

1 S.313

2 An act relating to transforming Vermont's career technical education
3 system

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

5 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

6 The General Assembly finds that:

7 (1) Vermont has unmet workforce needs and skills gaps, while a
8 growing percentage of the decreasing school-aged population is not continuing
9 on to further their education.

10 (2) To help reverse these trends, every student should graduate with a
11 plan for what comes next after high school, whether that is continued education
12 or training, military service, or entering the workforce.

13 (3) A growing body of research shows that the fulfillment of this vision
14 requires the creation of a career navigation system that includes intentional,
15 coordinated, and equitable local, regional, and statewide programming from
16 elementary school through high school. The system should ensure that
17 students gain awareness of post-high school career and education opportunities
18 through career exploration, personalized guidance, work-based learning,
19 flexible pathways programming, and credentials of value that support
20 successful transitions beyond high school.

21 (4) CTE is an essential tool to realize this vision. CTE engages students
22 in hands-on instruction and applied learning that builds practical skills,

1 develops career readiness, and provides pathways to industry-recognized
2 credentials and postsecondary credit. Vermont's CTE system must ensure that
3 every student, regardless of geography, identity, or school, has access to high-
4 quality career technical education opportunities.

5 Sec. 2. CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

6 TRANSFORMATION; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

7 To realize a strong statewide career preparation system, it is the intent of the
8 General Assembly to transform Vermont's career technical education (CTE)
9 system as follows:

10 (1) Provide universal access to CTE, ensuring that every student can
11 participate in CTE programming, including pretech and foundations courses,
12 by:

13 (A) increasing exposure to and early awareness of CTE in middle
14 school and the first two years of high school;

15 (B) addressing barriers such as transportation, scheduling conflicts,
16 and awareness;

17 (C) providing consistency in admissions policies while allowing for
18 program-specific requirements related to readiness, sequencing, and safety;
19 and

20 (D) ensuring that no student may be placed on a waitlist or prevented
21 from accessing CTE for lack of capacity where there is a viable alternative

1 program that aligns with the student’s intended program of study and meets
2 program requirements, including sequencing and safety concerns, through the
3 provision of transportation, supported through a state-level funding or
4 coordination mechanism.

5 (2) Enable flexible delivery models, expanding beyond regional
6 technical centers to offer multiple pathways for students to access CTE
7 programming and graduate with required high school courses by:

8 (A) delivering programs at sending high schools or in a hybrid format
9 where appropriate, provided that program quality, industry alignment, and
10 access to necessary equipment and facilities are maintained; and

11 (B) utilizing shared resources and technology to improve educational
12 access and limit transportation needs.

13 (3) Align the CTE system with workforce needs by designing and
14 evaluating programs based on current and emerging Vermont labor market
15 demands, continue robust evaluation of the system through the Comprehensive
16 Local Needs Assessment process, and utilize statewide research from
17 Vermont’s Most Promising Jobs and VT Labor Market Information to assess
18 student outcomes in continuing to the workforce.

19 (4) Create a sustainable, student-centered funding system that removes
20 disincentives for participation and supports program growth and innovation.

1 Flexible delivery models and access must be taken into consideration to ensure
2 the sustainability of program delivery.

3 (5) Explore the viability and impact of CTE centers becoming diploma-
4 conferring institutions or comprehensive high schools. In situations where this
5 is not possible, high schools shall be required to award the credits
6 recommended by a CTE center.

7 (6) Maintain a strong adult CTE system by building robust adult and
8 continuing education pathways within CTE that meet Vermont's upskilling,
9 reskilling, and workforce development needs while connecting seamlessly with
10 secondary programs and regional workforce partners. Such a system shall
11 have a governance and funding model that promotes coordination, quality,
12 program consistency, and sustainability.

13 (7) Coordinate CTE governance by establishing governance approaches
14 that strengthen collaboration across districts, improve consistency and program
15 quality, and better support positive student outcomes. CTE governance should
16 align with the ongoing education transportation process, with the above goals
17 as the lens through which decisions are made.

