



TO: Senate Education Committee

FROM: Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director, Vermont School Boards Association

RE: English Language Learners Categorical Aid Program

DATE: January 20, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Committee with VSBA's position on the proposal to change the funding mechanism for English Language Learners (ELL) from pupil weighting to categorical aid. VSBA does not support this change.

VSBA's position is based on a resolution passed by its members on November 4, 2021 and the VSBA Board's application of the resolution to the final report of the Task Force on the Implementation of the Pupil Weighting Factors Report and supporting documentation, including the [October 28, 2021 memorandum from Dr. Tammy Kolbe et al. to Representative Kornheiser and Senator Hardy](#) and the [January 11, 2022 memorandum from Dr. Tammy Kolbe et al. to Representative Kornheiser and Senator Hardy](#).

VSBA supports implementation of the weights set out as option #1 in the Task Force's final report with the addition of the ELL weight of 2.49 (from Table 1, Model 4 of the October 28 memo). These weights are designed to work together within Vermont's existing education funding formula.

There are several reasons we do not support a categorical funding program for ELL: (1) using a categorical grant program for ELL would require the General Assembly to calculate a new funding amount for the program each fiscal year, (2) choosing to segregate ELL funding from the rest of the formula, and possibly setting the amount at less than empirical analysis says it should be (due to the need for the General Assembly to recalculate a new funding amount each year), may result in discrimination against ELL students on the basis of race, national origin and language, (3) using a categorical grant program for ELL and setting the amount at \$25,335 (translated from a

weight of 2.49), would add \$40 million to the top of the Ed Fund based on the number of ELL students in the state, thereby driving down the yield and increasing tax rates for all districts, and (4) using ELL weights is more efficient and provides more predictability to districts.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with the Committee today.