

1 Introduced by Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
2 Referred to Committee on
3 Date:
4 Subject: Commerce and trade; workforce development
5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to provide a
6 framework for a public engagement process and succeeding steps to modernize
7 the State workforce development system.

8 An act relating to workforce development

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

10 Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND INTENT

11 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

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

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

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

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

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

7 (2) A major part of the solution to these challenges lies in Vermont’s
8 building an effective and efficient State workforce development system that is
9 a diverse public-private partnership among employers, government, and
10 education and training providers designed to ensure that individuals have the
11 skills needed by businesses.

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

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

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

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

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

8 Sec. 2. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
9 PROCESS; DUTIES

10 (a)(1) The State Workforce Development Board, in cooperation with the
11 Department of Labor, Agencies of Commerce and Community Development,
12 Education, Human Services, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and
13 Transportation, shall conduct a public engagement process consistent with 20
14 C.F.R. §679.100, 679.130 and 10 V.S.A. §541a to establish a vision and shared
15 goals for meeting Vermont’s 21st century workforce education, training,
16 recruitment, and retention needs.

17 (2) The public engagement process shall be designed to inform
18 workforce-related aspects of other state strategic plans and reports, including
19 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan, the State Economic
20 Development Marketing Plan, and the Statewide Comprehensive Economic
21 Development Strategy.

1 (3) In evaluating the current workforce service delivery system, the
2 Board ~~must shall~~ use a data-driven process and solicit the perspectives of job-
3 seekers, incumbent workers, employers, industry representatives, program
4 administrators, and workforce service delivery providers.

5 (4) The Board shall adopt a vision and describe the State’s collective
6 goals by February 1, 2020. The vision, goals, and any findings or
7 recommendations shall be posted online ~~and made publicly available~~ The
8 Board shall provide advance notice to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House
9 Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate
10 Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs if the
11 recommendations may require legislative action during the 2020 legislative
12 session.

13 (b) The Board may create a social network map of workforce service
14 delivery providers, employers, workforce program administrators, and industry
15 representatives to:

16 (1) develop a baseline ~~analysis account~~ of ~~all stakeholders~~ ~~how~~
17 individuals, both within and outside State government, ~~are~~ involved with
18 workforce development and training around the State;

19 ~~(2) identify areas of program duplication and gaps across the State;~~

1 (2) analyze the relative level of connectivity and alignment across
2 programs of people and programs managed inside and outside State
3 government; and

4 (3) identify ways of strengthening the opportunities to strengthen
5 connectivity to achieve greater program alignment toward and realize the
6 Board’s vision for a redesigned the State’s workforce development and
7 training system.

8 (c) The Board shall identify what resources must exist for the Board to be
9 able are necessary to maintain the network map over time and track changes in
10 levels of connectivity and alignment across the stakeholder community.

11 (d) The Board may, in compliance with any employment and
12 confidentiality regulations, seek input collect information from:

13 (1) “front line” service delivery providers to ascertain whether and
14 understand how the current system is and is not serving the needs of workers
15 job seekers and employers, and seek their ideas for how to improve their
16 programs and services;

17 (2) employers and employees to assess understand the effectiveness of
18 existing workforce programs, and seek their ideas for how to improve these
19 programs and services; and

20 (3) past and present participants of training programs to determine
21 understand if the program met their expectations and led to a job in their field

1 of interest or training, and seek their ideas for how to improve the program or
2 training in which they participated.

3 (e) The Board may take steps initiate activities to improve understanding
4 by stakeholders concerning:

5 (1) the workforce development system;

6 (2) the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, State agency and
7 department personnel and external partners on

8 (3) the role of the Board; and the Workforce Investment and
9 Opportunity Act and

10 (4) how the Act governs workforce development funding and policies
11 implemented by the State.