18 Sec. 3. CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION; GUIDANCE

19 On or before September 18, 2026, the Agency of Education, in
20 collaboration with the Vermont Association of Career and Technical Directors
21 and the Vermont Superintendents Association, shall issue guidance on the

1 following topics, which shall reflect the current career technical education
2 system as it exists on July 1, 2026, in an effort to provide clarity to the field
3 prior to updates to the career and technical education rules:

4 (1) updates to definitions, including definitions for “CTE programs,”
5 “credentials,” “embedded academics,” and “satellite models”;

6 (2) credit standards and competency-based pathways;

7 (3) work-based learning sequencing aligned with Occupational Safety
8 and Health Administration standards and federal hazard orders;

9 (4) minimum safety, space, and equipment standards;

10 (5) data and reporting alignment with Perkins V; and

11 (6) explicit allowance for differentiated regional delivery models.

12 Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 1532 is amended to read:

13 § 1532. MINIMUM STANDARDS; MEASUREMENT OF STANDARDS;

14 RULES

15 (a) The State Board shall adopt by rule:

16 * * *

17 (b) The following shall be adopted by procedure or rule:

18 * * *

19 (c) The State Board shall review the rules and procedures adopted pursuant
20 to this section not less than every five years and shall update the rules and
21 procedures as necessary.

1 Sec. 5. AGENCY OF EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS; LICENSING
2 OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION EDUCATORS;
3 ENFORCEMENT INTERVENTION PATHWAY; FLEXIBLE
4 PATHWAYS; REPORT

5 On or before January 15, 2027, the Agency of Education shall submit a
6 written report to the House Committees on Commerce and Economic
7 Development and on Education and the Senate Committees on Economic
8 Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Education, with
9 recommendations for the following:

10 (1) In collaboration with the Standards Board for Professional
11 Educators, recommendations regarding career technical education (CTE)
12 educator endorsement requirements that will balance the need for increased
13 access to CTE educators with industry expertise and experience with the need
14 for ensuring CTE educators are qualified to provide education in their specialty
15 fields, without unintentionally creating additional barriers or complexity. Such
16 recommendations shall include both necessary statutory changes as well as
17 recommended changes to applicable State Board of Education rules.

18 (2) A pre-enforcement intervention pathway that is responsible for:

19 (A) supporting interpretation and implementation of CTE rules and
20 statute;

1 (B) providing early-stage mediation between CTE centers and
2 sending districts;

3 (C) documenting patterns of noncompliance or systemic barriers; and

4 (D) escalating unresolved or repeated issues for formal enforcement.

5 (3) Updates to the Flexible Pathways Initiative created within the
6 Agency pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 941 that alleviate statewide inconsistencies
7 with how flexible pathways are accessed and how personalized learning plans
8 are created, updated, and utilized, including:

9 (A) recommendations for a statewide framework for career
10 navigation consistent with the requirements of 16 V.S.A. chapter 23,
11 subchapter 2, including:

12 (i) grade-level competency standards for students in
13 prekindergarten through grade 12 related to career exploration and planning
14 that are designed to ensure that each student develops the knowledge, skills,
15 and experiences necessary to graduate with a clear, actionable, and adaptable
16 plan for career and educational next steps; and

17 (ii) evidence-informed educational resources, activities, and
18 curricula that support opportunities for awareness and exploration of and
19 planning for career and education pathways both in and out of the classroom
20 setting;

1 (B) recommendations for statewide professional development
2 programming to help individuals within the public education system who have
3 direct contact with students build role-specific knowledge and skills necessary
4 to support students in developing post-high school career and education plans;

5 (C) recommendations for a model career navigation policy that is
6 integrated within comprehensive system improvement efforts to strengthen
7 prekindergarten through grade 12 academic proficiency and that:

8 (i) establishes a framework for school districts to embed grade-
9 level competencies related to career exploration directly into core academic
10 instruction, ensuring that career-aligned learning supports the attainment of
11 rigorous student performance standards;

12 (ii) ensures that students engage in meaningful career education
13 exploration and planning activities that reinforce academic growth and the
14 real-world application of classroom learning; and

15 (iii) utilizes a process by which each student develops and updates
16 a personalized learning plan in accordance with 16 V.S.A. § 941(b)(2), serving
17 as a primary tool for tracking both academic proficiency and evolving career
18 interests; and

1 (D) an analysis of data collection system capabilities and gaps related
2 to flexible pathways, personalized learning plans, and college and career
3 readiness.

4 (4) Recommendations for ensuring Adult Diploma Program (ADP)
5 participants have access to the educational programs that best serve their
6 needs, including career technical education, while also complying with federal
7 and State requirements for adult education, as well as recommendations for
8 how access to such educational programs shall be funded through the use of
9 State funds. If federal or State law is identified as a barrier, the report shall
10 cite the applicable law and explain how it is a barrier to ADP participants'
11 access to the educational program at issue.

