

## CARES Act Funding for Vermont

### **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund –\*See 12 Permissible Uses of these funds.**

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund provides flexible funds to state education agencies and school districts to support the extra costs associated with their COVID19 preparation and response efforts, including efforts to protect public health while ensuring continuity of learning, with particular attention to the needs of the most vulnerable and at risk students.

- Vermont is forecasted to receive about \$31 million.
- 90% of these funds will go to LEAs, with 10% reserved for SEA level activities.
- Funds will be allocated to states and LEAs based upon their most recent year Title I allocations but are not Title funds and therefore, not subject to the same requirements (e.g., regarding allowable uses or school eligibility).
- Monies must be obligated by LEAs by September 30, 2021. It is possible that the funds will come with an additional 12 months under the Tydings Amendment, however, that is unknown at this time. The State must award the funds to LEAs within one year of the federal issuance of the funds (the State's federal award date).

(c) SUBGRANTS TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES.—Each State shall allocate not less than 90 percent of the grant funds awarded to the State under this section as subgrants to local educational 10 agencies (including charter schools that are local educational agencies) in the State in proportion to the amount of funds such local educational agencies and charter schools that are local educational agencies received under part A of title I of the ESEA of 1965 in the most recent fiscal year.

(d) USES OF FUNDS.—A local educational agency that receives funds under this title may use the funds for any of the following:

\* (1) Any activity authorized by the ESEA of 1965, including the Native Hawaiian Education Act and the Alaska Native Educational Equity, Support, and Assistance Act (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) (“IDEA”), the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) (“the Perkins Act”), or subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.).

(2) Coordination of preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

(3) Providing principals and others school leaders with the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools.

(4) Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each population.

(5) Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies.

(6) Training and professional development for staff of the local educational agency on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.

(7) Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of a local educational agency, including buildings operated by such agency.

(8) Planning for and coordinating during long-term closures, including for how to provide meals to eligible students, how to provide technology for online learning to all students, how to provide guidance for carrying out requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401 et seq.) and how to ensure other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements.

(9) Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the local educational agency that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.

(10) Providing mental health services and supports.

(11) Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.

(12) Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in local educational agencies and continuing to employ existing staff of the local educational agency. (e) STATE FUNDING.—With funds not otherwise allocated under

### **The Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund**

The Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund is designed to give governors flexibility in addressing the impact of COVID-19 on state education systems. Vermont will receive an allocation of approximately \$4.4 million. The funds can be used to:

- Provide emergency support through grants to the LEAs that the SEA deems to have been most significantly impacted by COVID-19.
- Provide emergency support through grants to institutes of higher education serving students within the State that the Governor determines have been most significantly impacted by COVID-19.
- Provide support to any other education-related entity within the State that the Governor deems essential for carrying out emergency educational services to students.



# VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS

*SERVING EDUCATION THROUGH SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICE*

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April 30, 2020

Dear Secretary French,

The VASBO Executive Committee is eager to work with you as we attempt to forecast the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public education in Vermont.

Our understanding of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds is that LEAs will be able to use these funds to serve students. We do not want to underestimate the potential needs that Vermont children will have and we urge you to protect these funds from those who seek to use them for other reasons.

Following are some of the expenses SUs/SDs have incurred and potentially will incur over the next couple of years:

- Childcare for essential workers
- Technology-Chromebooks, software, licenses, upgrades, etc
- Food service, which includes loss of revenues
- Compensatory Services
- Mental health services
- Intensive social and emotional supports for children and their families
- Interventions for students at risk
- Homeless student needs
- Classroom/interior space modifications to accommodate social distancing

Some school districts have provided the AOE with preliminary estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on FY20 budgets. Through follow-up conversations, VASBO has learned that costs are likely to be higher than the responses suggest because many business managers believe that the full fiscal impact will not appear until FY21. There was significant concern that the data provided in response to Brad James' inquiry could paint an incomplete picture of the potential costs and fiscal challenges that schools will face in the coming months, both as the real cost of Continuity of Education emerge, and as we turn toward the next

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school year. Many business managers declined to answer given the uncertainty. For these reasons, we recommend that VASBO be consulted before making any recommendations related to how schools utilize Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds.

The long-term effects that this pandemic will have on many of our students and families will no doubt be catastrophic. We are asking that you work with us to advocate for a change in statute to relax the use of reserve funds and/or surplus at year end. Under current law, a reserve fund must be used for its stated purpose unless the voters specify otherwise in an annual or special vote. An end-of-year surplus is used to offset spending unless the voters choose otherwise, but current statutory language states a surplus must be audited prior to its use. That means an end-of-year surplus in FY2020 is not available for use until FY2022. We propose, a three-year exemption from the current language to allow boards to use either reserve funds or an end-of-year surplus without voter approval to offset unexpected increases in costs.

Lastly, we appreciate all that you are doing to communicate and serve the children in Vermont and we want to thank you for your dedication and support.

Sincerely,

Lisa Perreault, SFO  
VASBO President

CC: VSA, VSBA, VCSEA, VPA

**BUUSD Fund Balances – May 5, 2020**

<b>FUNDS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>CVCC</b>
<b>GENERAL</b>	-\$316,504	\$143,874
<b>TAX STAB.</b>	\$957,961	
<b>CAPITAL</b>	\$317,573	
<b>ASSIGN FY21</b>	-\$200,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$759,030</b>	<b>\$43,874</b>
<b>Projected Yr. End Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>-\$886,090</b>	<b>\$113,997</b>