

MEMORANDUM

TO: SENATOR PERCHLIK
FROM: SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
DATE: APRIL 15, 2023
RE: 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 to the Appropriations Committee.

We write today with an understanding that there is not much room in the budget for additions beyond the governor's recommend and that your task will consist mostly of deciding which of dozens of worthy requests are so urgent they are funded this year. We therefore have tried to parse our requests to those we consider serious priorities for the FY '26 budget.

Education Reform Transition

The governor's recommend contains \$4,000,000 to help with transition to a new system of governance and funding. No matter where we end up when we adjourn this spring, we will not be moving at the speed anticipated in the administration's plan. We nevertheless recommend that you hang onto \$2,000,000 for this purpose in FY '26, while recognizing that we will need additional dollars for that purpose in the out years.

Some of this year's \$2,000,000 will help with the summer mapping commission likely to emerge from the process, including legislative per diem and experts the committee may need to hire and some may be to help legislative counsel and JFO working through a checklist of items to be designed before whatever we seek as end product becomes operational. We

just can't fully envision what may be necessary, so want to retain monetary flexibility until we do.

We emphasize that transformation of the system will require dollars in the out years, starting with the FY '27 budget year. If governance changes derive from a legislatively adopted map, dollars will be required to assist districts sort out debt and other issues. If a system is developed whereby mergers are encouraged, we will need dollars for technical assistance and merger grants, and likely dollars for the SBE to help facilitate mergers.

Other Priorities Listed in Our Perceived Order of Importance

Child and Adult Food Program = \$182,000 new dollars
(Add to AOE, child nutrition budget to build sponsor capacity for Child and Adult Care Program) – Small investment, Large Return

Advance Vermont = \$350,000
Career Hub – Smallish Investment, Important Resource. The \$350,000 restores funding to it FY '22 and FY '23 levels

Governor's Institutes

The committee supports the request for a 3% increase, bringing the total budget item from \$384,874 to \$396,420

Vermont Farm to School and Early Childhood Network

Farm to School = \$1,200,000
(to keep Vermont Farm to School and Early Childhood Network program alive in face of federal cuts to Local Food for Schools and Child Care Program (LFSCC))

Adult Literacy

The committee supports the restoration of the \$180,211 resulting from a calculating error, as reflected in the House passed version of the budget.

State Board of Education

Request to Senate Education Committee: \$629,560

Education Committee Recommend:

\$70,000 line item in AOE budget for normal annual costs

\$36,000 for counsel on retainer

\$50,000 for cost of rewriting either CTE rules or Special Ed rules (one in FY '26, one in FY '27)

\$50,000 for legal counsel to begin multi-year project of determining which SBE rules to sunset, which to transfer to AOE and to update retained rules.

Total projected cost for multi-year project in FY '26 dollars = \$375,000.

Vermont State College System

Request to Education Committee = approximately \$13,000,000 over the governors recommended maintenance budget. We did not have time to fully develop our thinking on the state colleges budget.

The Governor's combined FY '26 and '27 maintenance recommend is \$8,000,000 over two years. The system request is \$21,575,037 over two years. The committee has no way to recommend a specific amount to the Appropriations Committee. All we can say is that whatever you are able to add will constitute a wise investment because the cost of deferred maintenance is exponentially greater with each year of delay.

University of Vermont

As with the state colleges, we did not have time to fully understand and prioritize the UVM budget. We certainly support the governor's recommend, but we cannot help you prioritize requested allocation beyond that amount.