

Draft letter

Daniel M. French, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education
Agency of Education
219 North Main Street, Suite 402
Barre, VT 05641

September 14, 2020

Dear Secretary French,

When the General Assembly adjourns at the end of this month, considerable uncertainty about the condition of education finance in fiscal years 2021 and 2022 will remain. Because the General Assembly will not reconvene until the beginning of January, we are requesting that the Agency of Education provide the following information to the House Committees on Ways & Means and Education on or before January 15, 2021. This information will allow the General Assembly to make informed decisions on how to address education finance issues in January and to act expediently if necessary.

Use of Federal Funds

We would like to see a full accounting of the use of the following federal funds received by the State for coronavirus costs incurred by public schools and approved independent schools:

- (1) Coronavirus Relief Funds appropriated in the FY2021 restated budget;
- (2) Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds; and
- (3) Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund.

We would like to see, by school district, projected unreimbursed coronavirus costs for fiscal years 2020 and 2021.

In order to assess the impact of this federal aid on the projected FY2021 deficit in the Education Fund, we would also like to know how much aid will be used to reimburse school districts for previously-budgeted costs.

Average Daily Membership

We would also like to see an analysis of the change in average daily membership by school district between October 2019 and October 2020, including a report on the number of students, by school district, who enrolled in home study in the 2020-2021 school year:

(1) but had been enrolled in their home school district in the 2019-2020 school year;
and

(2) who, after the 2020 census period and on or before January 10, 2021, re-enrolled in their home school district.

Special Education Service Plans

In addition, we would like to see a report on:

(1) the special education service plans submitted by school districts to the Agency of Education in October 2020; and

(2) the estimated additional costs, by school district, of providing individualized education program services due to remote or hybrid learning models.

Operational Status

Finally, we would like to receive an update on:

(1) the operational status of all school districts; and

(2) the status of any school district that has failed to pass its school budget for the 2020-2021 school year.

Sincerely,

Rep. Janet Ancel, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means

Rep. Kate Webb, Chair
House Committee on Education