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H.377

Introduced by Representatives James of Manchester, Austin of Colchester,  
Brady of Williston, and Jerome of Brandon

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; Advance Vermont public-private partnership; creation

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: In order to further the State's goal  
that 70 percent of working-age Vermonters hold a credential of value by 2025,  
this bill proposes to create a public-private partnership with Advance Vermont  
to increase postsecondary attainment in Vermont.

An act relating to the creation of a public-private partnership with Advance  
Vermont to increase postsecondary attainment in Vermont

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

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Postsecondary attainment is vital to the strength of Vermont's  
residents, families, communities, and economy. In 2016, recognizing its  
importance, State leaders from the business, education, government, nonprofit,  
and philanthropy sectors established the goal that 70 percent of working-age

1 Vermonters hold a credential of value by 2025. That goal was codified in 2019  
2 (10 V.S.A. § 546).

3 (2) As of 2018, only 53 percent of working-age Vermonters held a  
4 postsecondary credential such as a registered apprenticeship, certificate, or  
5 degree. That makes Vermont approximately 60,000 people short of meeting  
6 the State goal.

7 (3) All of Vermont's high-pay, high-demand jobs require education and  
8 training after high school. Sixty-five percent of all jobs in the State require a  
9 postsecondary credential. Employers consistently report trouble hiring for  
10 positions due to a lack of skilled applicants.

11 (4) Those with lower levels of education have been disproportionately  
12 affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. For Vermonters without a  
13 postsecondary credential who lost their jobs, reentering a changed workforce  
14 without additional education and training may pose a challenge. Ninety-nine  
15 percent of jobs created after the 2008 recession went to workers with at least  
16 some college experience. Experts predict the pandemic recovery will follow  
17 the same trend.

18 (5) Nationally, one in three workers believe that if they lose their jobs  
19 due to the COVID-19 crisis, they will need more education to find a  
20 comparable position. Yet only 44 percent of Americans say they have access  
21 to the education and training they need, and only 33 percent report they have a

1 firm understanding of the career pathways and skills associated with potential  
2 programs.

3 (6) Vermonters who are historically underserved by the education and  
4 workforce systems experience unique roadblocks in pursuit of postsecondary  
5 credentials. This includes people who identify as Black, Indigenous, or as a  
6 Person of Color; are involved with the justice system; are from low-income  
7 backgrounds; identify as LGBTQ+; experience gender-based discrimination;  
8 are first in their family to attend postsecondary education and training; or are  
9 living with disabilities.

10 (7) Education is a key determinant of economic and social well-being.  
11 Vermonters who hold postsecondary credentials have greater earning potential  
12 compared to those with only a high school diploma. Research supports that  
13 those with higher levels of attainment are also more likely to have healthy  
14 families, be civically engaged, and less likely to be food or housing insecure.

15 (8) In 2019, Vermont had a 92 percent high school graduation rate, yet  
16 only 61 percent of high school seniors enrolled in postsecondary education or  
17 training in the year following graduation. Of the class of 2012 who enrolled in  
18 a four-year college program, approximately 60 percent completed the program  
19 with a two or four-year degree within in four years.

20 (9) Adults make up an increasing portion of the postsecondary student  
21 population, due in part to ever-changing workforce and economic demands.

1 Thirty percent of postsecondary students in Vermont are 30 years of age or  
2 older, 25 percent are parents, and 80 percent work while enrolled. Of the  
3 Vermont adults who are not enrolled and have not completed postsecondary  
4 education, 88 percent view postsecondary credentials as valuable, and 63  
5 percent are interested in pursuing one.

6 (10) To enhance collaboration and capacity, states, including Maine and  
7 Michigan, have turned to intermediaries and public-private partnerships to  
8 provide thought leadership, mobilize cross-sector action, develop and share  
9 best practices, conduct and amplify research, inform policy, and execute public  
10 communications efforts aimed at increasing state attainment rates.

11 Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. chapter 71 is added to read:

12 CHAPTER 71. ADVANCE VERMONT PUBLIC-PRIVATE  
13 PARTNERSHIP

14 § 2161. ADVANCE VERMONT PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP;  
15 CREATION; TASKS

16 (a) Creation. There is created the Advance Vermont Public-Private  
17 Partnership to carry out the tasks under in this section.

