

**SENATE . . . . . No.**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

***Brendan P. Crighton***

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*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

**An Act relative to college in high school.**

\_\_\_\_\_

PETITION OF:

NAME:

*Brendan P. Crighton*

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*Third Essex*

**SENATE . . . . . No.**

[Pin Slip]

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE SENATE, NO. 818 OF 2023-2024.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**

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, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is  
2 amended by adding the following after the word “commonwealth” in line 6: “or any college in  
3 high school program administered pursuant to section 37 of chapter 69.”

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

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

9 Section 39A. (a) All public institutions of higher education shall develop written policies  
10 and procedures for accepting for the purposes of course credit to satisfy degree requirements

11 certain scores on the College Board's advanced placement examinations, successful completion  
12 of college in high school courses as provided in section 37 of chapter 69, successful completion  
13 of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, or and successful completion of dual  
14 enrollment courses. In the said policy, the institution shall:

15 (1) establish its conditions for granting course credit, including the minimum required  
16 scores on Advanced Placement examinations and examinations for courses constituting the  
17 International Baccalaureate Diploma Program; and

18 (2) establish whether credit will be granted for general education, major or elective  
19 requirements at the institution; and

20 (3) include procedures related to the transferability of these credits to another institution  
21 of higher education.

22 (b) On request of an applicant for admission as an entering student, a public institution of  
23 higher education, based on information provided by the applicant, shall determine and notify the  
24 applicant regarding:

25 (1) the amount and type of any course credit that would be granted to the applicant under  
26 the policy required in subsection (a); and

27 (2) any other academic requirement that the applicant would satisfy under the policy.

28 (c) All policies and procedures governing the award of credit shall be posted on the  
29 institution's website under the category of admission, which the institution shall update as  
30 necessary to reflect any changes in policies and procedures. In addition, each institution shall

31 submit its policies and procedures, or any changes thereto, to the department of higher education  
32 which shall post each institution's policies and procedures on the department's website.

33 (d) The board of higher education, in cooperation with the board of trustees of each  
34 public institution including the University of Massachusetts, shall annually review the college in  
35 high school course-granting policies of each public institution of higher education in accordance  
36 with the requirements of this section and file a report with its findings and any recommendations  
37 with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives and chairs of the joint committee on  
38 higher education not later than July 1. Each public institution of higher education shall provide  
39 the board of higher education with all necessary data, in accordance with the federal Family  
40 Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, to conduct the analysis.

41 SECTION 4. Chapter 29 of the General Law is hereby amended by inserting after section  
42 2CCCCC the following new section:-

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

53 (b) Amounts credited to the fund may focus on underserved communities across the  
54 Commonwealth, including those school districts with high concentrations of economically  
55 disadvantaged students.

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

61 (d) Annually, not later than October 1, the commissioner shall report to the clerks of the  
62 house of representatives and senate, the joint committee on education, the joint committee on  
63 higher education, and the house and senate committees on ways and means on the fund's activity.  
64 The report shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the source and amount of funds received; (ii)  
65 the amounts distributed and the purpose of expenditures from the fund, including but not limited  
66 to, funds expended to assist school districts in meeting the requirements in section 37 of chapter  
67 69; (iii) any grants provided to institutions of higher education and other stakeholder  
68 organizations; and (iv) anticipated revenue and expenditure projections for the next year.

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

71 Section 37. (a) There shall be a Massachusetts Office of College in High School, herein  
72 the office. The office shall be overseen by the commissioner of the department of elementary and  
73 secondary education in consultation with the commissioner of the department of higher  
74 education. The office will administer high school programs that expand student access to college

75 and postsecondary opportunities through high-quality instructional programming, hereinafter  
76 referred to as college in high school, in order to increase the rates of student success in  
77 postsecondary attainment and in the workforce. All programs established under this section shall:

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

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

83 (ii) an industry-recognized credential or certificate, including those determined to be  
84 necessary for occupations with high employment value as defined in section 38 of this chapter;  
85 or

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

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

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

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

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

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

100 (b) The office shall oversee all necessary college in high school programs, including but  
101 not limited to programs that incorporate one or more of the following: (1) early college; (2) dual  
102 enrollment; (3) industry-recognized credentialing in high school, including those for credentials  
103 determined to be necessary for occupations with high employment value as defined in section 38  
104 of this chapter; (4) advanced placement; (5) international baccalaureate programs; or (6) other  
105 approaches for college and career programs. The office shall develop and, as needed, refine all  
106 college in high school program designations offered in the Commonwealth and shall have the  
107 authority to set and raise credit attainment targets, recommend any designations to be awarded to  
108 applicants, administer all aspects of state support for the programs, track and report on the  
109 performance of participants in the aggregate and identify and pursue further innovative  
110 approaches. Academic courses that count for college credit shall be those agreed to by the  
111 institutions of higher education participating in any partnership with the high school.

112 (c) Pursuant to regulations to be promulgated by the board, all high schools shall offer an  
113 affordable college in high school program to students before the completion of their 12th grade  
114 year that incorporates one or more of the following: (1) early college; (2) dual enrollment; (3)  
115 industry-recognized credentialing in high school; (4) advanced placement courses; (5)  
116 international baccalaureate programs; or (6) other approaches for college and career programs.

