



## Vermont Association of Career and Technical Directors

**2/25/2026**

### **Testimony – House Commerce**

Re: 26-0768 – CTE Educational Service Agency Proposal

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Erik Remmers, and I am here representing the Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors, or VACTED. Our members lead Vermont's 15 career and technical centers and oversee accredited, standards-based programs aligned to Vermont's workforce needs.

I understand the committee is considering 26-0768, which proposes creation of a CTE Educational Service Agency and a shift to direct state appropriation for CTE funding.

VACTED agrees that Vermont should strengthen and expand access to Career and Technical Education. The challenges this proposal seeks to address — funding instability, coordination gaps, and uneven access — are real.

Rather than respond point-by-point to structural elements of the ESA proposal, I will frame our perspective through the six principles VACTED adopted on February 19, which we believe should guide any CTE reform this session.

First, accountability must accompany authority.

If governance authority is consolidated within an ESA, accountability structures must be clearly defined. Who employs CTE staff? Who negotiates collective bargaining agreements? Who evaluates directors? What is the dispute resolution pathway between centers and sending districts? Regardless of governance structure, Vermont's CTE system would benefit from a clearly designated statewide CTE implementation and alignment function. This role would support consistent admissions practices, assist in the development and alignment of regional program advisories, provide technical interpretation of statute and rule, identify recurring systemic barriers, and facilitate early resolution of disputes prior to formal enforcement.

The goal is not expanded oversight, but clearer implementation support and system coherence across regions.

Second, implementation should be sequenced before major structural change.

Governance restructuring should not precede updated State Board CTE rules, defined funding alignment, an operational intervention pathway, and a transition plan demonstrating no disruption to safety, staffing stability, or programming.

Third, CTE must be recognized as a professionally accredited, standards-based system.

CTE centers are accredited institutions staffed by licensed educators who intentionally teach academic and technical standards. Policy should affirm CTE centers' authority to award academic credit and require consistent application of CTE-earned credits toward graduation requirements. Many access concerns can be addressed through credit recognition and rule modernization without immediate structural overhaul.

Fourth, access must expand while protecting safety and program integrity.

CTE operates in regulated, high-risk environments with fixed requirements for staffing ratios, space, equipment, and instructional sequencing. Core technical instruction leading to industry-recognized credentials must occur in purpose-built, safety-compliant facilities. Universal access should mean every student has a viable pathway into CTE. It cannot eliminate safety readiness standards or capacity constraints.

Fifth, Vermont needs consistent standards while preserving regional flexibility.

Centers operate under different delivery models — full-day and half-day structures, embedded or dedicated academics, and regional satellites where appropriate. Consistency of standards does not require uniform structure, and one-size-fits-all mandates risk undermining both effectiveness and employer alignment.

Sixth, CTE funding must align with student need and system reality.

VACTED supports moving CTE funding into a stable, predictable structure aligned with Vermont's broader education funding system. However, funding must reflect real cost drivers, including regulated environments, equipment replacement cycles, concentrations of SPED and 504 students, and enrollment volatility. Without appropriate weighting and modeling, high-cost technical programs could be destabilized.

At this time, VACTED is not prepared to support or oppose the ESA structure as drafted. The proposal represents a significant governance and funding transition. Responsible decision-making requires operational clarity, fiscal modeling, updated rules, and defined accountability structures before implementation.

We stand ready to work collaboratively with this committee and the Agency of Education to strengthen CTE statewide in a way that expands access while protecting safety, quality, and regional workforce alignment.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

**Respectfully submitted,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erik Remmers", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Erik Remmers  
Director, Green Mountain Technology & Career Center  
President, Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors (VACTED)