

1 H.852

2 Introduced by Representatives Botzow of Pownal, Marcotte of Coventry,  
3 Frenier of Chelsea, Hill of Wolcott, Kimbell of Woodstock,  
4 McCoy of Poultney, Myers of Essex, O'Sullivan of Burlington,  
5 Sheldon of Middlebury, Stuart of Brattleboro, and Sullivan of  
6 Dorset

7 Referred to Committee on

8 Date:

9 Subject: Commerce and trade; workforce development

10 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create the  
11 framework for a public engagement process, and assign duties to the State  
12 Workforce Development Board, the Department of Labor, Career Technical  
13 Education Centers, and other stakeholders to modernize Vermont's workforce  
14 development system.

15 An act relating to modernizing the workforce development system

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

17 Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND INTENT

18 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

1           (1) A skilled and productive workforce is critical for the economic  
2           vitality of Vermont. However, our State currently faces several key labor  
3           market challenges:

4           (A) Employers throughout our State are in the midst of a skills crisis  
5           due to the lack of qualified workers to fill a wide range of jobs across multiple  
6           sectors, today and into the future.

7           (B) Vermont has maintained one of the lowest unemployment rates in  
8           the country, and there are not enough workers at all skill levels to fill current  
9           job vacancies.

10           (C) Many Vermonters are underemployed and it is not uncommon to  
11           hear eligible workers indicate they struggle to find a job that matches their  
12           training or interests, or both.

13           (D) Parents, youths, and families are increasingly anxious about a  
14           future where the next generation of workers may not have the same  
15           opportunities to prosper as the previous one.

16           (2) A major part of the solution to these challenges lies in Vermont's  
17           building an effective and efficient State workforce development system that is  
18           a diverse public-private partnership between employers, government, and  
19           education and training providers designed to ensure that individuals have the  
20           skills needed by businesses.

21           (b) Intent. In adopting this act, it is the intent of the General Assembly:

1           (1) to commit to a redesign of Vermont's workforce development and  
2           training system through a concerted three-year effort led by the State  
3           Workforce Development Board, in partnership with key administration  
4           partners, as well as stakeholders from the business, government, nonprofit  
5           training provider, and the education communities; and

6           (2) to create a framework for this three-year process that will ultimately  
7           result in:

8           (A) a workforce development system under which all Vermonters  
9           who want to work, and all employers who want workers, can connect with  
10           what they need to thrive; and

11           (B) greater stakeholder connectivity, program alignment, both inside  
12           and outside State government; and high impact projects, leading to a more  
13           coherent and effective system that equally serves Vermont employers,  
14           employees, and job seekers.

15           Sec. 2. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

16                   PROCESS; DUTIES

17           (a) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with key  
18           administration partners, shall conduct a public engagement process with  
19           workforce development and training stakeholders in 2018 in order to build a  
20           common agenda for what a successful workforce development and training  
21           system for the 21st century should include. This public engagement process

1 will inform future Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Strategic Plans  
2 and should:

3 (1) involve State government and external stakeholders over a six- to  
4 nine-month time frame, with input sessions held across the State;

5 (2) include informant interviews with key stakeholders in the system;

6 (3) add qualitative insights from stakeholders to data-driven assessment  
7 of the system; and

8 (4) assist with the process of system realignment already under way.

9 (b) The State Workforce Development Board shall create a social network  
10 map of stakeholder organizations involved in workforce development and  
11 training, including the following actions:

12 (1) conducting a social network mapping exercise to develop a baseline  
13 analysis of all stakeholders, both within and outside State government,  
14 involved with workforce development and training around the State;

15 (2) identifying areas of program duplication and gaps across the State  
16 and analyze the relative level of connectivity and alignment across programs  
17 managed inside and outside State government;

18 (3) identifying and implementing ways of strengthening the connectivity  
19 and achieving greater program alignment toward our shared vision for a  
20 redesigned workforce development and training system; and

1           (4) ensuring sufficient resources exist so that the Board is able to  
2           maintain the network map over time, in order to track changes in levels of  
3           connectivity and alignment across the stakeholder community.

