

Good morning,

Please follow the recommendations in the report that the Vermont legislature commissioned in 2019 on school funding. Specifically, please update the weighting system to provide more resources to students who are 1) living in poverty, 2) living in small or rural school districts, or 3) are learning English as a second language.

As a former teacher and someone who currently supervises visits between children and the parents from whom they have been removed by DCF, I understand the huge impact that schools have in mitigating the harmful repercussions of adverse childhood events (ACEs). The emotional and physical trauma that a child endures has an enormous impact on the development of the brain, creating feedback loops that can severely hamper a person's health as an adult, contributing to mental and physical health problems that contribute to the cycle of poverty and trauma. ACEs are less likely to lead to problems down the road when children are able to have deep, meaningful relationships with adults who care about them and who work to reduce the impact of these ACEs. And by reducing the impact of ACEs, we strengthen society as a whole and build a stronger economy, by supporting a more resilient workforce. The economic advantages more than make up for the short-term costs.

Every day, I see children who have been removed from homes where their parents are struggling with addiction, domestic violence, and/or mental health problems. In some cases, the parents are actually homeless. These children deserve every chance in the world to thrive. They are filled to the brim with potential—we just need to have their back.

Please follow the recommendations to update the weighting system to help the most vulnerable Vermonters.

Thank you!

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