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Hello I'm Eric Peterson, I'm the Regional Director for Vermont Adult Learning in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties

As you are aware, the Adult Education and Literacy System is asking for an additional 1.5 million dollars to support our efforts to help adults 16 years and up improve their literacy skills, earn high schools diplomas and improve employment opportunities

Over the past few years our system has seen increasing fallout out from the devastating effects of the pandemic on high school students and educational systems

National publications like Education Week have pointed to a decline in graduation rates and an increase in dropout rates across the country. Vermont is seeing the same effects.

Many students fell behind during the pandemic and missed critical education components leading to skill gaps. When many students found out they would not be graduating on time they gave up. And dropped out.

Data from places like Education Week shows the impacts have disproportionately impacted some populations, especially students with disabilities.

In states with a robust system of charter schools, they have become the safety net for these students. Vermont does not have such a system, so the adult ed system is that safety net.

We are seeing an increase in students coming straight from high schools with IEPs, 504s. Many of these students have gaps in their education and need more focused attention and greater accommodations to be successful. They struggle to achieve the test scores needed to qualify for Vermont's High School Completion Program, so their services are only funded by the Adult Education and Literacy grants. we do not get the additional HSCP funds to serve them.

If we are going to provide students with the services they need to fill in missing skill gaps and help them graduate, we need the resources to do so. This is why adult education providers are coming to you and requesting 1.5 million dollars. Please help us to help these students.