

Date: Sept 3, 2020

To: Rep. Kitty Toll, Chair House Appropriations Committee
Cc: Rep. Chip Conquest, House Appropriations Committee
From: Rep. Kathryn Webb, Chair, House Education Committee
Re: CRF funds for PreK-12 education
Governor's recommended budget for FY 21 related to education
Enabling Language Document

COVID RELIEF FUNDS FOR PreK-12 SCHOOLS

The House Education Committee has considered the need for additional FY2021 appropriations from the State's \$1.25 billion Corona Relief Fund (CRF) allocation. The Committee recommends that you consider two appropriations that are explained in more detail on the fiscal note found here:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/WorkGroups/House%20Education/COVID-19/W~Mark%20Perrault~Recommended%20CRF%20Appropriations%20for%20Prekindergarten-Grade%2012%20Education~9-2-2020.pdf>

This includes:

- An *additional* appropriation of \$32 million for reimbursements for CRF-eligible expenses incurred by school districts and for indoor air quality projects completed by December 30th. This request includes a 5% cushion to cover potential CRF-eligible costs not yet identified by school districts.
- A *restated* appropriation of \$4 million for CRF-eligible expenses for school food service supplies and equipment. This \$4 million is available from unspent funds previously appropriated in Acts 120 and 136 for the summer meals program that ended on August 31st.

The Committee also recommends that you consider adding language that gives the Agency of Education the authority to reallocate funds among the programs that receive appropriations from the State's CRF allocation should it become apparent that the funds will not be expended under a specific program before December 30th. This can be found in the document "Proposed CRF Education Language from HEC to HAC, Sections 1-3."

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/WorkGroups/House%20Education/Bills/20-1027/W~Jim%20DesMarais~DR%202020-1027,%20Draft%205.1,%209-3-2020~9-3-2020.pdf>

GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FY21

House Education reviewed the Education section of the Governor's proposed budget. As a result, the committee offers the following adjustments:

1. The committee does not support the Governor's recommended 30% budget reduction for the State Board of Education. In lieu of this, the committee recommends a budget of \$70,750 which reflects a 12.5% reduction. Rationale can be found in a breakdown of anticipated board expenses in testimony from John Carroll, Chair of the State Board of Education
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/WorkGroups/House%20Education/Governor's%20Recommended%20Restatement%20of%20the%20FY21%20State%20Budget/W~John%20Carroll~FY21%20Budget%20of%20State%20Board%20of%20Education%20-%20Comparison%20of%20Original%20and%20Alternative%20Restatements~9-1-2020.pdf>
2. The Committee does not support 67% grant reduction of \$60,000 for Outright Vermont. The Committee recommends \$58,200 which represents a 3% reduction in alignment with the Agency's overall 3% goal. Relevant testimony can be found here
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/WorkGroups/House%20Education/Governor's%20Recommended%20Restatement%20of%20the%20FY21%20State%20Budget/W~Dana%20Kaplan~FY21%20AOE%20Funding%20for%20Outright%20Vermont~8-28-2020.pdf>

TEMPORARIY COVID-RELATED STATUTORY ADJUSTMENTS

The Committee also recommends the following COVID-related temporary statutory changes as we work our way through education in a global pandemic. These can be found in Sections 4-7
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/WorkGroups/House%20Education/Bills/20-1027/W~Jim%20DesMarais~DR%2020-1027,%20Draft%205.1,%209-3-2020~9-3-2020.pdf>