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TO: Joint Meeting with House Committees on Education & Commerce and
Community Development
FROM: Heather Bouchey, Deputy Secretary, Vermont Agency of Education
TOPIC: Vermont's New Skills for Youth Initiative
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Vermont's New Skills for Youth Initiative (NSYI) will ensure that all students, but particularly Vermont's Career and Technical Education (CTE) students, graduate with 21st century skills such as flexibility in problem-solving; collaborative and team-based inquiry; creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial thinking; and the practical, transferable skills needed for success in any career.

VT NSYI will help us carry out the design and implementation of statewide programs of study (POS) that include both secondary and postsecondary elements and are directly linked to Vermont's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) priority sectors for workforce investment.

By taking a sector-focused approach and more effectively linking business and industry needs with rigorous CTE programs of study that begin earlier and end with clearer postsecondary connections, we will improve Vermont's economic viability and sustainability as well as the postsecondary attainment of our CTE students.

We will accomplish these goals by focusing on the following activities during the first six months:

- establish a new Career Readiness Council, comprised of key leadership across government agencies, k-16 education, and business/industry that is charged with maintaining oversight and accountability for career readiness in VT;
- conduct a comprehensive, statewide needs assessment that refines and extends the work done to date;
- build multi-partner statewide POS consortia focused on identifying the specific skills and competencies, curriculum and assessments, pedagogy (to include problem based learning), and learning experiences CTE students need for success in a variety of career pathways, beginning first with Healthcare Sciences;
- develop a logic model and three-year plan of action, based on the needs assessment and initial POS work; and
- develop a preliminary media campaign to increase awareness of CTE and publicize progress with respect to project goals.

This work comes at an exciting time in Vermont's history:

- In 2014, Vermont became one of the few states in the nation to complete a statewide CEDS. The Vermont 2020 CEDS identifies targeted (priority) economic sectors for growth and was completed with support and input from stakeholders around the state, including educators.
- Recently adopted Education Quality Standards mandate that all Vermont students graduate under proficiency-based requirements beginning with the class of 2020, and new state

- legislation requires 7th through 12th grade students to have personalized learning plans that map out their interests and goals as well as the specific experiences that allow each student to best meet required graduation proficiencies and post-high school aspirations.
- The reauthorized Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Vermont's resulting unified state plan is forcing novel interagency conversations about how to best train and prepare our workforce and learners.

All of these activities have culminated in a fully engaged, robust set of partnerships and a rich context for revitalizing and improving CTE.