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Vermont Schools in Need

The wide variety of schools in Vermont’s education system lends itself to a unique set of educational issues for the state. In this report, we identify the school districts that require the most acute assistance from the state based on the analysis of several metrics. We compared graduation rates, test scores, Title I eligibility and funding, and average income in school districts across the state to comprise a list of fourteen school districts in Vermont that could benefit most from increased state support.

Metrics

Graduation Rates

Graduation rates serve as an important metric for assessing a high school's educational performance due to their comprehensive reflection of student success and institutional effectiveness. According to the education experts *U.S. News and World Report* consulted, graduation rates can be used to judge how well a school is succeeding all its students.¹

Test Scores

Test scores are widely used to evaluate a high school's academic performance because they offer a quantifiable and standardized measure of student proficiency in specific subjects. These scores provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the school's curriculum, teaching methods, and the overall learning environment. By assessing students' grasp of fundamental concepts and skills, test scores offer a comparative basis for evaluating academic achievement and identifying areas that may require improvement.²

Title I Funding

Title I is an element of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA), which provides financial support to educational institutions

¹ Robert Morse and Eric Brooks, “How U.S. News Calculated the 2023-2024 Best High Schools Rankings,” U.S. News and World Report, August 28, 2023, <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/articles/how-us-news-calculated-the-rankings>.

² Morse and Brooks, “How U.S. News Calculated the 2023-2024 Best High Schools Rankings.”

demonstrating need through low academic success.³ Title I funding may be used to evaluate a school district or supervisory union's needs due to the consideration of district income and ability in the dispersal of funds. Specifically, through Title I, federal funds are disbursed "to school districts based on the number of low-income children, ages 5 - 17, in each district as determined by census data."⁴ As a result, the inclusion of this metric allows us to consider economic standing in the context of the district population.

Median Household Income

Median household income may assist in evaluating the support needed for a school district or supervisory union, as scholars believe that lower economic status leads to lower success in academic pursuits. Lower academic performance may impact students' abilities down the line, as "on average, students from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to have lower attainment at schools and worse opportunities in subsequent education and later life."⁵ Considering this relationship between disadvantage and future success, we have identified median household income as an important evaluative metric which demonstrates a district's economic status.

Fourteen Districts Demonstrating the Most Need Across Vermont

Methodology

To determine which schools needed the most aid, we identified the 25 districts with the worst performance across all four metrics and pinpointed fourteen schools that showed up the most in our research. Through the application of our specified factors which impact achievement, we have identified the fourteen schools across Vermont that demonstrate a need for government intervention and potential financial support. This report will now review the data under each metric for these school systems. No ranking of need across districts has been developed in this report and the order these districts have been written in is not representative of their level of need in comparison to other districts discussed here. The districts identified and their score on the various metrics can be found in Table 1.

³ National Center for Education Statistics, "Fast Facts: Title I," National Center for Education Statistics, accessed November 28, 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=158>.

⁴ Vermont Agency of Education, "Title I- Improving Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged," Vermont Agency of Education, 2023, <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/federal-programs/consolidated-federal-programs/title-i-part-improving-academic#:~:text=Through%20Title%20I%2C%20the%20federal,as%20determined%20by%20census%20data.>

⁵ Nadia Siddiqui and Stephen Gorard, "Is Household Income a Reliable Measure when Assessing Educational Outcomes? A Jigsaw of Two Datasets (Next Steps and National Pupil Database) for Understanding Indicators of Disadvantage," *International Journal of Research and Method in Education* 46, no. 2 (2023): 118-132, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1743727X.2022.2094359>.

