

1 H.106

2 Introduced by Representatives James of Manchester, Anthony of Barre City,
3 Austin of Colchester, Bongartz of Manchester, Bos-Lun of
4 Westminster, Brady of Williston, Brown of Richmond,
5 Brumsted of Shelburne, Burke of Brattleboro, Chase of
6 Colchester, Christie of Hartford, Coffey of Guilford, Durfee of
7 Shaftsbury, Elder of Starksboro, Hooper of Burlington,
8 Houghton of Essex, Jerome of Brandon, Kornheiser of
9 Brattleboro, Mrowicki of Putney, Mulvaney-Stanak of
10 Burlington, Pajala of Londonderry, Sims of Craftsbury,
11 Stebbins of Burlington, Townsend of South Burlington, Troiano
12 of Stannard, Vyhovsky of Essex, Webb of Shelburne, White of
13 Bethel, and Yantachka of Charlotte

14 Referred to Committee on

15 Date:

16 Subject: Education; equitable access to a high-quality education; community
17 schools

18 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to facilitate and
19 provide funding for the implementation of community schools that provide all
20 students with equitable access to a high-quality education.

1 An act relating to equitable access to a high-quality education through
2 community schools

3 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

4 ~~Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE~~

5 ~~This act shall be called the “Community Schools Act.”~~

6 Sec. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

7 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

8 (1) Every child should be able to grow up and have the opportunity to
9 achieve his or her dreams and contribute to the well-being of society. Every
10 neighborhood deserves a public school that fully delivers on that promise.

11 (2) According to the most recent data, more than half of the nation’s
12 schoolchildren live in low-income households, meaning they qualify for free
13 or reduced-price lunch, the highest proportion since this statistic began being
14 documented over 60 years ago. According to the Vermont Agency of
15 Education, an average of 38 percent of students across all supervisory unions
16 during the 2019–2020 school year qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.
17 As a result, some schoolchildren face more challenges than others in
18 succeeding in school and in life.

19 (3) Community schools facilitate the provision of comprehensive
20 programs and services that are carefully selected to meet the unique needs of
21 students and families, such as substance misuse, lack of stable housing,

1 ~~inadequate medical and dental care, hunger, trauma, and exposure to violence,~~
2 so students can do their best.

3 (4) According to a report from the Learning Policy Institute, the four
4 key pillars of the community schools approach, which are integrated student
5 supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, active family
6 and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices,
7 promote conditions and practices found in high-quality schools as well as
8 address out-of-school barriers to learning.

9 (5) Research shows that community school interventions can result in
10 improvements in a variety of student outcomes, including attendance,
11 academic achievement (including reducing racial and economic achievement
12 gaps), and high school graduation rates, and can meet the Every Student
13 Succeeds Act standard of “evidence-based” approaches to support schools
14 identified for comprehensive and targeted support and intervention.

15 (6) Research also shows that these programs offer a strong return on
16 investment. According to impact studies, each dollar invested in a community
17 coordinator position returns approximately \$7.00 in net benefits to the school,
18 while every dollar invested in programs and support (including medical, dental
19 and social services, afterschool and summer enrichment, parent engagement,
20 and early childhood services) can yield up to \$14.80 in return.

1 ~~(7) According to the Learning Policy Institute, “establishing community~~
2 schools” is one of 10 recommended strategies for restarting and rethinking the
3 role of public education in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Community
4 schools serve as resource hubs that provide a broad range of easily accessed,
5 well-coordinated supports and services that help students and families with
6 increasingly complex needs.

7 (b) Purpose. This law is enacted to support the successful implementation
8 of effective community schools that provide all students with equitable access
9 to a high-quality education.

10 Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 4032 is added to read:

11 § 4032. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

12 (a) Definitions. As used in this section:

13 (1) “Community school” means a public elementary or secondary
14 school that includes all four of the following:

15 (A) Integrated student supports, which address out-of-school barriers
16 to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies and
17 providers, coordinated by a community school director, which may include
18 access to services such as medical, dental, vision care, and mental health
19 services, or access to counselors to assist with housing, transportation,
20 nutrition, immigration, or criminal justice issues.

1 (B) Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities,
2 including before-school, afterschool, weekend, and summer programs, that
3 provide additional academic instruction, individualized academic support,
4 enrichment activities, and learning opportunities that emphasize real-world
5 learning and community problem-solving and that may include art, music,
6 drama, creative writing, hands-on experience with engineering or science,
7 tutoring and homework help, and recreational programs that enhance and are
8 consistent with the school's curriculum.

9 (C) Active family and community engagement, which brings
10 students' families and the community into the school as partners in children's
11 education and makes the school a neighborhood hub, providing adults with a
12 facility to access educational opportunities they want, including coordinating
13 services with outside providers to offer English as a second language classes,
14 green card or citizenship preparation, computer skills, art, financial literacy,
15 career counseling, job skills training, services for substance misuse, and other
16 programs that bring community members into the building for meetings or
17 events.

18 (D) Collaborative leadership and practices, which build a culture of
19 professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility using
20 strategies that shall, at a minimum, include a school-based leadership team, a
21 community school director, and a community-wide leadership team and may

1 ~~include other leadership or governance teams, teacher learning communities,~~
2 and other staff to manage the multiple, complex, joint work of school and
3 community organizations.

4 (2) “Community school director” means a person who:

5 (A) is a full-time or part-time staff member serving in an eligible
6 school or in a school district or supervisory union with an eligible school;

7 (B) is responsible for the identification, implementation, and
8 coordination of integrated student supports; expanded and enriched learning
9 time and opportunities; family and community engagement; and collaborative
10 leadership and practices;

11 (C) serves as a member of the school-based leadership team;

12 (D) serves as the lead for the needs and assets assessment and
13 community school plan described in subsection (e) of this section; and

14 (E) leads the needs and assets assessment and stakeholder-driven
15 approach to problem solving and continuous improvement.

