

1 H.835

2 Introduced by Representative McGill of Bridport

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Education; attendance; legal residence; homeless students;

6 appropriation

7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require school

8 districts to (1) immediately enroll homeless students; (2) provide transportation

9 assistance to homeless students attending their school of origin whose parents

10 or legal guardians seek shelter or are located in a different school district; and

11 (3) designate one or more employees of the district as a homeless education

12 liaison. This bill also proposes to create the Educational Stability Grant

13 Program to provide grant money to public education providers to use in

14 supporting highly mobile students by providing academic and social-emotional

15 services and supports with the goals of improving school attendance and

16 promotion rates, reducing behavioral and disciplinary incidents, and increasing

17 graduation rates.

18 An act relating to supporting homeless students

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

2 Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 1075 is amended to read:

3 **§ 1075. LEGAL RESIDENCE DEFINED; RESPONSIBILITY AND  
4 PAYMENT OF EDUCATION OF STUDENT**

5 \* \* \*

6 (c) State-placed students.

7 (1) A State-placed student in the legal custody of the Commissioner for  
8 Children and Families, other than one placed in a 24-hour residential facility  
9 and except as otherwise provided in this subsection, shall be educated by the  
10 student's school of origin, unless the student's education team determines that  
11 it is not in the student's best interests to attend the school of origin. The  
12 student's education team shall include, as applicable, the student, the student's  
13 parents and foster parents, the student's guardian ad litem and educational  
14 surrogate parent, representatives of both the school of origin and potential new  
15 school, and a representative of the Family Services Division of the Department  
16 for Children and Families. In the case of a dispute about whether it is in the  
17 student's best interests to attend the school of origin, the Commissioner for  
18 Children and Families shall make the final decision. As used in this section,  
19 "school of origin" means the school in which the child was enrolled at the time  
20 of placement into custody of the Commissioner for Children and Families, or

1 in the case of a student already in the custody of the Commissioner for  
2 Children and Families, the school the student most recently attended.

3 \* \* \*

4 (e)(1) For the purposes of this title, the legal residence or residence of a  
5 child of homeless parents is the child's school of origin, as defined in  
6 subdivision (c)(1) of this section, unless the parents and another school district  
7 agree that the child's attendance in school in that school district will be in the  
8 best interests of the child. A "child of homeless parents" means a child whose  
9 parents:

10       (1)(A) lack a fixed, regular, and adequate residence; or  
11       (2)(B) have a primary nighttime residence in a supervised publicly or  
12       privately operated shelter for temporary accommodations such as public  
13       assistance hotels, emergency shelters, battered women's shelters, and  
14       transitional housing facilities, or a public or private place not designated for, or  
15       ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

16       (2) If the parents and a school district other than the child's school  
17       district of origin agree that the child's attendance in school in that school  
18       district will be in the best interests of the child, the school district shall  
19       immediately enroll the child and contact the school last attended by the child to  
20       obtain any records necessary for enrollment.

1                   (3) If the child continues attendance at the child's school of origin and  
2                   the child's parent or legal guardian seeks shelter or is located in another school  
3                   district, the school district of the school of origin shall provide transportation  
4                   assistance to ensure the child can regularly attend school.

5                   (4) The board of each school district shall designate one or more of the  
6                   employees of the school district to act as a homeless education liaison. The  
7                   homeless education liaison shall facilitate a homeless child's access to and  
8                   success in school. The homeless education liaison shall also assist in the  
9                   mediation of any disputes concerning school enrollment, in making  
10                   arrangements for transportation of the homeless child to and from school, and  
11                   in requesting school and immunization records, and assist any unaccompanied  
12                   homeless child in making enrollment decisions. On or before the average daily  
13                   membership census period under subdivision 4001(1) of this title, the homeless  
14                   education liaison in each school district shall report the number of homeless  
15                   children enrolled in the district to the Agency.

16                   \* \* \*

17                   Sec. 2. EDUCATIONAL STABILITY GRANT PROGRAM;

18                   APPROPRIATION

19                   (a) Grant Program creation. There is created within the Agency of  
20                   Education the Educational Stability Grant Program to provide grant money to  
21                   public education providers to use in supporting highly mobile students by

1 providing academic and social-emotional services and supports with the goals  
2 of improving school attendance and promotion rates, reducing behavioral and  
3 disciplinary incidents, and increasing graduation rates. Subject to available  
4 appropriations, commencing with the 2027 fiscal year, the Agency shall award  
5 educational stability grants to preschool, elementary, and secondary public  
6 education providers from money appropriated to the Agency for the Grant  
7 Program.

8       (1) The Agency shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines  
9 necessary for implementation of the Grant Program. At a minimum, the  
10 policies shall include:

11       (A) timelines and procedures by which a public education provider  
12 may apply for a grant; and

13       (B) the information to be included on grant applications, including at  
14 a minimum:

15           (i) the number of highly mobile students the education provider  
16 served in the previous school year, which shall include children or youth who  
17 at any time during the academic year were homeless, as defined in 16 V.S.A.  
18 § 1075(e) or were State-placed students under 16 V.S.A. § 1075(c);

19           (ii) a description of services to be provided through the grant,  
20 including a description of innovative practices to address barriers for students;

2 through the grant;

3 (iv) an estimated cost to provide services through the grant;

4 (v) criteria for measurement of the effectiveness of services

5 provided through the grant;

6 (vi) a description of the public education provider's existing

7 policies and practices relating to the transfer of student records between

8 education providers;

9 (vii) the public education provider's collaboration with social

10 service agencies to make best-interest determinations and to provide

11 transportation, when needed;

12 (viii) the provision of services for students who receive special

13 education services;

14 (ix) access to extracurricular activities for students who receive

15 special education services;

16 (x) transition practices relating to school moves for students; and

17 (xi) engagement in academic supports, such as work-based

18 learning.

19 (2) Each public education provider that seeks a grant pursuant to this

20 section shall submit an application to the Agency in accordance with the

21 policies, procedures, and guidance issued pursuant to subdivision (1) of this

1        subsection. The Agency shall review the grant applications received and  
2        award grants to successful applicants.

3        (b) Funding.

4        (1) Appropriation. The sum of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the  
5        General Fund to the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2027 for the purpose of  
6        providing grants to public education providers through the Educational  
7        Stability Grant Program created pursuant to this section.

8        (2) Other sources. The Agency may seek, accept, and expend gifts,  
9        grants, or donations from private or public sources for the purposes of this  
10        section.

11        (c) Evaluation. Annually on or before July 15, the Agency shall evaluate  
12        the educational stability services provided by each public education provider  
13        that received a grant pursuant to this section in the preceding fiscal year;  
14        provided, however that the Agency need not provide an evaluation for any  
15        fiscal year in which grants were not awarded. At a minimum, the Agency shall  
16        review:

17        (1) the outcomes and effectiveness of the services provided as measured  
18        by the demonstrated degree of educational stability;  
19        (2) the improvement in school attendance;  
20        (3) the reduction in behavioral and discipline incidents;

- 1        (4) the increase in grade-level promotion;
- 2        (5) the reduction in the dropout rate; and
- 3        (6) the increase in the graduation and completion rates for the grant
- 4        recipients' schools.

5                   (d) Report. Notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), annually on or before  
6                   December 1, the Agency shall submit a written report to the House and Senate  
7                   Committees on Education with the results of the evaluation it conducted  
8                   pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and any recommendations for  
9                   legislative action.

12 (1) a school district as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 11(10);

13 (2) a supervisory union as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 11(23);

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17            Corporation.

18 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

19 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.