

TO: House Committee on Education
FROM: Colin Robinson, Political Director, Vermont-NEA
DATE: February 25, 2021
SUBJECT: Testimony on H.101

Thank you for allowing us the time to speak briefly to H.101 Draft 3.1.

We agree with much of what Chelsea Myers from the Vermont Superintendents Association shared in her testimony and would like to highlight two points.

1. Sec. 3 (c) subsections (C) and (3) – We want to emphasize the recommended adjustments from the VSA. It is critical that these grant funds can be targeted to where the funds are needed the most. Allowing an applicant to dial in on “one or more of” the specific literacy indicators is impactful as is ensuring that the scoring criteria give weight to district outcomes and student population.
2. Section 6 - As is quoted in VSAs testimony yesterday in Senate Education we asked to have the Standards Board of Professional Educators added to any review of teacher preparation programs. They are the body that does this work currently. Additionally, we agree that consistency is important, and Section 6 should refer to “evidence-based literacy instruction”.

We have one additional comment on Section 3 specifically related to the timeline of the grant making. First round applications are awarded on or before September 1, 2021 and then the same date applies to years 2022 and 2023 for grant years two and three. However, in years 2022 and 2023 grants may be modified by the AOE based upon the progress reports submitted by grant recipients. Section 3 (e)(1) currently reads:

“Not later than 30 calendar days after the one-year anniversary of receiving a grant award under this section, the eligible applicant shall submit to the Agency of Education a report that describes progress and concerns with the implementation of the eligible applicant’s action plan to improve literacy teaching and outcomes under subdivision (c)(2)(F) of this section.”

It seems that for this report to align with the grant award dates in years two and three a modification in Section(e)(1) may be needed.