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STATE OF VERMONT
House of Representatives

House Committee on Education

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May 9, 2024

To: House Ways and Means Committee
From: House Education Committee

The House Education Committee this morning discussed H.887 as amended by the Senate and unanimously agreed on the following position regarding Commission on the Future of Public Education and changes made in the Senate amendment.

HEC and HWM spent most of the first half of the session listening and learning from over 80 witnesses, hundreds of pieces of communications and our own meetings and discussions in our districts to develop the House position in H.887. It was careful, thoughtful and struck a commonsense approach to a complex problem.

The HEC's development of the Commission on the Future of Public Education reflects hours of work among committee members from all parts of Vermont and political points of view. It reflects the unanimous belief that understanding cost drivers in education and addressing them must go hand-in-hand with a broader look at Vermont's education system. There are hard decisions ahead, and they can only be made in the context of striving for a greater good – a right-size, stable, high quality public education system that Vermonters can afford. We ask you to stick to the House position on the Commission.

If you look at the duties of the Commission and that of the Senate-proposed working group, they are largely the same, including the requirement of proposing cost-containment strategies in time for the 2025 Legislature. Having two groups doing the same work is unnecessarily duplicative and an unnecessary burden on Legislative staff.

The House Education Committee greatly appreciates the time and work our two committees have done together, and together we produced a strong proposal rooted in testimony, data and a greater vision.

Sincerely,

Rep. Peter Conlon
Chair, House Education Committee