

1 H.874

2 Introduced by Committee on Education

3 Date:

4 Subject: adult education; adult diploma; flexible pathways; community
5 schools; postsecondary opportunities; uniform chart of accounts

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to make several
7 amendments to education law, including:

8 (1) repealing the High School Completion Program and making changes
9 to the State's adult education and literacy program;

10 (2) continuing the funding for the community schools program created
11 under 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 67;

12 (3) requiring school districts to include military-related options in career
13 development and postsecondary planning resources as part of the Flexible
14 Pathways Initiative and a student's personalized learning plan;

15 (4) requiring the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation to include
16 information regarding all military-related options available for postsecondary
17 planning and financial aid opportunities in all planning resources it produces;

18 (5) requiring a report on the postgraduation career and settlement
19 behaviors of students attending Vermont colleges and universities; and

20 (6) codifying the requirement that supervisory unions use the Uniform
21 Chart of Accounts to report all school finance data.

1 An act relating to miscellaneous changes in education laws

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

3 * * * Flexible Pathways * * *

4 Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 945 is amended to read:

5 § 945. ~~ADULT DIPLOMA PROGRAM; GENERAL EDUCATIONAL~~
6 ~~DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM~~ ADULT EDUCATION AND
7 SECONDARY CREDENTIAL PROGRAM

8 (a) The Secretary shall maintain an Adult Diploma Program (ADP), which
9 shall be an assessment process administered by the Agency through which ~~an~~
10 ~~individual~~ any Vermont resident who is at least ~~20~~ 16 years of age; who has
11 not received a high school diploma; and who is not enrolled in a public or
12 approved independent school, postsecondary institution, or home study
13 program can receive a local high school diploma granted by one of the
14 Program's participating high schools.

15 (b) The Secretary shall maintain a General Educational Development
16 (GED) Program, which it shall administer jointly with the GED testing service
17 and approved local testing centers and through which ~~an adult individual a~~
18 Vermont resident who is at least 16 years of age ~~and~~; who has not received a
19 high school diploma; and who is not enrolled in secondary public or approved
20 independent school, postsecondary institution, or home study program can

1 receive a secondary school equivalency certificate based on successful
2 completion of the GED tests.

3 (c) The Secretary may provide additional programs designed to address the
4 individual needs and circumstances of adult students, particularly students with
5 the lowest levels of literacy skills.

6 (d) The diagnostic portion of the Program referenced in subsection 4011(f)
7 of this title shall be used as a tool to evaluate the educational needs of and
8 skills gained by individual students, but shall not be used to exclude
9 individuals from the Program or to condition payments to local education and
10 literacy providers.

11 Sec. 2. REPEAL

12 16 V.S.A. § 943 (High School Completion Program) is repealed.

13 Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 4011 is amended to read:

14 § 4011. EDUCATION PAYMENTS

15 (a) Annually, the General Assembly shall appropriate funds to pay for
16 statewide education spending and a portion of a base education amount for
17 each adult ~~diploma~~ education and secondary credential program student.

18 * * *

19 (f) Annually, the Secretary shall pay to a ~~department or agency~~ local adult
20 education and literacy provider, as defined in section 942 of this title, that
21 provides an adult ~~diploma~~ education and secondary credential program an

1 amount equal to 26 percent of the base education amount for each student who
2 ~~completed~~ completes the diagnostic ~~portion~~ portions of the program, based on
3 an average of the previous two years.

4 * * *

5 Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 944 is amended to read:

6 § 944. DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

7 * * *

8 (b) Students.

9 (1) A Vermont resident who has completed grade 10 but has not
10 received a high school diploma is eligible to participate in the Program if:

11 (A) the student:

12 (i) is enrolled in:

13 (I) a Vermont public school, including a Vermont career
14 technical center;

15 (II) a public school in another state or an approved independent
16 school that is designated as the public secondary school for the student's
17 district of residence; or

18 (III) an approved independent school in Vermont to which the
19 student's district of residence pays publicly funded tuition on behalf of the
20 student;

1 that the recipient has made insufficient progress towards developing and
2 implementing community school programs. In determining which eligible
3 recipients shall receive funding, the Secretary shall take into account relative
4 need, based on the extent to which community school program services are
5 needed and the extent to which the eligible recipient seeks to offer them.

