

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Education to which was referred Senate Bill No. 283
3 entitled “An act relating to miscellaneous changes to education laws”
4 respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the
5 House propose to the Senate that the bill be amended by striking out all after
6 the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 * * * Community College of Vermont In-State Tuition for Refugees * * *

8 Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 2185 is amended to read:

9 § 2185. DETERMINATION OF RESIDENCY FOR TUITION PURPOSES

10 (a) The Board of Trustees shall adopt policies related to residency for
11 tuition purposes, consistent with State and federal requirements.

12 (b) Any member of the U.S. Armed Forces on active duty who is
13 transferred to Vermont for duty other than for the purpose of education shall,
14 upon transfer and for the period of active duty served in Vermont, be
15 considered a resident for in-state tuition purposes at the start of the next
16 semester or academic period.

17 (c) For determination of residency for tuition to the Community College of
18 Vermont, a person who resides in Vermont shall be considered a resident for
19 in-state tuition purposes, beginning at the start of the next semester or
20 academic period after arrival in Vermont, if that person:

21 (1) qualifies as a refugee pursuant to 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(42);

1 (2) is granted parole to enter the United States pursuant to 8 U.S.C.
2 1182(d)(5); or

3 (3) is issued a special immigrant visa pursuant to the Afghan Allies
4 Protection Act of 2008, as amended.

5 Sec. 2. INCENTIVE GRANT ELIGIBILITY; RESIDENCY

6 (a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a person who
7 qualifies for in-state tuition to the Community College of Vermont under
8 16 V.S.A. § 2185(c) shall not be ineligible for the Vermont incentive grant
9 program under 16 V.S.A. §§ 2841–2846 solely on account of that person’s
10 residency status.

11 (b) This section is repealed on July 1, 2023.

12 * * * Suspension or Expulsion of Students * * *

13 Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 1162 is amended to read:

14 § 1162. SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION OF STUDENTS

15 (a) A superintendent or principal may, pursuant to policies adopted by the
16 school board that are consistent with State Board rules, suspend a student for
17 up to 10 school days or, with the approval of the board of the school district,
18 expel a student for up to the remainder of the school year or up to 90 school
19 days, whichever is longer, for misconduct:

20 (1) on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity
21 when the misconduct makes the continued presence of the student harmful to

1 the welfare of the school;

2 (2) not on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored
3 activity where direct harm to the welfare of the school can be demonstrated; or

4 (3) not on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored
5 activity where the misconduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial
6 interference with another student's equal access to educational programs.

7 (b) Nothing contained in this section shall prevent a superintendent or
8 principal, subject to subsequent due process procedures, from removing
9 immediately from a school a student who poses a continuing danger to persons
10 or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process of the
11 school, or from expelling a student who brings a weapon to school pursuant to
12 section 1166 of this title.

13 (c) Principals, superintendents, and school boards are authorized and
14 encouraged to provide alternative education services or programs to students
15 during any period of suspension or expulsion authorized under this section.

16 (d) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this chapter, a student
17 enrolled in a public school, approved independent school, or prequalified
18 private prekindergarten program who is under eight years of age shall not be
19 suspended or expelled from the school; provided, however, that the school may
20 suspend or expel the student if the student poses an imminent threat of harm or
21 danger to others in the school.

1 Sec. 4. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUSPENSION,
2 EXPULSION, AND EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES IN EARLY
3 CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SETTINGS

4 The Building Bright Futures Council, established in 33 V.S.A. § 4602, shall
5 collaborate with the Agencies of Human Services and Education to define
6 suspension, expulsion, and exclusionary practices in early childhood education
7 settings and to establish best practices for supporting children who face such
8 measures. The work of the Council shall include reviewing available data on
9 exclusionary practices. On or before January 15, 2023 the Building Bright
10 Futures Council shall issue a written report to the Senate and House
11 Committees on Education, the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, and
12 the House Committee on Human Services detailing its work and findings and
13 making recommendations for legislative action.

14 * * * Entrance Age Threshold for Public School Kindergarten * * *

15 Sec. 5. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE IMPACT OF
16 STANDARDIZING THE ENTRANCE AGE THRESHOLD FOR
17 PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN

18 On or before December 15, 2022, the Agency of Education shall issue a
19 written report to the Senate and House Committees on Education on the impact
20 of standardizing the entrance age threshold for public school kindergarten
21 attendance. In preparing the report, the Agency of Education shall consult

1 with the Vermont Department for Children and Families, the Vermont
2 Department of Health, the Vermont School Boards Association, the Vermont
3 Principals' Association, the Vermont Superintendents Association, and the
4 Vermont National Education Association. The report shall include any
5 recommendations for legislative action.