12 (f) The Board, in cooperation with the Department of Labor, Agencies of
13 Commerce and Community Development, Education, Human Services,
14 Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Transportation, shall evaluate review
15 methods of employer engagement and assess evaluate the tools available to
16 employers to facilitate their access to and retention of workers. The Board may
17 recommend strategies and actions by February 1, 2020 that could include the
18 following for improvement that could address:

19 (1) what would be needed to fund dedicated how employer outreach
20 positions in each of the State-funded field offices might be shared;

1 (2) what type of coordination is needed between the State and federally
2 funded level employer outreach staff and local workforce organizations,
3 including staff of the regional development corporations and regional planning
4 commissions, to better serve employers;

5 (3) whether establishing a single office of workforce development in
6 each region of the State, building on the One-Stop model One Stop American
7 Job Center in each region to provide comprehensive customer-driven
8 centralized services for employers and job seekers could reduce administrative
9 burden and help small businesses access more resources serve businesses
10 better, improve responsiveness to emerging sector needs, and increase
11 workforce participation access to qualified, available workers through direct
12 outreach and recruitment;

13 (4) scaling or expanding regional pilot projects that link career coaches,
14 or other experts with industry knowledge, directly within middle or high
15 schools, or both, to foster career readiness and exploration, and help students
16 advance in a career pathway; and

17 (5) ways to share data and information collected from employers among
18 State departments and agencies parties who implement workforce development
19 programs.

20 (g) The State Workforce Development Board shall explore whether a
21 merger or colocation of review how functions performed by local workforce

1 investment boards, Career Technical Education Regional Advisory Boards,
2 Regional Planning Commissions, Regional Development Corporations, and
3 other regional economic development and workforce related boards could be
4 more equitably executed from region to region, and recommend structures that
5 would foster greater better regional collaboration, alignment, and employer
6 participation, and what would be required in order to accomplish this.

7 (h) During, and following, the public engagement process, the State
8 Workforce Development Following the public engagement process outlined in
9 subsection (a) of this section, the Board may make recommendations to align
10 relevant funding sources to promote to support a workforce development
11 system redesign, promoting:

12 (1) employer-driven workforce education and training solutions
13 opportunities;

14 (2) key strategies and evidence results-based performance measures;

15 (3) employer-driven strategies that are defined and developed locally in
16 collaboration with the Board and Executive Branch staff;

17 (3) innovative and effective initiatives, pilots, or demonstration programs
18 that can be scaled to the rest of the State; and

19 (4) federal Congressional support to redirect, recalibrate, and retarget
20 funding and resources to enable more innovative initiatives and to create pilot

1 ~~or demonstration programs and initiatives in Vermont~~ access to federal
2 ~~resources that enable more innovative programs and initiatives in Vermont.~~

3 (i) The Department of Labor, with assistance from the State Workforce
4 Development Board, shall ~~create a statewide, coordinated communications~~
5 ~~system to~~ facilitate the sharing of information to and between workforce
6 development and training delivery organizations so they may stay current with
7 initiatives and plans related to building the desired workforce development
8 system.

9 Sec. 3. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; CAREER PATHWAYS;
10 CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

11 ~~(a) As used in this section “Career Pathways” means a coherent, articulated~~
12 ~~sequence of rigorous academic and career and technical courses, commencing~~
13 ~~in the ninth grade, or earlier, and leading to one or more of: an associates~~
14 ~~degree; industry recognized certificate; occupational licensure; baccalaureate~~
15 ~~degree; or other advanced degree.~~

16
17 (a) As used in this section “Career Pathways” means a combination of
18 rigorous and high quality education, training, and other experiences and
19 services, beginning in at least the seventh grade, with multiple entry and exit
20 points that:

- 1 (1) at the secondary level, integrate the academic and technical skills
2 required for postsecondary success;
- 3 (2) are developed in partnership with business and industry and align
4 with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional
5 economy involved;
- 6 (3) prepares an individual to transition seamlessly from secondary to
7 postsecondary experiences and be successful in any of a full range of
8 secondary or postsecondary education options, including registered
9 apprenticeships;
- 10 (4) includes career counseling and work-based learning experiences to
11 support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;
- 12 (5) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in
13 the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific
14 occupation or occupational cluster;
- 15 (6) organizes education, training, and other experiences and services to
16 meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the
17 educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- 18 (7) enables an individual to gain a secondary school diploma or its
19 recognized equivalent, and that allows for college credit and industry
20 certifications to be earned in high school; and

1 (8) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or
2 occupational cluster.

