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TO: Chair Baruth and Members of the Senate Education Committee
FROM: Meg Porcella, Education Programs Coordinator, Agency of Education
DATE: February 22, 2019
RE: Testimony on Restorative Approaches Funding

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. In response to the requirement of Act 11 of the 2018 (Special Session), Sec. E.500.6, the AOE established two opportunities to support Vermont schools in the implementation of whole-school Restorative Approaches (RA): The Restorative Approaches Grant Program and the Restorative Approaches Professional Learning Contract.

Both of the RA opportunities are designed to strengthen district and school-level efforts to adopt and implement a whole-school approach to using a Restorative philosophy and practices as a part of a school's system of behavior. At a minimum, the whole-school use of RA will identify the systemic features that are needed to decrease the need for exclusionary discipline and ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly and equitably. For foundational information and guidelines about Restorative Justice and Restorative Practices in Vermont, refer to the [Integrated Educational Frameworks](#) section of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports page of the AOE's website.

We anticipate the contract amount to encumber approximately 40% of the total amount allocated through this legislation. The remaining \$150,000 will fund the grants. It is our goal to ensure that these funds be used to support the maximum number of SU/SDs and schools as is feasible. It is also our goal to ensure that the funds be utilized to support sites that have provided evidence of an implementation plan that establishes the systemic features necessary to be as effective as possible adopting/implementing whole-school RA. Given that this is the first year for awarding these grants, AOE staff used "best guess" estimates regarding what the percentages and numbers might look like. The actual percentages allocated may differ once grant applications come in.

The Restorative Approaches Grant Program is a one-year, state-level grant that will begin on July 1, 2019 and run through June 30, 2020. This grant opportunity is available to all Vermont public and approved independent schools. Grant funds will be available to enter into a contract with a vendor and fund stipends for staff time and/or substitute coverage. The application for the grant was released to the field on January 3, 2019. The applications are due by May 13, 2019. The funding cycle for the grants will begin on July 1, 2019 and will run through June 30, 2020.

The Restorative Approaches Professional Learning Contract will provide sites the opportunity to participate in professional learning, including technical assistance (TA) in the form of consultation and/or coaching. The professional learning will give participants the opportunity to learn alongside others in the state from a provider selected through a standard bid Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP was posted to the [Department of Economic Development's Bid System](#) site on January 3, 2019. The deadline for questions was on February 15, 2019, and the responses to the questions have been posted to the bid system site. We received questions from a consortium of providers that includes Community Justice Centers, the University of Vermont's Center on Disability and Community Inclusion (CDCI) as well as entities such as UP for Learning, Green Omega L3C, and True Nature Teaching. Bids are due on May 6, 2019; the contract period and grant period will run concurrently.