOE budget, so this would not represent a new expenditure. As the bill would not introduce a new revenue source nor an appropriation for this, the General Assembly would need to continue appropriating to AOE for this purpose. The annual dues of about \$53,000 are included in AOE’s budget for fiscal year 2027 and have remained unchanged for several years.

JFO also estimates the bill would raise a de minimis amount of revenue through a new fee. This fee would cover the cost of obtaining certain AOE employment applicants’ criminal records. The Vermont Criminal Information Center (VCIC) estimates that this fee would be \$12 per applicant. Per AOE, based on a four-year average, up to 34 employees would be subjected to this fee annually.

Background and Details

Section 1: Amending the Moratorium on Approved Independent Schools

This section would amend Act 78 (2023) to allow therapeutic approved independent schools that changed ownership to be approved by the State Board of Education (SBE). Under Act 78, Sec. E.511.1, the SBE is prohibited from approving applications for initial approval of an approved independent school. H.931’s amendment would apply to therapeutic schools that are required to submit an application due to a change in ownership and remain a therapeutic school afterwards. The fiscal impact of this change is unclear.

¹ The Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) is a nonpartisan legislative office dedicated to producing unbiased fiscal analysis – this fiscal note is meant to provide information for legislative consideration, not to provide policy recommendations.

Section 2: Interstate Compact for Education

This section would reestablish Vermont’s membership within the Interstate Compact for Education (the Education Commission of the States, or ECS). Per ECS, Vermont would be represented by seven individuals:

- The Governor;
- two legislators (one from the House and one from the Senate); and
- four members appointed by the Governor.

Of the Governor’s appointees, one must be the head of a State agency or institution which is responsible for at least one public education program.

As a member of ECS, Vermont would be subject to paying dues. The dues are based on ECS’ estimated expenditures. Vermont’s dues would total \$53,100 and have, per ECS, remained the same for several years. H.931 does not designate a specific appropriation for these dues, nor an agency to pay them. In prior years, AOE paid these dues and built them into its budget. AOE confirmed that these dues are factored into its budget for fiscal year 2027. As such, this cost would not represent a new expenditure for the State.

Section 3-12: Renaming Boards of Cooperative Education Services

These sections would amend 16 V.S.A chapter 10 to rename “Boards of Cooperative Education Services” to “Cooperative Educational Service Areas”. This change would be reflected throughout statute. Where abbreviated, “BOCES” would be replaced with “CESA”. This change is not expected to have a fiscal impact.

Section 13: Class Size Minimums

This section would amend Act 73, Sec. 7(b). Under this amendment, a school would be held harmless for not meeting class size minimums. This amendment would remain in effect until one of two conditions is met; the SBE updates the Education Quality Standards (EQS) rule 2000 series to address the addition of class size minimums to the education quality standards, or July 1, 2027.

The amendment would no longer be effective once one of these conditions is met, whichever comes first.

Without this amendment, if a school does not meet class size minimums for three consecutive years, action may be recommended by the Secretary of Education to the SBE. The fiscal impact of this section is currently unknown.

Section 14-15: Background Checks

Section 14 would mandate that certain individuals, either prospective new employees or contractors of AOE, provide their fingerprints to obtain criminal record information. This would apply to people who will, or may potentially have, unsupervised contact with students. These records would be retrieved by the VCIC from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

VCIC would charge the applicant a fee to cover the cost of this service. Per VCIC, this fee is expected to be \$12 per applicant and would be remitted to the FBI. AOE estimates, based on the past four years, an average of 34 individuals would be charged this fee annually. Based on this, JFO estimates this fee would raise about \$410 annually.

Section 15 would establish that the results of a records check for AOE employees or contractors would be valid for a records recheck in future years.

ⁱThe full fiscal note history is available on the fiscal tab of the bill page on the General Assembly website and can be pulled up through a bill number search on the JFO page.