# White River Valley Supervisory Union pulls out of VSBA amid education reform tensions



The decision by the White River Valley Supervisory Union (WRVSU) to withdraw from the Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA) underscores the growing rifts in education governance amid ongoing reform discussions in Vermont. This move is particularly significant as it reflects broader tensions among local education bodies concerning their representation and autonomy during a critical period for public education legislation in the state.

State lawmakers are currently negotiating proposed legislation, known as H.454, which aims to implement substantial systemic educational reforms. These negotiations are intensified, with an agreement sought by June 16, when lawmakers are set to reconvene. The plan has attracted a mixture of support and dissent, with stakeholders expressing concern that some proposed changes could negatively impact rural districts and their unique needs.

Kathy Galluzzo, chair of the WRVSU, indicated that the union has been paying approximately $10,000 annually in membership dues to the VSBA, which lobbies on behalf of its members. However, dissatisfaction with the VSBA’s support for reform measures, particularly those perceived as threatening supervisory unions, has culminated in WRVSU's decision to withdraw. A notable sentiment expressed by board member Bill Edgerton highlighted a belief that the association no longer supports their interests, stating, “They don’t believe in us, so they can’t lobby for us.”

The dissent within WRVSU is emblematic of a larger discontent reverberating through various supervisory unions across the state. Similar discussions have emerged in districts within Lamoille South, Twin Rivers, and Greater Rutland County. Meetings have yielded plans to potentially suspend dues or fully withdraw from the VSBA. This discontent escalates as some board members are calling for the association to refrain from endorsing legislation that lacks robust research and fiscal impact modelling, particularly with regards to governance transitions.

The Vermont education landscape is characterised by its unique supervisory unions, which serve as consolidated administrative bodies supporting multiple school districts. These unions were designed to foster resource-sharing while allowing districts to maintain a degree of independence. The WRVSU is a mosaic of operating models, catering to varied educational choices, including substantial options for students in terms of private school tuition. These localised structures are critical, especially in rural areas where geographic and demographic complexities cannot be overlooked.

Critics of current reform proposals, including those from the WRVSU, argue that suggestions from Governor Phil Scott's administration to radically restructure education oversight into five large districts could undermine local control and educational quality. Although touted as a means to increase efficiency, such consolidations risk diluting community engagement and oversight, particularly in rural settings, where schools can be essential community hubs.

Flor Diaz Smith, the VSBA president, contended that disparities amongst participating districts in supervisory unions can hinder consistent educational outcomes. Yet, voices from the WRVSU maintain that their communities still value choice and local governance, suggesting that reforms must honour these traditions. Galluzzo expressed a desire for representation that aligns with local values, arguing that educational diversity should be preserved, especially through local independent schools.

In light of these developments, the WRVSU has redirected its advocacy efforts towards the Rural Schools Community Alliance, a newly formed organisation that champions the interests of rural education. This move reflects a strategic pivot as the alliance advocates robustly against legislative proposals that might threaten the viability of small, rural schools. Amid ongoing discussions, there is a palpable concern that community voices may be overshadowed by broader administrative strategies not grounded in local realities.

While the VSBA has claimed that a majority of its members support ongoing oversight of supervisory unions, the discontent voiced by WRVSU and others suggests a call for a more nuanced approach to reform—one that prioritises local input and preserves the democratic fabric of Vermont’s educational landscape. Policymakers are thus faced with a precarious balancing act: the need for systemic efficiency must be weighed against the essential values of local representation and community engagement that define Vermont’s approach to education.

