

1 H.852

2 Introduced by Representatives Botzow of Pownal, Marcotte of Coventry,
3 Frenier of Chelsea, Hill of Wolcott, Kimbell of Woodstock,
4 McCoy of Poultney, Myers of Essex, O'Sullivan of Burlington,
5 Sheldon of Middlebury, Stuart of Brattleboro, and Sullivan of
6 Dorset

7 Referred to Committee on

8 Date:

9 Subject: Commerce and trade; workforce development

10 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create the
11 framework for a public engagement process, and assign duties to the State
12 Workforce Development Board, the Department of Labor, Career Technical
13 Education Centers, and other stakeholders, to modernize Vermont's workforce
14 development system.

15 An act relating to modernizing the workforce development system

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

17 Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND INTENT

18 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

1 (1) A skilled and productive workforce is critical for the economic
2 vitality of Vermont. However, our State currently faces several key labor
3 market challenges:

4 (A) Employers throughout our State are in the midst of a skills crisis
5 due to the lack of qualified workers to fill a wide range of jobs across multiple
6 sectors, today and into the future.

7 (B) Vermont has maintained one of the lowest unemployment rates in
8 the country, and there are not enough workers at all skill levels to fill current
9 job vacancies.

10 (C) Many Vermonters are underemployed and it is not uncommon to
11 hear eligible workers indicate they struggle to find a job that matches their
12 training or interests, or both.

13 (D) Parents, youths and families are increasingly anxious about a
14 future where the next generation of workers may not have the same
15 opportunities to prosper as the previous one.

16 (2) A major part of the solution to these challenges lies in Vermont's
17 building an effective and efficient State workforce development system that is
18 a diverse public-private partnership between employers, government, and
19 education and training providers designed to ensure that individuals have the
20 skills needed by businesses.

21 (b) Intent. In adopting this act, it is the intent of the General Assembly:

1 (1) to commit to a redesign of Vermont’s workforce development and
2 training system through a concerted three-year effort led by the State
3 Workforce Development Board, in partnership with key administration
4 partners, as well as stakeholders from the business, government, nonprofit
5 training provider, and the education communities; and

6 (2) to create a framework for this three-year process that will ultimately
7 result in:

8 (A) a workforce development system under which all Vermonters
9 who want to work, and all employers who want workers, can connect with
10 what they need to thrive; and

11 (B) greater stakeholder connectivity, program alignment, both inside
12 and outside State government; and high impact projects, leading to a more
13 coherent and effective system that equally serves Vermont employers,
14 employees, and job seekers.

15 Sec. 2. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

16 PROCESS; DUTIES

17 (a) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with key
18 administration partners, shall conduct a public engagement process with
19 workforce development and training stakeholders in 2018 in order to build a
20 common agenda for what a successful workforce development and training
21 system for the 21st century should include. This public engagement process

1 will inform future Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Strategic Plans
2 and should:

3 (1) involve State government and external stakeholders over a six- to
4 nine-month time frame, with input sessions held across the State;

5 (2) include informant interviews with key stakeholders in the system;

6 (3) add qualitative insights from stakeholders to data-driven assessment
7 of the system; and

8 (4) assist with the process of system realignment already under way.

9 (b) The State Workforce Development Board shall create a social network
10 map of stakeholder organizations involved in workforce development and
11 training, including the following actions:

12 (1) conducting a social network mapping exercise to develop a baseline
13 analysis of all stakeholders, both within and outside State government,
14 involved with workforce development and training around the State;

15 (2) identifying areas of program duplication and gaps across the State
16 and analyze the relative level of connectivity and alignment across programs
17 managed inside and outside State government;

18 (3) identifying and implementing ways of strengthening the connectivity
19 and achieving greater program alignment toward our shared vision for a
20 redesigned workforce development and training system; and

1 (4) ensuring sufficient resources exist so that the Board is able to
2 maintain the network map over time, in order to track changes in levels of
3 connectivity and alignment across the stakeholder community.