3
4 (b) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the State Workforce
5 Development Board, shall take steps necessary to ensure that promote policies
6 that support introduction of CTE programs of study to middle school students,
7 are introduced to CTE programs of study and Career Pathways as well as along
8 with career readiness and awareness activities, including taking steps to ensure
9 that middle schools and regional CTE centers work collaboratively to:

10 (c) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Board, shall promote
11 collaboration between middle schools and regional CTE centers to:

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

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

17 (3) provide middle school student with exposure to CTE programs and
18 facilities through tours, virtual field trips, promotional videos, and visits to
19 middle schools by CTE students and staff through activities such as tours of
20 regional CTE centers, virtual field trips, and CTE guest visits.

1 (d) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the State Workforce
2 Development Board, shall ~~take steps to ensure that~~ promote flexible and
3 student-centered policies that:

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

12 (2) ensure that students in grade 10 have access to courses in CTE
13 programs when supported by their personalized learning plans.

14 (e) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Board, shall direct
15 take steps to ensure that all CTE centers to provide Career Pathways and
16 rigorous programs of study to students, as follows that are aligned with an
17 approved Career Pathway and in combination with a registered apprenticeship
18 when appropriate.

19 (1) ~~Introduction to Career Pathways beginning in middle school and~~
20 leading to a credential of value, or further education or training to obtain a

1 postsecondary degree or credential of value, including Registered
2 Apprenticeship.

3 (f) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Department of Labor
4 and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, shall implement
5 a process for reviewing Career Pathways review that includes that considers:

6 (1) program relevance to State and regional employer need;

7 (2) participation of Regional Advisory Boards or other boards with
8 employers;

9 (3) pathways to postsecondary education and training; and

10 (4) ability for students to gain credentials of value, dual enrollment
11 credits, postsecondary credential or degree attainment, and employment.

12 Funding for new and innovative career pathway programs, and innovative
13 delivery models for students in rural areas, shall be leveraged through such
14 means as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Carl D. Perkins Act,
15 Next Generation Fund, and other relevant funding sources.

16
17 (g) The Agency of Education shall report on its Career Pathways review
18 process, findings, and recommendations to the Board on a regular basis.

19 (h) The Board may identify opportunities to leverage Workforce
20 Innovation and Opportunity Act funds, Carl D. Perkins Act funds, Next
21 Generation funds, Vermont Training Program funds, and other relevant

1 funding sources to develop community-based Career Pathways that respond to
2 local occupational demands.

3 (i) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Board, shall take steps
4 work to ensure that every high school student has the opportunity to experience
5 meaningful work-based learning when supported by the personalized learning
6 plan, and that high schools work with regional CTE centers to avoid
7 unnecessary duplication of opportunities already provided by the centers.

8 (j) The General Assembly shall create a permanent classified position
9 within the Agency of Education to perform the functions currently performed
10 by the limited service Career Pathways Coordinator position.

11 The General Assembly shall take steps to secure funding to continue the
12 Career Pathways initiative through the Agency of Education, including to:

13 (1) continue funding for the Career Pathways Coordinator position at the
14 Agency of Education, which is vital to the sustainability of a statewide Career
15 Pathways system;

16 (2) develop and implement State endorsed curricula and minimum
17 standards for CTE programs that are proficiency based and align with the goals
18 of Act 77 and with students' personalized learning plans;

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

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

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

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

17 (k) The Department of Labor and the Agency of Education shall support
18 coordination and alignment of programs of study delivered by the regional
19 CTE centers and the State's postsecondary institutions so that education and
20 training opportunities available to secondary and adult students lead to a
21 degree or stackable credential of value.

