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Legislative Document

No. 1412

S.P. 462

In Senate, April 12, 2021

**An Act To Require the Department of Education To Provide
Information to Students Allowing Them To Make Informed Choices
Regarding Their Education and Professional Futures**

Received by the Secretary of the Senate on April 8, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D M Grant", is positioned above the printed name of the Secretary of the Senate.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator POULIOT of Kennebec.
Cosponsored by Representative STEARNS of Guilford and
Senator: STEWART of Aroostook.

1 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

2 Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 231 is enacted to read:

3 **CHAPTER 231**

4 **STUDENTS RIGHT TO KNOW**

5 **§6981. Short title**

6 This Act may be known and cited as "the Students Right To Know Act of 2021."

7 **§6982. Definitions**

8 As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms
9 have the following meanings.

10 **1. Major colleges.** "Major colleges" means the 4 largest public 4-year universities in
11 the State based on average annual student enrollment.

12 **2. Vocational school.** "Vocational school" means any type of vocational, technical or
13 trade school in the State that prepares individuals to engage in the workforce as a technician
14 or participate in a trade or craft.

15 **§6983. Career landscape information collection**

16 The Department of Education shall collect and compile information sufficient to create
17 the student horizon database as set out in section 6984 which must include, on an annual
18 basis:

19 **1. In-demand jobs.** The most in-demand jobs in the State, including starting salary
20 and education level required for those jobs;

21 **2. Cost.** The average total annual attendance cost for each major college and
22 vocational school in the State;

23 **3. Student loan payment.** The average monthly student loan payment for individuals
24 who have attended major colleges and vocational schools in the State;

25 **4. Student loan default rate.** The average 3-year student loan default rate for each
26 major college and vocational school in the State;

27 **5. Total student loan debt.** The average total student loan debt for graduated in-state
28 students of the major colleges for 4-year degrees and graduate programs;

29 **6. Graduation rate.** The average graduation rate for each major college and
30 vocational school in the State;

31 **7. Completion rates.** The statewide completion rates for apprenticeship programs,
32 high school credential programs, career and technical education programs and military
33 first-term enlistments.

34 **8. Share of graduates working in occupation that does not require degree.** The
35 share of college graduates working in an occupation that does not require a college degree
36 for each major course of study;

1 **9. Starting salary for individuals graduating from major college.** The average
2 starting salary for individuals who have graduated from each major college;

3 **10. Starting salary for individuals who have completed apprenticeship, credential**
4 **or career and technical program.** The average starting salary for individuals who have
5 completed an apprenticeship program, high school credential program or career and
6 technical education program;

7 **11. Base pay for newly enlisted service members.** The base pay for newly enlisted
8 service members; and

9 **12. Starting salary for individuals graduating from vocational school.** The average
10 starting salary for individuals who have graduated from a vocational school in the State.

11 **§6984. Student horizon database**

12 The Department of Education shall develop a database, referred to in this section as
13 "the student horizon database" as described in this section. The database must be made
14 publicly available as an online tool.

15 **1. Most popular college, vocational school and career and technical education**
16 **programs.** The student horizon database must list the 50 most popular college, vocational
17 school and career and technical education programs in the State based on information
18 collected under section 6983.

19 **2. Searchable database.** The student horizon database must be a searchable database
20 that compares the following based on the user's selections:

21 A. Average annual cost;

22 B. Graduation rate;

23 C. Salary after attending;

24 D. Highest paying salaries for the top 5 major courses of study;

25 E. Full-time enrollment;

26 F. Socioeconomic diversity;

27 G. Race and ethnicity information;

28 H. Family income brackets;

29 I. Percentage of students paying down their debt;

30 J. Typical total debt after graduation;

31 K. Students receiving federal loans;

32 L. Typical monthly loan payment;

33 M. Students who return after their first year; and

34 N. Graduation, withdrawal and transfer status for students 8 years after attending.

35 The database must be designed so that a user has the option of selecting a specific major
36 course of study at a specific university, college, career and technical education program or
37 certificate program and receiving the following overview, to be filled in with information
38 collected under section 6983: "For every 100 students starting in (insert major course of
39 study) at this (insert university, college, career and technical education program or

1 certificate program), (insert number) will graduate in 6 years, of those, (insert number) will
2 get a job with an average starting salary of (insert salary) within 6 months of graduation.
3 The average debt for the graduates will be (insert debt). The total cost on average for this
4 degree or program is (insert total amount paid). For the (insert number) who don't graduate,
5 the average debt is (insert debt)."

6 **§6985. Reporting**

7 The Department of Education shall publish and distribute to high school students on
8 an annual basis a comparison, using the information collected under section 6983, a
9 scorecard based on the student horizon database created pursuant to section 6984 that lists:

10 **1. Top major courses of study.** The top 50 major courses of study for 4-year degrees
11 at the major colleges in the State by salaries earned by graduates;

12 **2. Top programs.** The top 20 career and technical education and certificate programs
13 in the State by salaries earned by graduates or recipients of a certificate of completion;

14 **3. Top in-demand jobs.** The top 25 most in-demand jobs in the State and their
15 corresponding starting salaries and education requirements; and

16 **4. Base pay and benefits for enlistment in the military.** The base pay and benefits
17 for enlistment in the military, along with the necessary vocational aptitude test score by
18 military branch and the average signing bonus.

19 **§6986. Rulemaking**

20 The Department of Education shall adopt rules necessary to implement this chapter.
21 Rules adopted under this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter
22 375, subchapter 2-A.

23 **SUMMARY**

24 This bill requires the Department of Education to provide information to students that
25 allows them to make informed decisions about their education and professional future. This
26 includes: the most in-demand jobs in the State and the average starting salary and education
27 requirements of those jobs, the average tuition for the 4 largest public universities and
28 vocational and technical schools in the State, the average monthly student loan payment
29 for obtaining a 4-year degree at public universities and vocational and technical schools
30 and the average starting salary for individuals with 4-year degrees and for those who
31 graduate from vocational and technical schools.