| Table 1: Key Metrics of the 14 School Districts/Unions Discussed in this Report | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | 4-year Graduation Rates (2022) | Title I Funding Per Student (approx.) | Median Household Income | 9 th grade math proficiency rate | 9 th grade language arts proficiency rate | 11 th grade science proficiency rate |
| Statewide Average | 83% | N/A | \$67,674 | 30% | 36.7% | 43.3% |
| Missisquoi Valley School District | 87% | \$174.67 | \$67,679 | 13.04% | 35.96% | 31.2% |
| North Country S. U. | 70% | \$101.23 | \$56,665 | 20.3% | 27.6% | 33% |
| Franklin Northeast S. U. | 82% | \$162.13 | \$60,789 | 30.06% | 43.5% | 20.8% |
| Orange East School District | 81% | \$210.77 | \$67,252 | 23.7% | 47.2% | 31.8% |
| Lamoille South School District | 91% | \$193.13 | \$66,339 | 38% | 67.2% | 48.7% |
| Lamoille North S. U. | 78% | \$406.89 | \$66,346 | 12.6% | 35.4% | 27% |
| Caledonia Central S. U. | 84% | \$177.02 | \$63,469 | 27.9% | 55.7% | 35% |
| Essex North S. U. | 50% | N/A | \$51,164 | N/A | N/A | 14.2% |
| Greater Rutland County S. U. | 82% | N/A | \$63,231 | 20.8% | 33.7% | 29% |
| Central Vermont S. U. | 76% | \$188.602 | \$64,840 | 9% | 50.6% | 40.6% |
| Springfield School District | 68% | \$358.59 | \$57,160 | 19.6% | 36.5% | 26% |
| Southwest VT S. U. | 77% | \$149.29 | \$57,008 | 27.3% | 42.6% | 36.7% |
| Winooski School District | 45% | \$578.97 | \$61,033 | 10.3% | 12.1% | 7.89% |
| Rutland City School District | 79% | \$518.99 | \$51,868 | 34.6% | 47.7% | 49.9% |
| Green: above the state average Red: below the state average | | | | | | |

Sources: Vermont Agency of Education, “Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment.”; Vermont Agency of Education, “Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information.”; U.S. Department of Education, “Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT.”; National Center for Education Statistics, “ACS-ED District Demographic Dashboard 2017-21, Institute of Education Sciences, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/5007050>.

Missisquoi Valley School District

The Missisquoi Valley School District (MVSD) resides in Swanton, Vermont and serves the towns of Swanton, Highgate, and Franklin.⁶ The district houses three K-6 elementary schools

⁶ Vermont Agency of Education, “All Districts and SUs, July 1, 2020,” Vermont Agency of Education, July 1, 2020, <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-sus-districts-towns-operating-and-tuitioning-grades-7-1-20.pdf>.

and one school containing both middle and high school years, serving approximately 2,000 students.⁷ The academic proficiency of students varies, measured by the Vermont Agency of Education's "Smarter Balanced" assessments for 2021. The ninth-grade math proficiency for the MVSD is documented at 13.04%, and the ninth-grade language arts proficiency resides at 35.96%, and eleventh-grade science proficiency at 31.2%.⁸ Additionally, the graduation rate for the district is 87%.⁹ The district's economic status is also important to note, as they received approximately \$174.67 per student in Title I funding in the year 2020.¹⁰ The median household of the towns within the district may also hold important information about their opportunities for success. The median household income across the district is reported by the National Center for Education Statistics as \$67,679.¹¹

North Country Supervisory Union

The North Country Supervisory Union (NCSU) is headquartered in Newport, Vermont and contains 9 elementary schools, one junior high school, and one high school.¹² The Union serves many towns in the Northeast Kingdom, specifically Brighton, Charleston, Coventry, Derby, Holland, Jay, Lowell, Morgan, Newport, Troy, and Westfield.¹³ According to the 2021 Vermont Agency of Education Smarter Balanced assessments, the NCSU's ninth-grade math proficiency level, including both students proficient and above proficient, is 20.3%.¹⁴ In addition, the ninth-grade language arts proficiency settles at 27.6% and the eleventh-grade science proficiency is documented as thirty three percent.¹⁵ The four-year high school graduation rate for the NCSU is 70%.¹⁶ \$101.23 per student in 2020 title one funding was allocated to the North Country Senior High School alone, plus additional funds supplied through this act to each town's elementary

⁷ Missisquoi Valley School District, "Our District," Missisquoi Valley School District, accessed November 26, 2023, https://www.mvdschools.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=3915852&type=d&pREC_ID=2480623.

⁸ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment," Vermont Agency of Education, 2021, <https://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting/vermont-education-dashboard/vermont-education-dashboard-assessment>.

⁹ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information," Vermont Agency of Education, 2022, <https://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting/vermont-education-dashboard/vermont-education-dashboard-student-information>.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT: Allocations under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," U.S. Department of Education, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/titlei/fy09recovery/vermont.pdf>.

