

Hello, my name is Rene Sanchez, and I am the superintendent of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union. I'm here today with my colleagues representing our supervisory Union and our High School, Otter Valley Union Middle and High School.

Introductions:

Jill Doody, Communications Coordinator, Matt Hildebrand, Special Education Supervisor, OVUMHS, Devon Karpak, OVUMHS Technology Education Instructor.

We are here to testify regarding S.313 and to share information about a career/workforce opportunity for our school and communities.

First, I'd like to give you a little background on my experience as an educator. I've been in education for 30 years and have worked as a teacher, athletic and academic coach, college counselor, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and now superintendent. But I'm here in my capacity as superintendent, and I really want to talk about my 12 years of experience as a high school principal, and in particular, my time as the principal in Houston, Texas.

Beginning in my first year in Houston, the district received the Race to the Top CTE Grant. The district then gave us the flexibility, training, and resources to plan at each High School to expand CTE and post-secondary options. The high school went from having one certificate program and no discernible pathways to four coherent pathways with 10 licenses and certificates, an Associate's Degree program for students interested in working at nearby refineries, and an authorized International Baccalaureate Career Programme.

Because of my experience in Houston and my two superintendencies in Vermont, when I came across the Transcend Career Connected Learning cohort opportunity, I recognized that RNESU and Otter Valley would benefit tremendously from Transcend's facilitation expertise in bringing the school and the community together to develop something impactful and sustainable.

S.313's universal access and early exploration are key efforts to help RNESU and its eight towns succeed in providing quality educational opportunities for our students. Providing additional options for College and Career while on their 15-year journey in our schools is key not only to our students' outcomes but also to those of our towns. S.313 will provide us with additional flexibility beyond the excellent programming available to our students now through our area's two technical centers.

We know we can't build a technical center from the ground up just for our Otter Valley students; we also know we can provide CTE-sequence coursework for students who may have been waitlisted, missed the deadline, were not selected, or couldn't attend for any other reason. Additionally, we are looking to serve more of our Special Education students who need specialized support with their post-secondary transition plans and whose transportation to the Technical Center would disrupt other much-needed services.

With all of that being said, we are beyond fortunate to have been selected to the Transcend's Rural Career-Connected Learning cohort. While we aim to serve our students with the programming we currently have, the cohort will help us build on and improve upon our current programming to create a successful, sustainable, engaging, future-oriented, and collaboratively built system.

[Move on to RC3 - RNESU presentation]