12 Sec. 6. COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS REDEFINED; INTENT

13 (a) 16 V.S.A. § 1522(14) defines a comprehensive high school as “a public
14 or independent school other than a career technical center that provides
15 secondary career technical education approved under section 1533 of this
16 title.” As Vermont works to transform its career technical education (CTE)
17 system to increase the access, quality, and opportunity of CTE programming
18 available to Vermont students, the concept of a comprehensive high school
19 could be expanded to achieve these goals. It is the intent of the General
20 Assembly to move toward a model of comprehensive high schools that would
21 offer all opportunities available to students within the public education system,

1 to be defined as “a public or independent school other than a career technical
2 center that fully integrates the provision of career technical education with the
3 provision of general education in one school building or on one school campus,
4 with a single budget for both CTE education and general education.”

5 (b) Any recommendations issued to the General Assembly regarding how
6 to achieve regional high schools, how to achieve more comprehensive high
7 schools, or how to embed career technical education within secondary schools
8 shall consider the definition of comprehensive high school the General
9 Assembly intends to move toward pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, or
10 any other model that creates high schools that share operational costs, expand
11 opportunities, and improve educational equity across a broad geographical
12 area, to guide such recommendations.

13 Sec. 7. 16 V.S.A. § 1545 is amended to read:

14 § 1545. CREDITS AND GRADES EARNED

15 (a) ~~Grades~~ Credits or proficiencies and grades earned in a course offered
16 within a CTE program approved by the State Board shall not be altered by any
17 public school or approved or recognized independent school in Vermont and
18 shall be applied by the school toward any State graduation requirements in
19 accordance with rules adopted by the State Board. Any State Board rules
20 regarding earning of credits or proficiencies shall allow flexibility with respect
21 to the integration of CTE education and other academic courses.

1 (b) The credits or proficiencies earned for a career technical education
2 program approved by the State Board shall be honored by any public or
3 independent school within Vermont. If necessary to enable a student to
4 participate in career technical education and graduate with ~~his or her~~ the
5 student's class, the credits or proficiencies earned shall be applied toward any
6 school district or independent school graduation requirements exceeding the
7 minimum number of credits or proficiencies required by the State Board. The
8 school board of the high school from which the student wishes to graduate
9 shall ~~make a determination as to whether the credits shall be applied~~ apply
10 credits or proficiencies earned for a career technical education program
11 approved by the State Board toward graduation requirements. A decision of a
12 school board may be appealed to the Secretary who shall construe this section
13 to favor participation in career technical education.

14 (c) For any student attending the Vermont Academy for Science and
15 Technology pursuant to subsection 4011(e) of this title, the credits or
16 proficiencies and grades earned shall, upon request of the student or the
17 student's parent or guardian, be applied toward graduation requirements at the
18 Vermont high school that the student attended prior to enrolling in the
19 Academy.

20 Sec. 8. [Deleted.]

1 Sec. 8a. 21 V.S.A. § 471 is amended to read:

2 § 471. DEFINITIONS

3 As used in this subchapter:

4 * * *

5 (5) “Employee” means a person who, in consideration of direct or
6 indirect gain or profit, has been continuously employed by the same employer
7 for a period of one year for an average of at least 30 hours per week or meets
8 the service requirement set forth in 29 C.F.R. § 825.801 (airline flight crew
9 employees) or 29 C.F.R. § 825.110(c)(3) (full-time teachers, as defined in 29
10 C.F.R. § 825.102, of an elementary or secondary school system or institution
11 of higher education).

12 * * *

13 Sec. 8b. 21 V.S.A. § 495d is amended to read:

14 § 495d. DEFINITIONS

15 As used in this subchapter:

16 * * *

17 (15) “Crime victim” means any of the following:

18 (A) a person who has obtained a relief from abuse order issued under
19 15 V.S.A. § 1103;

20 (B) a person who has obtained an order against stalking or sexual
21 assault issued under 12 V.S.A. chapter 178;

1 (C) a person who has obtained an order against abuse of a vulnerable
2 adult issued under 33 V.S.A. chapter 69; ~~or~~

3 (D)(i) a victim as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 5301, provided that the
4 victim is identified as a crime victim in an affidavit filed by a law enforcement
5 official with a prosecuting attorney of competent state or federal jurisdiction;
6 and

