

Senate Education Committee

Trevor Currier 271-4151

SB 574, establishing a commission to study the efficiency and structure of school administrative units.

Hearing Date: February 17, 2026

Time Opened: 10:33 a.m.

Time Closed: 10:36 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Altschiller, Prentiss, Abbas, Sullivan and Ward

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill establishes a commission to study the efficiency and structure of school administrative units (SAUs) for the purposes of identifying opportunities for SAU consolidation and restructuring as well as property tax relief.

Sponsors:

Sen. Innis

Sen. Watters

Sen. McGough

Sen. Lang

Sen. Avard

Sen. Birdsell

Sen. Ward

Sen. Rochefort

Sen. Gannon

Sen. Abbas

Sen. Sullivan

Sen. Prentiss

Sen. Murphy

Sen. Carson

Sen. McConkey

Sen. Pearl

Rep. Thibault

Who supports the bill: Senator Innis (Senate District 7), Senator McGough (Senate District 11), Senator Rochefort (Senate District 1), Senator McConkey (Senate District 3), Cory Stone, Linda Burnap, Amy Erickson, Barbara Zaenglein, Eric Zaenglein, Kathy Spielman, Abigail Mather, James Chapman, Cassandra Curtis, Priscilla Dube, Debra Merrick, Marlise Bryant, Michael Bryant, Mary Till, Jennifer Favreau, Deborah Fexis, Barbara Langworthy, Nicole Mackay, Donna Tully, Patricia Kellogg, Beth Edwards, James Moore, Susan Moore, Lois Cote, and Barbara Bryce.

Who opposes the bill: Tami Lanzillo Zeimetz, Kate Eaves, Barbara Prien, and Leigh Hutchinson

Who is neutral on the bill: No one.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator Dan Innis, *Senate District 7*

- Senator Innis testified and introduced in support of Senate Bill 574.
- Senator Innis explained that the legislation would establish a commission to study the efficiency and structure of school administrative units (SAUs).
- Sen. Innis explained that the stakeholders identified and included in the legislation include the Commissioner of the Department of Education, a superintendent of schools, a member of a local school board, and a business office administrator.
- He mentioned that the commission would be responsible for reviewing demographic and enrollment shifts across the entire state, as well as within SAUs, and examining how districts might reallocate resources to possibly lower property taxes.
- Sen. Innis stated that the rising costs at schools are undeniable, even as enrollment has decreased.
- He explained that the objective of Senate Bill 574 is to look at the consolidation of SAUs to reduce the burden on taxpayers.
- He recommended that the committee adopt the amendment he provided because the amendment attaches the commission to the Department of Education.
- Senator Sullivan asked if Senator Innis reviewed the report released by the previous study committee. Senator Innis responded that he has reviewed the report and added that this bill goes deeper and includes a broader range of stakeholders, including more school officials.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None.

Neutral Information Presented: None.