



STATE OF VERMONT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 16, 2015



Pat Moulton, Secretary
Agency of Commerce and Community Development
1 National Life Dr #6
Montpelier, VT 05620

Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary
Agency of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620

Annie Noonan, Commissioner
Department of Labor
5 Green Mountain Drive
Montpelier, VT 05602

Jeb Spaulding, Chancellor
Vermont State Colleges
3 Park St
Waterbury, VT 05676

Dear Secretary Moulton, Secretary Holcombe, Commissioner Noonan, and Chancellor Spaulding:

On behalf of the House Committees on Commerce and Economic Development and on Education, we are writing in regard to Senate Bill 138 (2015), "An Act Relating to Promoting Economic Development," and specifically Sec. C.10 of the bill (Vermont Career Technical Education), which is included as an attachment hereto.

Sec. C.10 directs your organizations to convene, develop suggestions, and report to certain committees of jurisdiction on or before December 1, 2015 on how Vermont's Career and Technical Education Centers can be better utilized to provide training aligned with high-wage, high-skills, high-demand employment opportunities in Vermont, including:

(1) how the Agency of Education will develop priority pathway programs of study with regional CTEs in collaboration with the Department of Labor, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the Vermont State Colleges;

(2) how these programs can include opportunities for post-secondary enrollment in apprenticeships, internships, approved training programs, subbaccalaureate programs, and adult technical education programs;

(3) how to ensure equitable and appropriate access to CTE programs of study developed and implemented in grades 9 through 12;

(4) what barriers or challenges exist to the development and implementation of high-quality priority pathways as described in the CEDS approved project; and

(5) one or more recommendations to address the financial disincentive for school districts to send students to the CTEs created by the CTE funding model.

Over the course of refining Sec. C.10 and further discussions within our committees, we have identified the following additional issues that we respectfully request you address in the scope of your work:

- (1) scheduling and busing;
- (2) reasons for the relatively lower demand for day and adult programs, whether culture, tuition costs, hours of operation, travel, or other issues;
- (3) who currently bears responsibility within Vermont schools for counseling and referrals of students to CTE, whether guidance counselors, teachers, principals, etc.;
- (4) details on the mechanics of funding, including for development of programs, payment of staff, facilities, equipment, etc, and how the money moves between a high school and CTE;
- (5) reasons why tech centers are more or less likely to partner with other education and training providers;
- (6) governance and the impacts on operation and expansion;
- (7) current CTE ability to aggregate employers to develop programs that serve multiple employers;

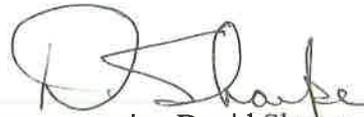
- (8) current CTE ability to recruit students, including for both day and adult programs;
- (9) reasons why relatively fewer CTE graduates enter construction trades;
- (10) barriers for adult students entering available education programs in the construction trades;
- (11) the potential costs and benefits of tech centers becoming specialized or magnet schools in certain areas, versus all centers developing programs in all fields;
- (12) the messages that are conveyed by colleges to high school students, and how those messages characterize the value of technical education;
- (13) the alignment between the tech programming and college degrees;
- (14) any stigma that exists regarding tech centers; and
- (15) the value of CTE programs that are not included in the priority pathways programs of study.

On behalf of the Committees, we sincerely thank you in advance for your consideration of these issues and for your service to Vermont. If we or members of our committees can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at your convenience.

Warmest regards,



Representative Bill Botzow
Chair, House Committee on Commerce
and Economic Development



Representative David Sharpe
Chair, House Committee
on Education



Representative Michael Marcotte
Vice Chair, House Committee on Commerce
and Economic Development



Representative Bernard Juskiewicz
Vice Chair, House Committee
on Education

Attachment: Sec. C.10 of S.138 (2015)

Sec. C.10. VERMONT CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

(a). Findings and intent.

(1) The "on time" graduation rate for high school students in Vermont is 86.6 percent (2013).

(2) The postsecondary continuation rate for 12th grade graduates is approximately 60 percent. Many states have set a target of 80 percent for students graduating from high school and transitioning to further education or training, or both.

(3) According to the Vermont Department of Labor, in 2014 the total number of people considered as "underutilized" labor in Vermont was 31,700.

(4) Vermont's workforce is aging, with 27.7 percent of all workers over 55 years of age.

(5) According to a report issued by the McClure Foundation, with assistance from the Vermont Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division, there are currently, and will be, many high-wage, high-skill job openings in Vermont between now and 2020.

(6) In order to support the creation and growth of high paid jobs in Vermont, we must provide our students with the needed education, skills, and competencies for these positions.

(7) Vermont's Career and Technical Education Centers (CTEs) are a key resource in preparing Vermonters for careers and meeting the workforce needs of Vermont employers.

(8) CTE learning is designed to prepare students to be ready for their next step, including further training, college, jobs, and careers.

(9) Vermont's CTEs do not currently offer enough programs of study of the size, scope, and quality necessary to prepare high school students for these current and anticipated high-skill, high-wage, high-demand job openings.

(10) Due to the demands and complexity of these jobs, CTE programming should provide new courses in a sequence from grades 9-12, including dual enrollment, with smooth transitions to postsecondary training or further education, or both.

(11) There is an approved project within the Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) that identifies six high-priority cluster programs of study which the Agency of Education is currently implementing: Travel/Tourism and Business Systems (Culinary, Hospitality, Accounting, Management, Entrepreneurship); Manufacturing/Engineering (STEM); Construction/Green Building and Design; Agriculture, Local Food Systems, Natural Resources; Information Technology (Networking, Software Development, Website Design); Health/Medical.

(12) The CEDS project for high-priority CTE programs of study will provide uniform high-quality programs at the centers throughout the State.

(13) The Vermont Department of Labor, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the Agency of Education, and the Vermont State Colleges should collaborate more closely to develop high school CTE programs of study, including adult technical education programs, aligned with the needs of Vermont's employers.

(14) In some cases, the funding models for the CTEs act as a disincentive for school districts to send their students to regional technical centers.

(15) The purpose of this section is to direct the Department of Labor, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the Agency of Education, and the Vermont State Colleges to collaborate on how to better utilize Vermont's CTEs.

(b) Study and report. The Agency of Education, the Department of Labor, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the Vermont State Colleges shall convene, develop suggestions, and report on or before December 1, 2015 to the House Committees on Commerce and Economic Development and on Education and the Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Education on how Vermont's CTEs can be better utilized to provide training aligned with high-wage, high-skills, high-demand employment opportunities in Vermont, including:

(1) how the Agency of Education will develop priority pathway programs of study with regional CTEs in collaboration with the Department of Labor, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the Vermont State Colleges;

(2) how these programs can include opportunities for post-secondary enrollment in apprenticeships, internships, approved training programs, sub-baccalaureate programs, and adult technical education programs;

(3) how to ensure equitable and appropriate access to CTE programs of study developed and implemented in grades 9 through 12;

(4) what barriers or challenges exist to the development and implementation of high-quality priority pathways as described in the CEDS approved project; and

(5) one or more recommendations to address the financial disincentive for school districts to send students to the CTEs created by the CTE funding model.