6 * * * Statewide Uniform School Calendar * * *

7 Sec. 6. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A STATEWIDE
8 UNIFORM SCHOOL CALENDAR

9 On or before January 15, 2024, the Agency of Education shall issue a
10 written report to the Senate and House Committees on Education with a
11 proposed statewide uniform school calendar, created to improve high-quality
12 learning opportunities for all Vermont students. In creating the calendar, the
13 Agency shall consider the impact on attendance at regional career and
14 technical education centers as well as the impact on families and educators.
15 The uniform calendar shall include student attendance days, periods of
16 vacation, holidays, and teacher in-service education days.

17 * * * Remote Learning * * *

18 Sec. 7. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATEWIDE
19 REMOTE LEARNING POLICY

20 On or before January 15, 2023, the Agency of Education, in consultation
21 with the State Board of Education, shall issue a written report to the Senate and

1 House Committees on Education with recommendations for a statewide remote
2 learning policy that incorporates remote learning into the requirements for
3 student attendance, school days, and cumulative instructional hours. The
4 report shall define remote learning and recommend statewide quality standards
5 to ensure substantially equal access to quality basic education. The report shall
6 also include any recommendations for legislative action.

7 * * * PCBs * * *

8 Sec. 8. 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 74, Sec. E.709.1 is amended to read:

9 Sec. E.709.1 ENVIRONMENTAL CONTINGENCY FUND;

10 POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS (PCBs) TESTING IN
11 SCHOOLS

12 (a) Notwithstanding 10 V.S.A. § 1283, of the funds transferred in
13 Sec. D.101(a) of this act to the Environmental Contingency Fund, the
14 Department of Environmental Conservation, in consultation with the
15 Department of Health and the Agency of Education, shall use up to \$4,500,000
16 to complete air indoor quality testing for Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) in
17 public schools and approved and recognized independent schools that were
18 constructed or renovated before 1980. All schools subject to this subsection
19 shall test for PCBs on or before July 1, ~~2024~~ 2026. ~~It is the intent of the~~
20 ~~General Assembly to develop additional guidance during the 2022 legislative~~
21 ~~session.~~

1 (b) On or before January 15, 2023, the Secretary of Natural Resources,
2 after consultation with the Secretary of Education and the Commissioner of
3 Health, shall submit to the House Committees on Education and on Natural
4 Resources, Fish, and Wildlife and the Senate Committees on Education and on
5 Natural Resources and Energy the following information addressing the testing
6 of air quality for PCBs in public schools and approved and recognized
7 independent schools that were constructed or renovated before 1980:

8 (1) the testing methodology used, including where and how samples
9 were collected;

10 (2) the results from schools that were tested, any immediate responses
11 that were taken by the school, and any planned responses that will take place
12 by a school;

13 (3) a cost estimate for the work planned to take place for schools that
14 were tested and any cost projections based on the sampling that has taken
15 place;

16 (4) a schedule for testing all remaining schools, including whether
17 testing will occur when students and staff are present in the school; and

18 (5) a proposal for how any required response to the presence of PCBs in
19 a school shall be funded, including any proposed financial assistance from the
20 State to schools to implement a required response.

1 Sec. Y. 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 72, Sec. 3(b) is amended to read:

2 (b) The Secretary of Education shall contract with an independent third
3 party to conduct the inventory and assessment described in subsection (a) of
4 this section. The inventory shall be completed on or before January 15, 2022,
5 and the assessment shall be completed on or before October 1, ~~2022~~ 2023.

6 Sec. 9. 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 72, Sec. 12 is amended to read:

7 Sec. 12. RADON TESTING; SCHOOL FACILITIES

8 (a) On or before June 30, ~~2023~~ 2026, each public school and approved
9 independent school, as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 11, shall perform a radon
10 measurement in accordance with the ANSI/AARST protocol for conducting
11 Radon and Radon Decay Products in Schools and Large Buildings (MALB-
12 2014) on any facility that has not had a test completed in five or more years;
13 provided, however, that any public school or approved independent school that
14 is engaged in implementing an indoor air quality improvement project prior to
15 June 30, 2023 shall perform a radon measurement on or before June 30, 2024.

16 (b) Each public school and approved independent school shall make
17 available the results of the radon measurement described in subsection (a) of
18 this section to each employee and student at the school.

1 * * * Crime Insurance for Incorporated School Districts * * *

2 Sec. 10. 16 V.S.A. § 492 is amended to read:

3 § 492. POWERS, DUTIES, AND LIABILITIES; BONDS

4 (a) The powers, duties, and liabilities of the collector, treasurer, prudential
5 committee, and clerk shall be like those of a town collector, treasurer, board of
6 school directors, and the school board clerk, respectively.

7 (b) Before entering upon their duties, the collector and treasurer shall give a
8 bond to the district conditioned for the faithful performance of their duties, in
9 such sum as may be required. ~~When~~ In lieu of taking a personal bond from a
10 collector or treasurer, or both, a school district may choose to provide suitable
11 crime insurance covering the collector or treasurer, or both. If a school district
12 has not provided suitable crime insurance in lieu of a bond and a collector or
13 treasurer for ten days neglects to give a bond as required, ~~his or her~~ that office
14 shall be vacant.

