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TESTIMONY PROVIDED TO: Vermont Child Poverty Council

FROM: Jennifer Gresham, Education Division Director, Federal & Education Support Programs

TOPIC: Supporting Children from Low-Income Families in Educational Settings DATE: November 16, 2017

Role of the Agency of Education:

- The AOE involvement in supporting children from low-income families includes providing access to federal education funds to the Local Education Agencies (LEAs), which in Vermont are the Supervisory Unions/Supervisory Districts. These funds are administered under the Elementary & Secondary Education Act.
- AOE provides technical assistance and monitoring to school systems around allowable uses of federal funds to meet identified needs.
- The AOE involvement in Inter-Agency efforts includes having a staff member contribute her expertise in this area to Act 264 Teams, the Turn the Curve interagency team, and other collaboration meetings with AHS. We are fully supportive of the guiding principles and vision of these teams, particularly from an equity standpoint, and are fully supportive of the state's efforts to build community based supports.
- The AOE also administers the State-Placed student funds for children in custody and in residential programs.
- Under McKinney-Vento, AOE provides a Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youths who is responsible for providing technical assistance, providing professional development, administering funds, collecting data and collaborating with local agencies.

Available Federal Education and State Funds:

- Title I – Improving Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged – is divided into 4 parts, three of which directly impact the education of disadvantaged youth. Part A supports local school systems in raising academic achievement of underperforming students, Part C supports the education programs of migrant youth and Part D supports the education programs of youth who are in facilities designated as serving neglected & delinquent youth.
- Title II, Part A – Supporting Effective Instruction – specifically around raising the academic achievement of students through improving teacher ability to provide instruction.
- Title III, Part A – Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students – supports local school systems who have a high percentage of English learners and immigrant students to help those students gain English language proficiency in order to access core academic subjects.
- Title IV – 21st Century Schools – Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants and 21st Century Community Learning Center Grants – allocations and awards are tied to schools who have a greater percentage of poverty or are underperforming.

- McKinney-Vento – Education and Support of Homeless Students – grants to local school systems to provide additional supports for students experiencing homelessness.
- State Placed Student funds – support the educational program of children who are State-placed in Vermont schools, in residential facilities either in or out of state, and can be used for special education or mainstream services depending on the situation.

Recent Changes:

- Residency rules have changed under the re-authorization of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act, as well as under McKinney-Vento. Greater emphasis is placed on school stability for students who are experiencing adverse events.

Moving Forward

- Agency of Education will continue to work collaboratively with AHS on this issue in the best interest of every student in Vermont.
- AOE will continue to monitor federal funding streams, with the understanding that some Title funds are in flux at the federal budgeting level.
- AOE will continue to support school systems in allowable uses of federal funds, identifying needs of their most vulnerable students and improving student outcomes for all. We know students perform better in school and can thrive when all students are treated as equals, regardless of difficulties they might face in school or at home, and we know students learn better when they are closer to home.