6 (2) In determining which eligible recipients shall receive funding and
7 the amount of funding and to advance the principles for Vermont's trauma-
8 informed system of care under 33 V.S.A. § 3401, the Secretary of Education
9 shall collaborate with the Director of Trauma Prevention and Resilience
10 Development and the Vermont Child and Family Trauma Work Group.

11 (3) The Agency of Education shall inform all eligible recipients of the
12 availability of funding under this act and, for those eligible recipients most in
13 need of this funding, shall educate these eligible recipients on community
14 school programs and their benefits. The Agency of Education shall also advise
15 all eligible recipients of other sources of funding that may be available to
16 advance the purpose of this act.

17 (d) Use of funding.

18 (1) A recipient of funding under this act shall use the funding to:

19 (A) if a needs and assets assessment has not been conducted within
20 the prior three years that substantially conforms with the requirements in this

1 subdivision, then, in collaboration with the site-based leadership team, conduct
2 a needs and assets assessment that includes:

3 (i) where available, and where applicable, student demographic,
4 academic achievement, and school climate data, disaggregated by major
5 demographic groups, including race, ethnicity, English language proficiency,
6 students with individualized education plans, and students eligible for free or
7 reduced-price lunch status;

8 (ii) access to and need for integrated student supports;

9 (iii) access to and need for expanded and enriched learning time
10 and opportunities;

11 (iv) school funding information, including federal, State, local,
12 and private education funding and per-pupil spending, based on actual salaries
13 of personnel assigned to the eligible school;

14 (v) information on the number, qualifications, and stability of
15 school staff, including the number and percentage of fully certified teachers
16 and rates of teacher turnover; and

17 (vi) active family and community engagement information,
18 including:

19 (I) family and community needs based on surveys, information
20 from public meetings, or information gathered by other means;

1 (II) measures of family and community engagement in the
2 eligible schools, including volunteering in schools, attendance at back-to-
3 school nights, and parent-teacher conferences;

4 (III) efforts to provide culturally and linguistically relevant
5 communication between schools and families; and

6 (IV) access to and need for family and community engagement
7 activities;

8 (B) hire a community school coordinator to, in collaboration with the
9 site-based leadership team, develop and implement community school
10 programs or designate a community school coordinator from existing
11 personnel and, in collaboration with the site-based leadership team, augment
12 work already being performed to develop and implement community school
13 programs; and

14 (C) if the recipient has not fully implemented positive behavioral
15 integrated supports under 16 V.S.A. § 2902, provide professional development
16 to staff on positive behavioral integrated supports and implement those
17 supports.

18 (2) A recipient of funding under this act may use the funding to, in
19 collaboration with the site-based leadership team, develop and implement a
20 plan to improve literacy outcomes and objectively assess those outcomes.

1 (3) If a needs and assets assessment has not been conducted under
2 subdivision (1)(A) of this subsection within the prior three years, the first year
3 of funding shall be used to conduct the needs and assets assessment of the
4 school to determine what is necessary to develop community school programs
5 and an action plan to implement community school programs. During ~~the~~
6 ~~second and third~~ subsequent years of ~~the~~ funding, the community school
7 coordinator shall, in collaboration with the site-based leadership team, oversee
8 the implementation of community school programs.

9 (e) Evaluation.

10 (1) At the end of each year of funding, each recipient shall undergo an
11 evaluation designed by the Agency of Education using its equity lens tool.

12 (2) On or before each of December 15, ~~2022 and 2024~~ and 2025, the
13 Agency of Education shall report to the General Assembly and the Governor
14 on the impact of the funding under this act. The report shall be made publicly
15 available on the Agency of Education's website.

