

## **Report on Act 77 of 2013**

### **16 VSA §4011(e) Reports**

#### **Annual Report on Early College to the House and Senate Committees on Education**

**Submitted by Chancellor Elizabeth Mauch**

**January, 2026**

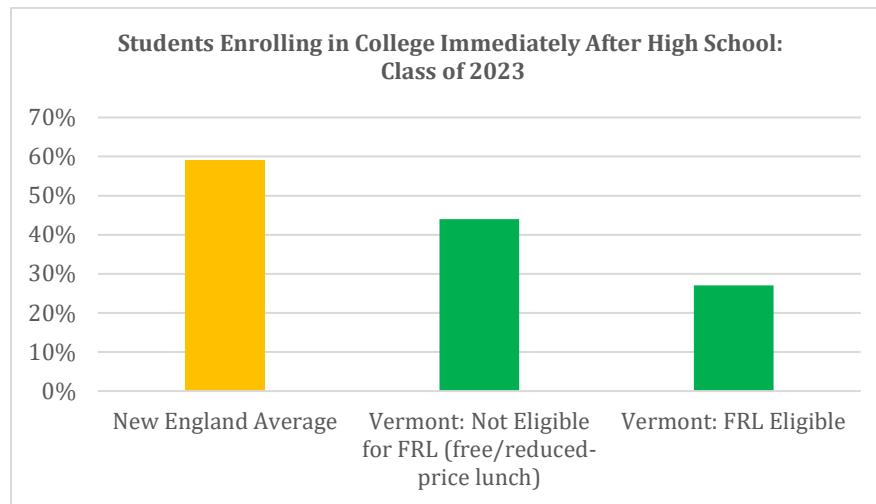
For the benefit of Vermont, the Vermont State Colleges system provides affordable, high quality, student-centered, and accessible education, fully integrating professional, liberal, and career study, consistent with student aspirations and regional and state needs.

## Early College: 10 Years of Strong Flexible Pathways Partnership

Act 77 of 2013, Vermont's "Flexible Pathways" law, was the legislature's response to a puzzling problem: Vermont had one of the highest high school graduation rates in the country, but also the lowest college continuation rate in New England. Students were getting diplomas, but they weren't fully ready for what came next. The law sought to provide "high-quality educational experiences that acknowledge individual goals, learning styles, and abilities" with multiple routes to high school completion and college and career readiness. These opportunities include career and technical education, work-based learning, virtual courses, dual enrollment courses offered on campus, online, or right at high schools and career and technical education centers, and a full year of Early College for high school seniors.

Early College students can continue to participate in athletics and other extracurricular activities at their high schools as well as at the colleges. High schools count credits toward graduation; CCV and Vermont State University count all credits towards certificates and degrees. Additionally, 39 seamless transfer pathways between CCV and Vermont State University (VTSU) ensure that all dual enrollment and Early College course credits count towards a college degree.

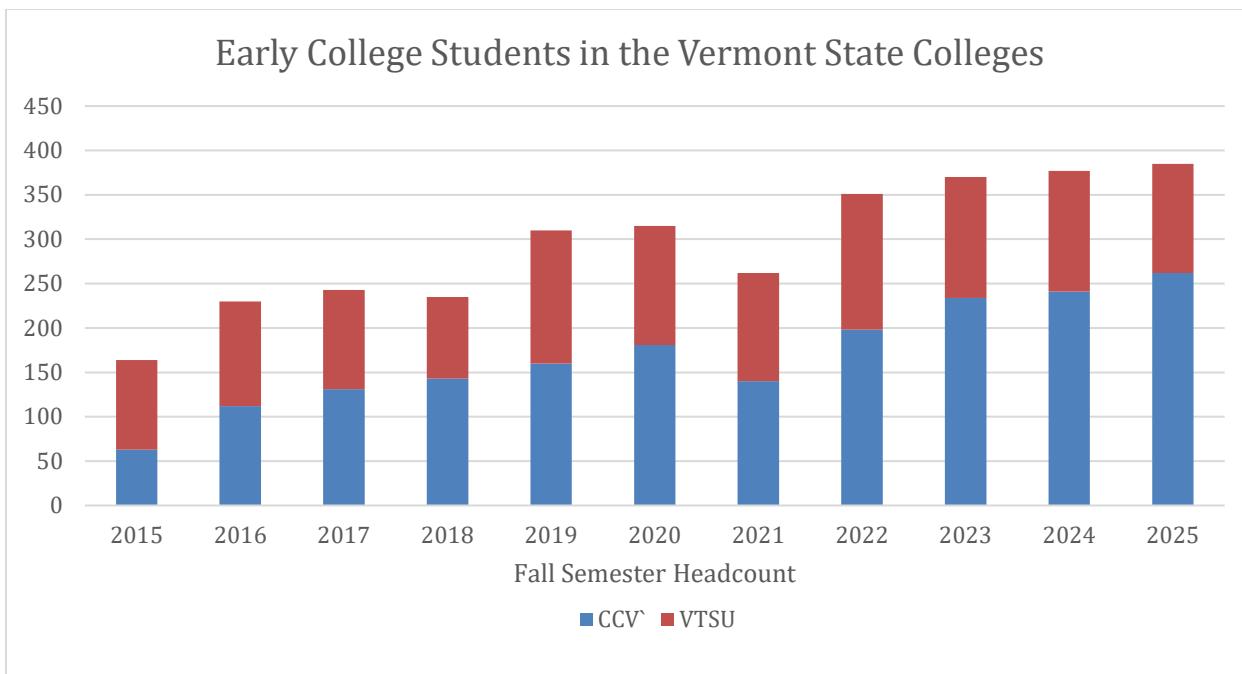
Early College, together with the other "on ramp" opportunities provided by the Flexible Pathways law, was meant to let Vermont's high schoolers—especially those least-advantaged and/or in need of a more flexible learning pathway—give college a try while they still had a safety net, with the hope that a taste of success would make them more likely to keep going. **The need is clear.<sup>1</sup>**



