

January 12, 2023

Vermont General Assembly
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Re: Positions Established in Act 127 of 2022, Sec. 12

Dear Chairs Conlon, Campion, Lanpher, Kitchel, Kornheiser, and Cummings:

Pursuant to Act 127, Sec. 12(c), I write to provide an update on how the Agency intends to use the positions created in Sec. 12(a) of that act. These positions create valuable programmatic support, technical and data management capacity within the agency which will be critical to implementing the pupil weighting factors transition, meeting the needs of English Language Learners and the schools and districts that serve them, many for the first time, and supporting access to child nutrition programs.

While this Act created the additional personnel capacity referenced above, it also gave the Agency additional flexibility to structure the work in a way that better serves Vermonters and improves quality and equity for our system. The additional positions allow us to distribute the work of our English Learner (EL) program more efficiently, while also adding needed data and assessment capacity to this area.

For the position established in subsection (a)(1):

The Agency will expand the guidance, technical assistance, and school district support functions of the Agency's incumbent EL position, which sits in the Consolidated Federal Programs (CFP) team of the Federal and Education Support Programs (FESP) Division. The position is funded via federal funds, predominantly Title I and Title III administration funds.

This position is responsible for managing the English Learner (Title III) grants program, and the technical assistance and support functions referenced in the act are already part of the scope of the role and are complementary. The position currently also includes significant data management and assessment management and support (to school districts) functions.

The Agency will use the new position established in subsection (a)(1) of this act to create a new role in the Agency's Assessment Team devoted solely to supporting EL learner assessment and data collection. The Agency will transfer existing assessment and data management functions from the current role to the new role. This will



allow the current CFP role to focus specifically on field technical assistance and support, while the new role provides valuable capacity to strengthen and improve Vermont's EL data collection and assessment capacity. The Agency is allocating \$100,262 of its General Fund budget request to support the Assessment team role.

For the EL specialist role, examples of work include, but are not limited to:

- Develop, review, and approve Title III English Learner and immigrant grant applications and amendments.
- Monitor supervisory union (SU/SD) compliance with federal Title I, Title III, and civil rights requirements, as well as state EL requirements.
- Provide guidance and technical support to SU/SDs on best practices in EL instruction, instruction of preK ELs and ELs with special needs, etc.
- Support SU/SD and school staff statewide by providing technical assistance and training to identify and meet the unique needs of English Learners
- Broker professional development opportunities including workshops and conferences for SU/SD staff
- Advocate for the adoption of needed state policies and updates to support ELs, in accordance with best practices
- Work with state stakeholders including refugee coordinators at AHS and manage MOU related to EL services for refugees and migrant students

For the EL assessment role, examples of work include, but are not limited to:

- Oversee, validate, and manage home language survey data and communicate those findings with vendors and other stakeholders
- Develop policies and procedures intended to support the process of screening, and assessing English Language Proficiency to ensure equity, efficacy, and security
- Manage the state's assessment contract for EL assessment and professional development.
- Provide training to the field on appropriate administration and interpretation of the state's EL assessment.
- Work closely with Agency data and assessment teams to fulfill federal reporting requirements to maintain compliance with regulations, as well as assess and improve the quality of necessary data collection tools

Moving the assessment and data collection responsibilities of the current EL position to the new position within the Data Management and Analysis Division, is the best way of meeting goals with respect to providing guidance and support to school districts for English learner students. Previously only one position was responsible for all four components of work which meant that there was less capacity to provide guidance and support to Vermont school systems. This expansion of capacity is well timed, as many school districts are serving EL students for the first time, and have significant support needs as a result.

For the positions established in subsection (a)(3):

The Agency will establish two Education Data Analyst positions in the Data Management and Administration Team of the Data Management



and Analysis Division. One position will be classified as an Education Data Analyst I and one will be classified as an Education Data Analyst II.

The Education Data Analyst II role will directly support the implantation of Act 127 by:

- Working with internal (AOE) and external stakeholders support new and ongoing data collection, reporting, and data management requirements related to the Act.
- Contribute to analyses of program effectiveness and statewide impact.
- Identify ways to use or modify existing data collection tools, data sources, and systems, as well as identify where new data collection systems are needed to support the work of the Act.
- Serve as a liaison between the Data Management and Administration team and other AOE teams and divisions working on the Act.

The Education Data Analyst I role will provide critical additional data management and analysis capacity to support the work of this Act, of the Universal School Meals Act, as well as other critical education data projects. As I noted in testimony during last session, the Agency's ability to be successful largely depends on its ability to respond to and appropriately staff new work. Not only must we provide resources directly to the programs created by this Act, but we must also ensure that the AOE's data systems and processes are robustly supported and capable of growing capacity to accommodate the new demands.

In our FY24 budget the Agency is allocating funding to these positions as follows:

- Education Data Analyst II: General Fund, \$100,262
- Education Data Analyst I: General Fund, \$100,262

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on this important work. Please let me know if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Daniel M. French, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education

