

April 25, 2025

To: Julia Richer, Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office  
Catherine Benham, Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

Cc: Representative Emilie Kornheiser, Chair, Vermont House Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Ann Cummings, Chair, Vermont Senate Committee on Finance  
Zoie Saunders, Secretary, Vermont Agency of Education

From: Tammy Kolbe & Bruce Baker, University of Vermont/University of Miami  
Justin Silverstein & Amanda Brown, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify comparisons between the education cost estimates prepared by Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) and The University of Vermont (Kolbe & Baker).

APA used an Adjusted Evidence-based Approach and UVM used an Education Cost Function modeling approach.

Both studies estimate a base cost amount that is equal to the resources needed for a student with no additional needs and who is served in a district/school with no special circumstances to attain state standards.

However, ***the two studies differ in their assumptions about the context in which education is provided in Vermont, and as a result generate different cost estimates.***

- The Adjusted EB approach (APA) base cost ***assumes a different governance structure and operational practices than what is currently in place in the state.*** School and district adjustments are applied to the base amount to account differences between settings, including to address existing school sizes.<sup>1</sup>
- The education cost function approach (UVM) base cost is the spending necessary to provide an adequate education, ***assuming Vermont's existing governance structure and scale.***

It is important to understand these differences when analyzing these two figures, and for these reasons **the base spending amounts are not directly comparable.**

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, the estimation approach provides additional funding by adjusting for all schools smaller than those used to create the approaches base cost figure (450 for elementary and middle school, 600 for high school)

