

2020 -- S 2703

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAYS TO EARNING A
BACHELOR'S DEGREE ACT

Introduced By: Senators Gallo, Lombardo, Metts, DiPalma, and Seveney

Date Introduced: February 27, 2020

Referred To: Senate Labor

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended by
2 adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 110

4 APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAYS TO EARNING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE ACT

5 **16-110-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Apprenticeship Pathways to Earning
7 a Bachelor's Degree Act."

8 **16-110-2. Definitions.**

9 As used in this section:

10 (1) "Board" means the board of education.

11 (2) "Degree apprenticeship" means an apprenticeship program that meets the standards
12 established in the National Apprenticeship Act 29 CFR Part 29 and the requirements of a
13 postsecondary degree program as established by the relevant state education agency in the state
14 where the program is delivered.

15 (3) "Student-apprentice" means a student or apprentice who meets the definition of
16 "regular student," as defined by the Higher Education Act, 34 CFR Part 600, and "apprentice" as
17 defined by the National Apprenticeship Act, 29 CFR Part 29.2.

18 **16-110-3. Implementation.**

1 (a) The board of education shall adopt policies or regulations establishing nontraditional
2 pathways to earning a bachelor's degree at state public higher education institutions in the state
3 through the inclusion of credits earned through apprenticeships.

4 (b) The board shall convene a workgroup, including, but not limited to, representatives
5 from the department of labor and training, the office of the postsecondary commissioner, public
6 higher education institutions, the state apprenticeship council, and the construction trades. The
7 purpose of the workgroup is to consider and advise the board in the development of degree
8 apprenticeship policies or regulations for nontraditional pathways to earning a bachelor's degree.
9 The policies or regulations shall include, but not be limited to:

10 (1) The subject areas in which a student-apprentice may earn a bachelor's degree through
11 a nontraditional pathway, with a greater priority given to subject areas that have both a low
12 completion rate and a hiring need by employers existing in the state;

13 (2) The form and manner in which apprenticeships may be registered with the department
14 of labor and training and the board of education for inclusion in a nontraditional pathway to earning
15 a bachelor's degree, including through public-private partnerships or an application process;

16 (3) The minimum requirements that apprenticeships in each subject area shall meet to be
17 registered as an apprenticeship with the department of labor and training and the board of education;

18 (4) The number of credits a student may earn through a registered apprenticeship in each
19 subject area;

20 (5) The development of clear guidelines distinguishing credit-bearing and non-credit-
21 bearing courses including, but not limited to, standardizing the process of assigning credit to
22 courses; and

23 (6) The requirements for successful completion of a registered apprenticeship in each
24 subject area, including, but not limited to, the minimum number of hours of work and the level of
25 demonstrated proficiency required in the subject area.

26 **16-110-4. Reporting.**

27 The board shall provide the governor, the president of the senate, and the speaker of the
28 house of representatives an implementation plan for the apprenticeship pathways to earning a
29 bachelor's degree act, which shall include a start date of August 1, 2021. Such plan shall be
30 presented no later than January 1, 2021. The board may create additional reporting requirements to
31 focus on data collection for the purposes of program progress, goals, and participation.

32 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAYS TO EARNING A
BACHELOR'S DEGREE ACT

1 This act would create the Apprenticeship Pathways to Earning a Bachelor's Degree Act, to
2 enable an individual to earn a bachelor's degree at public higher education institutions throughout
3 the state by earning credits through apprenticeships.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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