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An Act To Improve the School Administrative Unit Consolidation Laws by Allowing a Regional School Unit To Dissolve Itself

CONCEPT DRAFT SUMMARY

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

This bill proposes to improve the school administrative unit consolidation laws by allowing for the dissolution of a regional school unit at the end of any school year. The bill provides the following process for the dissolution of a regional school unit.

1. A member municipality of a regional school unit may petition to hold a vote on the dissolution of the regional school unit.

2. If a majority of the voters in the municipality approve the petition, the petition must be presented to the regional school unit board and the Commissioner of Education. The commissioner shall contact the regional school unit board, municipal officers of the participating municipalities and representatives of the group that filed the petition to establish a dissolution committee, which must prepare a dissolution agreement for submission to the voters of the member municipalities in the regional school unit.

3. Each member municipality of the regional school unit may independently decide whether the member municipality wants to participate in the referendum vote to dissolve the regional school unit.

4. A majority of the member municipalities within the regional school unit must approve the decision to hold the referendum vote on the question on the dissolution of the regional school unit.

5. The regional school unit may be dissolved only if a majority of voters in a majority of the member municipalities within the regional school unit votes to approve the referendum question to dissolve the regional school unit.

6. If a majority of voters in a majority of the member municipalities within the regional school unit votes to approve the referendum question on the dissolution of the regional school unit, the regional school unit must be dissolved and the board of directors of the regional school unit and a dissolution committee comprised of members representing each of the member municipalities in the regional school unit must develop and execute a dissolution agreement.

7. The dissolution agreement must provide for the disposition of all real and personal property and other monetary assets.

8. The dissolution agreement must address the outstanding indebtedness of the regional school unit as follows:

A. Outstanding indebtedness may not include debt service for school property, including real estate, facilities and any other infrastructure debt that is the sole responsibility of a member municipality within the regional school unit; and

B. Except for the provisions in paragraph A, outstanding indebtedness must be apportioned to each member municipality of the regional school unit based on the percentage of resident students that each member municipality has of the total student resident count in the regional school unit.

9. The member municipalities of the dissolved regional school unit may not be penalized for dissolving the regional school unit.

10. The member municipalities of the dissolved regional school unit may join another existing regional school unit or alternative organizational structure or may form an alternative organizational structure with another school administrative unit or with other units.

11. A member municipality of the dissolved regional school unit that tuitions a majority of its resident students to another school administrative unit or a private school that is approved to receive publicly funded students is exempt from any requirements established for the minimum number of students under the school administrative unit consolidation law and may form its own municipal school unit. A municipal school unit formed under this exemption must continue to provide school choice to parents of students who reside in the member municipality.