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Lyndon Institute
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Dear Representative/Senator,

I am writing to you because COVID-19 has had a significant and unique impact on the career and technical education centers in Vermont. The impact has manifested in multiple ways over the course of the previous year and raised numerous concerns looking forward.

Generally, the window for outreach and recruitment runs from December through April for Lyndon Institute, which includes the opportunity to inform and highlight our Career and Technical Education programming to our sending districts. Similar to other schools and CTE centers we were unable to finish recruitment efforts in the spring of 2020 due to the pivot to remote/virtual learning resulting from Covid-19. In agreement with other CTE centers, we estimate that recuperating lost enrollments will likely not be fully back on track until the spring of 2025. We are all looking forward to getting back to normal recruiting activities by the spring of 2022.

Scheduling of high school students for the upcoming school year typically happens in the late spring. With the transition to remote learning in March of 2020, the scheduling for fall 2020 courses and CTE programs encountered many obstacles. For example, all spring activities (i.e. prom, graduation, etc) had to be envisioned in a whole new way, online student learning systems were put to the test, and guidance counselors were often pulled away from scheduling tasks to simply support students and families. This resulted in course/program scheduling to take place over the summer and into the early fall. Many students chose to not follow through on their plans to enroll in a CTE program, often due to apprehension about COVID-19 itself, but also hybrid daily plans meant that students would not be able to attain the full experience of CTE programs, especially the technical skills lab instruction that draws so many to the Center.

With each school establishing a daily schedule that best fits their community, a lack of coordination has also impacted the students' abilities to take a CTE program *and* their traditional school classes. Additionally, the shifts from/to remote instruction due to Covid concerns, whether at the sending school and the CTE center is open for in-person instruction or vice versa. This lack of coordination has contributed to frustration for the students and their families, and arguably, has led to higher than normal student attrition rates

The competitive nature (money follows the student) of the CTE funding system, which COVID-19 has compounded, will continue to exacerbate the funding mechanism based on FTE (full time equivalent) enrollment for six-semester/three-years after we are fully clear of the pandemic. To maintain the continuity of



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education for CTE students, a stabilization of funding is quickly needed. As with school districts, CTE centers operate with very constrained budgets and often personnel are the most effective method to reduce expenses. This is particularly worrisome given the workforce needs in Vermont for high skilled employees and the general challenges to bring in quality educators from the private sector to our CTE centers.

To stabilize the funding, a solution would be to create a temporary "hold harmless provision" for FTEs. The timeframe of July 2020 through June 2025 would be held at a level no lower than the March 15, 2020 FTE counts. Career and Technical Centers that have realized increases in student FTE counts would be able to use those higher FTEs to determine funding; but again, the levels would go no lower than March 25, 2020. Hopefully, we can move to a funding model which does not place us in competition with the high schools we serve and allows us to focus on equity for all students.

Again, we appreciate your thoughtful time and consideration.

Regards,

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