



AUGENBLICK,
PALAICH AND
ASSOCIATES



Study on Funding and Governance Structures of Career Technical Education in Vermont

Report Presentation

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STUDY APPROACH

- Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, Inc. (APA) partnered with the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) was contracted by the State of Vermont, Legislative Joint Fiscal Office in October 2022 to conduct a study on the funding and governance structures of career technical education (CTE) in Vermont, authorized by Act 127 of 2022, Section 171.
- Study tasks included:
 - Literature/Document Reviews
 - Stakeholder Engagement
 - Data Analysis
- Study team developed 10 recommendations

BACKGROUND AND REVIEW

- Vermont's CTE system has multiple regional governance structures and a rather complex funding model.
 - CTE funding and governance of CTE been an issue in VT for years.
- The 50-state review found a variety of state approaches and no single approach for governance or finance.
 - Governance structures are typically district-based, region-based, or a mixed approach.
 - Funding approaches include weighted funding or foundation formula, categorical funding, unit-based or resource-based funding, reimbursement, other, or no direct state CTE funding.
- *States approach CTE governance and funding differently, and Vermont is unique in its approach.*

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Received feedback from around 900 people between in-person and remote meetings, and a survey, including 260 students
- Stakeholders generally felt positive about CTE
- Identified barriers and disincentives:
 - Alignment issues between CTE centers and sending schools/districts.
 - Alignment issues in CTE between K-12 and higher education.
 - Difficulty attracting and retaining qualified CTE teachers.
 - Economies of scale challenges in a state with many small settings.
 - Funding concerns across the CTE sector, including the tuition-based funding model.

DATA ANALYSIS

- Study undertook high level analysis of relationships between governance, performance, funding and student participation.
 - No clear relationships.
 - Local decisions seem to be a more significant contributor to the opportunities offered for students.
 - Proximity to the CTE center corresponds with the level of CTE participation by students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations focused on reducing barriers to enrollment and improving quality of CTE, along with meeting Vermont's workforce needs.
- The study recommendations **assume that Vermont sees CTE as a key part of its statewide workforce development system** to meet evolving workforce needs to keep the state competitive.
- Many of the recommendations are related to two overarching themes identified in the study team's work that impact not only CTE, but other areas of Vermont's K-12 system: **alignment and economies of scale.**

RECOMMENDATION 1 - FUNDING

- Provide additional funding and incentives or grants to create more accessibility for students whose sending high school is not on a shared campus with a CTE center.
 - Data show that proximity to CTE center is a strong predictor of CTE participation.
 - Stakeholders identified disincentives to send students to centers, including impacts on opportunities for other students in the sending districts.
 - Transportation is a barrier for access for many students.

RECOMMENDATION 2 - FUNDING

- Create a facilities funding system for CTE centers to address current facilities deficiencies, update program equipment, address enrollment needs, and plan for the future. The system should focus on updating facilities and growing capacity for the programs most needed for workforce development in the state.
 - A state board would distribute identified funds with a focus on updating current facilities and equipment along with adding capacity.
 - Distribution of funds would be with a focus on alignment with Vermont's workforce development needs.

RECOMMENDATION 3 - FUNDING

- Design a funding system that treats all CTE equitably while incentivizing additional CTE capacity in high-growth sectors, utilizing a weighted student funding formula that differentiates funding by CTE program type, with funding flowing directly to CTE centers from the Education Fund, eliminating tuition-based funding. Additionally, eliminate the six-semester FTE average for funding purposes.
 - Focuses are providing equitable opportunities for students across the state, similar effort for similar programs.
 - Funding CTE off the top of the Education Fund also means all districts in the state would share in the costs of CTE, which could impact local education tax rates.

RECOMMENDATION 4 - POLICY

- Require regions to align certain system policies, including calendars and academic requirements, to improve the efficiency of the system for students and staff, providing better outcomes in the system.
 - Stakeholders highlighted the impact of intra-center misalignment on opportunities and time on task for students.
 - Districts would be required to be on the regional calendar.
 - Incentivize mapping bell schedules and transportation to provide lowest barriers for CTE center students.
 - Require acceptance of specific CTE courses for graduation requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 5 - POLICY

- Review CTE teacher preparation and licensure requirements and salary policies with an aim of revising to better attract high-skilled industry professionals to teaching.
 - Barriers exist to attract and retain qualified staff, including overall compensation rates, variability of pay across districts, and licensure requirements.
 - Current policies in some districts could be leveraged to ensure pay systems recognize industry credentials and experience appropriately.

RECOMMENDATION 6 – STATE CAPACITY

- Invest in additional staffing at AOE to provide support to CTE educators across program areas and increase program quality, monitor the system, and to help ensure equity of CTE opportunity across the state.
 - Vermont’s numerous small settings makes coordinated technical assistance and support statewide important.
 - Stakeholders reported AOE has seen reductions in staffing in CTE, and other areas, which has led to less support across the system.
 - Will allow for increased opportunities for students in CTE and other flexible pathways.
 - Will allow AOE to broaden oversight and ensure equitable opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 7 – STATE CAPACITY

- Require that career exploration be offered to all middle school students across the state to increase awareness of CTE offerings as students enter high school.
 - No consistent curriculum or guidance for middle school CTE students.
 - Ensuring educators have the time and resources, middle and high school counseling should include career planning.
 - Consider a consistent career planning tool K-12.

RECOMMENDATION 8 – STATE CAPACITY

- Encourage greater secondary-postsecondary collaboration and require alignment/acceptance of credentialed Vermont CTE center pathways as precursors for enrollment into Vermont CTE postsecondary programs, eliminating the need for core course repetition and ensuring faster and lower cost credentialing for students.
 - Stakeholders consistently reported barriers for students to remain in-state to complete CTE credentials after high school.
 - Goal is to ensure time and cost of credentialing in state is similar to regional and national opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 9 – LARGER SYSTEMS CHANGE

- Examine current distribution of programs across the centers in the state and consider offering more programming outside of CTE centers (e.g., at sending schools or college) to expand opportunities for students.
 - State should review to consider programs that could be delivered outside of CTE centers, including using educational technology.
 - This could allow for the expansion of programs with more sophisticated equipment needs at the centers.

RECOMMENDATION 10 – LARGER SYSTEMS CHANGE

- Consider creating either a coordinated regional governance structure or a single district for CTE. If the state's intentions are equity for all students and developing a statewide workforce, then the state needs a more coordinated and coherent statewide strategy for CTE.
 - Given Vermont's economies of scale, may benefit from a more centralized decision-making.
 - Would increase coordination throughout the system.
 - This change would likely make implementation of many of the other recommendations easier to implement.

NEXT STEPS

- Following submission of this report, Act 127 also required AOE to:
 - “Consider the work performed and report issued...and shall develop an implementation plan, including next steps to design and implement new funding and governance models.”
 - Issue a report to the legislature by July 1, 2023, that “describes the results of its work...the implementation plan and makes recommendations for legislative action.”



QUESTIONS