

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

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

Introduced By: Senators Gallo, Pearson, DiPalma, Euer, Felag, Valverde, Lawson, and Zurier

Date Introduced: February 16, 2023

Referred To: Senate Education

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 112

4 APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAYS TO EARNING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE ACT

5 **16-112-1. 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 **16-112-2. Definitions.**

9 As used in this section:

10 (1) "Apprenticeship" means an apprenticeship program that meets the standards
11 established in the National Apprenticeship Act 29 CFR Part 29, and that is registered with the
12 department of labor and training.

13 (2) "Board" means the board of education.

14 **16-112-3. Implementation.**

15 (a) By January 1, 2024, each state public higher education institution shall adopt policies
16 establishing nontraditional pathways to earning a bachelor's degree at the state's public higher
17 education institutions through the inclusion of credits earned through apprenticeships, as further
18 provided in subsection (e) of this section.

1 (b) The policies adopted by each higher education institution shall be subject to review and
2 approval of the board of education. The board shall reject or modify any policies that are undue
3 burdensome for students seeking the apprenticeship pathway to earning a bachelor's degree. This
4 review shall be completed by April 1, 2024.

5 (c) In addition, the board of education shall adopt policies to uniformly address the
6 following:

7 (1) The form and manner in which registered apprenticeships may be determined to be
8 eligible for inclusion in a nontraditional pathway to earning a bachelor's degree, including through
9 public-private partnerships or an application process.

10 (d) No later than September 1, 2024, the board shall convene a workgroup, including, but
11 not limited to, representatives from the department of labor and training, the office of the
12 postsecondary commissioner, public higher education institutions, the state apprenticeship council,
13 and the construction trades. The purpose of the workgroup is to advise the board regarding the
14 implementation of nontraditional pathways to earning a bachelor's degree, including assisting with
15 the review pursuant to subsection (b) of this section and with the development of the plan required
16 by 16-112-4.

17 (e) The policies that shall be adopted by each public higher education institution shall
18 include, but not be limited to:

19 (1) The process by which a student may request academic credit for registered
20 apprenticeship coursework and experience;

21 (2) The number of credits a student may earn through coursework and experience hours in
22 a registered apprenticeship;

23 (3) The development of clear guidelines distinguishing credit-bearing and non-credit-
24 bearing apprenticeship coursework including, but not limited to, standardizing the process of
25 assigning credit to apprenticeship coursework; and

26 (4) Guidelines to determine degree majors towards which credits for apprenticeships may
27 be earned, including giving priority to majors that have both a low completion rate and a hiring
28 need by employers existing in the state.

29 (f) The policies of the public higher education institutions adopted pursuant to this section
30 shall become effective beginning August 1, 2024.

31 **16-112-4. Reporting.**

32 No later than August 1, 2025, the board shall provide the governor, the president of the
33 senate, and the speaker of the house of representatives a plan for increasing the number of students
34 who earn credit towards and/or complete bachelor's degrees from a Rhode Island public institution

1 [of higher education through a registered apprenticeship. The board may create additional reporting](#)
2 [requirements to focus on data collection for the purposes of program progress, goals, and](#)
3 [participation.](#)

4 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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