16 (3) “Community school initiative director” means a person who:

17 (A) aids implementation and coordination of integrated student
18 supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, family and
19 community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practice where more
20 than three eligible schools operate community school programs in Vermont,

21 and

1 ~~(B) provides support and guidance to community school directors.~~

2 (4) “Community-wide leadership team” means a team at a supervisory
3 union that is responsible for guiding the vision, policy, resource alignment,
4 implementation, oversight, and goal setting for community school programs
5 within the member districts of the supervisory union. This team shall include
6 representatives from the supervisory union; teachers, school leaders, students,
7 and family members from the eligible schools; community members; system-
8 level partners that include representatives from government agencies; relevant
9 unions; nonprofit and other community-based partners; and, if applicable, the
10 community school initiative director.

11 (5) “Eligible applicant” means an eligible school or a school district or
12 supervisory union with an eligible school.

13 (6) “Eligible school” means a public elementary or secondary school
14 that:

15 (A) has a student body where at least 40 percent of students are
16 eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National
17 School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.; or

18 (B) has been identified for comprehensive or targeted support and
19 intervention under Section 1111(c)(4)(D) of the Elementary and Secondary
20 Education Act of 1965 or otherwise identified by the State as in need of
21 additional support.

1 (7) "School based leadership team" means a school level team that is
2 responsible for assessing that school's needs, developing its goals, selecting
3 programming and services, and implementing the community school program.
4 The team shall be composed of school and community representatives with not
5 less than one-third parents or local residents and not less than one-third
6 teachers and other school staff, as well as the principal, representatives of
7 nonprofit organizations that serve the school, and, for secondary schools,
8 students at the school. The leader shall be selected by the membership of the
9 team.

10 (8) "Teacher learning communities" means a group of primarily
11 instructional staff in an eligible school who are given common planning time
12 to participate in ongoing decision making and planning that examine their
13 practice and student performance to improve school policy and classroom
14 teaching.

15 (b) Information and technical assistance. The Agency of Education shall
16 provide the following forms of technical assistance to supervisory unions:

17 (1) distribute materials that describe the elements and advantages of
18 community schools, including references to governmental and nonprofit
19 reports;

20 (2) assist any school district in forming a task force to study the creation
21 and administration of community schools,

1 ~~(2) inform supervisory unions of the availability of grants authorized by~~
2 ~~this law and provide technical assistance to eligible applicants in applying for~~
3 ~~such grants;~~

4 ~~(4) inform school districts of other sources of funding for community~~
5 ~~schools, including the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, and assist school~~
6 ~~district efforts to secure such funding; and~~

7 ~~(5) facilitate effective coordination among State agencies in the~~
8 ~~deployment of resources and services such as health, nutrition, and other~~
9 ~~supports.~~

10 ~~(c) Grant authorization. The Agency of Education is authorized to provide~~
11 ~~planning, implementation, and renewal grants to eligible applicants as follows:~~

12 ~~(1) a one-year planning grant of up to \$20,000.00 for each eligible~~
13 ~~school;~~

14 ~~(2) annual implementation grants of \$110,000.00 a year for a period of~~
15 ~~three years for each eligible school; and~~

16 ~~(3) at the conclusion of the initial three-year grant period, applicants~~
17 ~~with demonstrated success, as determined by the Agency of Education's~~
18 ~~evaluation under subsection (g) of this section, may apply for a renewal grant~~
19 ~~of \$110,000.00 annually for each eligible school for up to three years.~~

20 ~~(d) Planning grants applications and activities.~~

1 ~~(1) Eligible applicants shall submit an application to the Agency of~~
2 Education and shall include a description of the following:

3 (A) the initial community-wide leadership team and the school-based
4 leadership team or teams or the process that will be put in place to establish the
5 teams;

6 (B) the process and timeline for conducting a needs and assets
7 assessment and community school plan for each eligible school as required by
8 subsection (e) of this section; and

9 (C) if applicable, plans for hiring additional staff, providing
10 additional compensation to existing staff, or the contracting of a nonprofit
11 entity or entities that will help the eligible applicant apply for an
12 implementation grant or grants.

13 (2) Eligible applicants shall make an assurance that the applicant intends
14 to apply for an implementation grant within six months of receipt of a
15 planning grant.

16 (3) Planning grant funds shall be used for the following activities:

17 (A) the establishment of, or continued support of, a community-wide
18 leadership team and school-based leadership team or teams; and

19 (B) conducting a needs and assets assessment and crafting a
20 community school plan for each eligible school as required under subsection
21 (e) of this section.

1 ~~(d) Planning grant funds may be used for hiring additional staff,~~
2 ~~providing additional compensation to existing staff, or contracting with a~~
3 ~~nonprofit entity or entities to aid in the activities necessary to apply for an~~
4 ~~implementation grant.~~

5 (e) Application for implementation and renewal grants and community
6 school plan. Eligible applicants shall submit an application for an
7 implementation or renewal grant to the Agency of Education and for each
8 eligible school shall include:

9 (1) A needs and assets assessment that includes:

10 (A) where available, and where applicable, student demographic,
11 academic achievement, and school climate data, disaggregated by major
12 demographic groups, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, English
13 language proficiency, students with individualized education plans, and
14 students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch status;

15 (B) access to and need for integrated student supports under
16 subdivisions (a)(1)(A) and (f)(1)(C) of this section;

17 (C) access to and need for expanded and enriched learning time and
18 opportunities under subdivisions (a)(1)(B) and (f)(1)(D) of this section;

19 (D) school funding information, including federal, State, local, and
20 private education funding and per-pupil spending, based on actual salaries of
21 personnel assigned to the eligible school,

1 ~~(E) information on the number, qualifications, and stability of school~~
2 ~~staff, including the number and percentage of fully certified teachers and rates~~
3 ~~of teacher turnover; and~~

4 ~~(F) active family and community engagement information, including:~~

5 ~~(i) family and community needs based on surveys, information~~
6 ~~from public meetings, or information gathered by other means;~~

7 ~~(ii) measure of family and community engagement in the eligible~~
8 ~~schools, including volunteering in schools, attendance at back-to-school nights,~~
9 ~~and parent-teacher conferences;~~

