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To: House Education Committee
From: Mary E. Moran, Superintendent
Date: March 21, 2016
Re: **CTE Legislative Proposal – House 745**

I serve as the Superintendent of the Rutland City Public Schools and the Stafford Technical Center. Stafford is governed by the Rutland City Board of School Commissioners as advised by the STC Regional Advisory Board. Stafford serves the students from the sending high schools of Rutland City, Mount Saint Joseph Academy, Poultney, Fair Haven, Proctor, West Rutland, Mill River, and Otter Valley. Several home schoolers also attend STC. As well, we occasionally receive students from Woodstock and Black River in programs that their designated tech centers do not offer. In addition, we occasionally send students to the Hannaford Center for programs that STC does not offer. The level of interest and cooperation between and among the sending schools and centers has been positive and good for students. Finally, we have a vibrant Adult & Continuing Education Program that serves the Rutland Region very well.

STC Programs/Enrollment

- Stafford offers 16 all-day programs for a current enrollment of 233 students from eight (8) sending high schools as well as several home-schooled students.
- For the past 10 years, enrollment has been between 11% and 15% of possible sophomores, juniors and seniors from our sending schools.
- STC students have the advantage of taking advanced academic and AP classes at Rutland High School.

Higher Ed/Career Pathways

- According to the Harvard Business Review (2012), 47% of all new job openings through 2020 will be in the middle skill (some level of post-secondary education or stackable credentials).
- We currently have partnerships with 16 post-secondary institutions.
- Students are currently able to earn Industry Recognized Credentials (IRCs) in all programs; 25 different IRCs are available.
 - Portable – trusted by employers and institutions of higher education.
 - Stackable – has value and leads to another credential.
- Three programs lead to 4 state licensures (Cosmetology, Electrical, Plumbing and LNA)
- 16% of students completed dual enrollment courses for credit in 2014-15.
 - Many students leave STC with anywhere from 6 to 24 college credits.
 - A recent Health Careers Academy graduate entered college (pre-med) as a sophomore. She is the first in her family to graduate from high school.

Funding

- The current structure works well for the most part. I wonder what our enrollment would look like if schools were billed for “potential” students as opposed to “actual” students. Would this improve the “encouragement” students receive from some of our more “hesitant” schools?
- Dual enrollment is a valuable component of students’ education. Stafford pays for this credit when it does not qualify for Fast Forward funds or Fast Forward has been used by the student already. We do not ask the sending schools to use the student’s voucher as they are already sending tuition to the center and do not feel that it would be right to ask for the voucher as well.

Challenges

- Full-day program classes run from 9:15 to 2:30. Transportation remains a challenge:
 - Some students must be on a bus from their sending school by 7:10 in the morning only to wait for over 1 ½ hours for class once arriving at STC. This is a time when some students take a class at RHS.
 - Two other schools arrive at 8:20, with four more at 9:10.
 - Four schools leave at 1:45 and three leave at 2:30
- Increasing credit requirements (not sure how this aligns with PBGRs) at sending schools is making it harder for some students to access STC. Some counselors have already contacted us to express concern about students “fitting” Stafford in their schedules.
- Perception of Tech Ed remains a challenge as some school personnel, parents, and students still see it as an “alternative” school for those who struggle in high school. While providing career education to these students is important, we must do a better job of selling the value of a technical education to all students.

The Rutland Region has developed a strong and well-received CTE program at Stafford over the years. We in this region wonder where the impetus for this legislation is originating. If there are problems in certain areas, of course they should be addressed. But, a wholesale alteration of the governance, structure and funding of CTE in Vermont seems quite a reach.

Please let me conclude my comments about the importance and value of the CTE model currently in place by offering the opinion that the bill as drafted is of considerable concern to me, the Rutland City Board of School Commissioners and the members of the STC Regional Advisory Board, which reviewed it at the quarterly RAB Meeting last week. The formation of a study committee with a prescribed charge is understandable. The inclusion in the bill of the desired outcome, prior to such study, is both curious and disturbing.

Thank you for seeking and considering our input; and, as always, thank you for your service!