15 * * * Interstate School Districts * * *

16 **Sec. 11. INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS; INDIVIDUALIZED**

17 **EDUCATION PROGRAM**

18 Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a Vermont resident
19 who is enrolled in an interstate school district, is on an individualized
20 education program (IEP), is 21 years of age or younger, and who is not entitled
21 to receive special education services through the interstate school district due

1 to an age limitation shall be entitled to enroll in a Vermont public high school
2 and receive special education services through 21 years of age. The student
3 may choose the Vermont public high school, provided that the school
4 determines that it has capacity and is able to provide the services required
5 under the student’s IEP. The student’s local education agency of residence
6 shall be the student’s local education agency for special education purposes.
7 Tuition and special education expenses for the student shall be paid by the
8 Agency of Education, and the Agency of Education shall include in its annual
9 budget request to the General Assembly an amount to cover these expenses.

10 * * * Approved and Recognized Independent Schools * * *

11 Sec. 12. 16 V.S.A. § 166(b)(8) is amended to read:

12 (8)(A) If an approved independent school experiences any of the
13 following financial reporting events during the period of its approved status,
14 the school shall notify the Secretary of Education within five days after its
15 knowledge of the event unless the failure is de minimis:

16 (i) the school’s failure to file its federal or State tax returns when
17 due, after permissible extension periods have been taken into account;

18 (ii) the school’s failure to meet its payroll obligations as they are
19 due or to pay federal or State payroll tax obligations as they are due;

20 (iii) the school’s failure to maintain required retirement
21 contributions;

1 (iv) the school’s use of designated funds for nondesignated
2 purposes;

3 (v) the school’s inability to fully comply with the financial terms
4 of its secured installment debt obligations over a period of two consecutive
5 months, including the school’s failure to make interest or principal payments
6 as they are due or to maintain any required financial ratios;

7 (vi) the withdrawal or conditioning of the school’s accreditation
8 on financial grounds by a private, State, or regional agency recognized by the
9 State Board for accrediting purposes; or

10 (vii) the school’s insolvency, as defined in 9 V.S.A. § 2286(a).

11 (B)(i) If the ~~State Board~~ Secretary reasonably believes that an
12 approved independent school lacks financial capacity to meet its stated
13 objectives during the period of its approved status, then the ~~State Board~~
14 Secretary shall notify the school in writing of the reasons for this belief and
15 permit the school a reasonable opportunity to respond.

16 (ii) If the ~~State Board~~ Secretary, after having provided the school a
17 reasonable opportunity to respond, does not find that the school has
18 satisfactorily responded or demonstrated its financial capacity, the ~~State Board~~
19 Secretary may establish a review team, that, with the consent of the school,
20 includes a member of the Council of Independent Schools, to:

1 (I) conduct a school visit to assess the school’s financial
2 capacity;

3 (II) obtain from the school such financial documentation as the
4 review team requires to perform its assessment; and

5 (III) submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the
6 State Board.

7 (iii) If the State Board concludes that an approved independent
8 school lacks financial capacity to meet its stated objectives during the period of
9 its approved status, the State Board may take any action that is authorized by
10 this section.

11 (iv) In considering whether an independent school lacks financial
12 capacity to meet its stated objectives during the period of its approved status
13 and what actions the State Board should take if it makes this finding, the State
14 Board may consult with, and draw on the analytical resources of, the Vermont
15 Department of Financial Regulation.

16 (C) Information provided by an independent school under this
17 subsection that is not already in the public domain is exempt from public
18 inspection and copying under the Public Records Act and shall be kept
19 confidential.

20 * * * Prekindergarten Prequalification Quality Standards * * *

21 **Sec. 13. PREKINDERGARTEN PREQUALIFICATION QUALITY**

1 **STANDARDS**

2 (a) Purpose. The purpose of this section is to allow the Agencies of
3 Education and Human Services to update Vermont’s prekindergarten Quality
4 Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to bring it inline with current best
5 practices.

6 (b) Prequalification. Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 829(c)(1)(B) & (C), for
7 fiscal years 2023 and 2024, in order to be prequalified as a program of
8 prekindergarten education, whether provided by a school district or a private
9 provider, the program shall:

10 (1) be assessed at a quality level in Vermont’s QRIS agreed upon by the
11 Secretaries of Education and Human Services; or

12 (2) have a developed plan, approved by the designees of the Secretaries
13 of Education and Human Services, to achieve an agreed upon quality level in
14 no more than three years.

15 (c) On or before January 15, 2024, the Agency of Education and the
16 Agency of Human Services shall issue a joint written report to the Senate and
17 House Committees on Education, the Senate Committee on Health and
18 Welfare, and the House Committee on Human Services with recommended
19 updates to Vermont’s QRIS and recommendations for prekindergarten
20 prequalification standards in light of any proposed changes to the QRIS. The
21 report shall include recommendations for legislative action.

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* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 14. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

(Committee vote: _____)

Representative _____

FOR THE COMMITTEE