10 ~~(iii) efforts to provide culturally and linguistically relevant~~
11 ~~communication between schools and families; and~~

12 ~~(iv) access to and need for family and community engagement~~
13 ~~activities under subdivisions (a)(1)(C) and (f)(1)(F) of this section.~~

14 ~~(2) Collaborative leadership and practices, including a description of the~~
15 ~~community-wide leadership team, school-based leadership teams, teacher~~
16 ~~learning communities, and common planning time for educators.~~

17 ~~(3) Opportunities for partnerships with nonprofit organizations; faith-~~
18 ~~and community-based institutions; institutions of higher education, including~~
19 ~~teacher preparation institutions; hospitals; museums; businesses; and other~~
20 ~~community entities that can partner with the eligible school.~~

1 ~~(4) Community climate indicators, including housing instability,~~
2 ~~unemployment, poverty, jobs that offer a living wage, health indicators, youth~~
3 ~~employment, access to parks, environmental hazards, crime, and gang activity.~~

4 (5) A community school plan, which shall include a description of the
5 following:

6 (A) how the community school director and, as applicable,
7 community school initiative director will be expected to fulfill their
8 responsibilities under subdivisions (a)(2) and (a)(3) of this section;

9 (B) the collaborative leadership and practices structures and
10 strategies;

11 (C) the integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning
12 time and opportunities, and active family and community engagement
13 activities that will be tailored to the needs and assets assessment under
14 subdivision (1) of this subsection (e) and provided in accordance with the
15 activities under subdivision (f)(1) of this section;

16 (D) how the eligible school will provide culturally and linguistically
17 relevant communication between schools and families;

18 (E) how the eligible school will establish and maintain partnerships
19 with nonprofit organizations, faith- and community-based institutions,
20 institutions of higher education, including teacher preparation institutions,

1 ~~hospitals, museums, businesses, and other community entities that will help~~

2 implement and sustain the community school plan;

3 (F) how activities chosen will reinforce, and not be duplicative of,
4 existing programs and activities at the eligible school; and

5 (G) if applicable, a description of the federal, State, local, and private
6 funds that will be accessed.

7 (f) Activities for implementation and renewal grants.

8 (1) Programming, services, and activities in this subsection shall be
9 tailored to school and community needs as identified in the needs and assets
10 assessment and community school plan under subsection (e) of this section.

11 As a condition of receipt of funds, eligible applicants shall, for each eligible
12 school:

13 (A) provide a community school director and, as applicable, a
14 district-level community school initiative director to coordinate services across
15 eligible schools;

16 (B) establish or maintain a school-based leadership team and teacher
17 learning communities and, for the supervisory union, a community-wide
18 leadership team;

19 (C) implement at least two of the following integrated student
20 supports.

1 ~~(i) access to health services that may be based in the eligible~~
2 school or provided in the community, including primary health; dental care;
3 and mental health, including trauma-informed care;

4 ~~(ii) access to nutrition services, including access to additional~~
5 meals or assistance in accessing food assistance programs;

6 ~~(iii) access to programs that provide assistance to students who~~
7 have been chronically absent, suspended, or expelled:

8 (I) mentoring and other youth development programs;

9 (II) programs that support positive school climates;

10 (III) juvenile crime prevention and rehabilitation programs;

11 (IV) specialized instructional support services;

12 (V) homeless prevention services;

13 (VI) developmentally appropriate physical education;

14 (VII) legal services, including immigration-related legal
15 services;

16 (VIII) dropout prevention programs; and

17 (IX) transportation services necessary for students to access
18 integrated student support services, expanded and enriched learning time and
19 opportunities, family and community engagement activities, or other services
20 and activities identified to support the development of students,

1 (D) implement expanded and enriched learning time and
2 opportunities, which may include additional academic instruction; before-
3 school, afterschool, and summer learning programs; mentorship programs; job
4 training; internships; apprenticeships; and service-learning opportunities, and
5 provide time for the community school director, school staff, the school-based
6 leadership team, and others to plan, coordinate, and integrate these
7 opportunities; and

8 (E) implement at least two active family and community engagement
9 strategies, which may include:

- 10 (i) on-site early childhood care and education programs;
11 (ii) home visitation services by teachers and other professionals;
12 (iii) access to adult education, including instruction in English as a
13 second language, GED, financial literacy, or credit recovery programs;
14 (iv) access to job search and preparation services and career
15 advancement activities;
16 (v) access to legal services, such as help with green card or
17 citizenship preparation;
18 (vi) access to programs that aid family and community well-being,
19 including accessing homeless prevention services,

1 ~~(vii) programs that promote parental involvement and family~~
2 literacy, provide volunteer opportunities, promote inclusion in school-based
3 leadership teams, and empower and strengthen families and communities;

4 ~~(viii) provide other programming or services designed to meet~~
5 school and community needs identified in the needs and assets assessment,
6 which may also satisfy requirements under subdivisions (1)(C), (1)(D), and
7 (1)(E) of this subsection (f); and

8 ~~(ix) publicly disclose the results of an annual self-assessment~~
9 based on information under subsection (e) of this section.

10 (2) Required activities shall not be duplicative of existing programs and
11 activities.

12 (g) Evaluation.

13 (1) At the end of the initial three-year grant period of an implementation
14 award and every third year in which a renewal grant ends, each eligible school
15 shall undergo an evaluation designed by the Agency of Education. The
16 evaluation shall include, at a minimum, information under subdivisions (e)(1)
17 and (e)(2) and subdivision (f)(1) of this section, including the impact on
18 academic achievement and opportunities, school climate, integrated student
19 supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, active family
20 and community engagement strategies, the collaborative leadership and
21 practices in place, and changes in school spending.

1 ~~(2) On or before December 15, 2023, the Agency of Education shall~~
2 report to the General Assembly and the Governor on the impact of the
3 Community Schools Act and its grant program. The report shall be made
4 publicly available on the Agency of Education's website. The Agency of
5 Education shall provide data gathered, in the aggregate and disaggregate,
6 under subdivision (1)(1) of this section for each eligible school and present the
7 data in such a manner that allows it to be easily searchable. As applicable, the
8 Agency of Education shall make recommendations to the General Assembly,
9 the Governor, and the public concerning possible revisions to the State's
10 funding formula, particularly for the highest-poverty supervisory unions in the
11 State.

