

AOE Seeks Feedback on State Plan for Education Recovery, Use of Federal COVID-19 Funds for Education

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MONTPELIER, Vt. – The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) is soliciting feedback from stakeholders and the public on the draft [Building for the Future: Vermont’s Plan for Education Recovery and Beyond](#). The plan is a requirement of Vermont’s Act 74 and the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARP Act), and charts how the state will spend federal Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funding, and prioritize these resources for Education Recovery and our pathway out of the pandemic.

The AOE is required to collect stakeholder feedback on this plan before the final version is submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in August. The [full draft plan](#) and a [Summary and Overview](#) are available on the AOE website. Please email comments to AOE.EDInfo@vermont.gov. Comments should be returned by August 13, 2021.

“Vermont schools were very successful in navigating the health and safety requirements last year, and prioritizing student learning,” said Secretary of Education **Dan French**. “With the vast majority of our schools open for in-person or hybrid instruction last year, Vermont had a luxury not afforded to many other states, which was the time to begin the process of identifying what Vermont needs to help students, staff and school systems recover from the pandemic. Working with the Vermont General Assembly, education leaders, educators and community members, we have already begun the important work of developing a plan that is responsive to the needs of Vermonters.”

While the planning process is a critical part of meeting the requirements of state and federal legislation, it is also a key component of the overall Education Recovery process, which began in January 2021. Education Recovery in Vermont focuses on three key focus areas: social emotional learning and mental health, student engagement, and academic success. Each SU/SD was required to develop a plan to assess and address needs in their communities; they will be able to bring to bear significant resources to assist with education recovery from the federal government via the ESSER funds.

“Education recovery is critical to navigating the next phase of the pandemic and setting our schools up for success, not only in addressing the impacts of COVID-19, but also to move forward to address the future of Vermont education,” said Deputy Secretary **Heather Bouchey**. “It is important to keep in mind that the impacts to students are not limited to just academics. Federal funding and this planning effort will make sure Vermont school systems have what they need not only to help our students through the end of this crisis, but to be successful in the coming years.”

Vermont began its Education Recovery planning process in the winter of 2021, with significant engagement with educators, education leaders, and the public. Vermont required supervisory

unions and districts (SU/SDs) to undertake an education recovery planning process in the spring; SU/SDs are also required by the ARP Act to develop their own local plans for spending their ARP ESSER allocations. The AOE worked with the General Assembly to target and prioritize funding, to support school districts' continued needs to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, to implement Education Recovery, and to address longstanding needs and challenges that Vermont must tackle in order for the education system to be successful in the coming years.

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