

H.779

Introduced by Representatives Chapin of East Montpelier, Brady of Williston,
and Harple of Glover

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; flexible pathways; early college; dual enrollment

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to (1) repeal the
early college program on July 1, 2027; (2) increase the number of publicly
funded dual enrollment courses a student is eligible to take from two to four;
and (3) create the College-Level Programming for High School Students
Working Group to examine opportunities for high schools and the Vermont
State Colleges System to partner on providing college-level programming to
high school students.

An act relating to updating the Flexible Pathways Initiative

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

* * * Intent * * *

Sec. 1. INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to:

(1) shift the ways that our public kindergarten through grade 12 schools
partner with the Vermont State Colleges System in an effort to reduce financial

1 and programmatic impact on public schools while still maintaining
2 opportunities for high school seniors;

3 (2) address the negative impacts of the early college pathway on high
4 schools, particularly those located in close proximity to participating college
5 campuses that have seen significant impacts on the school's enrollment and
6 budget;

7 (3) ensure monies from the Education Fund shall be used to support our
8 public kindergarten through grade 12 schools; and

9 (4) increase equity in access to quality course and advanced learning for
10 high school students as the early college program is currently not as accessible
11 to lower income families or students in certain geographic areas of the State
12 due to fees charged by participating colleges and transportation costs or
13 limitations.

14 * * * Early College * * *

15 Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 941 is amended to read:

16 § 941. FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

17 * * *

18 (b) The Secretary shall develop, publish, and regularly update guidance, in
19 the form of technical assistance, sharing of best practices and model
20 documents, legal interpretations, and other support designed to assist school
21 districts:

* * *

(3) To create opportunities for secondary students to pursue flexible pathways to graduation that:

(A) increase aspiration and encourage postsecondary continuation of training and education;

(B) are an integral component of a student's personalized learning plan; and

(C) include:

(i) applied or work-based learning opportunities, including career and career technical education and internships;

(ii) virtual learning and blended learning;

(iii) dual enrollment opportunities as set forth in section 944 of this title; and

(iv) ~~early college programs as set forth in subsection 4011(e) of this title; and~~ [Repealed.]

(v) [Repealed.]

(vi) adult education and secondary credential opportunities as set forth in section 945 of this title.

* * *

1 Sec. 3. REPEALS

2 16 V.S.A. §§ 946 (early college) and 947 (early college program; report;
3 appropriation) are repealed.

4 * * * Dual Enrollment * * *

5 Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 944 is amended to read:

6 § 944. DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

7 (a) Program creation. There is created a statewide Dual Enrollment
8 Program to be a potential component of a student's flexible pathway. The
9 Program shall include college courses offered on the campus of an accredited
10 postsecondary institution and college courses offered by an accredited
11 postsecondary institution on the campus of a secondary school. The Program
12 may include online college courses or components.

13 (b) Students.

14 * * *

15 (2) An eligible student may enroll in up to ~~two~~ four dual enrollment
16 courses prior to completion of secondary school for which neither the student
17 nor the student's parent or guardian shall be required to pay tuition. A student
18 may enroll in courses offered while secondary school is in session and during
19 the summer.

20 * * *

1 (h) Number of courses. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit a
2 school district's authority to pay for more than the ~~two~~ four courses per eligible
3 student authorized by subdivision (b)(2) of this section; provided, however,
4 that payment under subdivision (f)(2) of this section shall not be made for
5 more than ~~two~~ four courses per eligible student.

6 * * *

7 * * * College-Level Programming for High School Students Working
8 Group * * *

9 Sec. 5. COLLEGE-LEVEL PROGRAMMING FOR HIGH SCHOOL

10 STUDENTS; WORKING GROUP; REPORT

11 (a) Creation. There is created the College-Level Programming for High
12 School Students Working Group to examine opportunities for high schools and
13 the Vermont State Colleges System to partner on providing college-level
14 programming to high school students, including within high school
15 classrooms.

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

18 (1) the Secretary of Education or designee;

19 (2) the President of the Community College of Vermont or designee;

20 (3) the President of Vermont State University or designee;

1 (4) two superintendents appointed by the Vermont Superintendent's
2 Association; and

3 (5) two curriculum coordinators appointed by the Vermont Curriculum
4 Leaders Association.

5 (c) Powers and duties. The Working Group shall study the provision of
6 college-level programming for high school students, including how the public
7 school system can partner with the Vermont State Colleges System to provide
8 college-level opportunities for interested students while still maintaining
9 programing within the public high schools that meets the needs of all students.
10 The Working Group shall also study how college-level programming may be
11 provided within high school classrooms. The Working Group shall include
12 funding recommendations to support any programmatic recommendations.

13 (d) Assistance. The Working Group shall have the administrative,
14 technical, and legal assistance of the Agency of Education.

15 (e) Report. On or before December 1, 2026, the Working Group shall
16 submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education with
17 its programmatic and funding findings and any recommendations for
18 legislative action.

19 (f) Meetings.

20 (1) The Secretary of Education shall call the first meeting of the
21 Working Group to occur on or before September 1, 2026.

1 (2) The Working Group shall select a chair from among its members at
2 the first meeting.

3 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum, and
4 members are prohibited from abstaining from all votes taken regarding final
5 recommendations.

6 (4) The Working Group shall cease to exist on January 15, 2027.

7 (g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Working Group
8 shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as
9 permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than six meetings. These
10 payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Education.

11 (h) Appropriation. The sum of \$10,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of
12 Education from the General Fund in fiscal year 2027 for per diem
13 compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the Working
14 Group.

15 * * * Effective Dates * * *

16 Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATES

17 (a) This section and Secs. 1 (intent), 4 (dual enrollment), and 5 (College-
18 Level Programming for High School Students Working Group) shall take
19 effect on July 1, 2026.

20 (b) Secs. 2 (16 V.S.A. § 941; flexible pathways) and 3 (repeals; early
21 college) shall take effect on July 1, 2027.