

Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

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FISCAL NOTE

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H.426 An act relating to addressing the needs and conditions of public school facilities in the State – Senate Proposal of Amendment

Summary – H.426, as recommended by the Senate Committee on Education appropriates the following amounts to the Agency of Education (AOE) from federal aid:

- (1) \$2.5 million for a school facilities inventory and conditions assessment to inform AOE of statewide school facilities needs and costs;
- (2) \$500,000 to contract with an independent third party to help school districts improve the health and safety of school facilities as a result of the pandemic;
- (3) \$1.0 million for allocation to school districts that need additional funding to improve the health and safety of the district's facilities; and

Section 3 – Requires the Secretary of Education (Secretary) to contract with an independent third party to conduct an inventory of school facilities to ascertain the extent of need for additional support to school districts as a result of the pandemic and other causes. The inventory is to be completed and the Secretary must submit a report to the House and Senate Committees on Education presenting the findings on or before January 15, 2022. Authorizes the use of not more than \$2.5 million of the amount allocated to AOE from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ESSER-ARPA)

Section 9 – Requires the Secretary to contract with an independent third party to assist any school district to improve the overall health and safety of any school district's facilities. Authorizes the Secretary to allocate not more than \$500,000 of the amount allocated to AOE from ESSER-ARPA to hire a consultant.

Provides that not more than \$1.0 million of the amount allocated to AOE from ESSER-ARPA shall be reserved for school districts that have used all the federal funds allocated to school districts under ARPA and that need additional funding to plan and implement improvements to its facilities.

Section 11 – Establishes the Renewable and Efficiency Heating Systems Grant Program to award funds to public and approved independent schools. Grant awards shall be used to cover not more than 50 percent of the total cost for the improvement or repair of existing heating systems or for the cost of the installation of renewable or efficiency electric space heating and conditioning systems.

Provides that, during the 2022 legislative session, the General Assembly shall determine the source of funding. Authorizes Efficiency Vermont to use up to \$150,000 of the amount appropriated to the program for direct labor costs.