117 (d) There shall be a College in High School Joint Committee, hereinafter the CIHS Joint  
118 Committee, charged with governing and overseeing the work of the office and making  
119 recommendations to the board of elementary and secondary education and the board of higher  
120 education. The CIHS Joint Committee shall develop recommendations that include but are not  
121 limited to the following: (1) helping drive the commonwealth's efforts to grow and expand  
122 college in high school programs; (2) assisting the office in establishing and monitoring robust  
123 performance requirements and targeted enrollments for all participating programs statewide and  
124 (3) aiding the office in identifying and certifying new college in high school programs. The  
125 CIHS Joint Committee shall consist of the secretary of the executive office of education or a  
126 designee; the commissioner of the department of elementary and secondary education or  
127 designee; the commissioner of the department of higher education or designee; two members of  
128 the board of elementary and secondary education, who shall be appointed by the chair of the  
129 board of elementary and secondary education; and two members of the board of higher  
130 education, who shall be appointed by the chair of the board of higher education.

131 (e) The office shall create and annually review a set of per-credit charges that the public  
132 and private institutions of higher education participating in a designated college in high school  
133 program require for providing credit-earning courses. The per-credit charge may be subject to  
134 factors, including but not limited to: (1) the segment of colleges offering certain courses; (2) the  
135 site where the course is taught; (3) whether the course has extra costs associated with enrollment  
136 and (4) whether there are minimum numbers of participating students per section offered.

137 (f) The office may develop, subject to the approval of the CIHS Joint Committee,  
138 recommendations for college in high school programs to continue to enroll participating students  
139 to extend and expand their graduation requirements such that they may continue to be considered



140 students of the high school for purposes of chapter 70 calculations for up to two more years in  
141 order to complete certificates, degrees or up to two years of transferable credit to a four-year  
142 college.

143 (g) The office shall propose a budget to the commissioner of the department of  
144 elementary and secondary education that reflects the goals and objectives of the office.

145 (h) The college in high school programs shall be open to all enrolled students, on a space  
146 available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex,  
147 gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, special  
148 needs, proficiency in the English language or academic achievement. A lottery shall be held if  
149 more students apply than can be accommodated.

150 (i) The office shall establish the information and requirements it deems necessary to be  
151 included in any application for designation as a college in high school program in order to ensure  
152 a high-quality and rigorous college in high school program. The office, after consultation with  
153 the department of higher education, shall establish standards for approving and designating  
154 college in high school programs.

155 (j) Where required, each designated college in high school program shall enter into an  
156 agreement with at least one postsecondary institution that provides students with opportunities to  
157 receive postsecondary credits during the student's participation in the program. Partner high  
158 schools and colleges shall work together to ensure that college credits automatically transfer to  
159 Massachusetts public postsecondary institutions upon completion of the program and admittance  
160 to one of those public institutions. In addition, partnering high schools and colleges should  
161 reduce barriers to college and consider automatic admission to the participating college upon

162 successful completion of the college in high school program. The agreement shall establish how  
163 the program will be sustainable on current funding plus any anticipated annual state supplement  
164 for designated college in high school programs as well as the designated duties for the high  
165 school, in the areas of program coordination, student support, faculty support, career partnership  
166 coordination and performance monitoring.

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

171 (l) Annually, by December 31, each college in high school program shall file a report  
172 with the commissioner of the department of elementary and secondary education and the  
173 commissioner of higher education, on performance measures, including, but not limited to the  
174 following categories:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

185           (m) The office shall propose, subject to approval by the CIHS Joint Committee and the  
186 boards of elementary and secondary education and higher education, multi-year goals for the  
187 commonwealth for the attainment of college degrees and qualifying, industry-recognized  
188 certificates for students participating in college in high school programs. Such goals shall include  
189 overall goals as well as goals for historically underserved populations including by income, race,  
190 ethnicity, sex, English language learner status and students with disabilities. Goals should  
191 include statewide-, district-, and school-level goals. The office shall be responsible for ensuring  
192 annual, timely public reporting of progress statewide and by district and school towards those  
193 goals.

194           (n) The office shall establish a publicly accessible online dashboard using data from the  
195 reports filed pursuant to subsections (g) and (h) of the section to generate information on each  
196 college in high school program. The purpose of the dashboard shall be to create user-friendly  
197 displays of the overall success of the individual programs in achieving the goals and shall be  
198 written in terms understandable to the general public and to help students and their families  
199 identify available college in high school opportunities.

200           SECTION 6. Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following  
201 section:-

202           Section 98. All public high school students shall complete and submit a free application  
203 for federal student aid or an application with the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority.

204           The Massachusetts Office of College in High School, established in section 37 of chapter 69,

205 shall promulgate regulations and provide guidelines for implementation of this subsection,  
206 subject to the approval of the board of elementary and secondary education. A student is not  
207 required to comply with this section if: (1) the student's parent or legal guardian submits a signed  
208 form indicating that the parent or legal guardian authorizes the student to decline to complete and  
209 submit the financial aid application; or (2) the student signs and submits a form on the student's  
210 own behalf if the student is 18 years of age or older.

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

214 SECTION 8. The first annual report required under section 38 of chapter 69, established  
215 in section 2 of this act shall be submitted no later than December 31, 2027.