

February 25, 2016

Notes of Bill Sugarman: Former Director of the Randolph Technical Career Center (12 years) and Work-based Learning Coordinator (7 years), University of Vermont, Department of Special Education (10 years).

Introduced by Committee on Education

Subject: Education; career technical education; governance study

This bill proposes to direct the Pre-Kindergarten-16 Council to review the governance, funding, and higher education pathways for career technical education and recommend a new model for career technical education, and to establish a new staff position in the Agency of Education.

I support the idea of a review of Vermont's Career & Technical system and offer the following questions as potential ways to organize the study.

What are the incentives and disincentives for students to participate in the current regional technical education system? (Potentially components such as: adult advice and direction, transportation, prior career development, aspirations, resources & experiences, effect of friends and social relationships, perceptions of "tech ed" both positive and negative, other anticipated and unanticipated issues.)

What are the incentives and disincentives that effect schools and school districts related to the current structures? (Potentially components such as: known and unknown costs, class size and offerings, effect on student body, transportation, other anticipated and unanticipated issues.) Note: The idea of a "cost-neutral" funding formula has been discussed for years.

What is the current status of students who participate in technical education (and those who don't) related to: pathways for students moving from secondary to post-secondary life including education, outcomes experienced, degree of preparation, economic status, participation in dual enrollment, work-based learning, etc.?

What are ways to maximize the positive components of technical education (e.g. dual enrollment, graduation, academic and technical preparation) for students and systems.

Additionally, the study should begin with clearly articulating these and other questions and then to locate data from which to "fine tune" the questions, determine a path of inquiry and identify and recommend "solutions." I think that whatever decisions are made relative to "tech ed" need to be steeped in data.

Other thoughts:

Line 18: delete "career technical."

Watch out for "foregone conclusions." For example, that governance is the (or the only) solution and that governance under, for example, the VSC will be the best method to improve opportunities and systems.