

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

BILL NO. 36-0064

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

March 28, 2025

An Act amending title 33 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 111, section 3100i aligning the disbursement and spending limitations of funds allotted to public schools from the Education Initiative Fund with the realities of academic planning, ensuring that funds are used to maximize student success

PROPOSED BY: Senators Kurt A. Vialet and Angel L. Bolques, Jr.

WHEREAS, funds are allocated for public schools annually in October from the Education Initiative Fund into each school's imprest fund checking account to be expended by the following September, creating a restrictive spending window;

WHEREAS, the allotted funds are not distributed to schools until March, significantly reducing the time available for effective planning and utilization of resources;

WHEREAS, the summer break beginning in June further shortens the timeframe, leaving administrators with only a brief period to plan and utilize funds before the September deadline;

WHEREAS, when school resumes in August, administrators are left with just one month to spend remaining funds, often leading to rushed or inefficient expenditures that do not align with long-term educational priorities;

1 **WHEREAS**, the current funding timeline limits schools’ ability to make strategic
2 investments in staffing, infrastructure, instructional materials, and student programs;

3 **WHEREAS**, any funds unexpended by the September 30th deadline are returned to the
4 Education Initiative Fund, reducing the total amount available for direct educational use;

5 **WHEREAS**, the requirement to return unspent funds results in schools expending less
6 than their full allotment, thereby hindering their ability to implement critical programs,
7 purchase necessary resources, and enhance student achievement;

8 **WHEREAS**, the failure to fully expend allocated funds may create a misleading
9 perception that schools require less funding than is actually needed and may potentially lead to
10 reduced future appropriations and negatively impact long-term educational planning;

11 **WHEREAS**, allowing funds to carry over beyond the fiscal year would minimize
12 wasteful spending, improve financial planning, and ensure that resources are fully utilized to
13 maximize student success;

14 **WHEREAS**, aligning school funding with the realities of academic planning will ensure
15 resources are being used strategically to maximize student outcomes rather than being spent
16 hastily to comply with unrealistic deadlines; and

17 **WHEREAS**, amending the law to make funds “available until expended” will provide
18 schools with the necessary flexibility needed to allocate resources effectively ensuring that
19 financial decisions are based on educational priorities rather than arbitrary spending deadlines;

20 Now, Therefore,

21 ***Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

22 **SECTION 1.** Title 33 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 111, section 3100i is amended as
23 follows:

24 (a) In subsection (c), strike the third, and fourth sentences; and

(b) Strike the language in subsection (e) and insert the following new language:

“All sums allotted in a fiscal year shall remain available until expended”.

BILL SUMMARY

This bill amends title 33 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 111, section 3100i to align school funding with the realities of academic planning, ensuring that funds are used to maximize student success rather than being spent hurriedly to meet arbitrary deadlines and make allotted make funds “available until expended” allowing schools the flexibility to utilize funds in a manner that best supports educational goals and ensures the full use of allocated funds. The bill also deletes the formula that was based on student enrollment over 500 and divides funds equally among schools.

BR25-0427/February 24, 2025/PFA/Revised/March 3, 2025