¹¹ National Center for Education Statistics, "ACS-ED District Demographic Dashboard 2017-21: Missisquoi Valley School District, Vermont," Institute of Education Sciences, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/5099921>.

¹² North Country Supervisory Union, "NCSU Schools and Central Office," NCSUVT, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://www.ncsuvt.org/our-schools>.

¹³ Vermont Agency of Education, "All Districts and SUs, July 1, 2020."

¹⁴ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

¹⁵ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

¹⁶ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

district.¹⁷ Lastly, the National Center for Education Statistics documents the median household income in this district as \$56,665 from 2017 to 2021.¹⁸

Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union

The Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union (FNESU) serves the towns of Enosburg, Richford, Bakersfield, Berkshire, Montgomery, and Sheldon.¹⁹ Within the supervisory union, there are five K-6 elementary schools, one K-8 school, one middle school, two high schools - one of which contains both junior and senior high - and one k-12 academy that offers predominantly virtual learning experiences.²⁰ The 2021 Vermont Smarter Balanced assessment data for the FNESU reports a 30.06% percent ninth-grade math proficiency rate including both students proficient and above proficient.²¹ In addition to this, the data represents a 43.5% percent proficiency rate for ninth-grade language arts and a 20.8% proficiency rate in eleventh-grade science across all schools within this supervisory union.²² As of 2022, the four-year high school graduation rate for the first high school, Enosburg Falls, is eighty-six percent.²³ The four-year high school graduation rate for the other high school, Richford Junior Senior High School, is seventy-eight percent as of 2022.²⁴ \$162.13 per student in Title 1 funding was distributed to both high schools in the FNESU.²⁵ Bakersfield, Berkshire, Montgomery, and Sheldon each received funding for their town specific school programs via title one as well, totaling to \$296,989.²⁶ Additionally, the median household income across the FNESU is reported as \$60,789.²⁷

Orange East School District

The Orange East Supervisory Union (OESU) is based in Bradford, Vermont and includes the towns of Bradford, Newbury, Corinth, Groton, Ryegate, Thetford, Topsham, Wells River, as well as students from local tuition towns.²⁸ The OESU houses three K-6 elementary schools, one k-8 school, one high school, and one k-12 school, serving approximately 1,500 students in total.²⁹ The 2021 Smarter Balanced assessment data from the Vermont Agency of Education reports a 23.7% proficiency rate for ninth-grade math in the OESU, including students both

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

¹⁸ National Center for Education Statistics, "ACS-ED District Demographic Dashboard 2017-21: North Country Supervisory Union, Vermont," Institute of Education Sciences, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/5099931>.

¹⁹ Vermont Agency of Education, "All Districts and SUs, July 1, 2020."

²⁰ Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union, "Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union: Schools," Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union, accessed November 26, 2023, <http://www.fnesu.net>.

²¹ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

²² Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

²³ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

²⁴ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

²⁵ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

²⁶ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

²⁷ National Center for Education Statistics, "ACS-ED District Demographic Dashboard 2017-21: Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union, Vermont," Institute of Education Sciences, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/5099920>.

²⁸ Vermont Agency of Education, "All Districts and SUs, July 1, 2020."

²⁹ Orange East Supervisory Union, "Schools," Orange East Supervisory Union, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://www.oesu.org/schools>.

proficient and above proficient.³⁰ This data also documents a 47.2% proficiency rate in ninth-grade language arts, as well as a 31.8% proficiency rate in eleventh-grade science.³¹ As of 2022, the graduation rate for the sole high school, Oxbow High School, is eighty-one percent.³² Across all towns in the OESU, \$210.77 per student in title one funding was received.³³ Additionally, the median household income for this supervisory union is recorded by the National Center for Education Statistics as \$67,252.³⁴

