Section 1 Header

2026 SESSION

26-3251
04/08

HOUSE BILL ***[bill number]***

AN ACT consolidating school administrative units, making chief school administrator jobs an elected position, and defining education roles.

SPONSORS: [sponsors]

COMMITTEE: [committee]

ANALYSIS

This bill:

I. Consolidates the authority and duties of school administrative units.

II. Empowers school boards to develop, evaluate, and implement school curriculums.

III. Makes chief school administrators elected officials.

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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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

26-3251
04/08

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT consolidating school administrative units, making chief school administrator jobs an elected position, and defining education roles.

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

1 Counties; County Conventions; Members. Amend RSA 24:1 to read as follows:

24:1 Members. The county convention consists of the state representatives of the representative districts of the county. ***The county school convention is the county convention except in Hillsborough County it is the county's state representatives whose districts are primarily outside Manchester and Nashua.***

2 Counties; Powers, Buildings, and Payment of Salaries; Establishing Compensation. Amend RSA 23:7 to read as follows:

23:7 Establishing Compensation. Every county convention shall have the power to establish salaries, benefits and other compensation paid to elected county officers including the county attorney, sheriff, register of deeds, treasurer, and county commissioners. ***Every county school convention shall have that power for county chief school administrators.*** For the purposes of this section, "compensation" shall include salary, longevity pay, vacation and sick pay, allowances, and all other payments made by the county to its officers, plus the fair market value of any compensation paid in kind if reportable as income for federal income tax purposes, plus all fringe benefits that may be provided including health insurance and retirement, and may also include an upper limit on the amount of mileage and out-of-pocket expenditures reimbursable to each officer. Said compensation shall be established biennially by the county convention prior to the filing date required under RSA 655:14 for the elected offices listed in this section, upon recommendation of the executive committee which shall remain in effect during their term of office. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, in counties in which any of the officers listed in this section receive fees or mileage, or both, for services performed by them as part of their compensation, the county convention may put such officer on a salary and expenses basis. Such officer may be required to continue to collect the usual fees and mileage for the service performed and to pay over all such fees and mileage to the county treasurer for the use of the county. In such event, the amount such officer received in fees and mileage, less expenses, shall be included in determining the minimum at which his salary may be established unless a lesser amount is agreed upon by the incumbent officer at that time. In no case shall the salary or other compensation of any of such officers be established at a lesser amount than that which was in effect December 31, 1972.

3 Counties; County Commissioners; Competitive Bidding on Purchases. Amend RSA 28:8, I to read as follows:

I. The provisions of this section shall apply to all counties in the state and the offices of county sheriff, county attorney, county treasurer, [~~and~~] register of deeds***, and county chief school administrators***.

4 Counties; Annual Reports of County Officers; Reports; Publication; Penalty. Amend RSA 30:1 to read as follows:

30:1 Reports; Publication; Penalty. The sheriff, the superintendent of the county department of corrections, the county attorney, the treasurer, the county commissioners, [~~and~~] the superintendents of the county farms***, and the county chief school administrators*** shall make up their several reports to the close of the county's fiscal year annually, and the same shall be printed together in pamphlet form before or during the sixth month following the close of the county's fiscal year. Whoever violates any provision of this section shall be guilty of a violation, and the fine shall be paid to the treasurer of the county of which said person is an official.

5 Towns, Cities, Village Districts, and Unincorporated Places; Powers and Duties of Towns; Liability for Damages Limited, Indemnification, Insurance. Amend RSA 31:105 to read as follows:

31:105 Indemnification for Damages. A city, town, county, village district or precinct, school district, chartered public school, school administrative unit, or any other municipal corporation or political subdivision may by a vote of the governing body indemnify and save harmless for loss or damage occurring after said vote any person employed by it and any member or officer of its governing board, administrative staff or agencies including but not limited to selectmen, school board members, chartered public school trustees, city councilors and aldermen, town and city managers, regional planning commissioners, town and city health officers, overseers of public welfare, and [~~superintendents of schools~~] ***chief school administrators*** from personal financial loss and expense including reasonable legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any claim, demand, suit, or judgment by reason of negligence or other act resulting in accidental injury to a person or accidental damage to or destruction of property if the indemnified person at the time of the accident resulting in the injury, damage, or destruction was acting in the scope of employment or office.