12 Sec. 4. APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS

13 (a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, \$1,529,000.00 is
14 appropriated from the Education Fund to the Agency of Education for fiscal
15 year 2022 designated for community schools under 16 V.S.A. § 4032.

16 (b) The Agency of Education may set aside:

17 (1) not more than 10 percent of funds for informational and technical
18 assistance for eligible applicants and eligible schools under 16 V.S.A. §

19 § 4032(b); and

20 (2) not more than five percent of funds for the evaluations required
21 under 16 V.S.A. § 4032(g).

1
2

~~Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE~~

~~This act shall take effect on passage.~~

Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE

This act shall be called the “Community Schools Act.”

Sec. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Every child should be able to grow up and have the opportunity to achieve their dreams and contribute to the well-being of society. Every child deserves a public school that fully delivers on that promise.

(2) According to the National Center for Education Statistics, more than half of the nation’s schoolchildren live in low-income households, meaning they qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, a percentage that has risen steadily in recent decades. According to the Vermont Agency of Education, an average of 38 percent of students across all supervisory unions during the 2019–2020 school year qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. As a result, some schoolchildren face more challenges than others in succeeding in school and in life.

(3) Community schools facilitate the coordination of comprehensive programs and services that are carefully selected to meet the unique needs of students and families, such as substance misuse, lack of stable housing,

~~inadequate medical and dental care, hunger, trauma, and exposure to violence, so students can do their best.~~

~~(4) According to research reports from the Learning Policy Institute, the four key pillars of the community schools approach, which are integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, active family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices, promote conditions and practices found in high-quality schools as well as address out-of-school barriers to learning.~~

~~(5) This research also shows that community school interventions can result in improvements in a variety of student outcomes, including attendance, academic achievement (including reducing racial and economic achievement gaps), and high school graduation rates, and can meet the Every Student Succeeds Act standard of “evidence-based” approaches to support schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support and intervention.~~

~~(6) Research also shows that these programs offer a strong return on investment. According to impact studies, each dollar invested in a community coordinator position returns approximately \$7.00 in net benefits to the school (Return on Investment of a Community School Coordinator: A Case Study; APEX and Community School Partnership; 2019). Every dollar invested in programs and support (including medical, dental, and social services; afterschool and summer enrichment, parent engagement, and early childhood~~

~~services) can yield up to \$15.00 in return. (Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence; Anna Maier, Julia Daniel, Jeannie Oakes, and Livia Lam; 2017).~~

~~(7) According to the Learning Policy Institute, “establishing community schools” is one of 10 recommended strategies for restarting and rethinking the role of public education in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Community schools serve as resource hubs that provide a broad range of easily accessed, well-coordinated supports and services that help students and families with increasingly complex needs.~~

~~(8) Community schools have been established in many states and settings, from New York City to Chicago and Los Angeles. But the approach has also been successful in rural communities. In McDowell County, West Virginia (population 22,000), community schools are part of a public-private partnership, a collaboration between state government, nonprofit agencies, businesses, and philanthropic foundations, that aims to “make educational improvement the route to a brighter economic future.” The national nonprofit Rural School and Community Trust is an active advocate for expanding this model in rural areas, calling the relationship between good schools and thriving communities “crucial.” In Vermont, a growing number of schools are implementing or exploring the model, from Molly Stark Elementary in Bennington, which offers school-based health services, extended hours,~~

~~summer school, and family learning activities, to the school-based health center in Winooski.~~

~~(b) Purpose. This law is enacted to support a demonstration grant program for the implementation of community school programs that provide students with equitable access to a high-quality education.~~

~~Sec. 3. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS; DEMONSTRATION GRANT~~

~~PROGRAM~~

~~(a) Definitions. As used in this section:~~

~~(1) "Community school coordinator" means a person who:~~

~~(A) is a full-time or part-time staff member serving in an eligible school or in a school district or supervisory union with an eligible school and appointed in accordance with Vermont law, and~~

~~(B) is responsible for the identification, implementation, and coordination of a community school program, subject to the operational and reporting structure of the community school coordinator's employer.~~

~~(2) "Community school program" means a program offered at a public elementary or secondary school that includes all four of the following:~~

~~(A) integrated student supports, which address out-of-school barriers to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies and providers, coordinated by a community school coordinator, which may include access to services such as medical, dental, vision care, and mental health~~

~~services, or access to counselors to assist with housing, transportation, nutrition, immigration, or criminal justice issues;~~

~~(B) expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, which may include before-school, afterschool, weekend, and summer programs, that provide additional academic instruction, individualized academic support, enrichment activities, and learning opportunities that emphasize real-world learning and community problem-solving and that may include art, music, drama, creative writing, hands-on experience with engineering or science, tutoring and homework help, and recreational programs that enhance and are consistent with the school's curriculum;~~

~~(C) active family and community engagement, which brings students' families and the community into the school as partners in children's education and makes the school a community hub, providing adults with a facility to access educational opportunities they want, which may include coordinating services with outside providers to offer English as a second language classes, green card or citizenship preparation, computer skills, and financial literacy, career counseling, job skills training, services for substance misuse, and other programs that bring community members into the building for meetings or events; and~~

~~(D) collaborative leadership and practices, which build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility using~~

~~strategies that shall, at a minimum, leverage the multitiered system of supports and include a community school coordinator and a representative of families in the community, and may include school, school district, and other leadership or governance teams; teacher learning communities; and other staff to manage the multiple, complex, joint work of school and community organizations.~~

~~(3) “Demonstration grant” means a grant provided to an eligible applicant under this section.~~

~~(4) “Eligible applicant” means either a school district with an eligible school or supervisory union with an eligible school.~~

~~(5) “Eligible school” means a public elementary or secondary school that:~~

~~(A) has a student body where at least 40 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1751 et seq.; or~~