1 (l) The Agency of Education, with guidance from a committee of the
2 Board, shall create two pilot projects that model a unified funding and
3 governance structure designed to streamline the delivery of the educational
4 experiences of both high school and CTE students.

5 (m) The Department of Labor shall be responsible for the oversight and
6 coordination of Adult Career Technical Education in the State. The Agency of
7 Education shall provide technical and programmatic assistance, as necessary,
8 to the Department to ensure alignment between secondary and post-secondary
9 policies and funding.

10 Sec. 4. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD;

11 STRENGTHENING AND ALIGNING WORKFORCE TRAINING
12 PROGRAMS

13 (a) The State Workforce Development Board shall take steps to encourage,
14 promote, and support the creation of registered apprenticeship programs, pre-
15 apprenticeship programs, paid internships, occupational trainings, and other
16 work-based and on-the-job learning opportunities that lead to industry
17 recognized certificates and credentials. The Board shall consider ways to meet
18 employers' immediate and long-term employment needs in a variety of ways
19 that can include:

20 (1) expanding the number and diversity of employer-sponsored
21 registered apprenticeships;

1 (2) promoting the development and access to pre-apprenticeship
2 programs in high schools and career and technical education centers;

3 (3) engaging Vermont’s colleges and universities in delivering the
4 related instruction components of registered apprenticeship programs;

5 (4) expanding the number of internships and returnships available in
6 current and new sectors;

7 (5) developing partnerships and alignment between training programs
8 offered in correctional facilities and those offered in business or community
9 settings; and

10 (6) registered apprenticeship programs that guarantee offers of continued
11 employment or consideration for future employment upon completion of the
12 program.

13 (b) The Board shall create a process for identifying, monitoring, and
14 evaluating occupational trainings and industry-recognized credentials. The
15 Board may consider establishing a process for endorsing credentials and
16 certificate programs to facilitate targeted investments in programs that meet
17 industry needs.

18 (c) The Board shall create and review periodically publicly available
19 documents that list:

20 (1) current industry, State, and federally recognized credentials;

21 (2) requirements to obtain these credentials;

1 (3) training programs that least to these credentials; and

2 (4) the cost of training and educational programs required to obtain the
3 credential.

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

8 Sec. 5. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD; GROWING THE
9 SIZE AND QUALITY OF THE WORKFORCE

10 (a) The Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and
11 Community Development and Human Services, in partnership with the State
12 Workforce Development Board, shall take steps to:

13 (1) increase labor force participation of Vermonters by creating
14 multitiered engagement, training, and support activities that help working age
15 Vermonters who are able to participate, or participate to a greater degree, in the
16 workforce, in consultation with the Agency of Education; and

17 (2) recruit and relocate new workers and employers to Vermont ; and

18 (3) assist businesses in locating and retaining qualified workers.

19 (b) To meet these objectives, the Department of Labor and the Agencies of
20 Commerce and Community Development and Human Services, in consultation
21 with the Agency of Education, shall:

1 (A) seek input from engage regional and statewide stakeholders,
2 including regional CTE centers, regional development corporations, and
3 regional planning commissions, to identify needs, strategies, and define
4 success, in consultation with the Agency of Education;

5 (B) identify targets and methods of recruitment, relocation,
6 execution of the marketing plan re-training, and retention;

7 (C) leverage resources available in current State and federal programs
8 to support more workers within and outside of Vermont entering and staying in
9 the workforce; and

10 (D) create metrics for tracking the success of outreach efforts and
11 economic impact, in consultation with Agency of Education.

12 (c) The Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and
13 Community Development, and Human Services Board may examine incentives
14 to encourage labor force participation in the labor force by target populations,
15 including unemployment insurance waivers to beneficiaries, income tax
16 reductions, exemption of State tax on Social Security for a period of time,
17 housing and transportation vouchers, tuition and training reimbursements, or
18 waivers for training. The Board shall notify the House Committee on
19 Commerce and Economic Development of any findings or recommendations,
20 as appropriate.