6 Towns, Cities, Village Districts, and Unincorporated Places; Powers and Duties of Towns; Indemnification; Civil Rights Suits. Amend RSA 31:106 to read as follows:

31:106 Indemnification; Civil Rights Suits. All cities, towns, counties, village districts and precincts, school districts, chartered public schools, school administrative units, and other municipal corporations and political subdivisions shall indemnify and save harmless any person employed by it and any member or officer of its governing board, administrative staff, or agencies including but not limited to selectmen, school board members, chartered public school trustees, city councilors and aldermen, town and city managers, regional planning commissioners, town and city health officials, overseers of public welfare, and [~~superintendents of schools~~] ***chief school administrators*** from personal financial loss and expense including reasonable legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any claim, demand, suit, or judgment by reason of any act or omission constituting a violation of the

civil rights of an employee, teacher or student, or any other person under any federal law if such act or omission was not committed with malice, and if the indemnified person at the time of such act or omission was acting within the scope of employment or office.

7 Towns, Cities, Village Districts, and Unincorporated Places; Municipal Budget Law; Other Communities. Amend RSA 32:24 to read as follows:

32:24 Other Committees. Nothing in this subdivision shall prevent a municipality [~~or school administrative unit~~] from establishing advisory budget or finance committees, with such duties and powers as the municipality [~~or school administrative unit~~] sees fit, but no such committee's recommendations shall have any limiting effect on appropriations, as set forth in RSA 32:18, unless all the procedures in this subdivision are followed.

8 Towns, Cities, Village Districts, and Unincorporated Places; Agreement Between Government Units; Joint Exercise of Powers. Amend the introductory paragraph of RSA 53-A:3 to read as follows:

Any power or powers, privileges or authority exercised or capable of exercise by a public agency of this state may be exercised jointly with any other public agency of this state. Such authority shall include, but not be limited to, the power to enter into agreements to share tax revenues resulting from local economic development efforts and with respect to cities, towns, ***counties,*** school districts, and school administrative units, the power to form the entities and conduct the activities provided for in RSA 162-G and RSA 31:134 through RSA 31:149, and/or the appropriate activities, including but not limited to, conducting financial, human resource, information technology, and other managerial and administrative functions related to the operation of the participating agencies as provided for in RSA 31, RSA 37, and RSA 194-C:4 as well as city charters adopted under RSA 49-C and town charters adopted under RSA 49-D.

9 Public Officers and Employees; New Hampshire Retirement System; General Conditions for Participation. Amend RSA 100-A:20, I to read as follows:

I. The governing board of any county, city, town, school district, [~~school administrative unit~~]or other political subdivision of the state may, by resolution legally adopted, in form approved by the board of trustees, elect to have its officers and employees become eligible to participate in the retirement system. After such election, such body shall be known as an employer for purposes of this chapter. The board of trustees shall set the date when the participation of the officers and employees of any employer shall become effective, and then such officers and employees may become members and participate herein, as provided in this subdivision. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, employees of any employer who are members of one or more of the predecessor systems and who have not elected, pursuant to RSA 100-A:3, to become members shall not be entitled to become members; and employees who are members of any local retirement system other than a local retirement system for teachers shall be entitled to become members only as provided in RSA 100-A:21. "Local retirement system" for purposes of this subdivision shall mean any retirement system

or other arrangement for the payment of retirement benefits in existence at the time of passage of this chapter, which is supported wholly or in part by public funds, exclusive of the predecessor systems as defined in RSA 100-A:1.

