

Written Testimony to Senate Education Committee

From: Jody Emerson, Superintendent/Director of the Central Vermont Career Center School District (CVCCSD)

April 27, 2023

Good afternoon, my name is Jody Emerson and I am the Superintendent/Director of the Central Vermont Career Center (CVCC). CVCC has 13 programs, some of which have two year options - Automotive, Baking & Culinary, Building Trades, Cosmetology, Design & Fabrication, Digital Media Arts, Electrical Tech, Emergency Services, Exploratory, Medical Professions, Natural Resources, Plumbing & Heating and Coop. I've been asked to discuss the Career and Technical Education (CTE) admissions process. First I'll let you know that not all 17 centers have the same process. This is an area where there is an opportunity for alignment across the state. Some of us have a very detailed admissions process and others have a system that is more like a lottery or first come, first serve model for applicants. As a reminder, no CTE center is a Local Education Authority (LEA), the sending school remains in that role and has many responsibilities as a result. In Vermont, CTE is considered a flexible pathway in Education as evidenced on the Agency of Education's [website](https://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/flexible-pathways/career-technical-education) and does not have the authority to grant diplomas. (<https://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/flexible-pathways/career-technical-education>). In addition, the Agency of Education provides several guiding documents for the admissions process.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GPX1nP9LBm8hn-jen-HedRPGgqlfsQ2n/view?usp=sharing>
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Gyr8xM6ybN-j-GM_9X9aHbyJMvloEs7f/view?usp=sharing
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18y2fahwSxUQJygQJ6zeY-u5Hu2TOB8bd/view?usp=sharing>

The [admissions process](#) at the Central Vermont Career Center was updated last year as we came out of covid and wanted to get back to a more traditional approach. As I was new to the center at the time, our registrar, former Assistant Director and interested teachers met throughout the year to redesign the process that is linked above and attached with this testimony. Now that we have completed a year, we will likely refine that document.

I'll use the first round of applications as an example. Students who are interested in attending a program at CVCC are expected to tour the center first - there are opportunities to do so at our Open House, our Trades Fair, sending school visit days in the fall for interested 8-10th graders, and 8th grade tours in the spring, this year will be the first year that we have almost all of our sending schools participating in those tours. Applications open the night of our November open house and were due just before the December break. The application process is online and students fill out their name, address, grade level, parent information, sending school, programs they are interested in (first 2 choices), and why they want to attend. Their counselor then goes in and recommends (or not) the student and attaches attendance, behavior and report card data. There is a rubric that is used by staff, including program instructors, our school counseling coordinator and assistant director to score those applications. All students are invited in for shadow day and are able to shadow both their first and second choice program - this year they shadowed their second choice from 9-10am and then their first choice from 10:15am-12:30pm

and then were able to join our students for lunch before returning to their sending school. This year we added an additional component, program preview day. Instructors were able to invite applicants back to program preview day based on the application and shadow day information they had. Students who were invited to program preview day spent the entire program day 8:22-12:30 with the instructors in the classrooms and labs/shops. It was an opportunity to set some norms, ask students to complete some pre-assessments, interview students and share what the program is really like. We have found that a lot of students think that if they get into Automotive for example, that they will be able to work on cars all day, or if they get into Electrical they will be wiring and other hands-on activities all the time - this is generally not the case. Many of our heavy trades programs, for example, spend the morning in the classroom working on strengthening their literacy and math skills, learning code, and/or working through the curriculum, such as the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). From this year's application process we have determined we need to make adjustments to next year's process due to counselor and teacher feedback. We are also trying to follow the process of using a google form, which is what most tech. center's in the state are currently using. We are piloting this form this spring/summer with our third round of admissions.

All centers have what is called a "blind" admissions process when it comes to Individualized Education Plans or Special Education. We can not and do not ask for EST, 504 or IEP plans as part of our admissions process. The sending school case manager is responsible for ensuring a team meeting took place where the team determined that placement in a CTE was appropriate for the student prior to application and a transition meeting needs to be scheduled once the student has been accepted. In general 35%-40% of CTE students are on specialized education plans be they 504 or IEP.