

Written Testimony to House Education Committee
From: Jody Emerson, Director of the Central Vermont Career Center (CVCC)

Feb 2, 2022

H.483

Good afternoon, my name is Jody Emerson and I am the Director of the Central Vermont Career Center, a role I officially took on, July, 1, 2021. Previously, I was the Associate Principal of U-32 for 8 years, one of the sending schools to CVCC. I jumped into the governance transition process when I was selected for my current role and fully support this shift which will allow a stronger voice across my sending schools and their towns in the future work of CVCC.

Systemic access for CTE will require a systematic change - I support the bill to continue looking at how to make these changes and want to be involved in this work along with my colleagues. I know that some of this was previously a part of Act 189 and it's important to address the funding which truly needs to follow our students. In addition, we need funding for new spaces and buildings. I am fortunate to be leading one of two centers who has seen increased applications during the pandemic. I have over 300 first round applications in our Enrolltrack system, over 2?? Of them completed applications of students who have been invited to interview with the instructor for their first-choice program this week.

I know funding is complicated, as a first year Director, I can say that it may, it may relate to governance, it may simply need to be separated in order to ensure that our centers can meet the expectations our state has for students and industry.

Act 189 was set to address some rules changes as well - much of the CTE related legislation is nearly 50 years old and needs to be updated for access. One important update is allowing younger students to attend and/or providing opportunities for students to access CTE type of programming at an earlier age, which would support the growth of CTE in Vermont.

Can we separate Finance and Rules from the study of Governance? Governance may need to be studied further to determine what options exist both in and outside of Vermont, and which best suit the needs of our students. Why are we one of the only states in the nation that doesn't allow for CTE high school? I know this does impact our students when they choose to attend post-secondary technical institutions, we do not have the capacity to participate in the same level of articulation agreements as centers across the country due to the limits on what we can offer students and when. Would these changes impact our sending schools? Yes, high schools have seen a loss of students to flexible pathways such as CTE and Early College. Are there ways to strengthen CTE pathways by partnering with our sending schools? Is it time to let go of the industrial revolution model of high school and strengthen the interest based models that exist? Ensuring students have access to rigorous and relevant training for career and college readiness? It cannot hurt our communities and industry if we work together to build pathways to CTE in our middle and high schools to provide opportunities for experiences that

help students to determine their path to career and college. Also, it is important to note that there is a significant difference between work-based learning and cooperative education - let's make sure those lines are not blurred and we continue to ensure that students with the proper training are those who are able to work on the job as seniors earning money while also meeting their graduation requirements. One other way to consider supporting this is by adding access to a 5th year, allowing students to walk with their graduation class at their sending school and funding access to another year of public education at a CTE center.

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Good afternoon, my name is Jody Emerson and I am the Director of the Central Vermont Career Center, a role I officially took on, July, 1, 2021. Previously, I was the Associate Principal of U-32 for 8 years. I have also just completed the required coursework for my Online Teaching License and will be working for VTVLC this spring teaching at least one Social Studies class.

While I support the use of VTVLC as a flexible pathways option for any student, whether CTE or not, VTVLC should not be the only option for students to meet their graduation requirements. Having taught the American History class in VTVLC, I can share that it is incredibly text heavy, requiring significant reading and writing, which many of our students would need additional support with. In my center 37% of students are on an individualized plan (504/IEP), which is about 17% more students than the general population of my sending schools.

This bill puts the VTVLC component on sending schools to register and support students, I think it is important to note that CTE centers also have staff teaching for VTVLC and may be better positioned to support students than sending school, especially in the case of a full day program or in those cases where students do not return to their sending school.

VTVLC is already a viable flexible pathway. What is the basis for this bill? Is this a need due to the variety of graduation requirements across the state of VT? This brings up concerns about funding and potential impact on minutes for CTE students, does it take students away from their time with us?

Just as schools across VT developed different sets of graduation requirements, our centers operate differently, there are full day and half day programs, this bill will have a negative impact for full day centers, both financially and in seat time.