4           (c) The State Workforce Development Board shall conduct the following  
5           interviews with, and seek input from, service delivery providers:

6           (1) interviews with “front line” service delivery providers to ascertain  
7           their perspective on whether and how the current system is and is not serving  
8           the needs of workers and employers, identifying specific “pinch points,” and  
9           seek their creative ideas for how to improve their programs and services;

10          (2) interviews with employers and employees about their needs to assess  
11          how effective existing programs have been for employers, and seek their  
12          creative ideas for how to improve these programs and services, especially as  
13          Vermont moves toward implementing the Workforce Innovation and  
14          Opportunity Act One-Stop Program; and

15          (3) interviews with or surveys of graduates of training programs about  
16          whether the program met their expectations and led to a job in their field of  
17          interest or training, and seek their creative ideas for how to improve the  
18          program or training in which they participated.

19          (d) The State Workforce Development Board shall take steps necessary to  
20          improve understanding among State agency and department personnel and  
21          external partners on the role of the Board and the Workforce Investment and

1 Opportunity Act and how the Act governs workforce development dollars and  
2 policies implemented by the State.

3 (e) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the  
4 Department of Labor and the Agency of Commerce and Community  
5 Development, shall evaluate different ideas for employer engagement  
6 strategies in 2018 and recommend action for 2019, including the following:

7 (1) explore what would be needed to fund dedicated employer outreach  
8 positions in each of the Department of Labor's field offices;

9 (2) improve connectivity and coordination between the Department's  
10 employer outreach staff with staff of the Regional Development Corporations  
11 and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and explore how  
12 all State-funded workforce development programs could better coordinate  
13 employer outreach with State-level employer outreach staff;

14 (3) explore establishing a single office of workforce development in  
15 each region of the State, building on the One-Stop model, to provide client-  
16 driven centralized services for employers and job seekers, and analyze whether  
17 such a strategy could reduce administrative burden and help small firms access  
18 more resources, improve responsiveness to emerging sector needs, and  
19 increase workforce participation through direct outreach and recruitment;

20 (4) explore whether a merger or colocation of local workforce  
21 investment boards, Career Technical Education Centers, and regional advisory

1 boards could foster greater regional collaboration on workforce development  
2 among stakeholder groups, and what would be required in order to accomplish  
3 this;

4 (5) provide support by the State Workforce Development Board for  
5 efforts to secure funding for one or two pilot projects that embed regional  
6 economic development staff directly within middle schools or high schools, or  
7 both, to foster career readiness and exploration at an early age, and if  
8 successful, replicate them throughout the State;

9 (6) explore ways to improve connectivity and relationship building with  
10 employers;

11 (7) explore whether to create an employer relations unit within State  
12 government that serves as the primary contact between employers and all  
13 State-funded workforce development programs and what would be required to  
14 do so effectively;

15 (8) ensure coordination and information sharing among the Department  
16 of Labor; relevant units of the Agency of Human Services, such as the  
17 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Creative Workforce Solutions; the  
18 Agency of Commerce and Community Development; and other State agency  
19 staff that talk to employers about their workforce needs; and

1           (9) explore ways to integrate employer intelligence gathered in other  
2           department or agency reporting systems into the Department of Economic  
3           Development's customer relationship management tool.

4           (f) During, and following, the public engagement process, the State  
5           Workforce Development Board shall take steps necessary to align funding to  
6           support the workforce development redesign, including the following:

7           (1) targeting employer-driven workforce development solutions based  
8           on provisional goals during the process;

9           (2) based on the results of the stakeholder engagement process,  
10          identifying two or three key strategies and desired performance measures and  
11          aligning resources accordingly;

12          (3) revisiting the allocation of Next Generation Funds and reprioritizing  
13          those funds based on employer-driven workforce development solutions;

14          (4) supporting more employer-driven strategies as they are defined and  
15          developed locally in collaboration with the Board and Executive Branch staff;

16          (5) enabling innovative initiatives and creating pilot or demonstration  
17          programs that can be scaled to the rest of the State, once proven effective; and

18          (6) seeking federal Congressional support to redirect, recalibrate, and  
19          retarget funding and resources to enable more innovative initiatives and to  
20          create pilot or demonstration programs and initiatives in Vermont.



1       (g) The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the State Workforce  
2       Development Board, shall create a statewide, coordinated communications  
3       plan to ensure the workforce development and training delivery organizations  
4       stay current with initiatives and plans related to building the desired workforce  
5       development system.

6       Sec. 3. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; CAREER TECHNICAL  
7               EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

8       (a) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the  
9       Agency of Education, shall take steps necessary to ensure that all middle  
10       school students are introduced to CTE programs of studies and Career  
11       Pathways as well as career readiness and awareness, including ensuring that  
12       middle schools and CTE centers work collaboratively to:

13               (1) develop and deliver introductory CTE courses or lessons, including  
14       at the middle schools when appropriate, to expose students to Career Pathways  
15       and CTE programs;

16               (2) provide exposure to local career opportunities through business  
17       tours, guest lecturers, career fairs, and career awareness days; and

18               (3) provide exposure to CTE programs and facilities through tours,  
19       virtual field trips, promotional videos, and visits to middle schools by CTE  
20       students and staff.

