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RESEARCH PROJECT:
CTE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

NOTE: All superintendents are speaking only on behalf of themselves and their respective career centers and not on behalf of VACTED as a whole.

Key takeaways from superintendents:

- CTE governance should be addressed in response to public education reform, not simultaneously.
- CTE receives widespread voter support for budget expenditures and enrollment is generally increasing.
- VACTED directors have been meeting on a weekly basis since the release of the Governor's proposal and intend to send a formal letter to legislators with feedback on pieces of the proposal around CTE.

**I. Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center
Nicole MacTavish, Superintendent**

A. Board Members: 11

B. Method of selection: Four members are appointed by sending school district boards. Each school district has its own process. The other seven are industry experts recommended to and appointed by the PAHCC board.

C. What's working:

Superintendent MacTavish notes that PAHCC is an autonomous CTE school district, and that that autonomy is an attractive quality, because it lacks layers of bureaucracy and red tape around funding.

PAHCC has a good relationship with its school board and works well with it to get approval for funding.

Superintendent MacTavish says that PAHCC receives strong support from taxpayers for its budget expenditures; the current budget passed at almost 75%.

D. Challenges and improvements:

Superintendent MacTavish has expressed concern about the discussion of consolidation of CTE school districts into a single district.

She says that there is zero evidence that one CTE district would save money, and that cuts save only a small percentage of the budget.

Superintendent MacTavish stresses that decisions about CTE consolidation should not be separate from ongoing reform in public education. Any decisions made on the governance structure of CTE in Vermont should be made based on those made for K-12 public education

E. Programs and enrollment 2024-2025:

Specific numbers were not obtained in this report. Superintendent MacTavish shared that PAHCC has 347 students enrolled across 18 programs. This is one out of every three students in Addison County.

II. Central Vermont Career Center

Jody Emerson, Superintendent

A. Board Members: 10

B. Method of Selection: Six members are appointed by sending school district boards. The four other members are voted in on Town Meeting Day, one from each of the four largest sending school districts.

C. What's working:

1. Autonomy is a benefit

Superintendent Emerson notes that CVCC being its own district is a benefit. She says this allows district officials to be focused entirely on CTE education and not be limited by coordinating with Barre school district.

2. Demand is high

The program has 245 seats available for the 2024-2025 school year and received 334 first round applicants, according to their annual report.

D. Challenges and improvements:

1. Location inside Spaulding High School

Superintendent Emerson expresses that it is challenging being based in the Spaulding High School building. CVCC has struggled to work with the Barre school district and to coordinate with the high school on ownership of costs associated with the building. She says CVCC recently had to pay a facilities use fee, which she says is an investment in the building that they will not get a return on when they move out.

Superintendent Emerson also notes that their current location prevents CVCC from being able to expand to meet increasing demand.

CVCC hopes to move to its own building in the future, but until then would like more clarity on outlining ownership of costs between itself and the high school.

2. Sending schools have different graduation requirements

Superintendent Emerson says it is difficult to coordinate with each sending school having its own graduation requirements. She says it would be helpful for CTE to be able to set its own graduation requirements or to have state-wide requirements.

As a solution, she proposes (personally and not on behalf of the career center) a comprehensive high school. According to the superintendent, this would be a four-year high school with opportunities to explore CTE offerings in ninth and tenth grade, then take them fully in 11th and 12th grade, while meeting graduation requirements.

Superintendent Emerson also notes that she could support a single CTE district with a superintendent that oversees all CTE in Vermont. She says there is evidence that this would improve access to CTE education for students in the state.

E. Programs and enrollment 2024-2025:

Automotive Technology: 16

Baking Arts: 7

Building Trades: 16

Cosmetology I & II: 30

Culinary Arts: 8

DMA: Graphic Design: 17

DMA: Videography: 8

Electrical Technology: 15

Emergency Services I & II: 17

Exploratory Technology: 24

Medical Professions: 12

Plumbing & Heating: 16

Co-op: 19

Welding: 15

III. Southwest Tech

Meg Honsinger, Superintendent

A. Board Members: 11 (and one vacant seat)

B. Method of Selection: Superintendent Honsinger says that board members are appointed by australian ballot.

C. What's working:

1. Southwest Tech is an independent school district

Superintendent Honsinger says that being an autonomous district is working very well, particularly in regard to funding.