The outcome of these discussions and the legislative session ahead will undoubtedly reverberate throughout the state, determining not just the structure of Vermont’s education system, but also the fundamental relationships between districts, unions, and the communities they serve.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://mountaintimes.info/2025/06/11/white-river-valley-su-withdraws-from-the-vermont-school-boards-association/), [[2]](https://vermontdailychronicle.com/education-secretary-proposes-overhaul-with-five-large-school-districts/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://mountaintimes.info/2025/06/11/white-river-valley-su-withdraws-from-the-vermont-school-boards-association/), [[3]](https://www.charlottenewsvt.org/2025/02/06/statewide-education-officials-balk-at-school-district-size-plan/), [[5]](https://vtdigger.org/2010/02/10/scheuermann-proposes-elimination-of-supervisory-unions-creation-of-educational-districts/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://mountaintimes.info/2025/06/11/white-river-valley-su-withdraws-from-the-vermont-school-boards-association/), [[6]](https://vtdigger.org/2014/05/01/stowe-school-board-tells-lawmakers-leave-us-alone/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://mountaintimes.info/2025/06/11/white-river-valley-su-withdraws-from-the-vermont-school-boards-association/), [[4]](https://www.campaignforvermont.org/bongartz_s_proposal), [[7]](https://www.vnews.com/Scott-administration-unveils-education-plan-with-just-5-school-districts-statewide-59074622)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://mountaintimes.info/2025/06/11/white-river-valley-su-withdraws-from-the-vermont-school-boards-association/), [[6]](https://vtdigger.org/2014/05/01/stowe-school-board-tells-lawmakers-leave-us-alone/), [[7]](https://www.vnews.com/Scott-administration-unveils-education-plan-with-just-5-school-districts-statewide-59074622)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://mountaintimes.info/2025/06/11/white-river-valley-su-withdraws-from-the-vermont-school-boards-association/), [[3]](https://www.charlottenewsvt.org/2025/02/06/statewide-education-officials-balk-at-school-district-size-plan/), [[2]](https://vermontdailychronicle.com/education-secretary-proposes-overhaul-with-five-large-school-districts/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://mountaintimes.info/2025/06/11/white-river-valley-su-withdraws-from-the-vermont-school-boards-association/), [[2]](https://vermontdailychronicle.com/education-secretary-proposes-overhaul-with-five-large-school-districts/)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://mountaintimes.info/2025/06/11/white-river-valley-su-withdraws-from-the-vermont-school-boards-association/), [[3]](https://www.charlottenewsvt.org/2025/02/06/statewide-education-officials-balk-at-school-district-size-plan/), [[5]](https://vtdigger.org/2010/02/10/scheuermann-proposes-elimination-of-supervisory-unions-creation-of-educational-districts/)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://mountaintimes.info/2025/06/11/white-river-valley-su-withdraws-from-the-vermont-school-boards-association/), [[6]](https://vtdigger.org/2014/05/01/stowe-school-board-tells-lawmakers-leave-us-alone/)
* Paragraph 10 – [[1]](https://mountaintimes.info/2025/06/11/white-river-valley-su-withdraws-from-the-vermont-school-boards-association/), [[2]](https://vermontdailychronicle.com/education-secretary-proposes-overhaul-with-five-large-school-districts/), [[4]](https://www.campaignforvermont.org/bongartz_s_proposal)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://mountaintimes.info/2025/06/11/white-river-valley-su-withdraws-from-the-vermont-school-boards-association/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://vermontdailychronicle.com/education-secretary-proposes-overhaul-with-five-large-school-districts/> - In January 2025, Vermont's Education Secretary, Zoie Saunders, proposed a significant overhaul of the state's education system, aiming to consolidate existing supervisory unions into five large school districts. This plan seeks to improve efficiency, reduce administrative overhead, and enhance educational opportunities by operating at a larger scale. The proposal has sparked discussions regarding its potential impact on local control and the quality of education in rural communities.
3. <https://www.charlottenewsvt.org/2025/02/06/statewide-education-officials-balk-at-school-district-size-plan/> - In February 2025, education officials across Vermont expressed concerns over Governor Phil Scott's proposal to consolidate the state's 119 school districts into just five large districts. Critics argue that such a consolidation could diminish local control, negatively affect educational quality, and overlook the unique needs of rural communities. The debate highlights the tension between administrative efficiency and community engagement in educational governance.
4. <https://www.campaignforvermont.org/bongartz_s_proposal> - In March 2025, Seth Bongartz, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, introduced a proposal to reform Vermont's education governance. The plan suggests consolidating 52 supervisory unions and 119 school districts into nine governance structures, including six supervisory districts and three mixed supervisory unions. This approach aims to streamline administration while preserving local control and addressing the challenges posed by the current system.
5. <https://vtdigger.org/2010/02/10/scheuermann-proposes-elimination-of-supervisory-unions-creation-of-educational-districts/> - In February 2010, Stacy Scheuermann proposed eliminating Vermont's supervisory unions and replacing them with 'Educational Districts.' This plan aimed to centralize various educational functions, such as special education and transportation, to improve efficiency and resource allocation. The proposal sparked discussions about the balance between centralization and local control in Vermont's education system.
6. <https://vtdigger.org/2014/05/01/stowe-school-board-tells-lawmakers-leave-us-alone/> - In May 2014, the Stowe School Board expressed opposition to proposed legislation that sought to eliminate local school boards and supervisory unions, replacing them with larger 'expanded school districts.' The board emphasized the importance of local control and community engagement in educational governance, highlighting concerns that such consolidation could erode the close ties between schools and their communities.
7. <https://www.vnews.com/Scott-administration-unveils-education-plan-with-just-5-school-districts-statewide-59074622> - In January 2025, the Scott administration unveiled a comprehensive education plan proposing the consolidation of Vermont's numerous school districts into just five regional districts. This initiative aims to streamline governance, reduce administrative costs, and enhance educational opportunities by operating at a larger scale. The proposal has been met with mixed reactions, particularly from rural communities concerned about the loss of local control.