

1 Introduced by Committee on Education

2 Date:

3 Subject: Education; miscellaneous

4 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to make
5 miscellaneous changes to education law, including: (1) requiring the Agency
6 of Education to contract with an independent third-party to conduct a
7 curriculum audit of at least four supervisory unions with a high percentage of
8 students who are approved for free and reduced-price meals; (2) creating a
9 proficiency-based learning study committee; (3) appropriating \$350,000.00 to
10 the Agency of Tourism and Marketing to promote Vermont postsecondary
11 schools; (4) requiring the Working Group on the Status of Libraries in
12 Vermont to study public safety protections in libraries; and (5) creating a
13 regional pilot student driver clinic program.

14 An act relating to miscellaneous changes to education law

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

16 * * * Curriculum and Academic Standards * * *

17 Sec. 1. CURRICULUM AUDIT; REPORT

18 (a) Curriculum audit. All Vermont children are entitled to substantially
19 equal educational opportunities. In order to better understand the breadth of
20 course offerings and curriculum differences across the State, the Agency of

1 Education shall contract with an independent third party to conduct and report
2 on a curriculum audit of at least four supervisory unions or supervisory
3 districts, all of which shall have a high percentage of students who are
4 approved for free and reduced-price school meals. **The curriculum audit shall**
5 **include all approved independent schools geographically located within the**
6 **supervisory union or supervisory districts selected.** On or before January 15,
7 2024, the Agency shall submit a copy of the report to the House and Senate
8 Committees on Education.

9 (b) Appropriation. The sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the
10 General Fund to the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2024 for the purpose of
11 contracting with an independent third party to conduct a curriculum audit as
12 described in subsection (a) of this section.

13 **Sec. 2. PROFICIENCY-BASED LEARNING; STUDY COMMITTEE**

14 (a) Creation. There is created the Proficiency-Based Learning Study
15 Committee to study proficiency-based learning and proficiency-based
16 graduation requirements as they are used in Vermont, as required by the
17 Agency of Education, Education Quality Standards (CVR 22-000-003), and to
18 make recommendations for whether proficiency-based learning is the most
19 effective way to ensure Vermont students attain rigorous standards in high-
20 quality programs or whether there are other systems of instruction, assessment,
21 grading, and academic reporting that would better serve Vermont students.

1 (b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following
2 members:

3 (1) the Secretary of Education or designee;

4 (2) the Chair of the State Board of Education or designee;

5 (3) the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or
6 designee;

7 (4) the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents Association
8 or designee;

9 (5) the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards Association or
10 designee; and

11 (6) the Executive Director of the Vermont National Education
12 Association or designee.

13 (c) Powers and duties. The Committee shall study proficiency-based
14 learning and proficiency-based graduation requirements, including the
15 following issues:

16 (1) the statewide implementation of proficiency-based learning and
17 proficiency-based graduation requirements and to what extent there is
18 consistency in application across all supervisory unions;

19 (2) other states' experience with proficiency-based learning;

20 (3) alternatives to proficiency-based learning, including other systems of
21 instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting; and

1 (4) recommendations for Vermont assessment standards and the efforts
2 needed to ensure successful and substantially equal implementation across
3 Vermont.

4 (d) Assistance. The Committee shall have the administrative, technical,
5 and legal assistance of the Vermont Agency of Education.

6 (e) Report. On or before January 15, 2024, the Committee shall submit a
7 written report to House and Senate Committees on Education with its findings
8 and any recommendations for legislative action.

9 (f) Meetings.

10 (1) The Secretary of Education or designee shall call the first meeting of
11 the Committee to occur on or before August 15, 2023.

12 (2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the
13 first meeting.

14 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

15 (4) The Committee shall cease to exist on January 16, 2024.

16 * * * Postsecondary School Marketing * * *

17 Sec. 3. VERMONT POSTSECONDARY SCHOOL MARKETING

18 The sum of \$350,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
19 Agency of Tourism and Marketing in fiscal year 2024 for the purpose of
20 marketing Vermont postsecondary schools.

21 * * * Public Safety in Libraries * * *

1 Sec. 4. 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 66, Sec. 1 is amended to read:

2 Sec. 1. WORKING GROUP ON THE STATUS OF LIBRARIES IN
3 VERMONT; REPORT

4 (a) Creation. There is created the Working Group on the Status of
5 Libraries in Vermont to study and report on the statewide status of Vermont’s
6 libraries. The Working Group is formed with the intent of strengthening and
7 supporting libraries of all sizes and improving library services for the public.

8 (b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following
9 members:

10 (1) the State Librarian;

11 (2) the President of the Vermont Library Association or designee;

12 (3) the Executive Director of the Vermont Humanities Council or
13 designee;

14 (4) three representatives of public libraries, who shall be from libraries
15 of different sizes and from different regions of the State, appointed by the State
16 Librarian;

17 (5) two representatives of public school libraries, who shall be from
18 schools of different sizes and from different regions of the State, appointed by
19 the Vermont School Library Association;

1 (6) two representatives of college and university libraries, appointed by
2 the President of the College and Special Libraries Section of the Vermont
3 Library Association; and

4 (7) one public library trustee, appointed by the President of the Friends
5 and Trustees Section of the Vermont Library Association.

6 (c) Powers and duties. The Working Group shall study:

7 (1) library services for specific segments of the Vermont population,
8 including senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, youths and children,
9 immigrant and migrant communities, and people living in poverty;

10 (2) the role that libraries play in emergency preparedness, cultural
11 diversity and inclusion, public health and safety, community identity and
12 resiliency, economic development, and access to public programs and services;

13 (3) the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on library operations and
14 services; ~~and~~

15 (4) whether current law provides adequate public safety protections for
16 libraries; and

17 ~~(4)~~(5) the current overall status of Vermont libraries, which may include
18 information related to programming, collections, facilities, technology, and
19 staffing.

