

Education – Superintendency Unions

Statutory Reference: [MGL Ch 71, §61-64](#)

Summary – Allows two or more towns to share a superintendent of schools and central office staff.

Creation – The school committees of two or more towns may vote to form a union for the purpose of employing a shared superintendent of schools and central office staff. The property valuations of each town must be less than two million five hundred thousand dollars and there must be an aggregate minimum of twenty-five schools and an aggregate maximum of seventy-five schools. This statute is more than 100 years old and the valuation limits are well out of date (Monroe had the lowest FY09 assessed property values in the state at \$23.5million). The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has the authority to form or adjust union membership without regard to the valuation limits and the number of schools.

Governance – A superintendency union is governed by a joint union school committee comprised of three members from each of the component school committees. The three members include the chairman and two members selected by their respective committees. The joint school committee employs a shared superintendent of schools and establishes the compensation and fringe benefits for the position. The local school committees retain authority over their existing schools, including establishing the budget, setting salaries and working conditions and determining the curriculum.

Finances – The joint union school committee determines the annual cost of the superintendent and central office staff and apportions these costs among the participating communities. Since the repeal of [section 65](#) of this law there is no guidance as to how this allocation should be done, but the DESE strongly recommends that school committees contemplating a school union develop a written agreement that defines qualifying costs, the method by which they are apportioned and any other specifics concerning the operation of the joint union school committee.

Employee Rights – The superintendent is hired for a three year term and the superintendent’s salary “shall not be reduced during his term.” The superintendent may be removed, with the consent of the DESE, by a two-thirds vote of the full membership of the joint committee.

Other – There are currently 20 superintendency unions in the state, consisting of 73 underlying school districts.