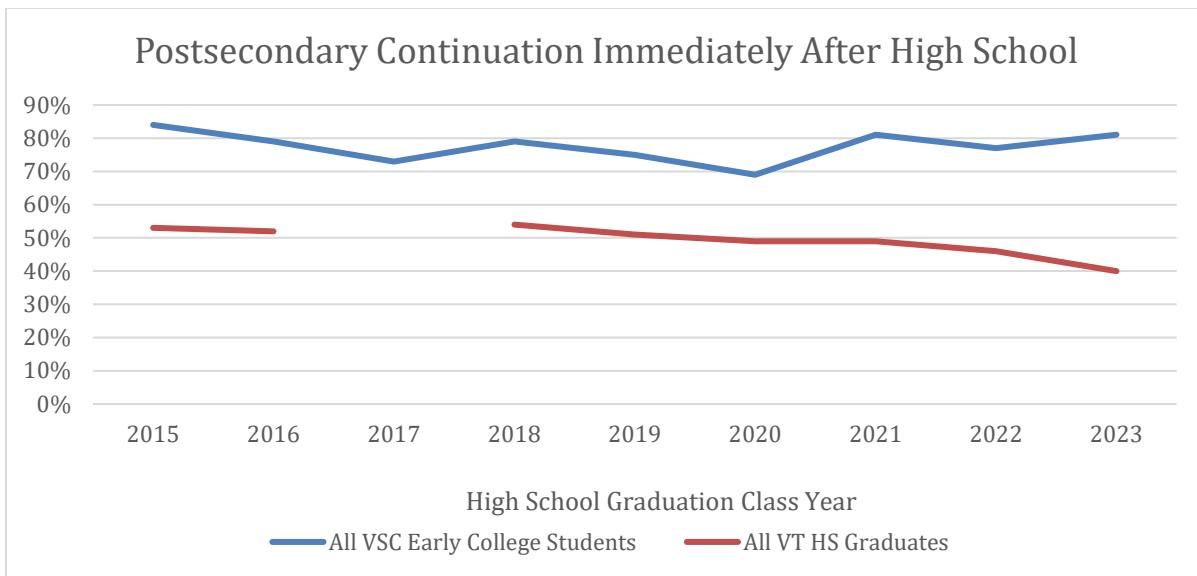
## And the good news: it's working.

Early College at the Vermont State Colleges reaches high school students across the state most likely to benefit, approximately 5% of the total high school senior class each year. **Over 30% are eligible for free or reduced lunch; over one-third are the first in their families to attend college.** Student success in the Early College program has been consistently high, with over 95% of students successfully completing the entire year.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, New England and Vermont data are as reported by the [New England Secondary School Consortium Common Data Project](#) and the [VT Agency of Education](#); CCV and Vermont State University data are as reported by the Vermont State Colleges System. Data represented for Vermont State University includes all of its legacy institutions, campuses, and programs, including the VAST program at Vermont Technical College.



Most significant, these Early College students continue postsecondary education after their Early College year at much higher rates than Vermont high school graduates.



#### **January 2026 Data Update**

Early College students in 2024-2025 had similarly high success rates to prior years, with 95% of all students continuing from fall to spring. In Fall 2025, there were 385 students enrolled in Early College in the VSC, an increase of 8 students over Fall 2024.

## **Supporting Early College Student Success**

From the beginning, the Vermont State Colleges has been a strong partner with Vermont's K-12 schools, career and technical education centers, the Agency of Education, VSAC, and others to offer a robust, equitable, and cost-effective continuum of supports and "on ramp" opportunities to Early College students, with a particular focus on first-generation and low-income students.

Vermont State Colleges provide 74% of all dual enrollment courses and serve almost 400 (90%) of all Early College students annually. CCV additionally provides free "Access Day" learning opportunities to 775 middle school students annually and a 30-hour, tuition-free Introduction to College and Careers course to 275 students. With philanthropic support for a debt-free associate degree **since 2022, CCV has seen triple the number of low-income students accessing Early College.**

Most important, the Vermont State Colleges' robust online and hybrid course offerings, and vibrant campus locations across the state, provide students with the flexibility and access that students furthest from opportunity need.

My deciding factor to be remote started off as me not having transportation. Because my CCV location is in St. Albans, that would be a 40-minute drive there and back. And at the time I just didn't have enough money to drive all the way there. So I first took up online because it was just more convenient for me and it gave me the freedom to get a job, hang out with my friends, do the activities at my school while still doing college.

### **Donovan, Richford High School 2024, career goal: personal financial advisor**

I chose Early College because of the money. It's not the heartfelt answer, but it's the real one. My mom kind of got cancer. So I knew I wasn't getting support from the parental end. Without this program, I probably wouldn't have pursued college at all—and now I'm going for my bachelor's at VTSU-Castleton.

### **Arin, Hartford High School, career goal: high school art teacher in Vermont**

It was amazing. I struggled in the traditional high school setting and I didn't get the best grades, but when I started doing Early College, I got really good grades. I was on the Dean's List every semester that I was at CCV.

### **Abbie, Spaulding HS/Central Vermont Career Center 2024, now VTSU nursing**

Early College is for everyone. There are students here from Oxbow who wanted to be more challenged, and I think that that is so respectable. For other people, being at a tiny school wasn't great, and CCV has more going on—new people and more classes. I really think it also depends on your financial need and your personal circumstances, but I think the actual learning part and wanting to get ahead thing is for everybody.

### **Libby Swift, Oxbow High School 2025, now accepted to UVM**