Lamoille South School District

The Lamoille South Supervisory Union (LSSU) is centered in Morrisville, Vermont and contains seven schools including two K-6 elementary schools, one school educating grades 1-3, two middle schools, and one high school.³⁵ The LSSU serves the towns of Elmore, Morristown, and Stowe.³⁶ 2021 Smarter Balanced assessment data from the Vermont Agency of Education documents the ninth-grade math proficiency level across the LSSU as thirty-eight percent, including those both at and above proficiency levels.³⁷ On top of this, the Smarter Balanced data record a 67.2% proficiency level in ninth-grade language arts and a 48.7% eleventh-grade science proficiency rate.³⁸ As of 2022, the four-year graduation rate for the first high school in the LSSU, People's Academy, is eighty-six percent, whereas the four-year graduation rate for Stowe High School, the other high school in the union, is ninety-six percent.³⁹ In 2020, the district received \$193.13 per student in title one funding across all the towns.⁴⁰ As for the economic status of the LSSU, the median household income across the LSSU is recorded by the National Center for Education Statistics as \$66,339.⁴¹

Lamoille North Supervisory Union

The Lamoille North Supervisory Union (LNSU) is located in Hyde Park, Vermont and serves the towns of Belvidere, Cambridge, Eden, Hyde Park, Johnson, and Waterville.⁴² The LNSU houses 8 schools, including six K-6 elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.⁴³ 2021

³⁰ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

³¹ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

³² Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

³³ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

³⁴ National Center for Education Statistics, "ACS-ED District Demographic Dashboard 2017-21: Orange East Supervisory Union, Vermont," Institute of Education Sciences, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/5099927>.

³⁵ Lamoille South Supervisory Union, "Our Schools," Lamoille South Supervisory Union, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://lamoillesouth.org/schools/>.

³⁶ Vermont Agency of Education, "All Districts and SUs, July 1, 2020."

³⁷ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

³⁸ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

³⁹ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

⁴¹ National Center for Education Statistics, "ACS-ED District Demographic Dashboard 2017-21: Lamoille South Supervisory Union, Vermont," Institute of Education Sciences, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/5099926>.

⁴² Vermont Agency of Education, "All Districts and SUs, July 1, 2020."

⁴³ Lamoille North Supervisory Union, "Our Schools," Lamoille North Supervisory Union, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://www.lnsd.org/schools>.

Smarter Balanced assessment data shows that the LNSU ninth-grade math proficiency rate is 12.6%, including both students who meet and exceed proficiency levels.⁴⁴ In addition, the ninth-grade language arts proficiency level resides at 35.4% percent and the eleventh-grade science proficiency level is documented as twenty-seven percent, both as of 2021.⁴⁵ In addition, the Lamoille Union High School graduation rate is documented by the Vermont Agency of Education at seventy-eight percent, as of 2022.⁴⁶ The high school alone received \$406.89 per issue in title one funding, with additional funding being provided to each towns' elementary program through the act.⁴⁷ The median household income across the LNSU is \$66,346, providing insight to the economic standing of the area.⁴⁸

Caledonia Central Supervisory Union

The Caledonia Central Supervisory Union oversees several school districts in Caledonia County. Within this supervisory union, Cabot School and Danville School need Acute Assistance. Students in the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union scored 8% lower than the state average in 9th grade math scores and 7% lower than the state average in 11th grade Science Scores.⁴⁹ Cabot School's four year graduation rate was about 5% lower than the state average in 2022 at 78% (this is the low for the school in recent years, the graduation rate was 90.1% in 2021 and 81.8% in 2019, there was no data for 2020).⁵⁰ Both Cabot and Danville Schools were eligible for 2020 Title I funding, receiving \$177.02 per student overall.⁵¹ Additionally, the town of Cabot's median Adjusted Gross Income was \$32,033 in 2017, about \$7,000 lower than the state average.

Essex North Supervisory Union

Essex North Supervisory Union comprises the Canaan School district and the Northeast Kingdom Choice School District. Essex county is the least populous in the state of Vermont. Data on Canaan School is sparse, but the school recorded a 50% four-year graduation rate in 2022.⁵² The school also received \$91,423 in Title I funding, and Canaan town recorded a median Adjusted gross income of \$30,007; nearly \$10,000 lower than the state average.⁵³ Canaan Schools and the Essex North Supervisory Union experience a unique set of conditions due to the county's sparse population and low income that require specific assistance from the state.

⁴⁴ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁴⁵ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁴⁶ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

⁴⁸ National Center for Education Statistics, "ACS-ED District Demographic Dashboard 2017-21: Lamoille North Supervisory Union, Vermont," Institute of Education Sciences, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/5099925>.

