

## **S 304 - VACTED Reaction to the Draft Bill**

Dear Vermont House Education Chair Conline and Committee,

We are writing on behalf of the Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors in response to the latest draft version of S 304. Our association convened a meeting of all CTE directors in March to deliberate our thoughts and reactions when under consideration by the Senate Education Committee. The following represents our reactions:

**CTE Opportunities for Grades Six through Ten** - Vermont CTE enthusiastically embraces the opportunity to formalize collaboration with middle and high schools, especially for students engaged in Career Awareness and Career Exploration—essential components for building a robust Career Pathway. However, there's a concern that this aspect of the bill is just an unfunded mandate, burdening technical centers and partner schools with additional responsibilities. At present, some technical centers manage these costs through Perkins Grant funding, while others rely on local resources. Despite the varied approaches, the field has witnessed the adoption of numerous innovative practices that surpass mere visitation requirements in effectiveness. To truly propel progress, we must transition towards a systemic approach supported by consistent financial backing. Middle school programming requirements are pivotal for the comprehensive success of our education system, yet securing sufficient funding and resources to ensure its effectiveness remains imperative.

**Comprehensive Career Development Policy** - VACTED enthusiastically supports the implementation of a policy that establishes clear guidelines for collaboration between sending schools and CTE centers, thereby facilitating student pathways into CTE programs. It remains crucial to establish standardized graduation language and aligned standards across the system to strengthen this essential work. However, without a model policy to review, it is challenging to provide specific feedback. Furthermore, it is imperative to allocate additional funding and resources for middle and early high school programming. We strongly advocate for a system-wide commitment to career counseling as a fundamental aspect of student support during the initial stages of their career pathway exploration.

**Construction Aid** - CTE Centers must be included in any construction aid program.

**CTE Oversight/Evaluation/Rulemaking** - VACTED recognizes the significance of oversight and evaluation within the CTE system. However, rulemaking within the CTE system has largely remained dormant for over twenty years, demanding urgent attention if we are to enhance access. The unresolved issue of whether rulemaking authority should be vested in the Secretary or the State Board of Education has lingered for about a decade, with the transition to a cabinet-level position, impeding substantial progress. The language about oversight is not novel; rather, it involves transferring the responsibility from the Vermont Advisory Council on Career Technical Education to the Secretary. VACTED supports a five-year cycle of oversight, recognizing its value in maintaining accountability and progress within the CTE framework. Clarification on rulemaking authority is essential to facilitate necessary changes and propel the system forward.

**Common Statewide Calendar** - VACTED remains committed to the importance of implementing a statewide calendar for CTE, which is beneficial not only to the education system as a whole but also to families. We earnestly hope that a viable pathway is identified to achieve this goal.

**Postsecondary Program Alignment** - Requiring an articulation agreement of any kind falls short of meeting Perkins V requirements. VACTED advocates for a transition towards a more seamless Dual

Enrollment relationship between the Vermont State University system and the Community College of Vermont. The existing system could be significantly streamlined to enhance navigability. Many CTE Centers have prioritized relationships with out-of-state post-secondary institutions, either because they offer programming unavailable in Vermont or because they find them easier to collaborate with compared to in-state options.

**Agency of Education Staffing** - Adequate staffing of the CTE Division, at the Agency of Education is crucial to support Vermont's CTE with the many changes on the horizon and already existing federal requirements. We understand that the administrator's budget has added a position to within the CTE area at AOE.

The Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors

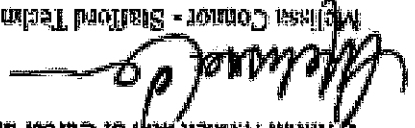
Respectfully,

Scott Farr - River Valley Technical Center



President

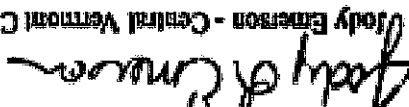
Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors



Melissa Connor - Stratford Technical Center

First President

Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors



Jody Emerson - Central Vermont Career Center

Vice President

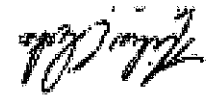
Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors



Erika Schneider - Hartford Area Career and Technology Center

Secretary

Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors



Mike Oakes - Randolph Technical Career Center

Treasurer

Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors

VC Secretary Heather Bouchey

State Director of Career Technical Education Ruth Durkee