1       (b) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the  
2       Agency of Education, shall:

3           (1) ensure that all grades 9 and 10 students have equitable access and the  
4       opportunity, when supported by their personalized learning plan, to participate  
5       in CTE classes such as pre-tech Foundation and pre-tech exploratory programs  
6       to expose them to a wide variety of career choices in the student's areas of  
7       interest; and

8           (2) ensure that grade 10 students have access to CTE programs when  
9       supported by their personalized learning plan.

10       (c) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the  
11       Agency of Education, shall ensure that all CTE centers provide Career  
12       Pathways and rigorous programs of study to students, as follows:

13           (1) Introduction to Career Pathways should begin in middle school and  
14       lead to a postsecondary credential of value or further education or training to  
15       obtain a degree or credential of value.

16           (2) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Department of  
17       Labor and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, shall  
18       implement a Career Pathways review that includes:

19           (A) program relevance to State and regional employer need;

20           (B) participation of Regional Advisory Boards or other boards with  
21       employers;

1           (C) pathways to postsecondary education and training; and

2           (D) ability for students to gain credentials of value, dual enrollment  
3 credits, and postsecondary student outcomes.

4           (3) Funding for new and innovative career pathway programs, and  
5 innovative delivery models for students in rural areas, shall be leveraged  
6 through such means as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Perkins  
7 Reserve, Next Generation Fund, and other relevant funding sources.

8           (d) The State Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the  
9 Agency of Education, shall ensure that every high school student has the  
10 opportunity to experience meaningful work-based learning when supported by  
11 the personalized learning plan, and shall ensure that high schools work with  
12 CTE centers to ensure they do not duplicate the opportunities already provided  
13 by the centers.

14           (e) The General Assembly shall take steps to secure funding to continue the  
15 Career Pathways initiative through the Agency of Education, including to:

16           (1) continue funding for the Career Pathways Coordinator position at the  
17 Agency of Education, which is vital to the sustainability of a Career Pathways  
18 system;

19           (2) develop and implement statewide curricula and minimum standards  
20 for CTE programs that are proficiency based and align with the goals of  
21 Act 77, and providing students with personalized learning plans;

1           (3) ensure that implementation of Career Pathways remains on schedule  
2           and work to increase rapid deployment of programs across the State;

3           (4) as part of the statewide economic development plan, market relevant  
4           CTE and technical education and training opportunities available to current  
5           and future students, adult learners, and employers as informed by employers,  
6           Economic and Labor Market Information data (ELMI), and the Comprehensive  
7           Economic Development Strategy (CEDS);

8           (5) ensure that CTE regional centers work with postsecondary  
9           institutions to provide opportunities at the centers and at high schools for  
10          students, both secondary and adult, to receive training and education that will  
11          lead to a degree or credential of value, both during the school day and in the  
12          evening, and eliminate barriers at CTE centers and high schools for post-  
13          secondary institutions to offer courses at those facilities; and

14          (6) ensure that CTE regional centers partner with employers and post-  
15          secondary education and training providers to expand the availability of job-  
16          specific training and apprenticeship programs to meet regional employer needs  
17          as informed by employers, Economic and Labor Market Information (ELMI)  
18          data, and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

19          (f) The Agency of Education, with guidance from a committee of the State  
20          Workforce Development Board, shall create two pilots that model a unified

1 funding and governance structure designed to streamline the delivery of the  
2 educational experiences of both high school and CTE.

3 (g) The Agency of Education, with guidance from a committee of the State  
4 Workforce Development Board, shall expand and support pilot projects that  
5 integrate up-front employer commitments to CTE and high school students,  
6 both in terms of education and employment, as part of a seamless transition  
7 into a registered apprenticeship with the sponsoring employer.

8 Sec. 4. 10 V.S.A. § 541a is amended to read:

9 § 541a. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

10 (a) Board established; duties. Pursuant to the requirements of 29 U.S.C.  
11 § 3111, the Governor shall establish a the State Workforce Development Board  
12 to assist the Governor in the execution of his or her duties under the Workforce  
13 Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and to assist the Commissioner of  
14 Labor as specified in section 540 of this title.