10 Public Officers and Employees; Old Age and Survivors' Insurance; Definitions. Amend RSA 101:2, VI to read as follows:

VI. The term "political subdivision" includes an instrumentality of a state, of one or more of its political subdivisions, or of a state and one or more of its political subdivisions, but only if such instrumentality is a juristic entity which is legally separate and distinct from the state or subdivision and only if its employees are not by virtue of their relation to such juristic entity employees of the state or subdivision[~~. Said term also includes a school administrative unit~~];

11 Education; Pre-Engineering and Technology Curriculum and Pre-Engineering and Technology Advisory Council; Membership and Terms. Amend RSA 188-E:16, I(f) to read as follows:

(f) Three [~~superintendents from school administrative units in which at least one school offers~~] ***principals, teachers, or other employees of schools which offer*** a pre-engineering and technology curriculum to its students, appointed by the governor and council.

12 New Paragraphs; Education; School Boards, Transportation, and Instruction of Pupils; Duty to Provide Education. Amend RSA 189:1-a by inserting after paragraph V the following new paragraphs:

VI. School boards shall oversee the provision and administration of:

(a) Development, review, and evaluation of curricula, and coordination of the implementation of various curricula;

(b) Educational services to students at school facilities, including the designation of number, grade, and age levels, and, as applicable, other information about students to be served;

(c) The on-going assessment of district needs relating to student population, program facilities and regulations;

(d) Pupil governance and discipline, including age-appropriate due process procedures; and

(e) Dealing with citizens at large.

VII. School boards, with input from school principals, shall be responsible for:

(a) Election and supervision of school principals; election of all other school administrators;

(b) Development, amendment, and adoption of school district policies; and

(c) School calendar arrangements and the number and duration of days pupils are to be served pursuant to RSA 189:1.

VIII. Under the direction of the school board, school principals shall have the following duties in their schools:

(a) School principals shall nominate all other school administrators, which shall be subject to election by the school board;

(b) Implementation of various curricula;

(c) Provisions and implementation of staff training and professional development;

(d) Compliance with laws, regulations, and rules regarding special education, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and minimum standards;

(e) Pupil achievement assessment through grading and state and national assessment procedures, using the methods of assessment approved by the school board; and

(f) Daily administration and provision of educational services to students at their school facility.

IX. School boards together with chief school administrators shall oversee:

(a) Local fiscal affairs;

(b) Staff, student, and parental safety;

(c) Maintenance and building issues, including on-going assessment of district facility needs; and

(d) Development of the annual and special meeting warrants; development of the annual budget, except when the provisions of RSA 32:14 are adopted.

13 Education; School Boards, Superintendents, Teachers, and Truant Officers; School Census; School Employee and Designated School Volunteer Criminal History Records Check. Amend RSA 189:13-a to read as follows:

I.(a) The employing school administrative unit, school district, or chartered public school shall [~~complete~~] ***ensure*** a criminal history records check ***is completed*** on every selected applicant for employment in any position in the school administrative unit, school district, or chartered public school prior to a final offer of employment. ***For school districts, the supporting school administrative unit shall complete the criminal history records check.*** A public academy approved by the New Hampshire state board of education shall submit a criminal history records check on applicants for employment pursuant to this section to the division of state police. [~~The superintendent of the school administrative unit~~] ***The chief school administrator, school principal,*** or the chief executive officer of the chartered public school or public academy may extend a conditional offer of employment to a selected applicant, with a final offer of employment subject to a successfully completed criminal history records check. No selected applicant may be extended a final offer of employment unless the school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy has completed a criminal history records check. The school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy shall not be held liable in any lawsuit alleging that the extension of a conditional or final offer of employment to an applicant, or the acceptance of volunteer services from a designated volunteer, with a criminal history was in any way

negligent or deficient, if the school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy fulfilled the requirements of this section.

(b) A nonpublic school may elect to require a criminal history records check on selected applicants for employment or selected volunteers. A nonpublic school that elects to conduct a criminal history records check shall comply with the procedures and requirements set forth in this section.

(c) A school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or nonpublic school shall not hire any individual whose credential issued by the department of education is currently suspended or revoked, except:

(1) Currently suspended educators may be hired for prospective employment that would begin after the educator's credential is no longer suspended; and

(2) Educators whose credential was suspended or revoked in a particular endorsement area, but who maintains an active endorsement in another area, may be employed solely in the endorsement area which is not suspended or revoked.

