

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 4521

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, April 8, 2024.

The committee on Higher Education, to whom were referred the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 818) of Brendan P. Crighton, Manny Cruz, Thomas M. Stanley and James B. Eldridge for legislation relative to college credits while attending high school and the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1286) of Jeffrey N. Roy, Kate Lipper-Garabedian and others relative high schools providing and funding college programs, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4521) ought to pass.

For the committee,

DAVID M. ROGERS.

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4521**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**  
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An Act relative to college in high school.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           SECTION 1. Section 9B of chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022  
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “commonwealth” in line 6 the  
3 following words:- or any college in high school program administered pursuant to section 37 of  
4 chapter 69.

5           SECTION 2. Section 16 of said chapter 15A is hereby amended by inserting after the  
6 word “nursing” in line 5 the following words:- or any college in high school program  
7 administered pursuant to section 37 of chapter 69,

8           SECTION 3. Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
9 section 39 the following section:-

10           Section 39A. (a) All public institutions of higher education shall develop written policies  
11 and procedures for accepting for the purposes of course credit to satisfy degree requirements  
12 successful completion of college in high school courses as provided in section 37 of chapter 69,  
13 or successful completion of dual enrollment courses. In their policy, the institution shall:

14 (1) establish whether credit will be granted for general education, major or elective  
15 requirements at the institution;

16 (2) include procedures related to the transferability of these credits to another institution  
17 of higher education;

18 (3) the amount and type of any course credit that would be granted to the applicant under  
19 the policy required in subsection (a); and

20 (4) any other academic requirement that the applicant would satisfy under the policy.

21 (b) All policies and procedures governing the awarding of credit shall be posted on the  
22 institution's website under the category of admission, which the institution shall update as  
23 necessary to reflect any changes in policies and procedures. In addition, each institution shall  
24 submit its policies and procedures, or any changes thereto, to the department of higher education  
25 which shall post each institution's policies and procedures on the department's website.

26 (c) The board of higher education, in cooperation with the board of trustees of each  
27 public institution including the University of Massachusetts, shall annually review the college in  
28 high school credit-granting policies of each public institution of higher education in accordance  
29 with the requirements of this section and file a report with its findings and any recommendations  
30 with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives and chairs of the joint committee on  
31 higher education not later than July 1. Each public institution of higher education shall provide  
32 the board of higher education with all necessary data, in accordance with the federal Family  
33 Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, to conduct the analysis.

34 SECTION 4. Chapter 29 of the General Law is hereby amended by inserting after section  
35 2CCCCC the following new section:-

36 Section 2DDDDD. (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the  
37 commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Massachusetts College in High School Trust  
38 Fund. The fund shall be administered by the commissioner of the department of elementary and  
39 secondary education, in consultation with the commissioner of the department of higher  
40 education. The fund shall be credited with: (i) revenue from appropriations or other money  
41 authorized by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) interest  
42 earned on such revenues; and (iii) funds from public and private sources such as gifts, grants and  
43 donations to further the rates of student preparedness for workforce and postgraduate success.  
44 Amounts credited to the fund shall not be subject to further appropriation and any money  
45 remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund.

46 (b) Amounts credited to the fund may focus on underserved communities across the  
47 commonwealth, including those school districts with high concentrations of economically  
48 disadvantaged students.

49 (c) Amounts received from private sources shall be approved by the commissioner of  
50 elementary and secondary education and subject to review before being deposited in the fund to  
51 ensure that pledged funds are not accompanied by conditions, explicit or implicit, on the  
52 implementation of college in high school programming that may be detrimental to the neutral  
53 education policy. The review shall be made publicly available.

54 (d) Annually, not later than October 1, the commissioner shall report to the clerks of the  
55 house of representatives and senate, the joint committee on education, the joint committee on

56 higher education, and the house and senate committees on ways and means on the fund's activity.  
57 The report shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the source and amount of funds received; (ii)  
58 the amounts distributed and the purpose of expenditures from the fund, including but not limited  
59 to, funds expended to assist school districts in meeting the requirements in section 37 of chapter  
60 69; (iii) any grants provided to institutions of higher education and other stakeholder  
61 organizations; and (iv) anticipated revenue and expenditure projections for the next year.

