

## **AOE Testimony: Flexible Pathways FY22, proposed budget items**

**Testimony To:** The Honorable Michael Marcotte, Chairman,

House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development

**Respectfully Submitted by:** Dr. Heather Bouchey, Deputy Secretary, Agency of Education

**Date:** February 11, 2021

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### **Testimony on Flexible Pathways FY22, proposed budget items**

#### **General Funds to Support Education**

In FY 2019 the General Assembly repealed the long-standing transfer of General Funds to the Education Fund. Instead of the General Fund transfer, the General Assembly dedicated:

- 100% of the Sales and Use Tax
- 25% of the Rooms and Meals Tax
- 33% of Purchase & Use Tax
- Lottery Transfer
- Medicaid Transfer and
- Wind & Solar Tax, Fund Interest to the Education Fund.

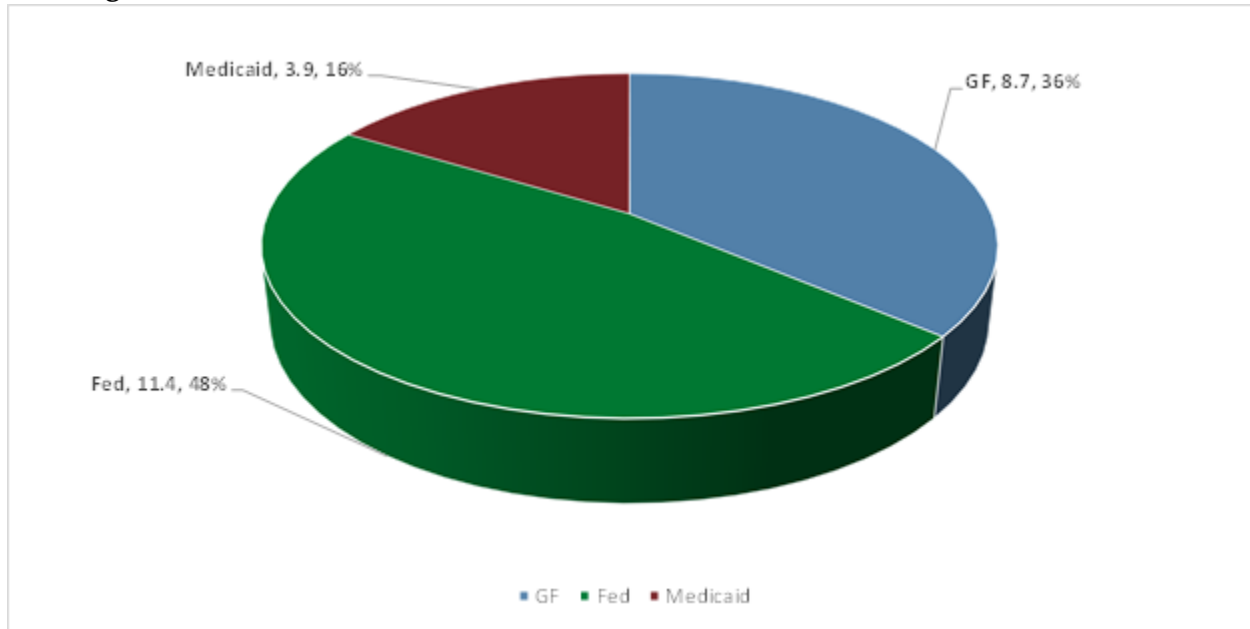
Additionally, the following expenditures were moved from the Education Fund to the General Fund:

- Adult Education and Literacy,
- the Community High School of Vermont,
- the unfunded liabilities for the Teachers' Pension,
- Other Post-Employment Benefits, and
- the Administration at the Agency that is not covered by Federal Funds or other sources.

General Fund appropriated to the AOE operations budget support activities including:

- The Secretary's Office and Legal Division,
- The Finance Division (to manage and allocate state and federal dollars),
- The required minimum state matches to retain federal dollars, and
- Administration of several programs including:
  - Drivers Education,
  - Oversight of Home Schooling,
  - Independent School review and approval,
  - Act 77/Flexible Pathways work,
  - Instructional Technology Support, and
  - Adult Education and Literacy.

**Figure 1: Student Pathways FY2022 Position Funding**



**B. 504.1 - Flexible Pathways**

16 V.S.A. § 941 describes the Flexible Pathways Initiative that requires schools serving students grades 7 - 12 to offer flexible pathways to graduation and to document the personalization process in Personal Learning Plans (PLPs). Flexible pathways, as a component of PLPs, can include work-based learning experiences, Career Technical Education (CTE), virtual or blended learning, dual enrollment and early college, the High School Completion Program, and other pathways whereby students can demonstrate proficiency in meeting graduation requirements.