II. The selected applicant for employment or designated volunteer with a school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy shall submit to the employer a criminal history records release form, as provided by the division of state police, which authorizes the division of state police to conduct a criminal history records check through its state records and through the Federal Bureau of Investigation and to release, for the purposes of paragraph V, a report of the applicant's criminal history and record information, including confidential criminal history record information, to the [~~superintendent~~] ***chief school administrator*** or designee of the school administrative unit or the chief executive officer of the chartered public school or public academy. For the purposes of this section, a designee may be the assistant [~~superintendent~~]***chief school administrator***, the head of human resources, the personnel director, the business administrator, or the finance director. The applicant shall submit with the release form a complete set of fingerprints taken by a qualified law enforcement agency or an authorized employee of the school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy. In the event that the first set of fingerprints is invalid due to insufficient pattern and a second set of fingerprints is necessary in order to complete the criminal history records check, the conditional offer of employment shall remain in effect. If, after 2 attempts, a set of fingerprints is invalid due to insufficient pattern, the school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy may, in lieu of the criminal history records check, accept police clearances from every city, town, or county where an applicant has lived during the past 5 years.

III. The department of education shall conduct training concerning the reading and interpretation of criminal history records. The [~~superintendent~~] ***chief school administrator*** or designee of the school administrative unit or the chief executive officer of the chartered public school or public academy shall complete such training and maintain the confidentiality of all criminal

history records information received pursuant to this paragraph. The [~~superintendent~~] ***chief school administrator*** of the school administrative unit, or chief executive officer of the chartered public school or public academy shall review the criminal history records information in accordance with paragraph V. If the criminal history records information indicates that the applicant has been convicted of any crime or has been charged pending disposition for or convicted of a crime listed in paragraph V, the [~~superintendent~~] ***chief school administrator*** or designee of the school administrative unit or the chief executive officer of the chartered public school or public academy shall review the information for a hiring decision. If the applicant's criminal history records information indicates that the applicant has been charged pending disposition for or has been convicted of a crime listed in paragraph V, the[~~superintendent~~] ***chief school administrator*** of the school administrative unit or the chief executive officer of the chartered public school or public academy shall notify the department of education.

III-a. The [~~superintendent~~] ***chief school administrator*** of the school administrative unit or chief executive officer of the chartered public school or public academy shall destroy any criminal history record information within 60 days of receipt. The [~~superintendent~~] ***chief school administrator*** of the school administrative unit or chief executive officer of the chartered public school or public academy shall destroy any criminal history record information that indicates a criminal record within 60 days of receiving said information.

IV. The school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy may require the selected applicant for employment or designated volunteer to pay the actual costs of the criminal history records check.

V. Any person who has been charged pending disposition for or convicted of any violation or attempted violation of RSA 318-B:2 for possession of a controlled drug with the intent to sell, felony level, within the last 10 years; RSA 630:1; 630:1-a; 630:1-b; 630:2; 631:1; 632-A:2; 632-A:3; 632-A:4; 633:1; 633:7; 639:2; 639:3; 645:1, II or III; 645:2; 649-A:3; 649-A:3-a; 649-A:3-b; 649-B:3; or 649-B:4; or any violation or any attempted violation of RSA 650:2 where the act involves a child in material deemed obscene; in this state, or under any statute prohibiting the same conduct in another state, territory, or possession of the United States, shall not be hired by a school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy. The [~~superintendent~~] ***chief school administrator*** of the school administrative unit***, school principal,*** or the chief executive officer of the chartered public school or public academy may deny a selected applicant a final offer of employment if such person has been convicted of any crime, misdemeanor or felony, in addition to those listed above. The governing body of a school district, chartered public school, or public academy shall adopt a policy relative to hiring practices based on the results of the criminal history records check and report of misdemeanors and felonies received under paragraph II. Such policy may include language stating that any person who has been convicted of any misdemeanor, or any of

a list of misdemeanors, may not be hired. Such policy may also include language stating that any person who has been convicted of any felony, or any of a list of felonies, shall not be hired.