62 SECTION 5. Chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
63 section 36 the following two sections:-

64 Section 37. All early college programs established under this section shall:

65 (1) Offer a coherent sequence of courses that allows a student to earn a high school  
66 diploma and achieve at least one of the following:

67 (i) the accumulation of transferable college credits; provided that, academic courses that  
68 count for college credit shall be those agreed to by the institutions of higher education  
69 participating in the partnership with the high school;

70 (ii) an industry-recognized credential or certificate, including those determined to be  
71 necessary for occupations with high employment value as defined in section 38; or

72 (iii) participation in a registered apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, or apprentice  
73 readiness program;

74 (2) Prepare students adequately for future success in the workforce or in an institution of  
75 higher education;

76 (3) Encourage the cooperative or shared use of resources, personnel and facilities  
77 between public high schools, public and independent colleges or universities and employers;

78 (4) Emphasize parental involvement and provide consistent counseling, advising and  
79 parent conferencing so that parents and students can make responsible decisions regarding course  
80 selection and can track the student's academic progress and success;

81 (5) Develop methods for early identification of potential participating students in the  
82 middle grades and through high school and provide outreach to those students to promote  
83 academic preparation and awareness of college in high school programs; and

84 (6) Develop strategies to identify and engage underserved populations including by  
85 income, race, ethnicity, sex, English language learner status and students with disabilities.

86 (c) Pursuant to regulations to be promulgated by the board, high schools are expressly  
87 authorized and encouraged to offer an affordable college in high school program to students  
88 before the completion of their 12th grade year that incorporates one or more of the following: (1)  
89 early college; (2) dual enrollment; (3) industry-recognized credentialing in high school; (4)  
90 advanced placement courses; (5) international baccalaureate programs; or (6) other approaches  
91 for college and career programs.

92 Section 38. (a) There shall be a College in High School Joint Committee, hereinafter the  
93 CIHS Joint Committee, charged with governing and overseeing the implementation of this  
94 section and making recommendations to the board of elementary and secondary education and  
95 the board of higher education. The CIHS Joint Committee shall develop and implement  
96 recommendations that include but are not limited to the following: (1) helping drive the  
97 commonwealth's efforts to grow and expand college in high school programs; (2) establishing

98 and monitoring robust performance requirements and targeted enrollments for all participating  
99 programs statewide (3) identifying and certifying new college in high school programs; and (4)  
100 setting standards for the participating students to be considered students of their high school for  
101 purposes of chapter 70 calculations for up to 2 years in order to complete certificates, degrees or  
102 up to 2 years of transferable credits to a 4-year institution. The CIHS Joint Committee shall  
103 consist of the secretary of the executive office of education or a designee; the commissioner of  
104 the department of elementary and secondary education or designee; the commissioner of the  
105 department of higher education or designee; two members of the board of elementary and  
106 secondary education, who shall be appointed by the chair of the board of elementary and  
107 secondary education; and two members of the board of higher education, who shall be appointed  
108 by the chair of the board of higher education.

109 (b) The CIHS Joint Committee shall review annually a set of per-credit charges that the  
110 public and private institutions of higher education participating in a designated college in high  
111 school program require for providing credit-earning courses. The per-credit charge may be  
112 subject to factors, including but not limited to: (1) the segment of colleges offering certain  
113 courses; (2) the site where the course is taught; (3) whether the course has extra costs associated  
114 with enrollment and (4) whether there are minimum numbers of participating students per  
115 section offered.

116 (c) The CIHS Joint Committee shall propose a budget to the commissioner of the  
117 department of elementary and secondary education that reflects the goals and objectives of the  
118 office.

119 (d) The college in high school programs shall be open to all enrolled students, on a space  
120 available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex,  
121 gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, special  
122 needs, proficiency in the English language or academic achievement. A lottery shall be held if  
123 more students apply than can be accommodated. Institutions may grant preference to students  
124 from low-income families.

125 (e) The CIHS Joint Committee shall establish the information and requirements it deems  
126 necessary to be included in any application for designation as a college in high school program in  
127 order to ensure a high-quality and rigorous college in high school program. The CIHS Joint  
128 Committee, after consultation with the department of higher education, shall establish standards  
129 for approving and designating college in high school programs.

130 (f) Where required, each designated college in high school program shall enter into an  
131 agreement with at least one postsecondary institution that provides students with opportunities to  
132 receive postsecondary credits during the student's participation in the program. Partner high  
133 schools and colleges shall work together to ensure that college credits automatically transfer to  
134 Massachusetts public postsecondary institutions upon completion of the program and admittance  
135 to one of those public institutions. In addition, partnering high schools and colleges should  
136 reduce barriers to college and consider automatic admission to the participating college upon  
137 successful completion of the college in high school program. The agreement shall establish how  
138 the program will be sustainable on current funding plus any anticipated annual state supplement  
139 for designated college in high school programs as well as the designated duties for the high  
140 school, in the areas of program coordination, student support, faculty support, career partnership  
141 coordination and performance monitoring.



