

TO: Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Jeff Fannon, Executive Director
DATE: February 28, 2024
RE: S.304 (Career Technical Education)

As requested, please accept this brief written submission as a supplement to my oral testimony about S.304— Career Technical Education (“CTE”). As I said in committee, Vermont-NEA believes CTEs are a critical component of Vermont’s public education system that deserves our support to assist students who may thrive in such an educational environment.

Sections, 1 and 2 of the bill¹ relate to funding of CTEs, and since there is so much being discussed right now about education funding generally, changing funding of CTEs without fully understanding all of the changes being discussed and enacted may cause unintended consequences that further exacerbate funding challenges schools face right now. We believe it advisable, therefore, to wait before making any additional changes to education funding, including changes to CTE funding. Moreover, during the Secretary’s February 23rd testimony, the Agency of Education suggested it would make further suggestions using a block grant approach. Vermont-NEA would like to see that proposal before supporting such a possible wholesale change to funding CTEs.

Since we are discussing the financing of CTEs by “sending districts,” I also mentioned that it may be appropriate to include in the bill language similar to what the House passed last year prohibiting a private school from charging a tuition fee for a publicly funded student that exceeds its announced tuition fee for a privately funded student.

The changes suggested in section 3 are acceptable.

Sections 4 and 5 recommend school boards develop and adopt new CTE policies, and it seems advisable to hear from the VSBA about these changes.

As a member of the school construction task force that issued the below linked report, section 6’s intention language that CTEs should equitably enjoy public funds is acceptable.²

While the committee was clear that the bill was not going to address whether the secretary of education should revert back to a commissioner that reports to the state board of education, certainly we can agree the state board of education lacks resources to fulfill its current mission; therefore, sections 7 and 8’s change to have the Agency oversee CTE rulemaking and oversight, seems like a partial fix to a known problem.

We have no position on section 9.

¹ References to the bill are to Draft 1.1 dated January 25, 2024.

² [W~Vermont Agency of Education~The School Construction Aid Taskforce Report~02-01-2024.pdf](#)