~~(B) has been identified for comprehensive or equity support and intervention under Section 1111(c)(4)(D) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or otherwise identified by the State as in need of additional support.~~

~~(b) Demonstration grant authorization. The Secretary of Education is authorized to provide annual demonstration grants of up to \$110,000.00 a year for a period of three years for each eligible applicant to:~~

~~(1) hire a community school coordinator to develop and implement a community school program; or~~

~~(2) designate a community school coordinator from existing personnel and augment work already being performed to develop and implement a community school program.~~

~~(c) Grant administration.~~

~~(1) The Secretary of Education shall administer the demonstration grant program under this section. The Secretary shall develop the demonstration grant application, determine grant amounts, and provide grant funding on or before September 1 of each of 2021, 2022, and 2023 to successful applicants. The Secretary may deny or reduce second- and third-year grant funding if the Secretary finds that the applicant has made insufficient progress towards developing and implementing a community school program.~~

~~(2) The Agency of Education shall inform supervisory unions of the availability of demonstration grants under this act and provide technical assistance to eligible applicants in applying for these funds. The Agency of Education shall also advise eligible applicants of other sources of funding that may be available to advance the purpose of this act.~~

~~(d) Use of grant funding.~~

~~(1) An eligible applicant shall use the demonstration grant funding to hire a community school coordinator to develop and implement a community school program or to designate a community school coordinator from existing personnel and augment work already being performed to develop and implement a community school program.~~

~~(2) If the funding is used to hire a community school coordinator, then during the first year of demonstration grant funding, the community school coordinator shall conduct a needs and assets assessment of the school to determine what is necessary to develop a community school program and an action plan to implement the community school program. During the second and third years of demonstration grant funding, the community school coordinator shall oversee the implementation of the community school program.~~

~~(e) Evaluation.~~

~~(1) At the end of each year of grant funding, each eligible applicant that received grant funding shall undergo an evaluation designed by the Agency of Education.~~

~~(2) On or before each of December 15, 2022 and 2024, the Agency of Education shall report to the General Assembly and the Governor on the~~

~~impact of the demonstration grant program. The report shall be made publicly available on the Agency of Education's website.~~

~~Sec. 4. APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS~~

~~(a) The Secretary of Education shall use \$1,529,000.00 of the amount allocated to the Agency of Education from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund pursuant to Section 313 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-260 for the demonstration grants to be funded on or before September 1 of each of 2021, 2022, and 2023 under Sec. 3 of this act.~~

~~(b) The Agency of Education may set aside~~

~~(1) not more than one percent of funds for informational assistance and technical assistance, such as assistance with applying for grant funding and use of grant funding, for eligible applicants under Sec. 3 of this act; and~~

~~(2) not more than two percent of funds for the evaluations required under Sec. 3 of this act.~~

~~Sec. 4. APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS~~

~~(a) The Secretary of Education shall use \$3,399,000.00 of the amount allocated to the Agency of Education from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 pursuant to Section 2001(f)(1), 2021, Pub. L. No. 117-2 for the demonstration grants to be funded on or before September 1 of each of 2021, 2022, and 2023 under Sec. 3 of this act.~~

~~(b) The Agency of Education may set aside:~~

~~(1) not more than one percent of the funds appropriated under subsection (a) of this section for each of fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024 for informational and technical assistance, such as assistance with applying for grant funding and use of grant funding, for eligible applicants as defined under Sec. 3 of this act; and~~

~~(2) not more than two percent of the funds appropriated under subsection (a) of this section for each of fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024 for the evaluations required under Sec. 3 of this act.~~

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

~~This act shall take effect on passage.~~

** * * Short Title * * **

Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE

~~This act shall be called the “Community Schools Act.”~~

** * * Findings and Purpose * * **

Sec. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

~~(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that:~~

~~(1) Every child should be provided with an equitable education, as defined by the Agency of Education as access to the resources, opportunities, and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, whatever their race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion,~~

language, disability, family background, or family income may be. Every child should be able to grow up with the opportunity to achieve their dreams and contribute to the well-being of society. Our public schools must be designed and equipped to fully deliver on that promise.

(2) According to the National Center for Education Statistics, more than half of the nation's schoolchildren live in low-income households, meaning they qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, a percentage that has risen steadily in recent decades. According to the Vermont Agency of Education, an average of 38 percent of students across all supervisory unions during the 2019–2020 school year qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. As a result, some schoolchildren face more challenges than others in succeeding in school and in life. Recognizing that students need fresh and nutritional foods to enable them to focus on their education and that many students come to school hungry, providing universal school meals offered at no cost to students or their families advances the goals that community school programs seek to achieve.

(3) Community schools facilitate the coordination of comprehensive programs and services that are carefully selected to meet the unique needs of students and families and build on the assets they bring to their schools and communities. Community schools combine challenging and culturally inclusive learning opportunities with the academic and social supports every student needs to reach their potential.

(4) According to research reports from the Learning Policy Institute, the four key pillars of the community schools approach, which are integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, active family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices, promote conditions and practices found in high-quality schools as well as address out-of-school barriers to learning. Research additionally supports the necessity of safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments to reinforce student success and well-being. These elements do not function independently, but are instead part of a unified and interconnected approach.

(5) This research also shows that community school interventions can result in improvements in a variety of student and family outcomes, including attendance, academic achievement, reducing systemic racial and economic injustices and inequities, and high school graduation rates, and can meet the Every Student Succeeds Act standard of “evidence-based” approaches to support schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support and intervention.

(6) Research also shows that these programs offer a strong return on investment. According to impact studies, each dollar invested in a community coordinator position returns approximately \$7.00 in net benefits to the school (Return on Investment of a Community School Coordinator: A Case Study; APEX and Community School Partnership; 2019). Every dollar invested in

programs and support (including medical, dental, and social services; afterschool and summer enrichment; parent engagement; and early childhood services) can yield up to \$15.00 in return (Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence; Anna Maier, Julia Daniel, Jeannie Oakes, and Livia Lam; 2017).

