

## State House Testimony 2/25/26

Thank you for welcoming us to your committee today.

Introduction: **Jensen Welch**, High School Teaching and Learning Coach at Bellows Free Academy (BFA) Fairfax High School. Math teacher for 17 years, in Coaching role now.

Celebration: BFA Fairfax was just named as "Exceeding Expectations" in the 4 year graduation rate on the AOE's Report Card, there is lots to celebrate here! BFA Fairfax has done a lot of work to increase access to Flexible Pathways, and some of this has helped our graduation rate.

- Early College - 4 seniors
- Dual enrollment courses, multiple offered through our HS, some students use their voucher independently
- Online learning courses
- Tech center programs (BTC, CTE, NCTC, Cold Hollow)
- Work based learning
- Apprenticeships (MEI Electrical, Husky Injection Moldings)

Additionally, last spring we were the only Franklin County High School to accept students from VAL - Vermont Adult Learning's program to receive a diploma.

History: Flexible Pathways, Personalized Learning Plans, and Proficiency Based Graduation were introduced in the 2013 Act 77 bill, a truly progressive law that made room for effective change.

However, last year's 2025 Act 73 law included new requirements for class size minimums that threaten to affect our ability to offer choices and may affect our ability to keep our faculty. The realities of flexibility and choice for high school students and class size minimums are not compatible.

Class size minimums hurt students and hurt teachers. Rather than always trying to decrease spending, please work to increase revenue.

Related: Caps on spending also hurt local schools, ask your Senate colleagues to oppose S.220.