4 (c) The State Workforce Development Board shall conduct the following
5 interviews with, and seek input from, service delivery providers:

6 (1) interviews with “front line” service delivery providers to ascertain
7 their perspective on whether and how the current system is and is not serving
8 the needs of workers and employers, identifying specific “pinch points,” and
9 seek their creative ideas for how to improve their programs and services;

10 (2) interviews with employers and employees about their needs to assess
11 how effective existing programs have been for employers, and seek their
12 creative ideas for how to improve these programs and services, especially as
13 Vermont moves toward implementing the Workforce Innovation and
14 Opportunity Act One-Stop Program; and

15 (3) interviews with or surveys of graduates of training programs about
16 whether the program met their expectations and led to a job in their field of
17 interest or training, and seek their creative ideas for how to improve the
18 program or training in which they participated.

19 (d) The State Workforce Development Board shall take steps necessary to
20 improve understanding among State agency and department personnel and
21 external partners on the role of the Board and the Workforce Investment and

1 Opportunity Act and how the Act governs workforce development dollars and
2 policies implemented by the State.

3 (e) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the
4 Department of Labor and the Agency of Commerce and Community
5 Development, shall evaluate different ideas for employer engagement
6 strategies in 2018 and recommend action for 2019, including the following:

7 (1) explore what would be needed to fund dedicated employer outreach
8 positions in each of the Department of Labor's field offices;

9 (2) improve connectivity and coordination between the Department's
10 employer outreach staff with staff of the Regional Development Corporations
11 and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and explore how
12 all State-funded workforce development programs could better coordinate
13 employer outreach with State-level employer outreach staff;

14 (3) explore establishing a single office of workforce development in
15 each region of the State, building on the One-Stop model, to provide client-
16 driven centralized services for employers and job seekers, and analyze whether
17 such a strategy could reduce administrative burden and help small firms access
18 more resources, improve responsiveness to emerging sector needs, and
19 increase workforce participation through direct outreach and recruitment;

20 (4) explore whether a merger or colocation of local workforce
21 investment boards, Career Technical Education Centers, and regional advisory

1 boards could foster greater regional collaboration on workforce development
2 among stakeholder groups, and what would be required in order to accomplish
3 this;

4 (5) provide support by the State Workforce Development Board for
5 efforts to secure funding for one or two pilot projects that embed regional
6 economic development staff directly within middle schools or high schools, or
7 both, to foster career readiness and exploration at an early age, and if
8 successful, replicate them throughout the State;

9 (6) explore ways to improve connectivity and relationship building with
10 employers;

11 (7) explore whether to create an employer relations unit within State
12 government that serves as the primary contact between employers and all
13 State-funded workforce development programs and what would be required to
14 do so effectively;

15 (8) ensure coordination and information sharing among the Department
16 of Labor; relevant units of the Agency of Human Services, such as the
17 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Creative Workforce Solutions; the
18 Agency of Commerce and Community Development; and other State agency
19 staff that talk to employers about their workforce needs; and

1 (9) explore ways to integrate employer intelligence gathered in other
2 department or agency reporting systems into the Department of Economic
3 Development's customer relationship management tool.

4 (f) During, and following, the public engagement process, the State
5 Workforce Development Board shall take steps necessary to align funding to
6 support the workforce development redesign, including the following:

7 (1) targeting employer-driven workforce development solutions based
8 on provisional goals during the process;

9 (2) based on the results of the stakeholder engagement process,
10 identifying two or three key strategies and desired performance measures and
11 aligning resources accordingly;

12 (3) revisiting the allocation of Next Generation Funds and reprioritizing
13 those funds based on employer-driven workforce development solutions;

14 (4) supporting more employer-driven strategies as they are defined and
15 developed locally in collaboration with the Board and Executive Branch staff;

16 (5) enabling innovative initiatives and creating pilot or demonstration
17 programs that can be scaled to the rest of the State, once proven effective; and

18 (6) seeking federal Congressional support to redirect, recalibrate, and
19 retarget funding and resources to enable more innovative initiatives and to
20 create pilot or demonstration programs and initiatives in Vermont.

1 (g) The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the State Workforce
2 Development Board, shall create a statewide, coordinated communications
3 plan to ensure the workforce development and training delivery organizations
4 stay current with initiatives and plans related to building the desired workforce
5 development system.