18 (b) Powers and duties. Advance Vermont shall perform the following tasks  
19 to support the State's goal under 10 V.S.A. § 546 that 70 percent of working-  
20 age Vermonters hold a credential of value by 2025 (goal):

1           (1) formulate policy recommendations for the Administration and the  
2           General Assembly;

3           (2) monitor and disseminate data regarding the performance of the  
4           State's attainment of the goal;

5           (3) create and maintain public-facing communications and resources to  
6           increase awareness of the value of postsecondary education and training and  
7           the variety of education and training pathways;

8           (4) convene members of the education, employer, nonprofit, and  
9           philanthropic communities and State agencies to identify gaps and  
10          opportunities for collaboration;

11          (5) support efforts to coordinate and implement regional attainment  
12          initiatives;

13          (6) ensure full transparency of all educational and occupational  
14          credentials and competencies that are delivered, issued, funded, authorized,  
15          overseen, or governed in Vermont; and

16          (7) contract with State agencies and departments to deliver services as  
17          agreed upon.

18          (c) Methods. To accomplish the tasks under in this section, Advance  
19          Vermont may:

20               (1) pursue and accept funding from diverse sources outside of State  
21               government; and

1           (2) disburse funds raised through fund development activities.

2           (d) Credential Transparency. In accordance with this section and in  
3           coordination with the Agency of Education, Agency of Commerce and  
4           Community Development, and the Department of Labor, Advance Vermont  
5           shall:

6           (1) Identify the set of specific data elements that will be made public  
7           across all credentials for all providers and put in place timelines, processes, and  
8           technical assistance resources to ensure that these data requirements are met.  
9           These data requirements shall be informed by national benchmarks and those  
10           developed by the states, federal agencies, and accreditors to ensure national  
11           comparability.

12           (2) Ensure that essential information to maximize informed consumer  
13           decisions about all educational and occupational credentials and their  
14           associated competencies, costs, pathways, quality assurance indicators,  
15           employment and earnings outcomes, assessments, transfer value, and  
16           alignment with occupational requirements, at a minimum, that are delivered,  
17           issued, funded, authorized, overseen, or governed in the State shall be made  
18           publicly available, searchable, comparable, and interoperable using linked open  
19           data specifications, such as the credential transparency description language.

20           (3) Ensure, at a minimum, that the secondary and postsecondary career  
21           and technical education and occupational credentials are:

1           (A) approved under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical  
2           Education Act;

3           (B) included on the eligible training provider list under the  
4           Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; and

5           (C) approved by the State Approving Agency authority under the  
6           Post-9/11 GI Bill.

7           (4) Ensure that the format and specifications for making all data  
8           referenced in subdivision (1) of this subsection is public, open, and  
9           interoperable and aligned with widely recognized and adopted standards, and  
10          allow for open access across state and national borders, sectors, and platforms.  
11          This information shall be human readable, machine-actionable, current,  
12          accurate, and maintained on a national repository open to the public, such as  
13          the national Credential Registry, and on each provider's website. These  
14          requirements may be met through utilization of the credential transparency  
15          description language.

16          (5) Ensure that all data published under this section, with the data  
17          elements described in this section, are fully available to the public for open use.  
18          The data required under this section shall not include personally identifiable  
19          information.

20          (6) Seek to ensure that the data published and made open and  
21          transparent under this section is utilized, at a minimum, to:

1           (A) maximize informed consumer choice;

2           (B) improve open and comparable review of credentials for eligibility  
3 for public funds;

4           (C) inform and enhance navigation, guidance, exploration, and  
5 pathway tools for the benefit of students, workers, veterans, counselors,  
6 employers, educators, program administrators, policymakers, and others;

7           (D) improve transfer tools and services;

8           (E) support the development of individualized, self-sovereign, digital  
9 learning and employment records;

10           (F) meet State data initiatives associated with prekindergarten–16  
11 longitudinal data goals; and

12           (G) improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of the education  
13 and training market in the State.

14           (7) Publish data under this subsection on or before January 1, 2023.

15           (e) Report. Notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), on or before January 15 of  
16 each odd numbered year, Advance Vermont shall submit a written report to the  
17 House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on  
18 Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate Committee on  
19 Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs outlining progress  
20 toward the goal of 10 V.S.A. § 546 and recommendations for priorities for the  
21 biennium.



1           (f) Limitation of scope of responsibilities. Nothing in this section shall be  
2           construed to supersede or usurp the statutory powers or authority of any State  
3           agency or department or of any school district.

4           Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION

5           The sum of \$350,000.00 is appropriated from the General Funds in fiscal  
6           year 2022 to the Agency of Education for the purpose of funding the work of  
7           Advance Vermont created under Sec. 2 of this act.

8           Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

9           This act shall take effect on passage.