**SB 57 - AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE**

03/06/2025 0498s
5Jun2025... 1900h
5Jun2025... 2569h
5Jun2025... 2629h

2025 SESSION

25-0993
02/09

SENATE BILL ***57***

AN ACT establishing a study committee to analyze reducing the number of school administrative units and establishing a commission to study the costs of special education.

SPONSORS: Sen. Murphy, Dist 16; Sen. Lang, Dist 2; Sen. Carson, Dist 14; Sen. Sullivan, Dist 18; Sen. Innis, Dist 7; Sen. Ward, Dist 8; Sen. Pearl, Dist 17; Rep. Cordelli, Carr. 7; Rep. Osborne, Rock. 2

COMMITTEE: Education

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AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill:

I. Creates a study committee to analyze reducing the number of school administrative units (SAUs) in the state.

II. Establishes a commission to study the cost of special education in public schools.

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Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics.***
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

*In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five*

AN ACT establishing a study committee to analyze reducing the number of school administrative units and establishing a commission to study the costs of special education.

*Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:*

1 Committee Established. There is established a committee to study reducing the number of school administrative units (SAUs) in the state.

2 Membership and Compensation.

I. The members of the committee shall be as follows:

(a) Two members of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate.

(b) Five members of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives.

II. Members of the committee shall receive mileage at the legislative rate when attending to the duties of the committee.

3 Duties. The committee shall study the issues related to school administrative units and consolidation including but not limited to the following:

I. Analyze and clarify the roles of school administrative districts (SAUs) and local school districts;

II. Analyze and clarify the roles of school superintendents and/or provision of superintendent services in SAUs and local school districts;

III. Examine existing research and findings related to consolidation of school districts including financial feasibility and efficiencies of scale that consolidation may or may not achieve;

IV. Examine the feasibility of consolidating school administrative units into one per county, except for counties with populations exceeding 100,000 residents, and maintaining individual school administrative units for the cities of Nashua and Manchester;

V. Examine issues related to staffing and oversight of SAUs and local school districts.

VI. Examine the processes for SAU merger under RSA 194-C:2 for efficiency and effectiveness.

4 Chairperson; Quorum. The members of the study committee shall elect a chairperson from among the members. The first meeting of the committee shall be called by the first-named senate member. The first meeting of the committee shall be held within 45 days of the effective date of this section. Three members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

5 Report. The committee shall report its findings and any recommendations for proposed legislation to the president of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, the senate clerk, the house clerk, the governor, and the state library on or before November 1, 2025.

6 New Section; Commission Established; Special Education Costs. Amend RSA 186-C by inserting after section 1 the following new section:

186-C:1-a Commission to Study Costs of Special Education Established.

I. There is established a commission to explore the costs of special education within public schools to school districts based on annual reporting, and to study specific revenue sources for the state to provide greater funding to reduce the reliance on local property taxes.

II. Notwithstanding RSA 14:49, the members of the commission shall be as follows:

(a) Five members of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives.

(b) Two members of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate.

(c) One special education educator, appointed by the New Hampshire Association of Special Education Administrators.

(d) The department of education director of special education, or designee.

(e) The advocate for special education, or designee.

(f) One public member, appointed by the chair of the commission.

(g) Two special education parent advocates, appointed by the governor.

(h) The commissioner of the department of education, or designee.

(i) The commissioner of the department of health and human services, or designee.

III. The commission shall study the following aspects and costs of special education:

(a) Student referral rates by IDEA category for special education programs.

(b) Why students may be labeled "other health impaired."

(c) The increase in referrals since the COVID school closures.

(d) Whether there are interventions that can be implemented prior to referrals for special education for some IDEA categories.

(e) The cost to provide services which are not "medically necessary" as defined by Medicaid, including services which are required to meet a child's agreed upon goals as part of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and services required as part of a 504 Plan.

(f) A comparison of the processes, requirements, and services under federal IDEA law, state law, and the rules of the department of education.

(g) The local district reporting of special education costs to the department of education.

(h) The local district costs for out of district placement and if other options were available.

(i) The analysis and effectiveness of local district developed dispute resolution options.

(j) The use of state funds to provide services.

(k) The Medicaid to Schools program, including:

(1) Who uses service reimbursement funds.

(2) Whether billing is in house or outsourced and its relationship with student data privacy.

(3) Categories of reimbursement and rates therefor.

(l) Use of insurance by local districts to contract for legal services.

(m) Graduation rates for students with disabilities by type of diploma and age and attendance in adult learning programs.

IV. Legislative members of the commission shall receive mileage at the legislative rate when attending to the duties of the commission.

V. The members of the commission shall elect a chairperson and vice chairperson from among the members. The first meeting of the commission shall be called by the first named house member. The first meeting of the commission shall be held within 45 days of the effective date of this section. Seven members of the commission shall constitute a quorum.

VI. The commission shall report its findings and any recommendations for proposed legislation to the president of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, the chairpersons of the senate and house committees with jurisdiction over education, the state board of education, the governor, and the state library. An initial report shall be submitted on or before November 1, 2025. A final report shall be submitted on or before July 1, 2026.

7 Repeal. RSA 186-C:1-a, relative to the commission to study special education is repealed.

8 Effective Date.

I. Section 7 of this act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

II. The remainder of this act shall take effect upon its passage.