16 (f) Ability to operate as a community school. Any school district or school,
17 regardless of whether it receives funding under this act, may function as a
18 community school as defined in this section.

1 Sec. 6. LEGISLATIVE INTENT AND FINDINGS; APPROPRIATION;
2 COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

3 (a) Intent and findings. It is the intent of the General Assembly to continue
4 to fund the community schools program. Consistent with the intent of the
5 Flexible Pathways Initiative articulated in 16 V.S.A. § 941, and consistent with
6 national research, the General Assembly finds that community schools provide
7 a framework to encourage and support supervisory unions to be creative as
8 they develop learning communities that integrate student supports, expand and
9 enrich learning opportunities, engage families and communities, develop
10 collaborative leadership, and ensure safe, inclusive, and equitable learning
11 environments.

12 (b) Appropriations. Notwithstanding any provision of 16 V.S.A. § 4025 to
13 the contrary, the sum of \$1,900,000.00 is appropriated from the Education
14 Fund to the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2025 for the purpose of
15 providing funding to school districts for the community schools program
16 created under 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 67, Sec. 3, as amended by Sec. 5 of
17 this act.

18 (c) Agency use of funds. The Agency of Education may set aside:

19 (1) not more than one percent of the funds appropriated under
20 subsection (b) of this section for informational and technical assistance, such

1 as the availability and use of funding for eligible recipients as defined under
2 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 67, Sec. 3, as amended by Sec. 5 of this act; and
3 (2) not more than two percent of the funds appropriated under
4 subsection (b) of this section for the evaluations required under 2021 Acts and
5 Resolves No. 67, Sec. 3, as amended by Sec. 5 of this act.

6 Sec. 7. 16 V.S.A. § 941 is amended to read:

7 § 941. FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

8 (a) There is created within the Agency a Flexible Pathways Initiative:

9 (1) to encourage and support the creativity of school districts as they
10 develop and expand high-quality educational experiences that are an integral
11 part of secondary education in the evolving 21st ~~Century~~ century classroom;

12 (2) to promote opportunities for Vermont students to achieve
13 postsecondary readiness through high-quality educational experiences that
14 acknowledge individual goals, learning styles, and abilities; and

15 (3) to increase the rates of secondary school completion and
16 postsecondary continuation and retention in Vermont.

17 (b) The Secretary shall develop, publish, and regularly update guidance, in
18 the form of technical assistance, sharing of best practices and model
19 documents, legal interpretations, and other support designed to assist school
20 districts:

1 (1) ~~to~~ To identify and support secondary students who require additional
2 assistance to succeed in school and to identify ways in which individual
3 students would benefit from flexible pathways to graduation;

4 (2) ~~to~~ To work with every student in grade ~~7~~ seven through grade 12 in
5 an ongoing personalized learning planning process that:

6 (A) identifies the student's emerging abilities, aptitude, and
7 disposition;

8 (B) includes participation by families and other engaged adults;

9 (C) guides decisions regarding course offerings and other high-
10 quality educational experiences; ~~and~~

11 (D) identifies career and postsecondary planning options using
12 resources provided pursuant to subdivision (4) of this subsection (b); and

13 ~~(D)~~(E) is documented by a personalized learning plan;

14 (3) ~~to~~ To create opportunities for secondary students to pursue flexible
15 pathways to graduation that:

16 (A) increase aspiration and encourage postsecondary continuation of
17 training and education;

18 (B) are an integral component of a student's personalized learning
19 plan; and

20 (C) include:

1 (i) applied or work-based learning opportunities, including career
2 and career technical education and internships;

3 (ii) virtual learning and blended learning;

4 (iii) dual enrollment opportunities as set forth in section 944 of
5 this title;

6 (iv) early college programs as set forth in subsection 4011(e) of
7 this title; and

8 (v) ~~the High School Completion Program as set forth in section~~
9 ~~943 of this title; and [Repealed.]~~

