

1 H.709

2 Introduced by Representatives Peltz of Woodbury, Clark of Vergennes,
3 Donovan of Burlington, Geier of South Burlington, Gilbert of
4 Fairfax, Jerman of Essex, Mook of Bennington, Waite-Simpson
5 of Essex and Zenie of Colchester

6 Referred to Committee on

7 Date:

8 Subject: Education; postsecondary education

9 Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to create a new council to integrate
10 the educational programs and policies of Vermont's public schools and
11 postsecondary institutions. It would also eliminate the commission on higher
12 education funding and require the University of Vermont, the Vermont State
13 Colleges, and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Inc. jointly to
14 assume the commission's responsibilities.

15 An act relating to creating a prekindergarten–16 council

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

17 Sec. 1. POLICY

18 (a) It is the policy of the state of Vermont to encourage and enable all
19 Vermonters to acquire postsecondary education and training in order for the

1 state to develop and maintain a highly educated, competitive, and engaged
2 citizenry.

3 (b) It is crucial that the prekindergarten–12 educational system and the
4 higher education community work together to increase postsecondary
5 aspirations, the enrollment of Vermont high school graduates in higher
6 education programs, the postsecondary degree completion rates of Vermont
7 students, and public awareness of the economic, intellectual, and societal
8 benefits of higher education.

9 Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 2905 is added to read:

10 § 2905. PREKINDERGARTEN–16 COUNCIL

11 (a) A prekindergarten–16 council (the “council”) is created for the purpose
12 of integrating the education programs and policies of the state of Vermont and
13 creating an education system that begins in prekindergarten programs and
14 extends through postsecondary education.

15 (b) The council shall be composed of:

16 (1) the commissioner of education;

17 (2) the commissioner of labor;

18 (3) the president of the University of Vermont;

19 (4) the chancellor of the Vermont state colleges;

20 (5) the president of the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Inc.;

21 (6) the president of the association of Vermont independent colleges;

1 (7) a principal of a secondary school selected by the executive director
2 of the Vermont Principals' Association;

3 (8) a member of a school board selected by the executive director of the
4 Vermont School Boards Association, Inc.;

5 (9) a superintendent selected by the executive director of the Vermont
6 Superintendents' Association, Inc.;

7 (10) a teacher selected by the president of the Vermont-National
8 Education Association;

9 (11) a representative from the business and industry community selected
10 by the president of the Vermont Business Roundtable;

11 (12) a member of the house of representatives who shall be selected by
12 the speaker and shall serve until the beginning of the biennium immediately
13 after the one in which the member is appointed;

14 (13) a member of the senate who shall be selected by the committee on
15 committees and shall serve until the beginning of the biennium immediately
16 after the one in which the member is appointed; and

17 (14) the secretary of administration.

18 (c) The council shall develop and regularly update a statewide plan for
19 prekindergarten through postsecondary education, including strategies to:

20 (1) ensure that at least 60 percent of the adult population will have
21 earned an associate's or higher-level degree by 2020;

1 (2) improve educational quality;

2 (3) promote early career awareness and nurture postsecondary

3 aspirations;

4 (4) develop programs that guarantee college admission and financial aid

5 for low income students who successfully complete early commitment

6 requirements;

7 (5) enhance student engagement in secondary school, ensuring that

8 learning opportunities are relevant, rigorous, and personalized and that all

9 students aspire to and prepare for success in postsecondary learning

10 opportunities;

11 (6) institute a statewide dual enrollment program designed to serve

12 students of varying interests and abilities, including those who are likely to

13 attend college, those who are from groups that attend college at

14 disproportionately low rates, and those who are prepared for a postsecondary

15 curriculum prior to graduation from secondary school;

16 (7) develop statewide college and career readiness standards and

17 assessments;

18 (8) create incentives for adults to begin or continue their postsecondary

19 education; and

1 (9) ensure implementation of a prekindergarten–16 longitudinal data
2 system, which it shall use to assess the success of the plan required by this
3 subsection.

4 (d) A subcommittee of the council (“the higher education subcommittee”)
5 shall perform any statutory duties required of it in connection with the higher
6 education endowment trust fund. The following members of the council shall
7 be the members of the higher education subcommittee: the president of the
8 University of Vermont, the chancellor of the Vermont state colleges, the
9 president of the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Inc., the president of
10 the association of Vermont independent colleges, the representative from the
11 business and industry community, the member of the house of representatives,
12 the senator, and the secretary of administration.

13 (e) The executive, legislative, and higher education staff shall provide
14 support to the council as appropriate to accomplish its tasks. Primary
15 administrative support shall be provided by the legislative council.

16 (f) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the general assembly,
17 legislative members of the council shall be entitled to compensation and
18 reimbursement for expenses as provided in 2 V.S.A. § 406, which shall be paid
19 for by the general assembly. Members of the council identified in subdivisions
20 (b)(7)–(11) of this section shall be reimbursed at the per-diem rate established
21 in 32 V.S.A. § 1010, which shall be equally apportioned among the

1 administration, the University of Vermont, the Vermont state colleges, the
2 Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Inc., and the association of Vermont
3 independent colleges.

4 (g) The council shall elect one of its members to be chair.

5 (h) The council shall meet at least six times yearly.

6 Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 2885 is amended to read:

7 § 2885. VERMONT HIGHER EDUCATION ENDOWMENT TRUST FUND

8 * * *

9 (d) During the first quarter of each fiscal year, ~~beginning in the year 2000,~~
10 ~~the commission on higher education funding~~ higher education subcommittee of
11 the prekindergarten–16 council created in section 2905 of this title may
12 authorize the state treasurer to make an amount equal to up to two percent of
13 the assets available to Vermont public institutions for the purpose of creating
14 or increasing a permanent endowment. In this subsection, “assets” means the
15 average of the fund’s market values at the end of each quarter for the most
16 recent 12 quarters, or all quarters of operation, whichever is less. Therefore,
17 up to two percent of the fund assets are hereby annually allocated pursuant to
18 this section, provided that the amount allocated shall not exceed an amount
19 which would bring the fund balance below the initial funding made in fiscal
20 year 2000 plus any additional contributions to the principal. One-half of the
21 amount allocated shall be available to the University of Vermont and one-half

1 shall be available to the Vermont state colleges. The University of Vermont or
2 Vermont state colleges may withdraw funds upon certification by the
3 withdrawing institution to the commissioner of finance and management that it
4 has received private donations which are double the amount it plans to
5 withdraw.

6 (e) Annually, by September 30, the state treasurer shall render a financial
7 report on the receipts, disbursements and earnings of the fund for the preceding
8 fiscal year to the ~~commission on higher education funding~~ higher education
9 subcommittee.

10 (f) All balances in the fund at the end of any fiscal year shall be carried
11 forward and used only for the purposes set forth in this section. Earnings of
12 the fund which are not withdrawn pursuant to this section shall remain in the
13 fund.

14 (g) The University of Vermont, the Vermont state colleges, and the
15 Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Inc. shall review expenditures made
16 from the fund, evaluate the impact of the expenditures on higher education in
17 Vermont, and report this information to the general assembly each year in
18 January.

19 Sec. 4. REPEAL

20 16 V.S.A. § 2886 (commission on higher education funding) is repealed,
21 and the commission ceases to exist on the effective date of this section.

- 1 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE
- 2 This act shall take effect on passage.