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MEMORANDUM

To: Rep. Catherine Toll, Chair, House Committee on Appropriations

From: Rep. Kathryn Webb, Chair, House Committee on Education

Date: February 28, 2019

Subject: Appropriations; Education

Thank you for your memorandum dated February 8, 2019, concerning provisions in the Governor's proposed fiscal year 2020 State budget related to education. The Committee has reviewed your memorandum, and has the following recommendations:

- We support:
 - Secs. E.500 and E.500.1, which moves the financial obligation for contracted services to support statewide administrative education systems to the Education Fund. **This should result in lower local school district costs.**
 - Sec. E.602.1, which appropriates \$3,000,000.00 to hold the Vermont State Colleges' tuition rates level for one year.
 - Sec. E.605.1, which appropriates \$1,000,000.00 for non-degree grants administered by VSAC.
 - Sec. E.605.1(.2), which appropriates monies for need-based stipends for dual enrollment and early college students. The Committee also supports appropriating an additional \$13,000.00 to accommodate anticipated growth in participation in the dual enrollment program.
 - An **additional** appropriation of \$40,000.00 **to the Agency of Education** to be used as a grant for continued LGBTQ training as was being carried out under the CDC Health Training Grant, which is ending in the current fiscal year. This training is available statewide and continues to be crucial for the lives of LGBTQ youth.
 - An additional appropriation of \$50,000.00 to the Governor's proposed appropriation for the **Farm-to-School Program** that was previously funded with one-time funding. **Expanding Farm-to-School funding in Vermont will allow more schools and childcare programs to participate in the**

Program and increase participation in, and sustainability of, child nutrition programs in schools. In 2018, Farm-to-School and Early Childhood grant applications came from all 14 counties, but available funding only met 32 percent of requests. The Farm-to-School Program also helps to support schools in transitioning to Universal School Meals. In schools with universal meals, nurses report improved academic performance and improved focus in class, declines in absenteeism, declines in school nurse visits as high as 72 percent, and at least 10 percent declines in behavioral referrals. We also know that each year, local food purchased by schools contributes \$1.4 million to Vermont's economy. We ask you, at the very least, to level fund the Farm-to-School Program at the fiscal year 2019 level of \$231,000.00, and if possible, add \$75,000.00 for fiscal year 2020. These small increases have a big impact on this Program, as small grants can help a school take big steps toward integrating Farm-to-School in the cafeteria and the classroom.

- The \$600,000.00 one-time funds allocated last year to work toward increasing access to afterschool and summer learning programs. We know that \$2.5 million per year is needed to ensure that all Vermont families have access to the programs they need for their children and youth. We encourage the Committee on Appropriations to continue to allocate funding for afterschool and summer learning programs, as funds are available.
- We do not support Sec. E.504.1, which proposes to fund dual enrollment one-hundred percent from the Education Fund. Currently, 50 percent of this funding comes from the Next Generation Initiative Fund, which was created for the purpose of promoting programs that encourage Vermonters to live and work in Vermont. We believe that dual enrollment furthers this goal and should continue to be funded as it is now.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.