

Senate Committee on Education
Wednesday, February 11, 2015

Jeffrey Renard, Director
Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC)

As creator and director of the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC) I am happy to report that since its inception in 2010, over 3,100 students have been supported by our program. These students have access to over 80 unique programs and courses not available at their local school, were not accessible due to scheduling conflicts, or were not offered at a time of day when students felt they would be the most successful.

VTVLC serves approximately seventy-five percent of Vermont high schools in the same way state virtual school programs do in 26 other states. However, there is one major difference; VTVLC is not a recognized school. As a partnership, Vermont schools offer online courses and in return, receive 50 tuition-free seats to use for their students. Because these are Vermont courses, offered by Vermont teachers and schools to Vermont students, all of the credits earned are considered “transfer credits”. This makes our courses easily transferable and accepted anywhere.

Students from “non-partner” schools may enroll at a cost of \$350 per half-credit. Most schools cover this cost, however some require the student to self-pay creating some disparity for students attending those schools. Regardless of funding, VTVLC online courses continue to be a great opportunity for both advanced students as well as struggling learners due to the removal of the barriers of traditional education. We continue to see growth in enrollment as students pursue online education as a flexible pathway toward graduation.

Some highlights of VTVLC include:

- **Taught by expert Vermont teachers.** All VTVLC faculty are endorsed in their content area *and* online teaching.
- **Increased availability of courses not offered locally.** Courses include; dual enrollment, Advanced Placement ®, core academics, world languages, electives, learning recovery and summer semester
- **No scheduling conflicts.** Courses are accessible from anywhere, anytime and allow students to move ahead or slow down as needed.
- **Promotes individual success.** Every student does better at different times of the day.

- **Reduced cost.** Emphasis is placed on schools offering unique/local courses that are low/under-enrolled to other students in the state to maximize efficiency and costs. VTVLC works to greatly expand access to currently existing programs.

Future goals for VTVLC:

- Proficiency-based high school diplomas.
- Offered at no cost to Vermont students
- Summer Semester of Study for any student

VTVLC will continue to work in finding solutions to decrease costs and increase equitable access to courses across the state. I would like to invite members of the committee to learn more about how online learning is changing education, not only at the K-12 Level, but also post-secondary where data from fall 2012 indicated 5.5 million students took at least one online course with 2.6 million being enrolled in fully online programs. Preparing Vermont students to take advantage of these opportunities is an additional benefit of our efforts.

I would yield to Mr Farr to talk about our work moving forward.