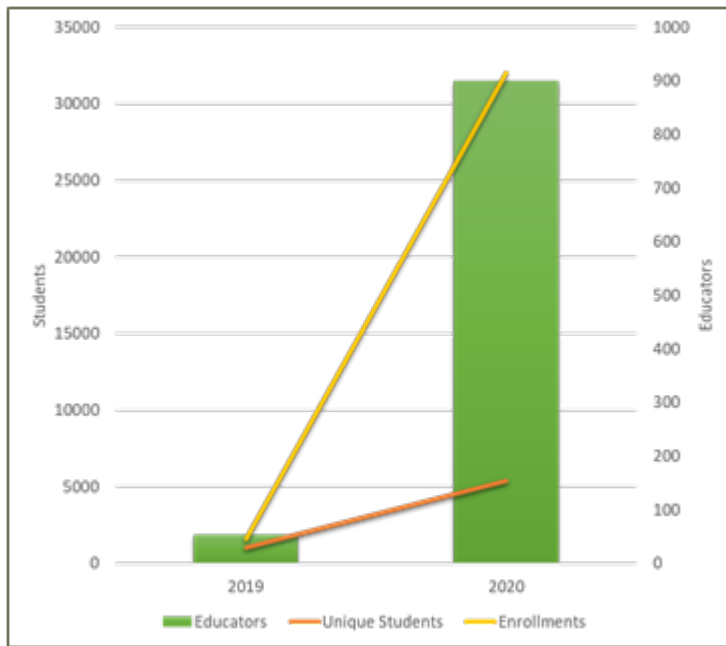
	FISCAL 2021 APPROP ACT	FISCAL YEAR 2022	
		AGENCY RECOMMEND	FY2021 TO FY2022
CATEGORY OF EXPENDITURE GRANTS	9,225,450	9,225,450	0
SOURCE OF FUNDS			
GENERAL FUND (A)	962,725	962,725	0
EDUCATION FUND (B)	8,262,725	8,262,725	0
TOTAL ALL SOURCES	9,225,450	9,225,450	0

#### SOURCE OF FUNDS DETAIL

(A) GENERAL FUND			
GRANTS			
1 Dual Enrollment	921,500	921,500	0
2 Dual Enrollment VT VSAC	<u>41,225</u>	<u>41,225</u>	0
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	962,725	962,725	0
(B) EDUCATION FUND			
GRANTS			
3 HS Completion for LEAs	4,000,000	2,100,000	(1,900,000)
4 Dual Enrollment	921,500	921,500	0
5 Early College	2,500,000	2,500,000	0
6 Vermont Academy of Science	500,000	500,000	0
7 Secondary School Reform	200,000	400,000	200,000
8 Vermont Virtual	100,000	1,800,000	1,700,000
9 Dual Enrollment VT VSAC	<u>41,225</u>	<u>41,225</u>	0
TOTAL GRANTS	8,262,725	8,262,725	0
TOTAL EDUCATION FUND	8,262,725	8,262,725	0

**Budgetary Changes:** The changes in this FY2022 appropriation reflect 3 major changes:

1. High School Completion Program: This appropriation has been reduced consistent with declining reimbursement patterns over the last three years; estimated unspent funds have been reallocated to VT Virtual and Secondary School Reform.
2. Secondary School Reform: An increase in funding for this appropriation reflects demand on the grant program over the last several years and continuing need to support systems in implementation of flexible pathways, proficiency and personalized learning plans in an equitable manner that serves all students, especially those that have been historically marginalized.
3. VT Virtual: This appropriation has been increased to reflect the nearly 500% growth in unique students served and the 1300% growth in enrollments, as well as the need for stability and predictability in offering this service to schools, families, and students.



## Summary of Flexible Pathways Grants

1. High School Completion Program (HSCP) – 16 V.S.A. § 943(c)  
 This grant reimbursement program provides learners with educational services of the scope and rigor needed to attain a high school diploma. Eligible students are at least 16 years old and have not earned a high school diploma. HSCP funding is available once a student reaches an assessment level commensurate with 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Adult Education and Literacy providers lead student intake and enrollment, the administration of assessments, and work with each student and the assigned school district to develop the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) that details their pathway to graduation.
2. Dual Enrollment - 16 V.S.A. § 944(f)(2)  
 This program is open to Vermont residents who have completed grade 10 and have not received a high school diploma. The program shall include college courses offered on the campus of an accredited post-secondary institution and college courses offered by an accredited post-secondary institution on the campus of a secondary school. The program may include online college courses or components. Established tuition rates are paid by the Agency to the post-secondary institution.
3. Early College - 16 V.S.A. § 946(a)(2)  
 This program directs the Agency to pay an amount equal to 0.87 times the Base Education Amount as the full tuition for each 12<sup>th</sup> grade Vermont resident student enrolled in an early college program, which includes the Vermont Academy of Science and Technology. Early College programs are developed and operated by Vermont colleges and have been approved by the Secretary for that purpose.
4. Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) - 16 V.S.A. § 946(a)(1)  
 VAST operates an approved independent 12<sup>th</sup>-grade program housed at Vermont Technical College.

5. Secondary School Reform - 16 V.S.A. § 941  
To support districts in the implementation of Act 77 and the integration of flexible pathways to graduation, consistent with the goals of Act 1 and Act 173, the Agency provides funding for projects that focus on innovative school and systems-based work on personalization, flexible pathways, and proficiency-based education that is inclusive, equitable, bias-free, and accessible to each learner.
6. Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative -16 V.S.A. § 941(b)(3)(c)(ii)  
To support more fully the intent of Act 77, and specifically the flexible pathways represented by virtual learning, this funding supports Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative to provide online courses – created and vetted by licensed instructors -- for students enrolled in high school. The flexibility of online learning courses allows students to maximize their learning during and beyond the traditional classroom day.
7. Dual Enrollment, VSAC – Previously 2017 No. 85 Sec. B.1100(a)(3)(C)  
Granted to VSAC to support need-based stipends for dual enrollment and early college students. Students who meet the eligibility criteria (based on FRL status) may receive a stipend to help offset the out-of-pocket expenses of books, fees, or transportation.