7 (ii) shall include the victim's child, foster child, parent, spouse,
8 stepchild or ward of the victim who lives with the victim, or a parent of the
9 victim's spouse, provided that the individual is not identified in the affidavit as
10 the defendant; or

11 (E) a person who is a survivor of domestic violence, sexual assault,
12 or stalking and who has supporting documentation from any one of the
13 following sources:

14 (i) a court or law enforcement or other government agency;

15 (ii) a domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking assistance

16 program;

17 (iii) a legal, clerical, medical, or other professional from whom the

18 person has received counseling or other assistance concerning domestic

19 violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or

20 (iv) a self-attestation by the person describing the circumstances

21 supporting the person's status as a survivor of domestic violence, sexual

1 assault, and stalking for which no further corroboration shall be required unless
2 otherwise mandated by law.

3 * * *

4 (18) “Domestic violence” has the same meaning as in 15 V.S.A. § 1151
5 and includes the definition of “abuse” in 15 V.S.A. § 1101.

6 (19) “Sexual assault” has the same meaning as in 12 V.S.A. § 5131.

7 (20) “Stalking” has the same meaning as in 12 V.S.A. § 5131.

8 Sec. 8c. 21 V.S.A. § 495g is amended to read:

9 § 495g. ~~PROVISION APPLICABLE TO COLLEGE PROFESSORS~~

10 ~~Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to prohibit any institution of~~
11 ~~higher education as defined by section 1201(a) of the federal Higher Education~~
12 ~~Act of 1965 from retiring any employee who is serving under a contract of~~
13 ~~unlimited tenure, who attains 70 years of age. Any employee whose tenure~~
14 ~~contract is terminated may, in the discretion of the institution, be allowed to~~
15 ~~continue in the employ of the institution on a nontenured basis. [Repealed.]~~

16 Sec. 8d. 21 V.S.A. § 383 is amended to read:

17 § 383. DEFINITIONS

18 As used in this subchapter:

19 (1) “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Labor or designee.

20 (2) “Employee” means any individual employed or permitted to work by
21 an employer except:

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(H) outside salespersons; ~~and~~

(I) students working during all or any part of the school year or
regular vacation periods; and

(J) elected and appointed municipal officers.

* * *

Sec. 8e. 21 V.S.A. § 495q is added to read:

§ 495q. AGREEMENTS WITH HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

(a) Any provision in a contract or agreement that creates or establishes the terms of a partnership, employment, or any other form of professional relationship with a health care provider regarding the health care provider's provision of health care services in Vermont shall be void and unenforceable if the provision:

(1) includes a restriction on the right of the health care provider to provide health care services in any geographical area for any period of time after the termination of such partnership, agreement, or professional relationship;

(2) limits the ability of a separating health care provider to provide notice of the provider's change of employment to individuals to whom the separating provider provided direct health care services;

1 (3) restricts a health care provider from making disparaging statements
2 about another party to the contract or agreement or about another person
3 specified in the agreement as a third-party beneficiary of the agreement;

4 (4) is inconsistent with Vermont law; or

5 (5) requires litigation arising from the performance of the contract or
6 agreement in Vermont to be conducted in another state.

7 (b) The notice provided in subdivision (a)(2) of this section may include
8 the following information:

9 (1) that the health care provider is continuing to practice the provider's
10 profession;

11 (2) the health care provider's new professional contact information; and

12 (3) the recipient's right to choose a health care provider.

13 (c) The provisions in subsection (a) of this section do not apply to
14 restrictions that limit a health care provider who contracts with a third-party
15 company for nonclinical business support services from opening a business
16 within a specific territory supported by a different third-party company
17 providing nonclinical services.

18 (d) "Health care provider" means a person licensed, certified, or authorized
19 by law to provide professional health care service in this State to an individual
20 during that individual's medical care, treatment, or confinement.

1 (e) An employer shall not discharge or in any other manner retaliate against
2 an employee who exercises or attempts to exercise the employee's rights under
3 this section. The provisions against retaliation in subdivision 495(a)(8) of this
4 subchapter and the penalty and enforcement provisions of section 495b of this
5 subchapter shall apply to this section.

6 (f) This section shall apply to contracts and agreements entered into on or
7 after July 1, 2026.

8 Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATE

9 This act shall take effect on passage.