

## **Summary of VDOL Report on Secondary Student Industry Recognized Credential Pilot Project (Act 183 Sec. 13)**

### **Overview**

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) in coordination with the Agency of Education was directed to design and implement the Secondary Student Industry Recognized Credential Pilot Project to provide funding for eligible secondary students to take eligible adult career and technical education courses.

### **Summary of Interim Pilot Report**

The program is intended as “funding of a last resort” as VDOL anticipates that most students will be eligible for funding outside of the pilot program. No Pilot IRC funding was used to support students who applied and students are supported by either Vermont Youth Employment Funds, Hireability, or WIOA funds. As of now, \$50,419 has been requested but funds have only been released to students who completed their course. The information collected in the application process is being used to evaluate student eligibility for funding as well as inform future decisions about the use of state and federal funds related to training for secondary students. As of January 20th, 26 applications have been received with one withdrawal and two non-responses to a VDOL case worker. 19 of the 26 were enrolled in a secondary CTE plan while 7 had an IEP or 504 plan.

### **Observations**

A large amount applicants were from Franklin County which raises concerns that the county is unable to meet students' needs and suggests it lacks a comprehensive understanding, strategic planning process, and resource management leadership to meet these needs. Districts should examine personal learning plans, the comprehensive local needs assessment, and students to anticipate the resource needs of students. Proactive planning will allow districts to better use ESSA, IDEA, Perkin V, and local funds more innovatively. The majority of students were unable to submit a “meaningful” Personal Learning Plan (PLP) and instead only included a brief statement about their need for a course. At least four students who disclosed a disability, IEP, or 504 plan were not enrolled or not accessing Hireability (vocational rehabilitation services). It is concerning that students with disabilities are relying on “last resort funding” to achieve their career goals when federal and state requirements demand that funding be made available to these students. It is being demonstrated that students who need “intensive supports” are not receiving them in a timely manner and half of graduating applicants with disabilities did not have access to career supports despite being entitled to them.

### **Conclusion**

VDOL does not recommend that this pilot program be extended or made permanent because it would disrupt the connected learning and planning process many districts and regions have achieved. VDOL recommends instead promoting comprehensive, high-quality strategic coordination to utilize available resources to meet “actual and real-time needs of students”.