6 Sec. 3. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; CAREER TECHNICAL
7 EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

8 (a) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the
9 Agency of Education, shall take steps necessary to ensure that all middle
10 school students are introduced to CTE programs of studies and Career
11 Pathways as well as career readiness and awareness, including ensuring that
12 middle schools and CTE centers work collaboratively to:

13 (1) develop and deliver introductory CTE courses or lessons, including
14 at the middle schools when appropriate, to expose students to Career Pathways
15 and CTE programs;

16 (2) provide exposure to local career opportunities through business
17 tours, guest lecturers, career fairs, and career awareness days; and

18 (3) provide exposure to CTE programs and facilities through tours,
19 virtual field trips, promotional videos, and visits to middle schools by CTE
20 students and staff.

1 (b) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the
2 Agency of Education, shall:

3 (1) ensure that all grades 9 and 10 students have equitable access and the
4 opportunity, when supported by their personalized learning plan, to participate
5 in CTE classes such as pre-tech Foundation and pre-tech exploratory programs
6 to expose them to a wide variety of career choices in the student's areas of
7 interest; and

8 (2) ensure that grade 10 students have access to CTE programs when
9 supported by their personalized learning plan.

10 (c) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the
11 Agency of Education, shall ensure that all CTE centers provide Career
12 Pathways and rigorous programs of study to students, as follows:

13 (1) Introduction to Career Pathways should begin in middle school and
14 lead to a postsecondary credential of value or further education or training to
15 obtain a degree or credential of value.

16 (2) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Department of
17 Labor and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, shall
18 implement a Career Pathways review that includes:

19 (A) program relevance to State and regional employer need;

20 (B) participation of Regional Advisory Boards or other boards with
21 employers;

1 (C) pathways to postsecondary education and training; and

2 (D) ability for students to gain credentials of value, dual enrollment
3 credits, and postsecondary student outcomes.

4 (3) Funding for new and innovative career pathway programs, and
5 innovative delivery models for students in rural areas, shall be leveraged
6 through such means as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Perkins
7 Reserve, Next Generation Fund, and other relevant funding sources.

8 (d) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the
9 Agency of Education, shall ensure that every high school student has the
10 opportunity to experience meaningful work-based learning when supported by
11 the personalized learning plan, and shall ensure that high schools work with
12 CTE centers to ensure they do not duplicate the opportunities already provided
13 by the centers.

14 (e) The General Assembly shall take steps to secure funding to continue the
15 Career Pathways initiative through the Agency of Education, including to:

16 (1) continue funding for the Career Pathways Coordinator position at the
17 Agency of Education, which is vital to the sustainability of a Career Pathways
18 system;

19 (2) develop and implement statewide curricula and minimum standards
20 for CTE programs that are proficiency based and align with the goals of
21 Act 77, and providing students with personalized learning plans;

1 (3) ensure that implementation of Career Pathways remains on schedule
2 and work to increase rapid deployment of programs across the State;

3 (4) as part of the statewide economic development plan, market relevant
4 CTE and technical education and training opportunities available to current
5 and future students, adult learners, and employers as informed by employers,
6 Economic and Labor Market Information data (ELMI), and the Comprehensive
7 Economic Development Strategy (CEDS);

8 (5) ensure that CTE regional centers work with postsecondary
9 institutions to provide opportunities at the centers and at high schools for
10 students, both secondary and adult, to receive training and education that will
11 lead to a degree or credential of value, both during the school day and in the
12 evening, and eliminate barriers at CTE centers and high schools for post-
13 secondary institutions to offer courses at those facilities; and

14 (6) ensure that CTE regional centers partner with employers and post-
15 secondary education and training providers to expand the availability of job-
16 specific training and apprenticeship programs to meet regional employer needs
17 as informed by employers, Economic and Labor Market Information (ELMI)
18 data, and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

19 (f) The Agency of Education, with guidance from a committee of the State
20 Workforce Development Board, shall create two pilots that model a unified

1 funding and governance structure designed to streamline the delivery of the
2 educational experiences of both high school and CTE.

