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## TESTIMONY

**Testimony To:** Vermont Senate Appropriations Committee

**Respectfully Submitted by:** Robin Castle, State Director of Adult Education and Literacy, Vermont Agency of Education Student Pathways Division

**Subject:** H.141, Sec. 83: Adult Diploma Program and High School Completion Program Transitional Students

**Date:** February 13, 2025

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### Background

Thank you to the Senate Appropriations Committee for accepting this written testimony. The Agency of Education (AOE) appreciates the legislature's intent to ensure students formerly enrolled in the High School Completion Program (HSCP), which was repealed by [Act 113 of 2024](#), are supported through this transition. However, the current draft language in [Section 83 of H.141](#) is an unnecessary duplication of work that is already underway at the Agency.

### High School Completion Transition Plan

Since the repeal of the HSCP, the Agency of Education has been working on developing the Adult Diploma Program (outlined in [16 V.S.A. § 945](#)) with stakeholder input. While developing the program, the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) providers raised concerns that some students would be at a disadvantage because they have already met the requirements under the previous HSCP program. After reviewing a large volume of feedback on draft Adult Diploma Program pilot documents, the Agency of Education released the [Adult Diploma Program Pilot Policy Manual](#) on February 7, 2025.

The Agency accounted for a transition mechanism in the Adult Diploma Program Pilot Policy Manual that provides more process detail, ensures accountability, and can be implemented immediately to accommodate students previously enrolled in the High School Completion Program. The excerpt from the pilot policy manual is provided below to outline this accommodation:

*A transition accommodation will be made for the short term (as part of the Adult Diploma Program pilot only) for those students who were in the High School Completion Program (HSCP) and also had an HSCP plan signed and dated prior to the repeal of the program effective July 1, 2024. This short-term accommodation will be in effect for students who meet the criteria below:*

- *Student must have been enrolled in the HSCP before July 1, 2024;*



- *Have an HSCP plan that was signed and dated by all parties (student, AEL providers, high school) before July 1, 2024;*
- *The HSCP plan is uploaded into LACES before March 31, 2025;*
- *Student will have an NRS 5 in all three TABE assessments of Reading, Language, and Math before graduation;*
- *Student will have met the graduation requirements of the high school who signed the HSCP plan as outlined in the HSCP plan;*
- *The high school who signed the plan has signed the Adult Diploma Program participation agreement and submitted it to AOE; and,*
- *The student graduates before July 1, 2025.*

This plan is specific, measurable and provides detailed instruction for AEL providers and schools to follow, while also ensuring that students who have met all of the requisite criteria are able to receive their diploma timely. The Agency's concern is that the proposed language in Section 83 is contradictory to the policy that has been released and does not contain the same measures for accountability. To avoid confusion, ensure the smooth and immediate transition for students, and afford the Agency of Education the ability to assist and oversee the process with Adult Education and Literacy providers, the Agency respectfully requests that Section 83 of H.141 is struck.