

Violet's Bill to Reform School Spending Advances, Easing 'Use It or Lose It' Rule

Bill 36-0064, approved by the Education Committee, would allow public schools year-round access to discretionary funds, ending the “spend it or lose it” dilemma, while strengthening oversight with monthly reports and documented expenditures.

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Senator Kurt Violet on Tues. June 17, 2025. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE.

The Committee on Education and Workforce Development on Tuesday voted in favor of [Bill 36-0064](#), a measure sponsored by Senator Kurt Violet relating to public schools' imprest funds.

The bill amends title 33 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 111 by “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.”

A former educator, Mr. Violet said he was well aware that late disbursements impact the way schools can spend these discretionary funds. “It is hard for the school administrator to spend those monies by that September 30 deadline. If the monies are not spent, it is deducted from your next disbursement...It doesn't go over to the next year,” he explained. Mr. Violet was hopeful that the bill would create flexibility and “allow them to have access to funds for the entire year, because a lot of the issues that schools are facing can be solved by this.”

Invited to testify was the Department of Education, which supported much of the bill. In fact, recommendations from VIDE were incorporated into the bill via an amendment that served as a substitute to the original language in the draft legislation.

Assistant Commissioner Victor Somme III agreed that the current stipulations create a “detrimental spend it or lose it situation.” Therefore, the bill would “promote year-round educational planning, enhance the effective use of resources and reduce waste caused by hasty spending.” Mr. Somme also testified that “eliminating the risk of losing unspent funds would also ensure schools have access to resources during the summer months for preparation, and provide critical startup funding at the beginning of each school year.”

VIDE has recommended that the Legislature “incorporate a statutory framework for permissible and restricted expenditures.” As a means of strengthening oversight, the bill requires principals to “provide monthly financial reports detailing expenditures to the commissioner of Education and to the district superintendent, along with required receipts.”

“The combined effect of the bill and the proposed amendments will empower school leaders to make proactive and transparent financial decisions,” said Mr. Somme. He offered that by “eliminating unnecessary lapses and improving accountability, it may generate long-term savings and maximize the return on educational investments.”

Committee members agreed.

“I think that this bill will finally resolve all the issues that we've been hearing about with the spending of money by our principals. It will hold them accountable. It will provide the transparency that we need,” said Senator Marise James. “I got a text from a principal already that said, ‘this is a great bill.’”

The bill will now be considered in the Committee on Rules and Judiciary.