15 (b) Additional duties; planning; process.

16 (1) In order to inform its ~~decision-making~~ decision making and to  
17 provide effective assistance under subsection (a) of this section, the Board  
18 shall:

19 ~~(A)~~ (A) conduct an ongoing public engagement process throughout the  
20 State that brings together employers and potential employees, including  
21 students, the unemployed, and incumbent employees seeking further training,

1 to provide feedback and information concerning their workforce education and  
2 training needs; and

3 ~~(2)~~(B) maintain familiarity with the federal Comprehensive Economic  
4 Development Strategy (CEDS) and other economic development planning  
5 processes, and coordinate workforce and education activities in the State,  
6 including the development and implementation of the State plan required under  
7 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, with economic  
8 development planning processes occurring in the State, as appropriate.

9 (2) In order to ensure that State- and federally funded workforce  
10 development and training efforts are of the highest quality and aligned with the  
11 State's workforce and economic goals, the Board shall annually:

12 (A) Review and approve a series of State-endorsed Career Pathways  
13 that reflects a shared vision across multiple sectors and agencies for improving  
14 employment outcomes, meeting employer needs, and best leveraging available  
15 State and federal funding.

16 (i) Career Pathways shall encompass education and training  
17 experiences from middle school to the postsecondary years, and may focus on  
18 particular target populations or industry sectors.

19 (ii) Career Pathways shall include or culminate in degrees,  
20 certificates, and other relevant credentials approved by the Board.

21 (B) Publicize the State-endorsed Career Pathways.

1           (3)(A) The Board, in conjunction with the State Board of Education,  
2           shall have the authority to approve State-endorsed and industry-recognized  
3           credentials that are aligned with the Career Pathways.

4           (B) The Board shall have the authority to adopt rules to implement  
5           this subdivision (3).

6   \* \* \*

7           Sec. 5. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD;  
8                                       STRENGTHENING AND ALIGNING WORKFORCE TRAINING  
9                                       PROGRAMS

10          The State Workforce Development Board shall take steps to encourage,  
11          promote, and support the creation of registered apprenticeship programs, pre-  
12          apprenticeship programs, paid internships, job-specific training, and industry  
13          recognized certificates and trainings, with special emphasis on programs that  
14          lead directly to full-time employment, including the following:

15               (1) expanding the number of apprenticeship programs that guarantee  
16               employer hire commitments prior to development and delivery of education  
17               and training;

18               (2) ensuring these programs exist across State geographic regions,  
19               industry sectors, and educational institutions, including high school, CTE, and  
20               college levels;

1           (3) creating a publicly available document that lists current industry,  
2           State, and federally recognized credentials; what is required to obtain these  
3           credentials; from which training program these credentials can be obtained;  
4           and at what cost;

5           (4) working with the Office of Professional Regulation to increase  
6           recognition of professional skills and credentialing across states, in addition to  
7           supporting professional paths that involve more than one industry, state, or  
8           federally recognized credential and rules adopted by the Office;

9           (5) supporting the efforts of 70×2025vt, a partnership between  
10          Vermont’s leaders in education, business, nonprofits, philanthropy, and  
11          government to increase the economic and civic vitality of Vermont through  
12          education attainment, and assist them in achieving their goal: by 2025, 70  
13          percent of working-age Vermonters will possess a postsecondary degree or  
14          credential of value; and

15          (6) encouraging employer-driven pilot projects, using existing Vermont  
16          Training Program, Workforce Education and Training Fund, and VSAC  
17          nondegree funding.



1       Sec. 6. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD; GROWING THE  
2                    SIZE AND QUALITY OF THE WORKFORCE

3           (a) The Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the  
4       Department of Labor, in partnership with the State Workforce Development  
5       Board, shall take steps to:

6           (1) increase labor force participation of workforce-age Vermont  
7       populations by creating a multitiered engagement process to identify working  
8       age Vermonters who are able to participate, or participate to a greater degree,  
9       in the workforce; and

10          (2) as part of labor force recruitment strategies, attract new people to  
11       live and work in Vermont, including both new employers and new employees,  
12       including the following actions:

13           (A) fund and execute an economic development marketing and  
14       outreach plan for Vermont;

15           (B) seek input from regional and statewide stakeholders to identify  
16       strategies and define success;

17           (C) identify key markets for targeted execution of the marketing  
18       plan; and

19           (D) create metrics for tracking impact and adjusting the marketing  
20       and outreach plan over time.