VI. In accordance with paragraphs I-V, this section shall apply to any employee, including substitute teachers, selected applicant for employment, designated volunteer, volunteer organization, or individual or entity which contracts with a school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy to provide services, including but not limited to cafeteria workers, school bus drivers, transportation monitors, custodial personnel, or any other service where the contractor or employees of the contractor provide services directly to students of the district, chartered public school, or public academy. Substitute teachers who have undergone a criminal history records check under this section for a [~~school administrative unit~~] ***school district*** shall not be required to undergo an additional criminal history records check, if working for a school district within the same school administrative unit[~~, unless required by the superintendent or by policies of the other school districts within that same school administrative unit~~]. Criminal history records checks for substitute teachers within the same school administrative unit, shall be valid for a period of 3 years. The employing school administrative unit, school district, or chartered public school shall be responsible for completing the criminal history records check on the people identified in this paragraph, except for school bus drivers, as provided in RSA 189:13-b. The cost for criminal history records checks for employees or selected applicants for employment with such contractors shall be borne by the contractor.

VII. The school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy shall not be required to complete a criminal history records check on volunteers, provided that the governing body of a school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy shall adopt a policy designating certain categories of volunteers as "designated volunteers" who shall be required to undergo a criminal history records check.

VII-a. A [~~school administrative unit,~~] school district, chartered public school, or nonpublic school shall not allow any individual whose credential issued by the department of education is currently suspended or revoked to serve as a volunteer except:

(a) Currently suspended or revoked educators shall maintain the rights afforded all members of the public to enter onto school grounds and attend school events in accordance with the law and school district policy; and

(b) Currently suspended or revoked educators who are parents and guardians of students shall maintain all the rights afforded all parents and guardians under law and school district policy.

VIII. A [~~school administrative unit,~~] school district, chartered public school, public academy, or school official acting pursuant to a policy establishing procedures for certain volunteers shall be immune from civil or criminal liability, provided the [~~school administrative unit,~~] school district, chartered public school, public academy, or school official has in good faith acted in accordance with

said policy. Nothing in this paragraph shall be deemed to grant immunity to any person for that person's reckless or wanton conduct.

IX.(a) Upon placement of a candidate, as defined in RSA 189:13-c, as a student teacher, the receiving [~~school administrative unit,~~] school district, or chartered public school shall conduct a criminal history records check of the candidate and shall follow the same procedures for assessing the candidate's criminal history background as for applicants for employment.

(b) A receiving [~~school administrative unit,~~] school district, or chartered public school may conduct a criminal history records check upon a candidate, as defined in RSA 189:13-c.

X. Violations of this section shall be jointly investigated by the state police and the department of education. Information obtained through such investigations shall remain confidential and shall not be subject to RSA 91-A.

XI. In this section, "public academy" shall have the same meaning as in RSA 194:23, II.

XII. The employing [~~school administrative unit,~~] school district, or chartered public school shall provide every school employee whose position requires a criminal background check under this section with informational materials, training, or other education, either online or in person, concerning child sexual abuse prevention, sexual assault and harassment policy training, warning signs of child abuse, and reporting mandates. For the purposes of this paragraph, school employees include coaches and those enumerated in RSA 189:13-a, I(a), VI, and IX(a). Such training shall be completed within 30 days of employment and renewed every 2 years for all employees.

14 Education; School Boards, Superintendents, Teachers, and Truant Officers; School Census; How Chosen. Amend RSA 189:39 to read as follows:

189:39 How Chosen. [~~Superintendents~~] ***School principals*** shall nominate and school boards elect all teachers employed in the schools in their school [~~administrative unit, providing such teachers hold a valid educational credential issued by the state board of education~~]***district***.