(7) According to the Learning Policy Institute, “establishing community schools” is one of 10 recommended strategies for restarting and rethinking the role of public education in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Community schools serve as resource hubs that provide a broad range of easily accessed, well-coordinated supports and services that help students and families with increasingly complex needs. These schools, at their core, are about investing in children, through quality teaching; challenging, engaging, and culturally responsive curricula; wrap around supports; safe, just, and equitable school climate; strong ties to family and community; and a clear focus on student achievement and well-being.

(8) Community schools are important centers for building community connection and resilience. When learning extends beyond the walls of the school through active engagement with community partners as with place-based learning, relationships expand and deepen, community strengths are highlighted, and opportunities for building vitality surface through shared learning.

(9) Community schools have been established in many states and settings, from New York City to Chicago and Los Angeles. But the approach has also been successful in rural communities. In McDowell County, West Virginia (population 22,000), community schools are part of a public-private partnership, a collaboration between state government, nonprofit agencies, businesses, and philanthropic foundations, that aims to “make educational improvement the route to a brighter economic future.” The national nonprofit Rural School and Community Trust is an active advocate for expanding this model in rural areas, calling the relationship between good schools and thriving communities “crucial.” In Vermont, a growing number of schools are implementing or exploring the model, from Molly Stark Elementary in Bennington, which offers school-based health services, extended hours, summer school, and family learning activities, to the school-based health center in Winooski.

(10) Recognizing that literacy proficiency is a foundational learning skill, community schools can advance the State goal of improving literacy for all students in the State. Achieving this goal will require a multiyear and multidimensional effort requiring continued focus by the General Assembly, the Administration, and school leaders, and community schools are an important component of that effort.

(b) Purpose. This act provides funding for the implementation of

community school programs that provide students with equitable access to a high-quality education and creates the Task Force on Universal School Lunch.

** * * Community School Programs * * **

Sec. 3. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS; FUNDING

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “Community school coordinator” means a person who:

(A) is a full-time or part-time staff member serving in an eligible school or in a school district or supervisory union with an eligible school and appointed in accordance with Vermont law; and

(B) is responsible for the identification, implementation, and coordination of community school programs, subject to the operational and reporting structure of the community school coordinator’s employer.

(2) “Community school programs” mean programs offered at a public elementary or secondary school that include all five of the following:

(A) Integrated student supports, which address out-of-school barriers to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies and providers, coordinated by a community school coordinator, which may include access to services such as medical, dental, vision care, and mental health services or access to counselors to assist with housing, transportation, nutrition, immigration, or criminal justice issues, and include what young people bring with them to the classroom and the ways that schools and

communities working together can enhance and embrace the knowledge and capacity that students and families can offer their schools. This could include educational strategies like universal design for learning, recognition and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, and practices that focus on building and supporting relationships such as restorative practices.

(B) Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, which may include before-school, afterschool, weekend, summer programs, and during the school day, that provide additional academic instruction, individualized academic support, enrichment activities, and learning opportunities that emphasize real-world learning and community problem-solving and that may include art, music, drama, creative writing, hands-on experience with engineering or science, tutoring and homework help, and recreational programs that enhance and are consistent with the school's curriculum.

(C) Active family and community engagement, which brings students' families and the community into the school as partners in children's education and makes the school a community hub, where all students and their families feel a sense of belonging and engagement. This shall include broad student and community participation, with a diversity of income, race, gender, newcomer status, language, and ability represented in the design, implementation, and evaluation of all activities, that is embraced by the

leaders and decision-makers in schools and communities. This also provides adults with a facility to access educational opportunities they want, which shall include access to evidence-based literacy instruction and may include coordinating services with outside providers to offer English as a second language classes, green card or citizenship preparation, computer skills, art, financial literacy, career counseling, job skills training, services for substance misuse, and other programs that bring community members into the building for meetings or events.

(D) Collaborative leadership and practices, which build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility using strategies that shall, at a minimum, leverage the multitiered system of supports and include a community school coordinator and an integrated school and community leadership team that include youth and family representatives, and may include other leadership or governance teams; teacher learning communities; and other staff to manage the multiple, complex, joint work of school and community organizations.

(E) Safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments.

(3) "Eligible recipient" means:

(A) a school district with one or more eligible schools;

(B) a supervisory union with one or more eligible schools;

(C) two or more school districts, each with one or more eligible

schools that seek to work collaboratively to provide community school programs; or

(D) two or more supervisory unions, each with one or more eligible schools that seek to work collaboratively to provide community school programs.

(4) “Eligible school” means a public elementary or secondary school that:

(A) has a student body where at least 40 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1751 et seq.; or

(B) has been identified for comprehensive or equity support and intervention under Section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Pub. L. 89-10, as amended, or otherwise identified by the State as in need of additional support.

(5) “Site-based leadership team” means an interdisciplinary, school-based leadership team that may include the school principal, the community school coordinator, teachers, other school employees, students, families, community partners, nonprofit organizations, unions, and neighboring community residents that supports collaborative planning, implementation, and oversight of community school programs by the eligible recipient.

(b) Funding authorization. The Secretary of Education is authorized to

provide annual funding for a period of three years to an eligible recipient to use as required under subsection (d) of this section.

(c) Funding administration.

(1) Subject to subdivision (2) of this subsection, the Secretary of Education shall determine, using the Agency of Education's equity lens tool, which eligible recipients shall receive funding and the amount of funding, and the Secretary shall provide the funding on or before September 1 of each of 2021, 2022, and 2023 to recipients. The Secretary may deny or reduce second- and third-year funding if the Secretary finds that the recipient has made insufficient progress towards developing and implementing community school programs. In determining which eligible recipients shall receive funding, the Secretary shall take into account relative need, based on the extent to which community school program services are needed and the extent to which the eligible recipient seeks to offer them.

(2) In determining which eligible recipients shall receive funding and the amount of funding and to advance the principles for Vermont's trauma-informed system of care under 33 V.S.A. § 3401, the Secretary of Education shall collaborate with the Director of Trauma Prevention and Resilience Development and the Vermont Child and Family Trauma Work Group.

