

January 25, 2018

Commentary on Special Education Spending Bill  
House Committee on Education

Questions for AOE

- What are the implications for AOE staffing and costs?
- What is the risk that the changes will result in a reduction of federal funding?
- Will the new funding model reduce administrative overhead for AOE and supervisory unions? If so, how, given the need to approve extraordinary service reimbursement claims?
- Is the extraordinary services reimbursement review team to be designated by AOE the right place to review extraordinary services reimbursement claims? Should it be with AOE or another Agency?
- How does the current funding model work (Bill Talbott presented on this and had a really nice powerpoint—perhaps could be updated?)
  - <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Documents/2016/WorkGroups/Senate%20Education/Special%20Education/W~William%20Talbott~Funding%20Special%20Education~3-18-2016.pdf>
- How does special education cost reimbursement work now when a student is placed:
  - In a public school outside of the supervisory union
  - In an independent school
- Does special education cost reimbursement work differently for school districts that tuition their students?

Matters for further Committee Consideration

- On the educational support grant:
  - Should the start date be FY2020 or pushed further out?
  - Should the first year education support grant amount be the equivalent of FY17 State spending on special education rather than FY16?
  - Should the amount be inflated each year?
  - Should there be a poverty adjustment to the educational support grant or should the weighting for poverty in the calculation of equalized pupils be increased?
  - If there is a poverty adjustment, should there be a cliff or should it be smoothed out?
  - Are the 5% and 2.5% poverty adjustments the appropriate percentages to use?
- On the extraordinary services reimbursement:
  - Should there be the 60% reimbursement for its expenditures between the special education grant amount and the thresholds for the 90% reimbursement?
  - Should supervisory unions just receive the educational support grant and be responsible locally to fund extraordinary expenses?

Questions for Prof. Kolbe

- Is a supervisory union's relative level of poverty an accurate predictor of special education needs?
- Why under the extraordinary services reimbursement are supervisory unions reimbursed 60% of its expenditures between the special education grant amount and the thresholds for the 90% reimbursement?