

**SENATE 2539:**

**AN ACT CREATING HIGHER EDUCATION  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL  
AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

*(summary reflects text as redrafted)*

**SPONSORS:**

Senators Lovely, Rodrigues, DiZoglio, Moore, Boncore, Welch, O'Connor, Tran, Eldridge, Rausch, Jehlen, Friedman, Comerford, Keenan, Brady, DiDomenico, Cyr, Brownsberger, Feeney, Rush, Creem, Crighton, Timilty, Tarr & several members of the House of Representatives

**LEGISLATIVE  
HISTORY:**

2/13/2020 Reported from the Committee on Higher Education; new draft of S756; bill reported favorably by the Committee on Higher Education and referred to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**EXISTING LAWS**

**AFFECTED:**

M.G.L. c.15A, §§ 1, 7 & 7A and M.G.L. c.71B, § 2

**PROPOSED**

**LEGISLATION:**

- Updates the goals of public institutions of higher education to include providing inclusive opportunities for individuals with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental disabilities.
- Requires public institutions of higher education to offer inclusive opportunities to support individuals with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, or other developmental disabilities to gain academic, career and technical, and independent living skills in order to prepare for adult life including, but not limited to, gainful employment and civic engagement.
- Permits individuals with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, or other developmental disabilities to participate in credit-bearing and noncredit-bearing courses and participate in internships or work-based training without being required to take a standardized college entrance aptitude test, have a high school diploma or its equivalent, meet minimum academic course requirements, meet minimum grade point average requirements, or obtain a passing score on the

statewide assessment tests utilized as a basis for competency determinations.

- Requires that students with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, or other developmental disabilities be fully included with nondisabled students in all academic and non-academic aspects of life at public institutions of higher education.
- Permits students with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, or other developmental disabilities to apply for financial assistance from state scholarship programs.
- Requires the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop inter-agency agreements, policies and practices necessary to support the effective collaborations to include students with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, or other developmental disabilities in higher education.
- Requires that costs associated with supporting participation in public institutions of higher education for students ages 18-21 be an approved expense to be covered by a school committee for special education so long as it is included in the student's individualized education program.
- Requires that costs associated with supporting participation in public institutions of higher education for individuals with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, or other developmental disabilities who are no longer receiving special education services be considered an approved expense of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission or the Department of Developmental Services, if the individual is accepted as a client of either agency.
- Codifies the inclusive concurrent enrollment discretionary grant program for school districts and public institutions of higher education to partner together to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment initiative options for students with disabilities ages 18 to 21.
- Requires the Executive Office of Education, subject to appropriation, to designate an Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment

Coordinator to manage grant administration and coordinate reporting requirements.

- Establishes an Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board to advise the Executive Office of Education on efforts to implement inclusive concurrent enrollment.
- Requires the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator, in consultation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Higher Education and the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board, to develop strategies and procedures to assist public institutions of higher education in sustaining, expanding, and replicating inclusive concurrent enrollment partnerships established through the Executive Office of Education's discretionary grant program.
- Permits students receiving special education programming to include inclusive concurrent enrollment at a public institution of higher education in an individualized education plan.
- Requires the Executive Office of Education to provide annual reporting on the status of the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program.

**ESTIMATED**

**COST:**

The cost of this legislation will be borne through current appropriation.

(MTM)