⁴⁹ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁵⁰ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

⁵¹ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

⁵² Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

⁵³ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

Greater Rutland County Supervisory Union

The Greater Rutland County Supervisory Union contains Rutland Town and several other towns in Rutland County. The districts' high schools: Poultney High School and Proctor Junior/Senior High School are both in need of additional assistance. Students in both schools in the union score upwards of 20 percentage points lower than the average student in 11th grade science.⁵⁴ Students at Poultney High School performed poorly on both 9th grade math and language arts tests; with only 11% of students being proficient in either subject. Both high schools are eligible for Title I funding, with Poultney High School receiving \$141,309 in grants and Proctor Junior/Senior High School receiving \$83,828 in grants.⁵⁵ Finally, five of the seven towns in the Union have lower than average Adjusted Gross Incomes than the state.

Central Vermont Supervisory Union

Central Vermont Supervisory Union resides in Williamstown, Vermont that serves much of Orange County, Vermont. Most of the data for this Union come from its high schools, Northfield Middle High School, and Williamstown Middle High School. Northfield High School students performed particularly poorly on 9th grade math tests, with less than 9% of students achieving proficiency; the Union maintained 9% lower math proficiency than the state average.⁵⁶ Both high schools are eligible for Title I funding and the district received \$188.602 per student overall.⁵⁷ Additionally, 21.5% of families served by the school district fall below the poverty level compared to just 9.9% of families in Vermont. In addition, the Central Vermont Supervisory Union graduation rate is documented by the Vermont Agency of Education at seventy-six percent, as of 2022.⁵⁸

Springfield School District

Springfield School District serves the Town of Springfield, VT, and most of the data for this district comes from its sole high school, Springfield High School. Test scores for this district stood out, as just 9.09% of 9th graders were proficient in math and 19.32% were proficient in language arts; both metrics over 20% lower than the state average.⁵⁹ The school also received \$358.59 per student in Title I funding and has an adjusted gross income about \$5,000 lower than the state average.⁶⁰ In addition, the Springfield School District graduation rate is documented by the Vermont Agency of Education at sixty-eight percent, as of 2022.⁶¹

⁵⁴ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

⁵⁶ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

⁵⁸ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

⁵⁹ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁶⁰ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

⁶¹ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

Southwest VT Supervisory Union

The Southwest VT Supervisory Union serves the towns of Bennington, Pownal, Shaftsbury, Woodford.⁶² The Southwest VT Supervisory Union houses eight schools, including six K-6 elementary schools, one middle school (Mount Anthony Union Middle School), and one high school (Mount Anthony Union High School).⁶³ Smarter Balanced 2021 assessment data shows that the Southwest VT Supervisory Union's ninth-grade math proficiency rate is 27.3%, including both students who meet and exceed proficiency levels.⁶⁴ In addition, the ninth-grade language arts proficiency level resides at 42.6% and the eleventh-grade science proficiency level is documented as 36.7%, both as of 2021.⁶⁵ In addition, the Southwest VT Supervisory Union graduation rate is documented by the Vermont Agency of Education at seventy-seven percent, as of 2022.⁶⁶ The high school alone received approximately \$149.29 per student in Title I funding, with additional funding being provided to each town's elementary program through the act.⁶⁷ The median household income in the towns served by this union is \$57,008, providing insight to the economic standing of the area.⁶⁸

Winooski School District

The Winooski School District is located in Winooski and serves the children of the town of Winooski.⁶⁹ The school district is comprised of two schools, Winooski Middle and High School, and JFK Elementary School.⁷⁰ Smarter Balanced assessment data in 2021 shows that the Winooski High School ninth-grade math proficiency rate is 10.3%.⁷¹ In addition, the ninth-grade language arts proficiency level resides at 12.1% as of 2021.⁷² In addition, the Winooski High School's graduation rate is documented by the Vermont Agency of Education at forty-five percent, as of 2022.⁷³ The Winooski School District received \$578.97 per student in Title I one funding.⁷⁴ The median household income across the Winooski School District is \$61,033, providing insight to the economic standing of the area.⁷⁵

⁶² Vermont Agency of Education, "All Districts and SUs, July 1, 2020."

⁶³ Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union, "Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union Home," accessed November 28, 2023, <https://www.svsu.org/>.

⁶⁴ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁶⁵ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁶⁶ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

⁶⁷ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

⁶⁸ National Center for Education Statistics, "ACS-ED District Demographic Dashboard 2017-21 Southern Vermont Supervisory Union, Vermont," Institute of Education Sciences, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/5099905>

⁶⁹ Vermont Agency of Education, "All Districts and SUs, July 1, 2020."

