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MnState became operational on July 1, 1995, bringing together three formerly separate systems of community colleges, technical colleges, and state universities. Prior to 1995, each of the three systems had its own governance structure and mission. Technical colleges focused on vocational and occupational education and only a limited number were accredited. Governance of the technical college system was shared by a State Board of Technical Colleges and local school districts. The school districts managed budgets, set policies, and negotiated contracts for the colleges. In most cases, the colleges reported to individual school districts; though in several cases, they reported to “intermediate” or “joint” districts, which served multiple individual school districts. Technical colleges also received some technical assistance and oversight from a statewide system office that reported to the State Board of Technical Colleges, but personnel and fiscal operations were more decentralized in the technical college system than in the community college and state university systems.

This bill requires MnState to submit a plan to the legislature for transferring control of the technical colleges back to school districts. The plan must be developed in consultation with the Department of Education and take into account effects that such a transfer would have on credit transfer policies, bonding funds, and K-12 education statutes. If the plan were to be executed, it must be completed by the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year.