(3) The Agency of Education shall inform all eligible recipients of the availability of funding under this act and, for those eligible recipients most in

need of this funding, shall educate these eligible recipients on community school programs and their benefits. The Agency of Education shall also advise all eligible recipients of other sources of funding that may be available to advance the purpose of this act.

(d) Use of funding.

(1) A recipient of funding under this act shall use the funding to:

(A) if a needs and assets assessment has not been conducted within the prior three years that substantially conforms with the requirements in this subdivision, then, in collaboration with the site-based leadership team, conduct a needs and assets assessment that includes:

(i) where available, and where applicable, student demographic, academic achievement, and school climate data, disaggregated by major demographic groups, including race, ethnicity, English language proficiency, students with individualized education plans, and students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch status;

(ii) access to and need for integrated student supports;

(iii) access to and need for expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities;

(iv) school funding information, including federal, State, local, and private education funding and per-pupil spending, based on actual salaries of personnel assigned to the eligible school;

(v) information on the number, qualifications, and stability of school staff, including the number and percentage of fully certified teachers and rates of teacher turnover; and

(vi) active family and community engagement information, including:

(I) family and community needs based on surveys, information from public meetings, or information gathered by other means;

(II) measures of family and community engagement in the eligible schools, including volunteering in schools, attendance at back-to-school nights, and parent-teacher conferences;

(III) efforts to provide culturally and linguistically relevant communication between schools and families; and

(IV) access to and need for family and community engagement activities;

(B) hire a community school coordinator to, in collaboration with the site-based leadership team, develop and implement community school programs or designate a community school coordinator from existing personnel and, in collaboration with the site-based leadership team, augment work already being performed to develop and implement community school programs; and

(C) if the recipient has not fully implemented positive behavioral

integrated supports under 16 V.S.A. § 2902, provide professional development to staff on positive behavioral integrated supports and implement those supports.

(2) A recipient of funding under this act may use the funding to, in collaboration with the site-based leadership team, develop and implement a plan to improve literacy outcomes and objectively assess those outcomes.

(3) If a needs and assets assessment has not been conducted under subdivision (1)(A) of this subsection within the prior three years, the first year of funding shall be used to conduct the needs and assets assessment of the school to determine what is necessary to develop community school programs and an action plan to implement community school programs. During the second and third years of the funding, the community school coordinator shall, in collaboration with the site-based leadership team, oversee the implementation of community school programs.

(e) Evaluation.

(1) At the end of each year of funding, each recipient shall undergo an evaluation designed by the Agency of Education using its equity lens tool.

(2) On or before each of December 15, 2022 and 2024, the Agency of Education shall report to the General Assembly and the Governor on the impact of the funding under this act. The report shall be made publicly available on the Agency of Education's website.

(f) Ability to operate as a community school. Any school district or school, regardless of whether it receives funding under this act, may function as a community school as defined in this section.

Sec. 4. APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS

(a) The Secretary of Education shall use \$3,399,000.00 of the amount allocated to the Agency of Education from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 pursuant to Section 2001(f)(1), 2021, Pub. L. No. 117-2 for the funding under this act on or before September 1 of each of 2021, 2022, and 2023 under Sec. 3 of this act.

(b) The Agency of Education may set aside:

(1) not more than one percent of the funds appropriated under subsection (a) of this section for each of fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024 for informational and technical assistance, such as the availability and use of funding for eligible recipients as defined under Sec. 3 of this act; and

(2) not more than two percent of the funds appropriated under subsection (a) of this section for each of fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024 for the evaluations required under Sec. 3 of this act.

** * * Locally Produced Foods * * **

Sec. 5. 16 V.S.A. § 1262a is amended to read:

§ 1262a. AWARD OF GRANTS

** * **

~~(d) The Agency shall, from funds appropriated for this subsection to the Agency, award grants to supervisory unions and supervisory districts in accordance with section 1264a of this title (locally produced foods). If the amount appropriated for this purpose is insufficient to fully fund the grants under that section, then the grant amounts that are awarded shall be prorated.~~

* * *

Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. § 1264 is amended to read:

§ 1264. FOOD PROGRAM

* * *

~~(d) It is a goal of the State that by the year 2022 school boards operating a school lunch, breakfast, or summer meals program shall purchase at least 20 percent of all food for those programs from local producers. [Repealed.]~~

~~(e)(1) On or before December 31, 2020 and annually thereafter, a school board operating a school lunch, breakfast, or summer meals program shall submit to the Agency of Education an estimate of the percentage of locally produced foods that were purchased by the school board for those programs.~~

~~(2) On or before January 31, 2021 and annually thereafter, the Agency of Education shall submit to the Senate Committees on Agriculture and on Education and the House Committees on Agriculture and Forestry and on Education in an aggregated form the information received from school boards regarding the percentage of locally produced foods that are purchased as part~~

~~of a school lunch, breakfast, or summer meals program. The provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20(d) regarding expiration of required reports shall not apply to the report required by this subdivision. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 7. 16 V.S.A. § 1264a is added to read:

§ 1264a. LOCALLY PRODUCED FOODS

(a) It is a goal of the State that by the year 2023, at least 20 percent of all foods purchased by supervisory unions and supervisory districts, together referred to in this section as “supervisory unions,” be locally produced foods. School boards have the discretion to define what foods are included within the definition of “locally produced foods” for the purposes of this subsection and subsection (b) of this section.

(b) On or before December 31, 2021 and annually thereafter, a school board operating a school lunch, breakfast, or summer meals program shall report to the Agency of Education an estimate of the percentage of the cost of all foods purchased by the school board for those programs that were locally produced foods during the one-year period ending on June 30 of that year.

(c)(1) Beginning with the 2021–22 school year and thereafter, supervisory unions shall be eligible for a local foods incentive grant (grant) from funds appropriated to the Agency of Education for this purpose.

(2) A supervisory union may apply for the grant if it has:

(A) developed a locally produced foods purchasing plan that

describes the supervisory union's goals for purchasing locally produced foods and its plan to achieve those goals;

(B) designated an individual as the food coordinator for locally produced foods who shall be responsible for implementing the locally produced foods purchasing plan;

(C) developed a process for tracking the purchase of locally produced foods; and

(D) complied with the reporting requirement under subsection (b) of this section.

