

Chairwoman Janet Ancel
Committee on Ways and Means
House of Representatives
Montpelier, Vermont 05401

Dear Chairwoman Ancel,

The House Education Committee recommends that the Ways and Means Committee include fees to support the Vermont Agency of Education's Results Oriented Program Approval (ROPA) process. ROPA provides accreditation for teacher education programs at public and private colleges in Vermont.

The Agency of Education circulated a new fee proposal in November, 2015 to fund ROPA (attached). These fees were endorsed by all of the teacher education programs in Vermont who recognized that funds were needed in order to preserve the ROPA accreditation process. In fact, the November proposal makes ROPA an entirely self-funded program.

We heard testimony from our higher education institutions that they prefer ROPA accreditation because it is Vermont-based and it is affordable, compared to national certification. In most cases, national certification through the Council for the Accreditation for Educator Preparation (CAEP) will cost more than double what ROPA will charge under the new fee structure, and it will require additional staffing in order to comply.

In the short term, our institutions are very concerned that the sudden elimination of ROPA will leave them without an accreditation structure.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please let me know how the Education Committee can support a solution.

Sincerely,

David Sharpe
Chairman