3 (g) The Agency of Education, with guidance from a committee of the State
4 Workforce Development Board, shall expand and support pilot projects that
5 integrate up-front employer commitments to CTE and high school students,
6 both in terms of education and employment, as part of a seamless transition
7 into a registered apprenticeship with the sponsoring employer.

8 Sec. 4. 10 V.S.A. § 541a is amended to read:

9 § 541a. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

10 (a) Board established; duties. Pursuant to the requirements of 29 U.S.C.
11 § 3111, the Governor shall establish a the State Workforce Development Board
12 to assist the Governor in the execution of his or her duties under the Workforce
13 Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and to assist the Commissioner of
14 Labor as specified in section 540 of this title.

15 (b) Additional duties; planning; process.

16 (1) In order to inform its ~~decision-making~~ decision making and to
17 provide effective assistance under subsection (a) of this section, the Board
18 shall:

19 ~~(A)~~ (1) conduct an ongoing public engagement process throughout the
20 State that brings together employers and potential employees, including
21 students, the unemployed, and incumbent employees seeking further training,

1 to provide feedback and information concerning their workforce education and
2 training needs; and

3 ~~(2)~~(B) maintain familiarity with the federal Comprehensive Economic
4 Development Strategy (CEDS) and other economic development planning
5 processes, and coordinate workforce and education activities in the State,
6 including the development and implementation of the State plan required under
7 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, with economic
8 development planning processes occurring in the State, as appropriate.

9 (2) In order to ensure that State- and federally funded workforce
10 development and training efforts are of the highest quality and aligned with the
11 State's workforce and economic goals, the Board shall annually:

12 (A) Review and approve a series of State-endorsed Career Pathways
13 that reflects a shared vision across multiple sectors and agencies for improving
14 employment outcomes, meeting employer needs, and best leveraging available
15 State and federal funding.

16 (i) Career Pathways shall encompass education and training
17 experiences from middle school to the postsecondary years, and may focus on
18 particular target populations or industry sectors.

19 (ii) Career Pathways shall include or culminate in degrees,
20 certificates, and other relevant credentials approved by the Board.

21 (B) Publicize the State-endorsed Career Pathways.

1 (3) creating a publicly available document that lists current industry,
2 State, and federally recognized credentials; what is required to obtain these
3 credentials; from which training program these credentials can be obtained;
4 and at what cost;

5 (4) working with the Office of Professional Regulation to increase
6 recognition of professional skills and credentialing across states, in addition to
7 supporting professional paths that involve more than one industry, state, or
8 federally recognized credential and rules adopted by the Office;

9 (5) supporting the efforts of 70×2025vt, a partnership between
10 Vermont’s leaders in education, business, nonprofits, philanthropy, and
11 government to increase the economic and civic vitality of Vermont through
12 education attainment, and assist them in achieving their goal: by 2025, 70
13 percent of working-age Vermonters will possess a postsecondary degree or
14 credential of value; and

15 (6) encouraging employer-driven pilot projects, using existing Vermont
16 Training Program, Workforce Education and Training Fund, and VSAC
17 nondegree funding.

1 Sec. 6. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD; GROWING THE
2 SIZE AND QUALITY OF THE WORKFORCE

3 (a) The Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the
4 Department of Labor, in partnership with the State Workforce Development
5 Board, shall take steps to:

6 (1) increase labor force participation of workforce-age Vermont
7 populations by creating a multitiered engagement process to identify working
8 age Vermonters who are able to participate, or participate to a greater degree,
9 in the workforce; and

10 (2) as part of labor force recruitment strategies, attract new people to
11 live and work in Vermont, including both new employers and new employees,
12 including the following actions:

13 (A) fund and execute an economic development marketing and
14 outreach plan for Vermont;

15 (B) seek input from regional and statewide stakeholders to identify
16 strategies and define success;

17 (C) identify key markets for targeted execution of the marketing
18 plan; and

19 (D) create metrics for tracking impact and adjusting the marketing
20 and outreach plan over time.

1 (b) The Department of Labor and the Agency of Commerce and
2 Community Development shall examine incentives to encourage labor force
3 participation by target populations, including unemployment insurance waivers
4 to beneficiaries, income tax reductions, exemption of State tax on Social
5 Security for a period of time, housing and transportation vouchers, tuition
6 reimbursement, or waivers for training.

