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H.191

Introduced by Representatives Olsen of Londonderry, Condon of Colchester,
and Komline of Dorset

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; education funding; small schools; categorical grants;
competitive grants

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to replace the
small school support program in 16 V.S.A. § 4015 with a competitive grant
process. Annually, the General Assembly would appropriate an amount from
the Education Fund to be used for this purpose.

An act relating to Small School Competitive Grants Programs

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

Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 4017 is added to read:

§ 4017. SMALL SCHOOL SUPPORT COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Average grade size” means the two-year average enrollment
divided by the number of grades taught in the district on October 1. For
purposes of this calculation, kindergarten and prekindergarten programs shall
be counted together as one grade.

1 (2) “Eligible school district” means a school district that operates at least
2 one school and has an average grade size of 20 or fewer.

3 (3) “Geographic isolation” means that the Secretary has determined, on
4 an annual basis, that the driving times, distances, and travel routes are an
5 obstacle to transporting students, consistent with the methodology used by the
6 Secretary in response to 2009 Acts and Resolves No. 153, Sec. 21(1). A
7 determination by the Secretary of whether a district is geographically isolated
8 under this section shall be final.

9 (4) “School district” means a town, city, incorporated, interstate, or
10 union school district or a joint contract school established under subchapter 1
11 of chapter 11 of this title.

12 (b) Small schools support competitive grant program. Annually, the
13 Secretary shall award small schools support grants on a competitive basis to
14 eligible school districts that have applied for the grant. When evaluating and
15 prioritizing grant applications, the Secretary’s considerations shall include:

16 (1) the relative geographic isolation of the school district;

17 (2) the district’s student to staff ratios;

18 (3) the extent to which there is excess capacity in neighboring districts;

19 (4) the district’s geographic proximity to other districts in which there is
20 excess capacity; and

1 (5) the district's demonstrated intent to consolidate its governance
2 structure with one or more other districts.

3 (c) Annually, the General Assembly shall appropriate from the Education
4 Fund the total amount available for grants awarded under this section.

5 (d) The Board shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to
6 administer this section.

7 Sec. 2. REPEAL

8 16 V.S.A. § 4015 (small school support) is repealed.

9 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATES

10 (a) Sec. 1 shall take effect on July 1, 2016 and shall apply to grants made
11 for fiscal year 2017 and after.

12 (b) Sec. 2 shall take effect on July 1, 2016.

13 (c) This section shall take effect on July 1, 2015.