

MEMORANDUM

TO: House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs

FROM: Jeff Fannon, Executive Director, Vermont-NEA

DATE: April 22, 2026

RE: S.206 – Early Childhood Professionals

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Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you about S.206. Allow me to take a moment to introduce myself and Vermont-NEA to you. Vermont-NEA represents almost 16,000 educators in Vermont’s publicly funded school system, including both licensed teachers and education support professionals (ESPs), who are employed in Vermont’s public schools, approved independent schools, and therapeutic schools.

We are supportive of the bill but think there should be some amendments that will help clarify the problem to be solved and how best to address it without creating confusion. The bill as passed by the Senate, S.206, would create an entirely new and separate licensure regulatory system for early childhood educators under the Secretary of State’s Office of Professional Regulation. Currently, the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE or Board) is a 13-member, teacher majority, board appointed by the Governor that oversees the training, licensing, and professional standards of all Vermont teachers, including teachers who are endorsed early childhood educators (ECE). VSBPE has 38 teacher license endorsements, including early childhood education and early childhood special education.

“The holder [of an ECE teacher license] is authorized to teach young children birth through PK, PK through grade three, or birth through grade three, as specified on the [teacher’s] endorsement.”

See Rules Governing the Licensing of Educators and the Preparation of Educational Professionals: Rule Series 5100 [LICENSING REGULATIONS](#) at pages 96-98.

“The holder [of an early childhood special education teacher license] is authorized to provide early childhood education, birth through preschool, and early intervention and special education services, including service coordination, case management and comprehensive evaluation services, to children from birth to age 6.”

See Rules Governing the Licensing of Educators and the Preparation of Educational Professionals: Rule Series 5100 [LICENSING REGULATIONS](#) at pages 99-104.

The Vermont Agency of Education provides VSBPE with administrative and technical support. Additionally, VSBPE is a member of and supported by the Professional Educator Standards Boards Association (PESBA) under the auspices of the National Association of State Directors

of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC). NASDTEC is the national entity that establishes teacher quality standards for all states to adopt, in accordance with state policies and practices. NASDTEC also maintains the national database that tracks teacher licensure for reciprocity purposes allowing for the mobility of properly licensed teachers across state lines. Moreover and significantly, this database also tracks teacher licensure discipline matters to ensure the safety of students.

This background is important given the additional licensure structure S.206 would create. The three proposed new early childhood educator licenses are described in section 3 as early childhood educator 1, 2, and 3 (ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III). Vermont-NEA supports the bill's unstated intent to professionalize the early education workforce, to increase the wages of early childhood education professionals, and stabilize, therefore, the early education workforce to increase early education opportunities for Vermont's parents. Vermont-NEA supports the establishment of the new OPR administered board for the licensure of ECE I and ECE II. We do not support the establishment of the new ECE III license as it would be confusing given the almost identical requirements under the existing VSBPE rules cited above. Indeed, the bill itself acknowledges the confusion between this new proposed OPR licensure system and the existing VSBPE/AOE licensure system. *See* Section 3 at proposed 26 VSA § 6226(3) wherein the newly licensed early educator must disclose to families the difference between this proposed license and the existing AOE license. By eliminating the proposed ECE III licensure, this proposed section of law could be deleted, thereby eliminating any potential confusion by parents.

Vermont public schools are providing pre-k education already and, in so doing, employing VSBPE licensed teachers. The VSBPE requirements for pre-k teachers are almost identical to the proposed requirements in S.206 for ECE III. In addition to generally recommending the elimination of ECE III throughout the bill because it's redundant and confusing, we recommend changing the nomenclature to Early Childhood Professional I and II (ECP I and ECP II), which is similar to what the AOE proposed and likewise similar to what Child Development Division Deputy Commissioner Janet McLaughlin in her April 8 slide deck declared as "reasonable."

If you have questions, I'll be pleased to try responding to them. Thank you very much.