



Resolution

Supporting Adjusted Student Weights in Vermont's Education Funding

Whereas, the Vermont constitution requires that all Vermont students have equal education opportunity; and

Whereas, as stated in Brown v. Board of Education (1954), "In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if [they are] denied the opportunity of an education;" and

Whereas, the Brigham decision determined that without equal funding, students cannot receive an equal education opportunity; and

Whereas, Act 60 determined that in order to create the equal funding determined by the Brigham decision, needs of students need to be considered and weighted; and

Whereas, the weighting requirements have not been reviewed or adjusted in 20 years and much has changed in the education landscape in terms of policies, requirements, and understanding of student needs since that time; and

Whereas, the Task Force on the Implementation of the Pupil Weighting Factors Report Recommended as Option 1 that the state adopts "the general set of school-level pupil weights proposed in the PWF Report authors' October 28, 2021, memo;" and

Whereas, the Vermont Senate Committees on Finance and Education unanimously supported the October 28, 2021 weights instead of the Cost Equity proposal, creating S.287; and

Whereas, on March 25, 2022 the Vermont Senate passed S.287 unanimously; and

Whereas, the Vermont House of Representatives is now contemplating replacing student weights with a "Cost Equity" funding approach; and

Whereas, Professor Tammy Kolbe, one of the authors of the "Study of Pupil Weights" commissioned by the legislature, in a presentation to Senate Committee on Finance on January 26, 2022, states the advantages to using Vermont's existing formula with proper calibration include: The weighting system's ability to "Equalize spending, while still allowing locals to make spending decisions" and "Fairly and efficiently adjust for cost differences – Encourage spending by "needier" districts and disincentivize "overspending" by less needy districts;" and

Whereas, In the same presentation, regarding the Cost Equity Proposal, Professor Kolbe states: "Grant amounts based on average cost estimates will either provide too much or too little aid to many districts" and "Where grants operate as a "spending threshold" this may result in new inequities in opportunities to learn among school districts, and within specific categories of students or types of districts;" and

Whereas, the Winooski School Board strongly supports updating the weights because it provides the flexibility for the school district to create school budgets that will best meet the needs of our students and community, as compared to grants (i.e., the cost equity proposal) which often have rules and regulations that need to have usage documented, leading to more bureaucracy and money not spent on student learning and support; and

Whereas, On December 6, 2021, the Winooski City Council Unanimously approved [a letter](#) calling on our leaders in the legislature to create a plan to implement the Report's recommendations, acknowledging that the Pupil Weighting Factors Report of 2019 determined unequivocally that Vermont currently and substantially undercounts students who live in poverty and English language learners for the purpose of allocating education funds, resulting in vast inequities in our school funding system that can only be resolved through the full implementation of the Report's recommendations; and

Whereas, after decades of bearing the negative impacts of inequitable funding for immigrant, rural, and low-income students, waiting 5 more years is too long;

Now, Therefore, be it Resolved, The Winooski City Council again requests that the Vermont House of Representatives adopt the Task Force's Option 1 recommended weights as proposed by the Senate in S.287, and the Council requests that the VT House of Representatives adopt the hybrid weighting proposal for ELL as proposed by the Senate in S.287, and

Be it Further Resolved, the Council requests that the Vermont House and Senate work together to create a three-year transition period or less for the new weights.

Affirmative Vote:

Mayor

Councilor

Councilor

Councilor

Councilor

Adopted

Rejected

Attest (City Clerk)

Approved Date