

Testimony for Commerce Committee  
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Career and Tech Education is the Key to College, Skilled Employment, and More

- Students who attend Career and Tech get so much more than a path for graduation. They come away with evidence of skills and proficiencies for further training, schooling, and employment.
- Let's debunk the myth that college bound students stay at high school and tech centers are for everyone else. Students come to tech centers from every level of academic achievement and we move them forward while giving them applied experiences to build their skills and confidence.
- Students at a career and tech center get college credits with Fast Forward and Dual Enrollment.
- Students at a career and tech center get IRCs, Industry Recognized Credentials like LNA licenses, OSHA 10 certificates, EPA Act 608 Refrigerant Handling certification, and Servsafe.
- Students attending a career and tech center can become apprentices while in high school.
- Rigor, Relevance, and Relationship
- Students learn pathways to achieving their learning and career goals as tech center students.
- We could impact so many more students. **Barriers** come from two main directions:
  - **Age old stigma** in schools and communities that tech centers are for “vocational students” who can't make it in a regular school. It makes school adults, family members, and friends DIScourage students from attending.
  - Funding of tech centers is based on the number of students attending, and the amount of time they spend in programs; the state dollars following the student. **High schools lose revenue every time a student attends the tech center.**
- The Help we need:
  - We know that many students make decisions about school and whether to stick it through to graduation by 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade. We need to be able to work with students before 11<sup>th</sup> grade and for more than 2 years. Whether it is as a regional service center to advise on PLPs and Work Placement (what we are already good at,) or students attending earlier in high school, we can reach all students and help them be successful.
  - We need full support for educating the public about CTE from the state so that students do not have to jump hurdles to attend. I no longer want to hear students' parents tell me they had to fight to get their student in because a school counselor told them they wouldn't get into college if they attended. I no longer want to argue with a principal about the financial prudence of whether students should be offered the opportunity to attend. And I certainly do not want to watch as veteran teachers take a condescending tone for the student who wants to attend an information session on career and tech.
  - Finally, and most important in these times, CTE needs to be funded separately from high schools. No matter how many times we repeat the mantra: “What's best for the student,” when the money follows the student and high school budgets are in crisis, less students arrive at the tech center. Funding needs to come to the tech centers before it reaches the towns and schools. It could be based on population or some other formula, schools should not have to worry that budgets will explode if students attend tech centers. And tech centers should not have to spend time and money trying to get past the barriers being put up from high schools and school boards.
- To review, Tech Centers in Vermont offer students more than job skills. They teach employability skills, offer opportunities for IRCs, apprenticeships, college credit, competition for scholarships, and more. They should be filled to capacity with students opting for this education and experience. We need to change the way they are seen and funded so that more students can benefit from them.