142 (g) Designation as a college in high school program shall be for an initial period of five  
143 years, subject to review after the first three years, and renewable subject to performance. The  
144 department of elementary and secondary education shall, subject to appropriation, provide  
145 additional funding to designated programs for each participating student.

146 (h) Annually, by December 31, each college in high school program shall file a report  
147 with the commissioner of the department of elementary and secondary education and the  
148 commissioner of higher education on performance measures, including, but not limited to the  
149 following categories:

150 (i) high school graduation rates of participating students;

151 (ii) percentage of participating students who complete the program;

152 (iii) percentage of participating students who gain any postsecondary credits;

153 (iv) credits earned by participating students in college in high school programs, including  
154 percentage of each program incorporating early college to gain at least 12 credits;

155 (v) percentage of participating students in a 6-year cohort who attain postsecondary  
156 degrees; and

157 (vi) college and career outcomes of participating students.

158 The commissioners shall prepare an aggregate report for the senate and house chairs of  
159 the joint committee on higher education, and the joint committee on education.

160 (i) The CIHS Joint Committee and the board of elementary and secondary education and  
161 board of higher education shall establish multi-year goals for the commonwealth for the

162 attainment of college degrees and qualifying, industry-recognized certificates for students  
163 participating in college in high school programs. Such goals shall include overall goals as well as  
164 goals for historically underserved populations including by income, race, ethnicity, sex, English  
165 language learner status and students with disabilities. Goals should include statewide-, district-,  
166 and school-level goals. The office shall be responsible for ensuring annual, timely public  
167 reporting of progress statewide and by district and school towards those goals.

168 (j) The CIHS Joint Committee shall establish a publicly accessible online dashboard  
169 using data from the reports filed pursuant to subsections (g) and (h) of the section to generate  
170 information on each college in high school program. The purpose of the dashboard shall be to  
171 create user-friendly displays of the overall success of the individual programs in achieving the  
172 goals and shall be written in terms understandable to the general public and to help students and  
173 their families identify available college in high school opportunities.

174 (k) The CIHS Joint Committee Shall oversee all necessary college in high school  
175 programs, including but not limited to programs that incorporate one or more of the following:  
176 (1) early college; (2) dual enrollment; (3) industry-recognized credentialing in high school,  
177 including those for credentials determined to be necessary for occupations with high employment  
178 value as defined in section 38 of this chapter; (4) advanced placement; (5) international  
179 baccalaureate programs; or (6) other approaches for college and career programs.

180 SECTION 6. (a) The executive office of labor and workforce development shall create  
181 and administer an 18-month pilot program allowing for the development and implementation of  
182 an adult workforce high school diploma program to assist adults age 23 and older to obtain a  
183 high school diploma and develop employability and career technical skills.

184 (b) To be considered eligible to participate in the program, a qualified provider must meet  
185 the following criteria: experience in providing dropout re-engagement services, a course catalog  
186 that includes all courses necessary to earn a regionally accredited high school diploma, the  
187 ability to provide career pathways coursework, the ability to provide preparation for industry-  
188 recognized credentials and stackable workforce credentials, the ability to provide career  
189 placement services, the ability to provide employability skills certification aligned with the US  
190 Department of Labor’s “Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success,”  
191 and be accredited by a recognized regional accrediting body. The executive office of labor and  
192 workforce development shall approve and publish a list of qualified providers according to these  
193 criteria.

194 (c) Funds shall be reimbursed to qualified providers for the completion of the following  
195 milestones for each pupil served: each half credit, an employability skills certification, a  
196 workforce credential requiring up to 50 hours of training, a workforce credential requiring  
197 between 51-100 hours of training, a workforce credential requiring more than 100 hours of  
198 training, an accredited high school diploma.

199 (d) The executive office of labor and workforce development shall file a report on the  
200 efficacy of the pilot program with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the house  
201 and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on labor and workforce  
202 development. The report shall include the following metrics: (a) the total number of adult  
203 learners funded through the program; (b) total number of credits earned; (c) total number of  
204 employability skills certifications issued; (d) the total number of workforce credentials earned;  
205 and (e) the total number of graduates, in addition to any legislative recommendations.

206           SECTION 7. The commissioner may expend funds from the Twenty-First Century  
207 Education Trust Fund established in section 35NNN of chapter 10 for college in high school  
208 programs.

209           SECTION 8. The first annual report required under section 38 of chapter 69, established  
210 in section 5 of this act shall be submitted no later than December 31, 2027.