15 Education; School Boards, Superintendents, Teachers, and Truant Officers; School Census; Mandatory Report to Voters. Amend RSA 189:76, I to read as follows:

I. Before any meeting at which any school district adopts a school budget, [~~whether or not the district has adopted the provisions of RSA 194-C:9-b,~~] a mandatory report to voters [~~must~~] ***shall*** be posted in at least 3 appropriate places, 2 of which must be places of business or other public locations, and one of which shall be the local newspaper or, if a local newspaper is not available, the district's website. The report must be posted at least 7 days, excluding Sundays and legal holidays, prior to the meeting.

16 Education; Pupils; Parents as Teachers Program Established. Amend RSA 193:35, I to read as follows:

I. The department of education shall establish the school district based Parents as Teachers Program for a rural community in Sullivan county in cooperation with [~~School Administrative Unit 6~~] ***Sullivan County's school administrative unit*** and the Parent Information Center. Sullivan

county will be the rural site for the program because of its unique demographic profile, including the high number of risk factors affecting its children, the demonstrated interest of its public officials in the program, and the capacity to link the program to existing programs within the county including Good Beginnings, the Parent Information Center, and department of education programs in Sullivan county. The department shall use the following criteria to measure the effectiveness of the program:

17 Education; School Administrative Units; Status. RSA 194-C:1 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

194-C:1 Definitions.

I. "Chief school administrator" means the city or county official elected pursuant to RSA 653:1, VII. This term shall replace “superintendent”.

II. "School administrative unit” means the city or county department overseen by the chief school administrator together with the school districts they support.

III. The corresponding city council or county commissioners are the governing body of the school administrative unit.

18 Education; School Administrative Units; Interstate School Administrative Units; Exemption RSA 194-C:3 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

194-C:3 Interstate School Administrative Units; Exemption. Interstate school districts and compacts created by RSA 200-B and RSA 200-F shall be exempt from this chapter.

19 Education; School Administrative Units; Services. RSA 194-C:4 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

194-C:4 Services. For each supported school district, the school administrative unit under the chief school administrator shall provide the following education administrative services to their school boards, budget committees, other elected and appointed school district officials, school principals and other administrators, and school district employees:

I. Payroll, benefits including procedural requirements, cash flow, bills, records and files, accounts, reporting requirements, funds management, audits, and coordination with the school district treasurer and advisory boards on policies necessary for compliance with all state and federal laws regarding purchasing.

II. Support services for recruitment of staff, criminal history records checks, pursuant RSA 189:13-a, labor contract negotiation, processing of grievances, and arrangement for mediation, fact finding, or arbitration.

III. Compliance with laws, regulations, and rules regarding home education, long-term student records, sexual harassment, and other matters as may from time to time occur. Support services for compliance with laws, regulations, and rules regarding special education, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act, short-term student records, and other matters as may from time to time occur.

IV. Writing, receiving, disbursement, and the meeting of all federal, state, and local compliance requirements.

V. Oversight of and legal services for the provision of insurance, appropriate hearings, litigation, and court issues.

VI. Support for pupil transportation contracts and execution, as directed by the school board.

VII. Grant writing, compliance, and administration, as directed by the school board.

VIII. Support for annual budget, warrants for annual and special meetings, and any required public notices, as directed by the school board and budget committee.

IX. Support the completion of annual audits pursuant to RSA 21-J:19 of supported school districts.

X. Assist identification of consultants to be used for various services.

20 Education; School Administrative Units; Organization and Duties; Federal Assistance RSA 194-C:5 through C:6 are repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

194-C:5 Transition.

I. No existing school administrative unit shall enter into a contract where the terms, parties affected, or services provided by the contract extend beyond June 30, 2029.

II. Any party harmed by changes to, or consolidation of, school administrative units shall be entitled only to monetary damages. No party may file suit against this state or any school administrative unit or district seeking remedies other than monetary damages.

194-C:6 Federal Assistance. School administrative units, in cooperation with local school districts, are hereby authorized to cooperate with the federal government or any agency thereof to request, receive, distribute and expend federal funds for educational purposes. The receipt and expenditure of federal funds by a school administrative unit shall be accounted for in the same manner as established for federal funds processed through local school districts. Each school administrative unit is hereby directed to establish, separate from its operating budget, a federal grant account for each supported school district.