10 (vi) ~~the Adult Diploma Program and General Educational~~
11 ~~Development Program~~ adult education and secondary credential opportunities
12 as set forth in section 945 of this title; and

13 (4) ~~to~~ To provide students, beginning ~~no~~ not later than in grade ~~7~~ seven,
14 with career development and postsecondary planning resources to ensure that
15 they are able to take full advantage of the opportunities available within the
16 flexible pathways to graduation and to achieve their career and postsecondary
17 education and training goals. Resources provided pursuant to this subdivision
18 shall include information regarding the admissions process and requirements
19 necessary to proceed with any and all military-related opportunities.

20 (c) Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed as discouraging or
21 limiting the authority of any school district to develop or continue to provide

1 educational opportunities for its students that are otherwise permitted,
2 including the provision of Advanced Placement courses.

3 (d) An individual entitlement or private right of action shall not arise from
4 creation of a personalized learning plan.

5 Sec. 8. 16 V.S.A. § 2828 is added to read:

6 § 2828. PLANNING RESOURCES

7 The Corporation shall include information regarding all military-related
8 options available for postsecondary planning and financial aid opportunities in
9 all planning resources it produces.

10 Sec. 9. REVIEW OF FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS; INTENT

11 It is the intent of the General Assembly to continue to review the Flexible
12 Pathways Initiative under 16 V.S.A. chapter 23, subchapter 2 to ensure the
13 Initiative provides sustainable and effective high-quality educational
14 experiences that increase rates of secondary school competition and
15 postsecondary continuation in Vermont.

16 * * * Career and Settlement Behaviors of Postsecondary Graduates * * *

17 Sec. 10. POSTGRADUATION CAREER AND SETTLEMENT

18 BEHAVIORS OF STUDENTS ATTENDING VERMONT

19 POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS; REPORT

20 (a) On or before July 1, 2025, the Agencies of Education and of Commerce
21 and Community Development and the Department of Labor, in consultation

1 with Vermont's public and private postsecondary education institutions, shall
2 issue a written report to the General Assembly on the postgraduation career
3 and settlement behaviors of students attending Vermont colleges and
4 universities. At a minimum, the report shall include:

5 (1) an analysis and discussion of why Vermont is last in the country in
6 percentage of college students who stay in the same state in which the school
7 they graduated from is located;

8 (2) information on the types of degrees most commonly attained at
9 Vermont-based postsecondary education institutions;

10 (3) a discussion of the obstacles preventing graduates from staying in
11 Vermont, including whether housing options factor into settlement decisions;
12 and

13 (4) a comprehensive plan to increase the percentage of Vermont
14 graduates who plan to live and work in Vermont for at least five years
15 postgraduation, which shall include the following initiatives:

16 (A) better college-career pipelines between higher education
17 institutions and employers in Vermont;

18 (B) expanding career counseling and career development services on
19 campuses, focused on Vermont industries and companies;

20 (C) increased campus-community ties through service, cultural
21 exchanges, and other community initiatives; and

1 (D) incentives, including preferential or streamlined pathways to
2 licensure for graduating students.

3 (b) In preparing this report, the entities listed in subsection (a) of this
4 section shall have the administrative and technical support of the Agency of
5 Education.

6 * * * Uniform Chart of Accounts * * *

7 Sec. 11. 16 V.S.A. § 326 is added to read:

8 § 326. UNIFORM CHART OF ACCOUNTS

9 (a) GASB compliant Uniform Chart of Accounts and Financial Reporting
10 requirements shall be established and maintained by the Agency of Education,
11 which shall:

12 (1) be comprehensive in respect to compliance with federal funds
13 reporting requirements; and

14 (2) provide the financial information necessary for State and local
15 education decision makers in regard to specific program costs and evaluation
16 of student results.

17 (b) All supervisory unions and supervisory districts shall use the Uniform
18 Chart of Accounts to record and report all school finance data.

