

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Education to which was referred House Bill No. 106
3 entitled “An act relating to equitable access to a high-quality education through
4 community schools” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and
5 recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting
6 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE

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

9 Sec. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

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

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

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

1 (3) Community schools facilitate the provision of comprehensive
2 programs and services that are carefully selected to meet the unique needs of
3 students and families, such as substance misuse, lack of stable housing,
4 inadequate medical and dental care, hunger, trauma, and exposure to violence,
5 so students can do their best.

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

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

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

1 APEX and Community School Partnership; 2019. Every dollar invested in
2 programs and support (including medical, dental and social services,
3 after-school and summer enrichment, parent engagement and early childhood
4 services) can yield up to \$15.00 in return. Community Schools as an Effective

5 School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence; Anna Maier, Julia
6 Daniel, Jeannie Oakes, and Livia Lam; 2017.

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

13 (8) [add finding on urban, suburban, and rural schools]

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

17 Sec. 3. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS; DEMONSTRATION GRANT
18 PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

7 (2) “Community school program” means a program offered at a public
8 elementary or secondary school that includes all four of the following:

9 (A) integrated student supports, which address out-of-school barriers
10 to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies and
11 providers, coordinated by a community school coordinator, which may include
12 access to services such as medical, dental, vision care, and mental health
13 services, or access to counselors to assist with housing, transportation,
14 nutrition, immigration, or criminal justice issues;

15 (B) expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, including
16 before-school, afterschool, weekend, and summer programs, that provide
17 additional academic instruction, individualized academic support, enrichment
18 activities, and learning opportunities that emphasize real-world learning and
19 community problem-solving and that may include art, music, drama, creative
20 writing, hands-on experience with engineering or science, tutoring and

1 homework help, and recreational programs that enhance and are consistent
2 with the school’s curriculum;

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

12 (D) collaborative leadership and practices, which build a culture of
13 professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility using strategies
14 that shall, at a minimum, leverage the multi-tiered system of supports and
15 include a community school coordinator and a representative of families in the
16 community, and may include school, school district, and other leadership or
17 governance teams; teacher learning communities; and other staff to manage the
18 multiple, complex, joint work of school and community organizations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 (2) augment work already being performed to develop and implement a
18 community school program.

19 (c) Grant administration.

20 (1) The Secretary of Education shall administer the demonstration grant
21 program under this section. The Secretary shall develop the demonstration

1 grant application, determine grant amounts, and provide grant funding on or
2 before September 1 of each of 2022, 2023, and 2024 to successful applicants.
3 If the amount appropriated for this purpose is insufficient to fully fund the
4 demonstration grants under this section, then the demonstration grant amounts
5 that are awarded shall be prorated. [If proration is not used, then the Secretary
6 should award grants based on relative need, in which case criteria may need to
7 be established to guide the Secretary] The Secretary may deny or reduce
8 second- and third-year grant funding if the Secretary finds that the applicant
9 has made insufficient progress towards developing and implementing a
10 community school program.

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

16 (d) Use of grant funding.

17 (1) An eligible applicant shall use the demonstration grant funding to
18 hire a community school coordinator to develop and implement a community
19 school program or to augment work already being performed by the eligible
20 applicant to develop and implement a community school program.

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

9 (e) Evaluation.

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

13 (2) On or before each of December 15, 2023 and 2025, the Agency of
14 Education shall report to the General Assembly and the Governor on the
15 impact of the demonstration grant program. The report shall be made publicly
16 available on the Agency of Education’s website.

17 Sec. 4. APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS

18 (a) The Secretary of Education shall use \$1,529,000.00 of the amount
19 allocated to the Agency of Education from the Elementary and Secondary
20 School Emergency Relief Fund pursuant to Sec. 313 of the Consolidated

1 Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-260, for the demonstration grant
2 program under Sec. 3 of this act.

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

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

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

9 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

10 This act shall take effect on passage.

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12 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE