

# House Commerce and Economic Development Committee

Feb. 26, 2019

Dear House Commerce and Economic Development Committee, thank you on behalf of the Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors (VACTED), we appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective. The Directors and Assistant Adult Technical Education Directors around the state work tirelessly to align workforce needs with educational opportunities. We strive to align our educational programs to the priority sectors within our state.

At our small center in Enosburg Falls we host 7 programs that represent the priority sectors identified by the Vermont Dept. of Labor. We have Medical Careers, Forestry and Natural Resources, Diversified Agriculture, Digital Media, Business Leadership, Construction and Auto Tech.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Adult CTE has a proven track record preparing students for the work force.

Some quick background on VACTED:

**About VACTED:** 3 objectives of our association are:

1. To promote education that benefits the total education and welfare of the all secondary and adult students.
2. To develop and implement educational programs that will prepare students to enter the workforce and/or post secondary institutions of higher education
3. To develop and implement programs that will partner with industry to provide high skill and high paying jobs for all Vermonters.

## **Common Practice around the state:**

Every center has a Regional Advisory board (RAB) made up of various stake holders including area employers and industry partners.

Every CTE program has advisory boards also made up of various stake holders including local employers and industry partners.

Every center has students participating in work based learning, these include everything from single day job shadows to semester long paid positions.

Every center is required to have an adult education component.

We have Directors on or in attendance at the State Workforce Development Board, we participate in regional planning meetings, Work Force investment boards (WIB), attend the Vermont Talent Pipeline Initiatives and participate in on various local boards. I believe this could be said for our adult Education Coordinators as well.

That association (VACTEA) <http://vtadultcte.org>

We appreciate the recent attention state government has put on CTE and Adult CTE. We see first hand how the educational opportunities offered at our centers translate into career opportunities for our students. We appreciate the state allocated funds to supports these efforts. And strongly support the attention and allocations outlined in the state budget.

CTE and Adult CTE pride ourselves on getting our high school and adult students prepared for a career. We also pride ourselves on taking a very common sense approach to education and try to use our funds as effectively as possible. We also try to use the most recent data to ensure our effectiveness in not only in our outcomes for our students but how to do so as fiscally responsible as possible.

One example of this is that the Agency of Education tracks where our students are 6 months and 3 years after they leave our school. It is not just enough to get them to a diploma or accepted into a college, we want them in a career.

For example at my center I know that over the last 5 years on average:

40-50% of our students go on to a post secondary education.

30-40% enter the workforce in a job directly related to their program often times in the job that they were placed in as senior in high school.

Each center receives a grant of \$20,000 to support adult programing, These funds are used to support staff, instructor salaries, provide scholarships to eligible **adult** students, and design programming.

Recently at our center some of these funds were used for...

Support adults earning a License in Nursing Assistant (LNA).

Provide scholarships to students earning welding certifications.

Provide scholarships to students to earn their Commercial Drivers License (CDL).

We are appreciative of the state's desire to improve our Adult Technical Education programs. As mentioned in previous testimony Adult Education around our state has gained more and more traction. They are an extremely nimble and flexible organization that constantly looks for ways to offer programing that will meet work force needs and offer programs that will help the adults of our communities. As you know there are many organizations tackling this issue and Adult Education in CTE is in a prime position to assist in this endeavor. We not only have the desire to support but we also have the equipment, space, admin support, and the infrastructure to quickly meet these needs. Many centers are trying to partner with CCV, VTC, other organizations, businesses to use our facilities as training areas for workforce development.

We appreciate the recent funds from the state to regional centers to provide adult career technical education. I cannot speak to what initiatives have been approved this current year but I know the intention to use these funds are to improve the overall effectiveness of adult technical education and meet the needs of the labor market. Our next steps as both Directors and Adult Tech Ed Directors is to examine how effective we are in improving our programming based on these funds and will provide information and data as to the effectiveness.

One area we have concern over is language in the draft that speaks to giving some of these funds to high schools as well. Our concern is high schools may not be in the same position to offer what can be offered at the regional technical centers and I would hate to see high schools recreating the wheel or starting new programs that may already be offered at their regional tech center. While the intention is sound, proper coordination and communication between high school and regional centers could reduce duplication of services. Also because of the regional

nature of tech centers we may be able to offer programming to a wider service area than a local high school could.

We also support the VSAC Non degree grants. We have seen first hand how this has helped adult students get the certification they need to put themselves in position for an entry level job, or advancement in a current job. We particularly support the language around supporting adults for an accredited certificate program, or registered apprenticeship program. We believe that the more of this type of training and education gets recognized as an effective avenue the better we may be able to meet work force needs.

Another area I would like to speak on is regarding flexible pathways, supporting dual enrollment is a great opportunity for our students, I fear that it may not be maximizing the intended audience, but I cannot fully speak to that, I would like to look at the data and impact that has had on our secondary students. I would like to introduce the idea that some of those funds could be used for high school students to pursue the same type of programming of the non degree grants. For example we have had high school students (students not enrolled at CTE) that would like to pursue accredited certifications (i.e. LNA). It would be great if we could support these students as well.

In closing, VACTED is eager to assist and get involved. Despite the demands of running a school, creating partnerships and meeting the needs of our industry partners and statewide workforce gaps remains one of our top priorities. Thank you for your time today and I know I speak for all the Directors around the state that you all have an open invitation into any of our centers. If you haven't already please stop by for a visit and tour our students love to share what they are doing and where they plan on going.

Thank you

Nate Demar  
CHCC  
President VACTED

