

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.

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

\* \* \*

## APPROPRIATION

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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;

1                    (iii) a description of the need for the services to be provided  
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.

10          (e) Definitions. As used in this section, "public education provider"  
11 means:

- 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);  
14           (3) a program of prekindergarten education prequalified pursuant to 16  
15 V.S.A. § 829 operated by a school district; and  
16           (4) the University of Vermont and the Vermont State Colleges  
17 Corporation.

18       Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

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