(3) A supervisory union that has satisfied the conditions under subdivision (2) of this subsection may, on or before January 15, 2022 or on or before January 15 of any year thereafter, apply to the Agency for the grant by submitting a certification, signed by the business manager for the supervisory union, that the supervisory union satisfies the conditions under subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(4) If a supervisory union is eligible for a grant under subdivision (3) of this subsection, then the Agency shall make the grant payment, subject to appropriation, on or before the following March 31 after submission of the supervisory union's application, which is due on or before January 15 of that year, which shall be equal to \$0.15 per reimbursable school lunch served by the supervisory union in the prior school year through the National School

Lunch Program. A supervisory union may apply for this grant and receive this grant funding only once.

(5)(A) A supervisory union that has received a grant under subdivision (4) of this subsection (c) may, on or before January 15, 2023 or on or before January 15 of any year thereafter, apply for a further grant by submitting to the Agency of Education information that demonstrates that at least 15 percent of the cost of all foods purchased or grown, raised, or produced by the supervisory union during the one-year period ending on June 30 of the previous year were local to Vermont as defined in 9 V.S.A. § 2465a(b), excluding:

(i) foods purchased or grown, raised, or produced by the supervisory union that were used to provide catering services for which the supervisory union received compensation; and

(ii) fluid milk.

(B) If a supervisory union grows, raises, or produces food, it shall assign a fair market value to that food for the purpose of reporting its cost.

(C) A vendor that contracts with a supervisory union to supply food products shall certify to the supervisory union which of the food products supplied meet the definition of local to Vermont, taking into account the exclusions under subdivision 5(A) of this subsection (c).

(6) If a supervisory union is eligible for a grant under subdivision (5) of

this subsection, the Agency shall, on or before the following April 30 after submission of the supervisory union's application, which is due on or before January 15 of that year, make the grant payment, subject to appropriation, which shall be determined as follows:

(A) \$0.15 per reimbursable school lunch served in the prior school year through the National School Lunch Program for supervisory unions purchasing at least 15 percent locally produced foods;

(B) \$0.20 per reimbursable school lunch served in the prior school year through the National School Lunch Program for supervisory unions purchasing at least 20 percent locally produced foods; or

(C) \$0.25 per reimbursable school lunch served in the prior school year through the National School Lunch Program for supervisory unions purchasing at least 25 percent locally produced foods.

(7) A supervisory union may apply for and receive grant funding under subdivisions (5) and (6) of this subsection for each year that it qualifies for this grant funding. For applications covering the 2020–2021 school year, meals served through the Summer Food Service Program shall also be counted for this grant payment.

(8) The Agency of Education may perform sample audits for any year that grant funds are paid to supervisory unions under subdivision (6) of this subsection to verify that information provided to the Agency under

subdivision (5) of this subsection is accurate. If the Agency makes a grant payment under subdivision (6) of this subsection to a supervisory union that was based on inaccurate information reported by the supervisory union, the Agency may seek reimbursement from the supervisory union for an overpayment or reimburse the supervisory union for an underpayment or may adjust future grant amounts under this section to reflect the over- or underpayment.

(d)(1) On or before January 31, 2022 and annually thereafter, the Agency of Education shall submit to the Senate Committees on Agriculture and on Education and the House Committees on Agriculture and Forestry and on Education in an aggregated form:

(A) the information received from supervisory unions regarding the percentage of locally produced foods, as the supervisory unions define them, that were reported under subsection (b) of this section; and

(B) the percentage of locally produced foods, using the grant funding definition, that were reported under subdivision (c)(5) of this section and the amount of grant funding paid to supervisory unions under subdivision (c)(6) of this section in the prior school year.

(2) The provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20(d) regarding expiration of required reports shall not apply to the reports required by this subsection.

Sec. 8. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; STAFFING

The following position is created in the Agency of Education: one full-time, classified position specializing in the administration of school food programs. The position established in this section shall be transferred and converted from an existing vacant position in the Executive Branch of State government. There is appropriated to the Agency of Education from the General Fund in fiscal year 2022 the amount of \$100,000.00 for salary, benefits, and operating expenses.

** * * Task Force on Universal School Lunch * * **

Sec. 9. TASK FORCE ON UNIVERSAL SCHOOL LUNCH; REPORT

(a) Creation. There is created the Task Force on Universal School Lunch. The Task Force shall make recommendations on how, not later than the 2026–2027 school year, to achieve the goal of providing universal school lunch for all public school students at no cost to the students or their families.

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the:

- (1) Secretary of Education or designee;
- (2) Secretary of Human Services or designee; and
- (3) Secretary of Agriculture or designee.

(c) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall make recommendations on how, not later than the 2026–2027 school year, to achieve the goal of providing universal school lunch for all public school students at no cost to the students or their families and shall perform the following tasks:

(1) recommend funding sources for universal school lunch;

(2) recommend what data should be collected by local education agencies, school districts, and schools to qualify for federal funds based on student poverty, the means by which the data should be collected, the frequency of collection, and how this data should be reported to the Agency of Education and the frequency of this reporting;

(3) consider how other states offer and fund universal school meals at no cost to students or their families; and

(4) meet with Vermont's federal delegation to discuss what changes could be made to federal law and regulations to more readily facilitate universal school meals.

(d) Collaboration. In performing its duties under this section, the Task Force shall collaborate with Hunger Free Vermont, the School Nutrition Association of Vermont, the Vermont Superintendents Association, the Vermont School Boards Association, the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, the Vermont Principals' Association, and the Vermont-National Education Association.

(e) Report. On or before January 15, 2022, the Task Force shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education and on Appropriations, the House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture with its findings and any recommendations

for legislative action.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Secretary of Education shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before October 10, 2021.

(2) The Task Force shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Task Force shall meet not more than eight times.

(5) The Task Force shall expire on January 16, 2022.

(g) Assistance. The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Agency of Education.

** * * Effective Date * * **

Sec. 10. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.