21 Education; School Administrative Units; Budget RSA 194-C:9 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

194-C:9 Budget.

I. The city and county property tax rates in Hillsborough county shall be adjusted to reflect their specific school administrative unit expenses to be raised by property taxes.

II. A school administrative unit’s annual budget shall be determined in the same manner and schedule as other city and county department budgets, except that, in the case of the Hillsborough county's school administrative unit, only members of the county school convention shall approve that portion of the county budget.

III. Chief school administrators, other business administrators, consultants, and the regularly employed office personnel of a school administrative unit office shall be deemed employees of a city or county for the purposes of payment of salaries and contributions to an employee's retirement and workers' compensation. Employee candidate background checks for all employees of the school administrative unit shall be pursuant to the requirements of RSA 189:13-a and RSA 28:10-c.

IV. If a school administrative unit contains one or more cooperative school districts that cross county boundaries, the county tax rate for the affected towns shall be adjusted to reflect their portion of the school administrative unit expenses to be raised by property tax, and those towns shall pay that portion to the appropriate county.

V. The commissioner of the department of revenue administration shall adopt rules to implement this section per RSA 541-A.

22 Education; Withdrawal From Cooperative School Districts; Time of Withdrawal. Amend RSA 195:30 to read as follows:

195:30 Time of Withdrawal. The vote to withdraw from a cooperative school district shall take effect on July 1 of the calendar year one year subsequent to the date on which the withdrawal vote is passed. [~~A preexisting school district which withdraws from a cooperative school district shall remain a part of the school administrative unit of which it was a member prior to withdrawal unless the withdrawing district complies with the school administrative unit withdrawal process set forth in RSA 194-C:2.~~] After passage of the withdrawal vote and the issuance by the state board of education of its certificate of withdrawal, a special meeting of the voters in the withdrawing district shall be held at a time set by the state board of education. The warrant for this special meeting, approved by the state board of education and signed by the commissioner, shall provide for the election of officers in the withdrawing school district. The commissioner of education shall have authority to appoint officers pro tem as may be necessary and prepare the warrant for the special meeting held to elect officers. This meeting shall have the same power and authority as an annual meeting with reference to the raising or appropriating of money. The district officers elected at said meeting shall take office immediately and shall carry out the duties of their office and may take any action otherwise permitted by law which is necessary in order to carry out the provisions of the withdrawal.

23 Education; Schoolhouses; Location and Construction by District. Amend RSA 199:1 to read as follows:

199:1 Location and Construction by District. The district may decide upon the location of its schoolhouses by vote or by a committee appointed for the purpose, provided, however, that all plans, specifications, and the selection of site for any new school buildings for any school district within the state shall be approved by the school board of the district in which it is proposed to construct such a building. The provisions of this section shall apply to all new construction and substantial

renovation of public school buildings, including those constructed by grant or loans of funds from state, the federal government, or other sources. The district shall investigate feasible options in the course of deciding to renovate or replace an existing school building. In considering such options, the district shall hold at least one public hearing and shall seek input from municipal boards and departments. The district shall also review the municipality's zoning regulations and master plan in order to maximize best planning practices. [~~For the purposes of this chapter, in addition to their usual meanings, the words "schoolhouse" and "school building" also mean educational administration building, including school administrative unit facilities.~~]

24 New Paragraphs; Elections; State and County Officers to be Elected; Elected for 2-Year Term. Amend RSA 653:1 by inserting after paragraph VI the following new paragraphs:

VII. Twelve chief school administrators as follows:

(a) One for the city of Manchester.

(b) One for the city of Nashua.

(c) One for all remaining cities and towns within Hillsborough County.

(d) One for each remaining county.

VIII. Voters in each school administrative unit shall elect their chief school administrator to 2-year terms. In the case of cooperative school districts that include towns from more than one county, the voters shall elect the chief school administrator of the school administrative unit that services their school district.

IX. Towns that are part of interstate school districts or are subject to RSA 200-B or RSA 200-F shall not be eligible to participate in electing a chief school administrator.