21 Sec. 6. VERMONT TALENT PIPELINE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

1 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

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

7 (2) VTPM is a statewide public and private partnership among the
8 Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Agency of Education,
9 Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, Franklin/Grand Isle Workforce
10 Investment Board, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, Lake Champlain
11 Regional Chamber of Commerce, South Burlington School District, State
12 Workforce Development Board, Vermont Business Roundtable, Vermont
13 Chamber of Commerce, and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.

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

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

19 (1) to acknowledge the importance of VTPM;

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

1 (3) to encourage the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, the
2 State Workforce Development Board, and VTPM to collaborate in identifying
3 and developing additional credentialing programs within applicable industries.

4 Sec. 7. RESULTS BASED MONITORING

5 (a) The Department of Labor, with the assistance of the Government
6 Accountability Committee and the State Workforce Development Board, shall
7 develop a framework to evaluate workforce education, training, and support
8 programs and services. The framework shall be applied to the State's
9 workforce system inventory and shall distinguish programs and services based
10 on method of delivery, customer, program administrator, goal, or other
11 appropriate category. The framework shall:

12 (1) create population level indicators based on desired outcomes for the
13 workforce development delivery system;

14 (2) along with social network mapping work that the Board may pursue,
15 support program and service alignment of State-grant-funded projects with the
16 State Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Plan

17 (3) align with the Board's vision;

18 (4) note performance measures that already exist in the workforce
19 system and identify where State-specific measures would help monitor progress
20 in achieving the State's goals; and

21 (5) identify gaps in service delivery and areas of duplication in services.

1 (b) The State Workforce Development Board shall consider whether the
2 information and data currently collected and reported throughout the workforce
3 development system is necessary useful and shall identify what information
4 and data that are not available or readily accessible. The Board shall make its
5 findings available and recommend a process to improve the collection and
6 reporting of data.

7 (c) The State Workforce Development Board may create a process and a
8 timeline to collect program level data annually for the purposes of updating the
9 State’s workforce system inventory.

10 (d) The State Workforce Development Board may develop tools for
11 program and service delivery providers that support continuous improvement
12 using data-driven decision making, common information-sharing systems, and
13 a customer-focused service delivery system.

14 Sec. 8. 10 V.S.A. chapter 22A is amended to read:

15 CHAPTER 22A. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

16 § 540. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING LEADER

17 The Commissioner of Labor shall be the leader of workforce education and
18 training in the State, and shall have the authority and responsibility for the
19 coordination of workforce education and training within State government,
20 including the following duties:

1 (1) Perform the following duties in consultation with the State

2 Workforce Development Board:

3 * * *

4 (G) design and implement criteria and performance measures for
5 workforce education and training activities; ~~and~~

6 (H) establish goals for the integrated workforce education and
7 training system; and

8 (I) with the assistance of the Secretaries of Education, of Human
9 Services, of Commerce and Community Development, Agriculture, and of
10 Transportation and of the Commissioner of Public Safety, develop and
11 implement a coordinated system to recruit, relocate, and train workers from
12 outside Vermont to ensure the labor force needs of Vermont's businesses are
13 met.

14 * * *

15 (8) Coordinate intentional outreach and connections between students
16 graduating from Vermont's colleges and universities and employment
17 opportunities in Vermont.

18 * * *

19 § 541a. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

20 (a) Board established; duties. Pursuant to the requirements of 29 U.S.C.

21 § 3111, the Governor shall establish a State Workforce Development Board to

1 assist the Governor in the execution of his or her duties under the Workforce
2 Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and to assist the Commissioner of
3 Labor as specified in section 540 of this title.

4 (b) Additional duties; planning; process.