20 (A) Programming. The Working Group may study the types and
21 frequency of library programs, attendance at library programs, and whether

1 library programs are meeting community needs. The study of programming
2 may include an assessment of public engagement and outreach surrounding
3 library programming as well as the opportunities for nonlibrary programs and
4 groups to access Vermont libraries.

5 (B) Collections. The Working Group may study the size and
6 diversity of library holdings and assess the strengths and gaps in materials
7 available to Vermonters. The study of collections may include an assessment
8 of how libraries may best share resources across differing libraries and
9 communities, whether libraries offer community-specific resources, and
10 whether libraries maintain special collections or historical artifacts.

11 (C) Facilities. The Working Group may study whether library
12 facilities and buildings could be improved with regard to energy efficiency,
13 accessibility, flexibility, human health and safety, historic preservation, and
14 intergenerational needs.

15 (D) Technology. The Working Group may study whether Vermont
16 libraries have sufficient access to basic technological resources, ~~cyber security~~
17 cybersecurity resources, high-speed Internet, electronic catalogs, interlibrary
18 loan and other interoperable systems, and appropriate hardware and software.

19 (E) Staff. The Working Group may study staffing levels at Vermont
20 libraries, whether staffing levels are sufficient to meet community needs,
21 whether library staff compensation and benefits are sufficient, how libraries

1 rely on volunteers, and what resources are available for workforce
2 development and training of library staff.

3 (d) Public input. As part of the study and report, the Working Group shall
4 solicit feedback from the general public and library users around the State.
5 The Working Group may examine models for library management and
6 organization in other states, including the formation of statewide service
7 networks.

8 (e) Data to be used. The data used in the analysis of library services and
9 operations may be from 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
10 Postpandemic data may also be used to assess the status of library services and
11 operations.

12 (f) Consultation with the Board of Libraries. The Working Group may
13 solicit feedback from the Board of Libraries.

14 (g) Assistance. The Working Group shall have the administrative,
15 technical, and legal assistance of the Department of Libraries.

16 (h) Report. On or before **December 20, 2023**, the Working Group shall
17 submit a report to the House and Senate Committees on Education. The report
18 shall contain:

19 (1) specific and detailed findings and proposals concerning the issues set
20 forth in subsection (c) of this section, including recommendations for
21 legislative action regarding **public safety protections** on library property;

1 (2) recommendations for updating the statutes, rules, standards, and the
2 governance structures of Vermont libraries to ensure equitable access for
3 Vermont residents, efficient use of resources, and quality in the provision of
4 services;

5 (3) recommendations related to the funding needs of Vermont libraries,
6 including capital, ongoing, and special funding; and

7 (4) any other information or recommendations that the Working Group
8 may deem necessary.

9 (i) Meetings.

10 (1) The State Librarian shall be the Chair of the Working Group.

11 (2) The Chair shall call the first meeting of the Working Group to occur
12 within 45 days after the effective date of this act.

13 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

14 (4) The Working Group shall cease to exist on **January 20, 2024**.

15 (j) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Working Group
16 shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as
17 permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 12 meetings. These
18 payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Department of
19 Libraries.

20 (k) Appropriation. The sum of \$12,000.00 is appropriated to the
21 Department of Libraries from the General Fund in fiscal year 2022 for per

1 diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the
2 Working Group.

3 * * * Driver Education * * *

4 Sec. 5. REGIONAL STUDENT DRIVER EDUCATION CLINICS; PILOT
5 PROJECT; REPORT; APPROPRIATION

6 (a) Pilot program. On or before December 15, 2023, the Agency of
7 Education and the Department of Motor Vehicles, in partnership with
8 interested school districts, shall establish a regional pilot student driver clinic
9 program to provide the required minimum 6 hours of behind-the-wheel
10 instruction by a certified driver education instructor as required by State Board
11 of Education rule.

12 (1) The Agency and Department shall appoint one or more certified
13 driver education instructors who shall assist in the development of the pilot
14 program.

15 (2) The pilot program shall be designed to be implemented on a regional
16 level, with an adequate number of programs provided to meet the reasonably
17 anticipated needs of all public and approved independent schools participating
18 in the pilot program. The Agency and Department shall partner with
19 participating school districts to define regions.

20 (3) The pilot program shall meet all legal requirements of student driver
21 education and training programs.

1 (4) The Agency and Department shall adopt policies, procedures, and
2 guidelines necessary to implement the pilot program.

3 (b) Implementation. Regional pilot programs developed in accordance
4 with the pilot program created under subsection (a) of this section shall begin
5 offering student driver clinics on or before July 15, 2024.

6 (c) Rule suspension. For fiscal years 2024 and 2025, the requirement
7 found in Agency of Education, Length of School Day and Year, Specific
8 Program Requirements for Public Schools (CVR 22-000-005), Rule 2352 that
9 not more than one hour of behind-the-wheel instruction shall be provided to a
10 student in one day shall be suspended for students receiving behind-the-wheel
11 instruction through the pilot program.

12 (d) Reports.

13 (1) On or before December 15, 2023, the Agency of Education shall
14 submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education with
15 information on the progress made in developing the pilot program created
16 under this section and the implantation plan for pilot clinics to take place in the
17 summer of 2024. The report shall also include an update on the certification
18 process for driver education teachers and the steps the Agency has taken to
19 address the workforce shortage in driver education. In reporting on the
20 workforce shortage, the Agency shall include any recommendations for
21 legislative action.

