

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~~ their- dreams and contribute to the well-being of society.

13 ~~Every neighborhood~~ Our public schools must be ~~deserves a public school~~
14 ~~that~~ designed and equipped to fully delivers on that promise.

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

1 As a result, some schoolchildren face more challenges than others in
2 succeeding in school and in life.

3 (3) Community schools facilitate the ~~provision~~ coordination of
4 comprehensive programs and services that are carefully selected to meet the
5 unique needs of students and families, and to build on the assets they bring to
6 their schools and communities. ~~such as substance misuse, lack of stable~~
7 housing, inadequate medical and dental care, hunger, trauma, and exposure to
8 violence, so students can do their best. Community Schools combine
9 challenging and culturally relevant learning opportunities with the academic
10 and social supports every student needs to reach their potential.

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

17 (5) Research shows that community school interventions can result in
18 improvements in a variety of student outcomes, including attendance,
19 academic achievement (including reducing racial and economic achievement
20 gaps), and high school graduation rates, and can meet the Every Student

1 Succeeds Act standard of “evidence-based” approaches to support schools
2 identified for comprehensive and targeted support and intervention.

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

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

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

1 highlighted, and opportunities for building vitality surface through shared
2 learning.

3 (b) Purpose. This law is enacted to support a pilot program for the
4 implementation of community schools ~~programs~~ that provide students with
5 equitable access to a high-quality ~~education.~~ learning opportunities and
6 necessary supports.

7 Sec. 3. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS; PILOT GRANT PROGRAM

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

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

10 (A) is a full-time or part-time staff member serving in an eligible
11 school or in a school district or supervisory union ~~with an eligible school;~~ and
12 ~~(B) is responsible for working collaboratively within the school~~
13 ~~district or supervisory union and across the full community to identify, implement~~
14 ~~and coordinate community school(s)– is responsible for the identification,~~
15 ~~implementation, and coordination of a community school program.~~

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

18 (A) integrated student supports, which address out-of-school barriers
19 to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies and
20 providers, coordinated by a community school coordinator, which may include
21 access to services such as medical, dental, vision care, and mental health
22 services, or access to counselors to assist with housing, transportation,

1 nutrition, immigration, or criminal justice issues; and include what young
2 people bring with them to the classroom and the ways that schools and
3 communities working together can enhance and embrace the knowledge and
4 capacity that students and families can offer their schools. This could
5 include educational strategies like universal design for learning, recognition
6 and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, and practices that focus on
7 building and supporting relationships such as restorative practices. These are
8 also essential to integrated student supports.

9 (B) expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities accessible
10 to every student, including before-school, afterschool, weekend, and summer
11 programs, that provide additional academic instruction, individualized
12 academic support, enrichment activities, and place-based learning
13 opportunities -that emphasize real-world learning and community problem-
14 solving and that may include art, music, drama, creative writing, hands-on
15 experience with engineering or science, tutoring and homework help, and
16 recreational programs that enhance and are consistent with the school's
17 curriculum;

18 (C) active family and community engagement, which brings
19 students' families and the community into the school as partners in children's
20 education and makes the school a neighborhood-community hub, providing
21 where all students and their families feel a sense of belonging and engagement.

1 ~~adults with a facility to access educational opportunities they want. The~~
2 ~~process for getting there must feature broad student and community~~
3 ~~participation, with a diversity of income, race, gender, newcomer status,~~
4 ~~language, ability, etc. represented in the design, implementation, and~~
5 ~~evaluation of all activities and reflected in the faces of leaders and decision-~~
6 ~~makers in schools and communities.~~

7 ~~including coordinating services with outside providers to offer~~
8 ~~English as a second language classes, green card or citizenship preparation,~~
9 ~~computer skills, art, financial literacy, career counseling, job skills training,~~
10 ~~services for substance misuse, and other programs that bring community~~
11 ~~members into the building for meetings or events; and 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 ~~an integrated school and~~
16 ~~community leadership team that would include youth and family~~
17 ~~representatives, a representative of families in the community,~~ and may include
18 school, school district, and other leadership or governance teams; teacher
19 learning communities; and other staff to manage the multiple, complex, joint
20 work of school and community organizations.

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

3 (4) “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 (5) “Pilot grant” means a grant provided to an eligible applicant under
13 this section.

14 (b) Pilot grant authorization. The Secretary of Education is authorized to
15 provide annual pilot grants of up to \$110,000.00 a year for a period of three
16 years for each eligible applicant to hire a community school coordinator to
17 develop and implement a community school program.

18 (c) Grant administration.

19 (1) The Secretary of Education shall administer the pilot grant program
20 under this section. The Secretary shall develop the pilot grant application,
21 determine grant amounts, and provide grant funding on or before September 1

1 of each of 2022, 2023, and 2024 to successful applicants. If the amount
2 appropriated for this purpose is insufficient to fully fund the pilot grants under
3 this section, then the pilot grant amounts that are awarded shall be prorated.
4 The Secretary may deny or reduce second- and third-year grant funding if the
5 Secretary finds that the applicant has made insufficient progress towards
6 developing and implementing a community school program.

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

12 (d) Use of grant funding. An eligible applicant shall use the pilot grant
13 funding to hire a community school coordinator to develop and implement a
14 community school program. During the first year of pilot grant funding, the
15 community school coordinator shall conduct a needs and assets assessment of
16 the school ~~and community and together with the school and community~~
17 leadership team, analyze the data~~-to determine what is necessary to develop a~~
18 community school ~~program~~ and an action plan to implement the community
19 school ~~program~~. During the second and third years of pilot grant funding, the
20 community school coordinator ~~with the school and community leadership~~
21 team, shall oversee the implementation of the community school ~~program~~.

1 (e) Evaluation.

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

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

9 Sec. 4. APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS

10 (a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, \$1,529,000.00 is
11 appropriated from the Education Fund to the Agency of Education for fiscal
12 year 2022 designated for the pilot grant program under Sec. 3 of this act.

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

14 (1) not more than one percent of funds for informational and technical
15 assistance for eligible applicants and eligible schools under Sec. 3 of this act;

16 and

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

19 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

20 This act shall take effect on passage.

21

1 (Committee vote: _____)

2

3

Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE