



STATE OF VERMONT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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MEMORANDUM

To: Rep. Robin Scheu, Chair, House Appropriations Committee

From: Rep. Peter Conlon, Chair, House Education Committee

Date: February 23, 2026

Subject: Budget Memo for FY27 Requests

1. Agency of Education budget. The Committee supports the Administration's budget request of 3.9 percent, which includes the request to shift five limited-service positions created in Act 73 to permanent positions. The Committee has long advocated that AOE capacity needs to be built up to assist with transformation.

We are concerned, however, that certain key positions remain unfilled or unadvertised, including the director of special education, staffing a school construction section, and having a fully staffed Finance Department. We request HAC delve deeper into these staffing concerns when AOE is before the committee.

2. The Committee strongly supports the University of Vermont's request for a 3 percent increase in baseline funding and appreciates the university's efforts to stay within the governor's ask. UVM has also asked for an additional \$1 million for five years for the Vermont Cancer Center. The Committee has no position on this and would defer to the Health Care Committee

In her testimony, President Tromp did not request, but supported any assistance the General Assembly can provide for the UVM sports complex. There has been talk of using the Higher Education Trust Fund for this purpose. The House Education Committee does not support this use of the trust fund for this purpose as this is well outside its original purpose. Further discussion on potential uses is under the next category.

3. The Committee strongly supports the Vermont State College System's 3 percent increase request, which is in line with the governor's ask. Additionally, VSCS asked for \$1.5 million in one-time funding for a micro-credential program, and \$3.9 million for is Allied Health programs. These are both worthy investments for our state colleges but understandably fall outside the state's ability to fund them

this year. The VSCS request also included \$6 million in capital projects. We defer to the House Institutions and Corrections Committee for their recommendation.

The Committee also discussed, on its own, potential additional uses for the Higher Education Trust Fund, if the General Assembly decides to not withstand its current allocation formula. We would support increasing funding for the Freedom and Unity Scholarship Program administered by the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation to \$2.3 million to move eligibility from \$65,000 of household income to \$80,000, making Vermont State University available tuition-free to more Vermonters and putting its ability to provide that more on par with CCV and UVM.

4. The Committee strongly supports the base funding request of the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation of roughly \$28 million, a 3 percent increase. VSAC continues to provide key support to Vermonters through its financial assistance programs and college counseling.

In addition, VSAC has requested an additional \$812,000, for a total of \$2.3 million, for the Freedom and Unity scholarship program for students attending Vermont State University. This would increase the household income eligibility from \$65,000 to \$80,000 to receive free tuition at VTSU. The House Education Committee understands that general fund dollars are tight, but we would support using Higher Education Trust Fund dollars for this, if the Legislature is to not withstand the current allocation formula.

VSAC has also seen the end of funding for several forgivable loan programs targeting critical Vermont jobs facing a shortage of qualified candidates. The House Education Committee supports funding for these, if funding is available, including for teachers, nurses and mental health workers.

5. The Committee supports continued funding for the Child and Adult Care Food Program of \$182,000, which was not included in the AOE budget. This program draws significant matching federal funds to provide food assistance to home child and adult care settings and has become key to programs holding down costs while offering nutritious meals. As approved last year, it also relies on AOE being the fiscal sponsor of the program, which the House Education Committee would request continues.
6. The Committee supports continued funding for the Governor's Institute of Vermont at the requested level for FY27 of \$423,000. While this increase is higher than the guideline of 3 percent, it should be noted that GIV has received no increase since FY24. GIV serves hundreds of Vermont students each year, many attending tuition free. It exposes young people to career choices, including public service and allied health fields that will benefit Vermont in the long run.
7. The Committee supports continued funding for Advance Vermont, including moving from annual request to base funding for the future. Advance Vermont's promise in guiding high school students and other Vermonters looking at future careers remains limited by its funding. Its funding has been uneven over the past

few years, even as it seeks to get in front of more Vermonters through its My Future Vermont website and its new Graduate with a Plan program. If funding is available, the committee supports the \$600,000 request.