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S.233

Introduced by Senators White, Clarkson and Major

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; special education; DCF; parent child center network

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to appropriate \$250,000.00 to the Agency of Human Services to establish a two-year pilot program that awards grants to develop special education family advocacy pilot programs.

An act relating to establishing a special education family advocacy pilot program

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. SPECIAL EDUCATION FAMILY ADVOCACY PILOT PROGRAM

(a) In fiscal year 2027, \$250,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Human Services to establish a two-year pilot program that awards grants to develop special education family advocacy pilot programs.

The pilot programs shall aim to:

(1) ensure that families of kindergarten through grade 12 students have access to knowledgeable, neutral advocates to guide them through the

1 individualized education program (IEP) process, including access to in-person
2 support during IEP meetings;

3 (2) strengthen collaboration between schools and parents; and

4 (3) help prevent costly disputes and due process hearings by addressing
5 issues early.

6 (b) The Agency shall seek applications from school districts, parent child
7 centers, and other interested nonprofit organizations. Successful applicants
8 shall submit an application to the Agency describing how the applicant, if
9 awarded a grant, shall:

10 (1) train advocates to provide direct support for parents of children with
11 disabilities in grades kindergarten through 12 through the IEP process;

12 (2) provide trainings for parents to prepare and empower them to
13 advocate on their own during the IEP process; and

14 (3) collaborate with school districts with the goal of supporting all
15 involved parties to work together in the best interests of students.

16 (c) On or before November 15, 2027, the Agency shall submit a written
17 report to the House Committees on Education and on Human Services and to
18 the Senate Committees on Education and on Health and Welfare evaluating the
19 pilot program created pursuant to this section and any recommended future
20 actions. In drafting the report required pursuant to this subsection, the Agency
21 shall seek the input of the Agency of Education in evaluating the need for and

1 effectiveness of the pilot program and include the Agency of Education's
2 response as part of the report.

3 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

4 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.