§ 3641-a. Excelsior scholars program for grade seven mathematics and science students. The commissioner shall establish an excelsior scholars program for grade seven mathematics and science students pursuant to this section and regulations of the commissioner adopted for such purpose. Within the amounts appropriated for this purpose, the commissioner shall award grants on a competitive basis to public and independent colleges and universities to conduct summer programs that shall provide advanced coursework in mathematics and science to students designated as excelsior scholars and, as funds permit, other high-performing students who have completed seventh grade.

1. Each year, the commissioner shall identify up to three thousand high performing seventh grade students in mathematics and science from students nominated by each public middle school, junior high school, intermediate school or junior/senior high school, or kindergarten through secondary school. The commissioner by regulation shall prescribe the maximum number of students that may be nominated by each school, which may vary based on the size of the school, which shall include equal numbers of male and female students. After review by the commissioner, qualified students shall be certified to the governor for recognition as an excelsior scholar.

2. The commissioner shall conduct a competitive process under which financial grants are awarded to each college and university approved to provide appropriate advanced coursework to excelsior scholars in the summer months, subject to the availability of funds appropriated for such purpose.

3. The regulations of the commissioner shall provide for coordination of the program with the seven centers for excellence in technology and the programs offered by such centers, to the extent practicable.