7 Sec. 7. VERMONT TALENT PIPELINE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

8 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

9 (1) The Vermont Talent Pipeline Management Project (VTPM) is an
10 employer-oriented strategy that expands the role of employers as end-
11 customers of the education and workforce systems. VTPM seeks to improve
12 the employability of Vermonters and the alignment of employer needs with
13 education and workforce development and training programs.

14 (2) VTPM is a statewide public and private partnership among the
15 Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Agency of Education,
16 Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, Franklin/Grand Isle Workforce
17 Investment Board, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, Lake Champlain
18 Regional Chamber of Commerce, South Burlington School District, State
19 Workforce Development Board, Vermont Business Roundtable, Vermont
20 Chamber of Commerce, and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.

1 (3) Partners will coordinate the network of training providers to deliver
2 industry, State, and federally recognized credentials, job training, and
3 workforce education in targeted job areas, sectors, and industries which
4 connect to the skills employers are looking for when filling available positions.

5 (b) Intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly:

6 (1) to acknowledge the importance of VTPM;

7 (2) to support development and roll-out of VTPM across all economic
8 sectors, sizes of business, and regions of the State; and

9 (3) to encourage the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, and the
10 State Workforce Development Board to utilize VTPM to identify and develop
11 additional credentialing programs within applicable industries.

12 Sec. 8. AGENCY OF COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT;

13 EXPERIENCEVT

14 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

15 (1) EXPERIENCEvt is a recently launched online platform and asset
16 map designed to connect Vermont educators and service organizations to
17 employers and experiential learning opportunities. The site is a State-
18 sponsored initiative to help grow the number of students and professionals
19 exposed to experiential learning opportunities throughout Vermont, and, more
20 importantly, the broad array of educational and employment opportunities in
21 Vermont's economy.

1 (2) EXPERIENCEvt is a public-private partnership among the Agency
2 of Commerce and Community Development, Department of Labor, Agency of
3 Education, and Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility.

4 (b) Intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly:

5 (1) to acknowledge the importance of the EXPERIENCEvt project;

6 (2) to support development and roll-out of EXPERIENCEvt across all
7 economic sectors, sizes of businesses, and regions of the State; and

8 (3) to encourage relevant educational and employment opportunities to
9 be populated on the site and to actively promote employer and job seeker
10 usage.

11 Sec. 9. RESULTS FIRST INITIATIVE; IMPLEMENTATION

12 The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Government
13 Accountability Committee and the State Workforce Development Board, shall
14 deploy the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative and Results Based
15 Accountability Framework to assess and monitor current workforce
16 development and training programs while simultaneously informing the system
17 redesign work that will be under way, consistent with the following actions:

18 (1) work with the Pew Center and State Workforce Development Board
19 to create population level indicators based on desired outcomes for the
20 workforce development delivery ecosystem;

1 (2) continue to align programs and State-grant-funded projects with the
2 State Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Plan and in alignment with
3 Board current priorities;

4 (3) evaluate efficacy of the performance measures that already exist in
5 the workforce system to identify gaps and identify State-specific measures that
6 would help monitor progress in achieving the State's goals;

7 (4) recommend a process for collecting data that are not currently
8 available;

9 (5) create an annual process to collect program level data to update the
10 State's workforce system inventory; and

11 (6) work with the Board to develop tools for continuous improvement
12 that promote data-driven decision making by leveraging available federal and
13 State funds, using common information-sharing systems, and honing a
14 customer-focused service delivery system.

15 Sec. 10. APPROPRIATION

16 (a) In fiscal year 2019, the amount of \$120,000.00 is appropriated from the
17 General Fund to the State Workforce Development Board for the purpose of
18 implementing the public engagement process and related initiatives specified
19 in this act.

20 (b) The Operations Committee of the State Workforce Development Board,
21 in consultation with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development,

1 Department of Labor, and Agency of Education, shall have the authority to
2 issue a request and select one or more for proposals to provide services
3 pursuant to this act.

4 Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE

5 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.