

MEMORANDUM

TO: SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
FROM: SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
DATE: APRIL 11, 2026
RE: EDUCATION COMMITTEE BUDGET PRIORITIES

As we have taken testimony from educators, nonprofits and governmental entities we have asked those requesting dollars to send us a specific request for our review, from which we would assemble our budget request letter.

We write today with an understanding that we do not have the knowledge of all the competing interest the Appropriations Committee must sift through vs. available dollars. We do know that money is tight, so we are simply letting the Appropriations Committee know that we think the following items are important and a good use of our state dollars. We sometimes left out parts of a request if we did not receive enough testimony to be sure of the basis for a request.

We rank our recommendations with a ranking of High, Medium and Low.

Education Committee Budget Priorities

Education Reform Transition

The Act 73 follow-up legislation we are working on contains three appropriations as follows:

1. \$2,750,000 from the education fund to the Agency of Education for the purpose of awarding study committee support grants as new Supervisory Unions take shape this summer (supervisory union transition facilitation grants).

2. \$300,000 from the education fund for study committee support grants.
3. \$200,000 from the education fund to the Agency of Education for district merger support grants.

Committee Priority Level: High

Agency of Education

- a. \$2.73 billion across all AOE appropriation (consistent with governor's recommend. 3.91% increase).
- b. 5 new positions for education transformation
- c. \$113,500,000 increase in statewide education spending, bringing total budget to \$2.104 billion
- d. \$182,000 for the Child Nutrition Program for sponsoring organizations of CACFP

Committee Priority Level

- a. High
- b. Medium (a lot of mixed feelings on this one, with votes ranging from high to low)
- c. High (with one member preferring the 50%/50% plan offered by the House)
- d. High (this is important because of the potential to drw down federal dollars)

Vermont State Colleges:

Request to Education Committee:

General Fund: \$55,842,752

Grants: Allied Health Global Commitment: \$3,894,000

Total: \$59,742,752

Committee priority level: High

Building Bright Futures:

Request to Ed. Committee = \$798,707 (level funding)

Committee Priority Level: High (one member voting for medium)

Advance Vermont:

Request to Ed. Committee = 600,000

Committee Priority Level: High (this was a unanimous vote for high. Advance Vermont does critical work and accomplishes a lot for relatively small dollars)

VSAC:

Requests to Education Committee:

- a. \$27,897 base funding (3% increase)
- b. Authority to use up to \$400,000 from base finding for innovative career and college aspirations initiative
- c. \$84,000 (level-funding) for dual enrollment/early college stipend
- d. \$5,289,000 (\$2,000,000 increase) to support current demand for program
- e. \$1,500,000 for Vermont Mental Health Professional Loan Program
- f. \$2,300,000 (\$800,000 increase) for VSAC Freedom and Unity Scholarship

Committee Support Level:

- a. High (one member voting for medium)
- b. High
- c. Medium
- d. High on base amount/not sure increase is critical in tight year

- e. High
- f. High (one member voting low)

Governor's Institute:

Request to Ed. Committee:

\$423,361 (10% more than Governor's recommend of \$384,874)

Committee Priority Level

Level Funding: High

5% Increase: High (Committee is very supportive of Governor's Institute, but in tight budget year agreed that 5% increase would be appropriate)

Farm to School and Early Childhood Program:

Request to Ed. Committee:

- a. \$500,000 base funding (level funded) farm to school and early childhood grants
- b. \$500,000 base funding (level funded) local foods incentive for schools

Committee Priority Level:

- a. High to Medium
- b. High

University of Vermont:

Requests to Ed. Committee:

- a. 3% increase in base funding
- b. \$1,000,000 for five years for UVM Cancer Center
- c. \$15,000,000 from Education Trust Fund to support construction of Multipurpose Center (venue for all Vermonters)

Committee Priority Level:

- a. High to Medium for 3% increase
- b. High to low (committee was split
- c. We are taking a bit more testimony on this one and will send a separate letter.

Note: Some of the organizations we supported for funding last year, like Community Schools, did not appear in our committee this year with their budget requests. We therefore haven't included them in this request letter. That said, we likely continue to support their work and our silence should not be mistaken as diminished support.