

1 H.723

2 Introduced by Representatives Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Campion of
3 Bennington, Cupoli of Rutland City, Goodwin of Weston,
4 Juskiewicz of Cambridge, Lewis of Berlin, McFaun of Barre
5 Town, Stuart of Brattleboro, and Waite-Simpson of Essex

6 Referred to Committee on

7 Date:

8 Subject: Education; secondary school; graduation; assessment

9 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the
10 State Board of Education to establish a program to award a Vermont Enhanced
11 Diploma to secondary students who attain a high level of academic
12 achievement as demonstrated by both the rigor of academic coursework and
13 performance on standardized assessments.

14 An act relating to the Vermont Enhanced Diploma

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

16 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

17 (a) Implementation of the recently adopted Common Core State Standards
18 and Next Generation Science Standards will provide the foundation for robust
19 and relevant curricula throughout the State, reflecting the knowledge students
20 need in order to be successful citizens in the 21st century.

1 (b) Taken together, the new standards and related assessments will assist
2 the State Board to establish goals for public education to accomplish in
3 Vermont and monitor the achievement of those goals, including whether
4 educational opportunities are available equitably throughout the State.

5 (c) The Vermont Enhanced Diploma Program will provide an additional
6 level of accountability, while also motivating rigorous effort and superior
7 academic accomplishment.

8 Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 165a is added to read:

9 § 165a. VERMONT ENHANCED DIPLOMA

10 (a) The State Board shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to
11 establish and administer a program to award a Vermont Enhanced Diploma to
12 each Vermont secondary student who attains a high level of academic
13 achievement as demonstrated by both the rigor of the student's academic
14 coursework and his or her performance on standardized assessments. The
15 program shall include:

16 (1) rigorous, objective, statewide academic examinations that are
17 aligned with the standards adopted under section 164 of this title in:

18 (A) mathematics, English language arts, and science; and

19 (B) foreign languages, U.S. history and government, world history,
20 and geography;

1 (2) minimum examination scores and other criteria necessary to achieve
2 a Vermont Enhanced Diploma; and

3 (3) a process by which a student may submit evidence of his or her
4 examination scores to the University of Vermont and any of the Vermont State
5 Colleges in lieu of other standardized college admission test results.

6 (b) The State Board may adopt rules that establish:

7 (1) additional criteria for awarding other types of enhanced diplomas,
8 such as an enhanced diploma with honors or an enhanced diploma with a
9 career technical education certification;

10 (2) alternative criteria or methods of assessment, or both, for students
11 with disabilities and students who are English language learners.

12 (c) The State Board shall ensure that the examinations required under this
13 section are available on at least an annual basis to each Vermont secondary
14 student, including a student enrolled in a home study program, who wishes to
15 be assessed. Satisfactory completion of one or more of the examinations is not
16 required for graduation from secondary school except to the extent that a
17 school district selects an examination as the final assessment for a particular
18 course.

19 (d) The State Board shall assist the University of Vermont and the Vermont
20 State Colleges to integrate scores from examinations administered under this
21 section into each institution's admissions process.

1 Sec. 3. REPORTS

2 On or before January 15, 2015, the State Board of Education shall submit a
3 written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education setting out
4 the details of the program established in Sec. 2 of this act and identifying any
5 legislation that may be necessary for full implementation. Notwithstanding the
6 provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), the State Board shall submit annual status
7 reports to both Committees in January 2016 through January 2022.

8 Sec. 4. IMPLEMENTATION

9 (a) Annual examinations in the subjects areas identified in Sec. 2 of this
10 act, 16 V.S.A. § 165a(a)(1)(A) (mathematics, English language arts, and
11 science), shall be administered beginning in the 2016–2017 academic year.

12 (b) Annual examinations in the subjects areas identified in Sec. 2 of this
13 act, 16 V.S.A. § 165a(a)(1)(B) (foreign languages, U.S. history and
14 government, world history, and geography), shall be administered beginning in
15 the 2017–2018 academic year; provided, however, that:

16 (1) the State Board of Education may choose to administer examinations
17 in fewer than all of these subject areas in the 2017–2018 academic year and
18 add additional subject areas in each year thereafter; and

19 (2) examinations in all subject areas shall be administered beginning no
20 later than the 2020–2021 academic year.

1 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

2 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2014, and shall be implemented

3 pursuant to Sec. 4 of this act.