25 Elections; Nominations; Qualifications by Office; Incompatible Offices. Amend RSA 655:10, I to read as follows:

I. No person shall file declaration of candidacy or primary petitions for nomination at the primary for incompatible offices. For the purposes of this section, incompatible offices shall include the offices of governor, United States senator, United States representative, representative to the general court, state senator, councilor, county commissioner, county sheriff, county attorney, county treasurer, ***chief school administrator,*** register of deeds, and register of probate. If any person shall file for incompatible offices, the secretary of state shall advise the person of the provisions hereof and said person shall then advise the secretary of state which of said offices he or she wishes to retain in order to seek said nomination.

26 Elections; Vacancies Among Public Officers Elected at State Elections; County Officers. Amend RSA 661:9, I to read as follows:

I. If a vacancy for a period of one year or longer occurs in the office of county sheriff, county attorney, ***chief school administrator,*** register of deeds, or county treasurer, the members of the county convention***, or county school convention for chief school administrators,*** shall fill the vacancy for the unexpired term by a majority of the ballots cast. If a vacancy for a period of less

than a year occurs in any such office, the members of the [~~county~~] convention shall, by majority vote of the [~~county~~] convention, vote to either fill the vacancy or to leave the office vacant.

27 Transition period.

I. Each school district shall be associated with one school administrative unit as follows:

(a) Interstate school districts created by RSA 200-B and RSA 200-F shall be unchanged.

(b) School districts within the chief school administrator's election district, as specified by RSA 653:I, VII, shall be associated with that chief school administrator's school administrative unit.

(c) Cooperative school district boards that cross county lines shall choose, prior to January 1, 2028, which county school administrative unit they will be associated with.

II. Existing school superintendents and newly elected chief school administrators under RSA 653:1, VII, shall, for each school district, mutually agree on a date, between March 1, 2029, and July 1, 2029, for when services for that district shall be taken over by the new school administrative unit. All records, funds, and other property associated within that district shall be transferred to the new school administrative unit by that date. Employment, transportation, services, and other contracts shall be offered to the newly elected superintendent, but, if not adopted, shall be terminated. Existing school administrative units shall be terminated as of their latest transition date.

28 New Subdivision; Joint Consolidation Committee. Amend RSA 194-C by inserting after section 12 the following new subdivision:

Joint Consolidation Committee

194-C:13 Joint Consolidation Committee.

I. There is established a committee to oversee the transition to a reduced number of school administrative units in the state. The committee shall be known as the Joint Consolidation Committee.

II. 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.

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

IV. The committee shall track the issues related to school administrative units and consolidation. It shall introduce legislation that it determines is necessary or desirable to improve the consolidation process and correct any errors or oversights.

V. The members of the 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. Four members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

VI. 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 at least annually on or before November 1.

29 Prospective Repeal; 2029. The following are repealed:

I. RSA 189:75, III, relative to the definition of a "corresponding school administration unit".

II. RSA 194:1-a, relative to single district school administrative units.

III. RSA 194-C:4-a, relative to the assignment of superintendent services and personnel for school administrative units.

IV. RSA 194-C:7, relative to representation in school administrative units.

V. RSA 194-C:8, relative to weighted voting in school administrative units.

VI. RSA 194-C:9-a, relative to alternate budget procedures and methods of adopting alternate budgets.

VII. RSA 194-C:9-b, relative to alternative budget procedures for school administrative units.

VIII. RSA-C:10, relative to public hearings for school administrative units.

IX. Sections 26 through 30, relative to the Joint Commission on SAU Consolidation.

30 Repeal. RSA 194-C:2, relative to the organization, reorganization, withdrawal, or merger of school administrative units, is repealed.

31 Effective Date.

I. Section 28 and Section 30 of this act shall take effect upon its passage.

II. Sections 24 and 25 of this act shall take effect January 1, 2028.

III. Sections 12 and 18 of this act shall take effect July 1, 2028.

IV. The remainder of this act shall take effect January 1, 2029.