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

8 (1)(A) conduct an ongoing public engagement process throughout the
9 State that brings together employers and potential employees, including
10 students, the unemployed, and incumbent employees seeking further training,
11 to provide feedback and information concerning their workforce education and
12 training needs; and

13 (2)(B) maintain familiarity and promote alignment with the federal
14 State and regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
15 and other economic development planning processes, and coordinate
16 workforce and education activities in the State, including the development and
17 implementation of the State plan required under the Workforce Innovation and
18 Opportunity Act of 2014, with economic development planning processes
19 occurring in the State, as appropriate.

1 (2) In order to ensure that State-funded and federally funded workforce
2 development and training efforts are of the highest quality and aligned with the
3 State’s workforce and economic goals, the Board shall regularly:

4 (A) Review and approve State-endorsed Career Pathways that reflect
5 a shared vision across multiple sectors and agencies for improving
6 employment outcomes, meeting employers’ and workers’ needs, and best
7 leveraging available State and federal funding.

8 (i) Career Pathways shall encompass educational and training
9 experiences from middle school to the postsecondary years, and may focus on
10 particular target populations or industry sectors.

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

13 (B) Publicize the State-endorsed Career Pathways, including on
14 websites managed by the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, and
15 Department of Economic Development.

16 (3)(A) The Board shall have the authority to approve State-endorsed and
17 industry-recognized credentials and certificates, excluding high school
18 diplomas and postsecondary academic degrees, that are aligned with the Career
19 Pathways.

20 (B) The Board shall have the authority to adopt rules to implement
21 this subdivision (3) design a review process that ensures:

1 (3) Funding awarded through the Vermont Returnship Program may be
2 used to build and administer coordinated and cohesive programs and to provide
3 participants with a stipend during the returnship, based on need. Funds may be
4 made only to programs or projects that:

5 (A) do not replace or supplant existing positions;

6 (B) expose individuals to real and meaningful workplace experiences;

7 (C) provide a process that measures progress toward mastery of skills,
8 behavior, and other factors that indicate a likelihood of success in the
9 workplace;

10 (D) are designed to motivate and educate participants through work-
11 based learning opportunities with Vermont employers; or

12 (E) offer participants a continuum of learning, experience, and
13 relationships with employers that will make it financially possible and
14 attractive for individuals to continue to work and live in Vermont.

15 (c) The Department of Labor shall:

16 (1) identify new and existing funding sources that may be allocated to
17 the Vermont Returnship Program;

18 (2) collect data and establish program goals and performance measures
19 that demonstrate program results for returnship programs funded through the
20 Vermont Returnship Program;

1 (3) engage appropriate agencies and departments of the State in the
2 Returnship Program to expand returnship opportunities with State government
3 and with entities awarded State contracts; and

4 (4) work with other public and private entities to develop and enhance
5 returnship programs, opportunities, and activities throughout the State.

6 **Sec. 9. APPROPRIATIONS**

7 (a) In fiscal year 2019 the amount of \$150,000.00 is appropriated from the
8 General Fund to the Department of Labor as administrative agent of the State
9 Workforce Development Board to implement the provisions of this act.

10 (b) In fiscal year 2019 the amount of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the
11 General Fund to the Department of Labor to implement the Vermont Strong
12 Returnship Program created in 10 V.S.A. § 545.

13 **Sec. 10. REPORTING**

14 (a) On or before January 15, 2019, the State Workforce Development
15 Board shall report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic
16 Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing
17 and General Affairs concerning the implementation of this act.

18 (b) On or before January 15, 2019, the Department of Labor, in
19 collaboration with the Agency of Education and the State Workforce
20 Development Board, shall report to the House Committee on Commerce and

1 Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Economic
2 Development, Housing and General Affairs concerning:
3 (1) how to encourage more businesses to offer apprenticeships;
4 (2) how to encourage more labor force participation in apprenticeships;
5 and
6 (3) of the myriad federal and private apprenticeship opportunities
7 available, which additional opportunities, and which industry sectors, should
8 be offered or enhanced in Vermont.
9 Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE
10 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.