1       (b) The Department of Labor and the Agency of Commerce and  
2       Community Development shall examine incentives to encourage labor force  
3       participation by target populations, including unemployment insurance waivers  
4       to beneficiaries, income tax reductions, exemption of State tax on Social  
5       Security for a period of time, housing and transportation vouchers, tuition  
6       reimbursement, or waivers for training.

7       Sec. 7. VERMONT TALENT PIPELINE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

8       (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

9           (1) The Vermont Talent Pipeline Management Project (VTPM) is an  
10       employer-oriented strategy that expands the role of employers as end-  
11       customers of the education and workforce systems. VTPM seeks to improve  
12       the employability of Vermonters and the alignment of employer needs with  
13       education and workforce development and training programs.

14           (2) VTPM is a statewide public and private partnership among the  
15       Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Agency of Education,  
16       Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, Franklin/Grand Isle Workforce  
17       Investment Board, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, Lake Champlain  
18       Regional Chamber of Commerce, South Burlington School District, State  
19       Workforce Development Board, Vermont Business Roundtable, Vermont  
20       Chamber of Commerce, and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.

1           (3) Partners will coordinate the network of training providers to deliver  
2           industry, State, and federally recognized credentials, job training, and  
3           workforce education in targeted job areas, sectors, and industries which  
4           connect to the skills employers are looking for when filling available positions.

5           (b) Intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly:

6           (1) to acknowledge the importance of VTPM;

7           (2) to support development and roll-out of VTPM across all economic  
8           sectors, sizes of business, and regions of the State; and

9           (3) to encourage the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, and the  
10          State Workforce Development Board to utilize VTPM to identify and develop  
11          additional credentialing programs within applicable industries.

12         Sec. 8. AGENCY OF COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT;  
13                 EXPERIENCEVT

14          (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

15          (1) EXPERIENCEvt is a recently launched online platform and asset  
16          map designed to connect Vermont educators and service organizations to  
17          employers and experiential learning opportunities. The site is a State-  
18          sponsored initiative to help grow the number of students and professionals  
19          exposed to experiential learning opportunities throughout Vermont, and, more  
20          importantly, the broad array of educational and employment opportunities in  
21          Vermont's economy.

1           (2) EXPERIENCEvt is a public-private partnership among the Agency  
2           of Commerce and Community Development, Department of Labor, Agency of  
3           Education, and Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility.

4           (b) Intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly:

5           (1) to acknowledge the importance of the EXPERIENCEvt project;

6           (2) to support development and roll-out of EXPERIENCEvt across all  
7           economic sectors, sizes of businesses, and regions of the State; and

8           (3) to encourage relevant educational and employment opportunities to  
9           be populated on the site and to promote employer and job seeker usage  
10          actively.

11          Sec. 9. RESULTS FIRST INITIATIVE; IMPLEMENTATION

12          The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Government  
13          Accountability Committee and the State Workforce Development Board, shall  
14          deploy the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative and Results Based  
15          Accountability Framework to assess and monitor current workforce  
16          development and training programs while simultaneously informing the system  
17          redesign work that will be under way, consistent with the following actions:

18          (1) work with the Pew Center and State Workforce Development Board  
19          to create population level indicators based on desired outcomes for the  
20          workforce development delivery ecosystem;

1           (2) continue to align programs and State-grant-funded projects with the  
2           State Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Plan and in alignment with  
3           Board current priorities;

4           (3) evaluate efficacy of the performance measures that already exist in  
5           the workforce system to identify gaps and identify State-specific measures that  
6           would help monitor progress in achieving the State's goals;

7           (4) recommend a process for collecting data that are not currently  
8           available;

9           (5) create an annual process to collect program level data to update the  
10          State's workforce system inventory; and

11          (6) work with the Board to develop tools for continuous improvement  
12          that promote data-driven decision making by leveraging available federal and  
13          State funds, using common information-sharing systems, and honing a  
14          customer-focused service delivery system.

15          Sec. 10. APPROPRIATION

16          (a) In fiscal year 2019, the amount of \$120,000.00 is appropriated from the  
17          General Fund to the State Workforce Development Board for the purpose of  
18          implementing the public engagement process and related initiatives specified  
19          in this act.

20          (b) The Operations Committee of the State Workforce Development Board,  
21          in consultation with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development,

1 Department of Labor, and Agency of Education, shall have the authority to  
2 issue a request and select one or more for proposals to provide services  
3 pursuant to this act.

4 Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE

5 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.