⁷⁰ Winooski School District, "Welcome to Winooski Middle and High School," Accessed November 28, 2023, <https://www.wsdvt.org/wmhs/>; Winooski School District, "Welcome to JFK Elementary," Accessed November 28, 2023, <https://www.wsdvt.org/jfk/>.

⁷¹ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁷² Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁷³ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

⁷⁴ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

⁷⁵ National Center for Education Statistics, "ACS-ED District Demographic Dashboard 2017-21: Winooski School District, Vermont," Institute of Education Sciences, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/5009360>.

Rutland City School District

The Rutland City School District is located in Central Rutland and serves the children of Rutland city.⁷⁶ The Rutland City School District houses 5 schools, including two k-2 primary schools, one 3-6 intermediate school, one 7-8 middle school, and one 9-12 high school (Rutland City Senior High School).⁷⁷ Smarter Balanced assessment data in 2021 shows that the LNSU ninth-grade math proficiency rate is 34.6%, including both students who meet and exceed proficiency levels.⁷⁸ In addition, the ninth-grade language arts proficiency level resides at 47.7% percent and the eleventh-grade science proficiency level is documented as 49.9%, both as of 2021.⁷⁹ In addition, the Rutland City School District graduation rate is documented by the Vermont Agency of Education at seventy-nine percent, as of 2022.⁸⁰ The Rutland City School District received approximately \$518.99 per student in Title I funding.⁸¹ The median household income across the Rutland City School District is \$51,868, providing insight to the economic standing of the area.⁸²

Barriers to Accessing Grants

Federal and state grants remain a backbone of support for American high schools in need. Many high schools which have a high population of students in need also have limited staff and faculty at their disposal due to a lack in resources overall. These are the schools who typically qualify for the most federal and state grant programs.⁸³ It takes time and expertise to effectively write and apply to grants, which can pose a significant barrier to struggling schools accessing the supports that they need. Vermont's reliance on state funds rather than local funds mitigates some of the disparities that this aggravates in other states, but disparities still exist.⁸⁴ The U.S. Government Accountability Office has recommended that the federal government mitigate the financial burden of applying to these grants and streamline the process across agencies to both cut costs and time associated with grant administration.⁸⁵ Several private and government grant writing assistance programs exist, but with limited resources to begin with, the schools who need them most are likely unable to access their support.⁸⁶

⁷⁶ Vermont Agency of Education, "All Districts and SUs, July 1, 2020."

⁷⁷ Rutland City School District, "About," Rutland City Public Schools, Accessed November 28, 2023, <https://www.rutlandcitypublicschools.org/about>.

⁷⁸ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁷⁹ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Assessment."

⁸⁰ Vermont Agency of Education, "Vermont Education Dashboard: Student Information."

⁸¹ U.S. Department of Education, "Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies – VERMONT."

⁸² National Center for Education Statistics, "ACS-ED District Demographic Dashboard 2017-21: Rutland City School District, Vermont," Institute of Education Sciences, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/5007050>.

⁸³ Josh, Delarosa, 2022, "Press Release - Forty-Five Percent of Public Schools Operating without a Full Teaching Staff in October, New NCES Data Show - December 6, 2022," Nces.ed.gov, December 6, 2022, https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press_releases/12_6_2022.asp.

⁸⁴ National Center for Education Statistics' *Digest of Education Statistics* (NCES 2020b).

⁸⁵ U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Communities rely on federal grants, but may have challenges accessing them," U.S. Government Accountability Office, November 14, 2022, <https://www.gao.gov/blog/communities-rely-federal-grants-may-have-challenges-accessing-them>.

⁸⁶ U.S. Government, "Grants.gov," accessed November 26, 2023, <https://www.grants.gov/>.

Conclusion

Based on the metrics of graduation rates, test scores, Title I eligibility, and average income in the school districts, we identified fourteen school districts in the state as needing the most assistance. This data can help inform education policy in Vermont to benefit students that need it the most.

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Contact: Professor Anthony “Jack” Gierzynski, 517 Old Mill, The University of Vermont, Burlington, VERMONT 05405, phone 802-656-7973, email agierzyn@uvm.edu.

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