

Here is a draft of the language I put together for the Governor's higher Ed proposal. It is not complete or final but it includes the broad strokes of the program. The final wording should be in the budget bill.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Step Up program

(a) Program creation. There is created a statewide Step Up Program to provide outreach, supportive advising, and up to five free courses toward a college degree to young Vermonters who have graduated from high school but have not continued on to college. The Program shall include college courses offered on the campus of an accredited public postsecondary institution. The Program may include online college courses or components.

(b) Students.

(1) A Vermont resident who has completed grade 12 and has received a high school diploma is eligible to participate in the Program if:

(A) the student:

(i) is age 18 - 25;

(ii) has completed the Governor's Career Readiness Program at the Community College of Vermont;

(B) the postsecondary institution has determined that the student is sufficiently prepared to succeed in a postsecondary course, which can be determined in part by the assessment tool or tools identified by the participating postsecondary institution.

(2) An eligible student may enroll in up to five courses for which neither the student nor the student's parent or guardian shall be required to pay tuition. A student is not required to enroll in five courses in one semester but shall enroll in a minimum of one course in each consecutive semester in order to remain eligible for additional tuition-free courses.

(c) Public postsecondary institutions. The Vermont State Colleges and the University of Vermont shall work together to provide Step Up opportunities throughout the State.

(1) The public postsecondary institution shall maintain the postsecondary academic record of each participating student and provide transcripts on request.

(2) To the extent permitted under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the public postsecondary institution shall collect and send data related to student participation and success to Secretary and shall send data to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation necessary for the Corporation's federal reporting requirements.

(3) The public postsecondary institution shall accept as full payment the tuition set forth in subsection (e) of this section.

(d) Program management. The Community College of Vermont (CCV) shall manage or may contract for the management of the Step Up Program in Vermont by:

(1) marketing the Step Up Program to Vermont students and their families including changing the name of the Program;

(2) assisting postsecondary partners to develop memoranda of understanding, when requested;

(3) convening regular meetings of interested parties to explore and develop improved student support services;

(4) coordinating the use of technology to ensure access and coordination of the Program;

(5) reviewing program costs;

(6) evaluating all aspects of the Step Up Program and ensuring overall quality and accountability; and

(7) performing other necessary or related duties.

(e) Tuition and funding.

(1) Tuition shall be paid to public postsecondary institutions in Vermont as follows: