

## Terms and Definitions Fact Sheet

Terms and Definitions. In order to have a productive conversation, we all must speak the same language. These definitions are adapted from the [Vermont Agency Of Education Act 46 FAQ](#), Agency fact sheets regarding [independent schools](#), [school choice](#), and other references.

Term	Definition	Local Example
School	A building in which education occurs, operated either by a school district and its publicly elected board or a private entity and its board of directors.	Thetford Elementary School Thetford Academy
School District	A public governing unit that is its own independent municipality (can levy taxes, etc.). Responsible for providing for the education of all students residing within its boundaries, either by: operating one or more schools or paying tuition on behalf of the students or operating some grades and paying tuition for others.	Thetford Town School District (TTSD) <i>a 5 member board of directors elected by the voters of Thetford</i>
Supervisory Union	An “administrative, planning, and educational service unit” for two or more school districts. The governing Board representatives are appointed from among the members of each school district’s board.	Orange East Supervisory Union (OESU)
Interstate School District	There are two districts organized to provide education to a combination of New Hampshire and Vermont students. They were created by acts of the two state legislatures and of Congress. They are Vermont schools for purposes of financing only. Vermont governance decisions do not affect them.	SAU 70 (Dresden School District) Rivendell Interstate School District (RISD)
Designation	A school district that does not operate a school offering grades 7-12 and would otherwise be paying tuition for some or all of those grades may designate an approved independent high school OR a public high school. If both the sending district and the receiving school(s) agree	Thetford Academy is the designated school for Thetford and Strafford school districts.

	to designation, then the receiving school is the school for the district and all students who reside in the district enroll in that school (or schools, if more than one school is designated). The designated school is considered a public school for tuition purposes under § 824(b) (meaning the sending district pays the full tuition charged)	
School Choice	High schoolers apply to the school that they wish to attend, and the school district pays the tuition charged. There are many layers and restrictions to this as described in §822a	Sharon and Hartland school districts have high school choice
Merger	Where two or more districts come together to form an entirely new municipal unit	
RED	A Regional Education District is created when school districts merge to form a union school district if the merged district has an average daily membership of 1,250 or includes at least four districts. A RED is responsible for students in grades PK-12. A RED must operate a school educating students in grades K-6. The RED is responsible for students in grades 7-12. The RED may meet this responsibility by paying tuition. The RED may not pay regular education tuition and operate a school for students in the same grade.	
Side-by-Side	A variation of a RED. Each newly merged district results from the merger of at least two districts. At least one of the newly merged districts operates K-12. After merger, all REDs are part of same SU	