
TESTIMONY

Testimony To: Senate Committee on Education
Respectfully Submitted by: Heather Bouchey, Ph.D., Interim Secretary of Education
Subject: Career and technical education programs
Date: February 23, 2024

Good afternoon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill which we believe will finally address long-standing challenges regarding funding for CTEs, as well as improve access for all students to the hands-on, enriching experiences that CTE centers afford. Given the dire economic and employment issues Vermont currently faces, it is critical that we take full advantage of our CTE system and all it can possibly offer.

Suggested changes to language:

Introduction

~~(1) Basing the tuition charged to a school district on the district's prior year full-time equivalent student enrollment in a CTE center;~~

(1) ~~(1)~~ Providing block funding to CTE, based on the Center's prior year operating costs, including full-time equivalent student enrollment in the Center; (see below and further testimony next week)

~~(4) requiring the Agency of Education to create and supervisory unions to adopt a model comprehensive career development policy;~~

(4) requiring the Agency of Education to create and supervisory unions to implement, in partnership with CTE, a model comprehensive career development policy;

(8) requiring the Agency of Education to develop a statewide school calendar.

(We recommend moving this item to Miscellaneous Education Bill or similar vehicle. It is a good idea that will assist in CTE operations, but it is much broader than CTE and should involve other education stakeholders. Consider, instead, charging the SUs and CTE centers with developing shared bell times throughout the CTE region, but this should hold until CTE governance is fixed.)



§1552.

Remove section (d). The proposal is to move from a tuitioning model to a block allocation provided directly to the CTE.

~~§1561. TUITION REDUCTION~~

§1561. FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

(Note: We are planning to testify next week on the proposed new funding model. Transition period for FY2026-2027, with direct allocation of funding to CTEs based on previous year's total operating expenditures. Building in programmatic level FTEs and associated weights beginning 2028.)

§1541a. RESPONSIBILITY OF LOCAL BOARDS IN SENDING DISTRICTS

Recommend removing section (3), as bill no longer contemplates tuitioning.

(4) Provide students in grades six through eight with career enrichment and exposure, including at least one annual visit **or equivalent virtual experience** to the district's regional career and technical education center.

§1547. COMPREHENSIVE CAREER DEVELOPMENT POLICY.

(a)(1) the role of CTE centers in providing career-focused education **and assisting supervisory unions in developing and implementing the comprehensive Career Development Policy.**

Sec. 8 (c)8. District Quality Standards. We understand and support the intent, as we agree this will improve operations for CTE centers. However, we recommend waiting for this to be incorporated into Governance bill next session. Not all CTE centers are districts, so this may not apply well. For example, most existing CTE centers are co-located with a high school. They are, accordingly, already covered by DQS and it would be redundant for them to have to do additional work regarding DQS.

§1594. POSTSECONDARY PROGRAM ALIGNMENT.

We have not yet engaged with the VSC on this aspect of the bill proposal, as we were awaiting whether the General Assembly supported the concept. From our perspective, this would go a long way to ensuring robust k-16 pathways that will enhance our economy and workforce in Vermont. However, we also recognize the current stress regarding organizational capacity development and finances that the VSC is under. This is why we first wanted concept approval from the General Assembly before moving any further.

Finally, I was very pleased to get the opportunity to talk further about our proposal with members of VACTED yesterday. It sounds like we are on the same page for much of the proposed bill, with the possible need for additional fine-tuning, questions to be

answered, etc. We are happy to continue working toward improving the bill, realizing the Committee's intention of getting it out as soon as possible.