She mentions that, while it was before her time at Southwest Tech, some felt that when the center was under a supervisory union, money wasn't necessarily flowing down to CTE programs, and independence solves that problem.

2. Listen and Learn tour gave voice to CTE

Superintendent Honsinger values the opportunity that the Listen and Learn tour provided for CTE programs to give feedback and to have healthy conversations around education transformation in Vermont.

D. Challenges and improvements:

1. Proposal for tuition reduction would require cuts

Superintendent Honsinger says that there is no extra room to cut at Southwest Tech. She says that if tuition goes through at \$25,000 for next year, it would require over \$1 million in cuts, which would translate into cutting staff. She does not feel that there is currently surplus staff to cut.

2. Consolidation

The superintendent believes that changes to public education should be made before changes are made to CTE structure. Once public education changes are complete, she says, then it makes sense to look at how CTE fits into that structure.

She also notes it is important to consider how decisions made around consolidation would affect collective bargaining agreements, including factors like salary, medical insurance, etc.

E. Programs and enrollment 2024-2025:

Accounting & finance: 9

Automotive tech: 26

Building trades: 23

Business Management: 10

Cosmetology: 20 ** - year after yr waiting lists

Culinary arts: 19

Forestry & heavy equipment: 20

Graphic arts: 9

Human services: 18

Law enforcement: 13

Manufacturing: 11
Medical Professions: 24
Video & TV production: 12

IV. River Valley Technical Center
Scott Farr, Superintendent

- A. Board members: 9
- B. Method of selection: Four members are appointed by sending school district boards. They are given weighted votes to meet the statutory requirement that 60% of the board be representatives of the school districts. Five members are industry experts recommended to and appointed by the center board. Superintendent Farr says this is working very well.

- C. What's working:
1. Technical center budgets have been approved in excess of 70% by voters. Superintendent Farr says this is a sign of strong support for CTE by taxpayers.
 2. Enrollment is up in all programs. RVTC is currently in recruitment season and is ahead of last year's enrollment by 50%.

- D. Challenges and improvements:
1. Governor's funding proposal creates adversarial relationship between sending school districts and CTE school districts
According to Superintendent Farr, the stipulation that a school district receives \$13,000 in funding if a student attends a regular public school but only gets \$5,000 if the student attends a technical education center, disincentivizes schools from sending students to technical and career centers. He says this funding model creates a winner and a loser and that CTE directors have been echoing this sentiment for years.

The superintendent says that in regards to support from HCED, funding is a priority. Costs are increasing and base funding has decreased by 3%. He has reduced staff in the last few years and does not feel that he has any more room to cut.

Further reduction of base funding could lead to cutting programs, he says, even though enrollment has been increasing.

2. Governor's proposal creates supervisory role by Agency of Education
Superintendent Farr says that there should be a separate board that governs CTE.

He also echoes the preference that CTE reform, particularly regarding deciding a number of districts, should match what's going on in the rest of the system. He believes it would be more

helpful to see what changes are made to K-12 public education before addressing CTE, so that it can match.

3. Governor's proposal is distracting from changes that can be made in the interim

The superintendent says that while he supports a governance change that improves student access to career and technical education, this doesn't have to be the first thing done.

He says that rules and regulations around access to curriculum and graduation requirements haven't been changed in a while, and there are steps that can be taken more immediately that would remove barriers and facilitate access to CTE in Vermont.

E. Programs and enrollment 2024-2025:

Specific numbers were not obtained in this report. Superintendent Farr shared that the most popular programs are Carpentry, Health Care, Industrial Trades, Human Services and their pre-tech exploratory program for ninth and tenth graders.