

Talking Points for Career Technical Education

CTE is Public Education:

- Roughly 50% of high school graduates in the state of Vermont go on to college or university. Organizing our public education system around a pathway where students can move into high-skill, high-wage, high-demand careers, while also having the option to stay in Vermont, is critical not only to our students' success, but also to our communities, and to Vermont industry. CTE is that pathway.
- Vermont needs a way for young people to stay in Vermont, pursue careers that communities depend on, and earn wages high enough to live sustainably, support a family, and afford a home.
- CTE is good for students, good for communities, and good for the economic future of Vermont.

CTE is a Fantastic Investment:

- CTE is a tiny portion of the overall spending in public education.
- In Addison County, for example, our entire county's spending on public education next year will be \$123 million. Our CTE District accounts for only \$5.79 million, less than 4.45% of public education spending in our region, yet we serve 1 in every 3 high school students.
- CTE is a fantastic bang for the taxpayers' buck.
- CTE is critical to economic development.
- Until Vermont's housing shortage is behind us and our wages catch up, we will not be able to attract enough skilled labor to either replace retiring experts, or fill new opportunities created by thriving industry.
- By 2030, 1 in 3 Vermonters will be over 60.
- Skilled tradespeople and technical experts are retiring in droves, and not nearly enough young people are stepping in to these critical and high-paying careers.
- When we are operating at an unemployment rate of roughly 2%, we need every student graduating, ready for their next step in education or training, and ready to enter a high-demand career.

Competitive Funding in Counterproductive:

- The current funding system requires K-12 school districts to pay CTE centers tuition, for every student who comes to us from their district. The districts, quite literally, write out checks to CTE Centers, paying us to serve students.
- These funds come out of the sending school district's general funds, and it diminishes funding they have available for their district priorities.

- As you can imagine, this disincentivizes sending school districts from encouraging students to pursue CTE, as every student they send to us, costs them (depending on the CTE center) between \$17,000 to \$35,000 per student.
- Instead, funding for CTE centers should come directly out of the general education fund at the State level, and should be funded on a formula which ensures all students have access to CTE.
- Since we know that only 50% of Vermont students go on to post-secondary education, that leaves 50% of Vermont students in need of a clear pathway to a high-wage, high-skill, high-demand career. We should fund CTE centers, then, to support at least 50% of all high school students.
- Right now, CTE centers are funded to support only a tiny fraction of Vermont students.
- To our south, for example, Stafford Technical Center can serve only 13% of the high school students in their boundary. This does not serve students, communities, or industry well.

Why is Hannaford Career Center More Expensive than other CTE Centers?

- Why does the Hannaford Career Center have the highest tuition rate in Vermont? The answer is straight forward – bond debt, and boundaries.

Bond Debt:

- The main building housing our district programs, here in the heart of Middlebury, was constructed in 1971.
- Over 50 years later, no significant remodel or needed infrastructure updates had happened. The building was in disrepair, electrical and IT infrastructure was failing and unable to support modern technology, heating and cooling systems were inefficient in both performance and energy use, and roof leaks and other water intrusion issues, made this facility questionable for student use.
- Thanks to the support of our community, we passed an \$8.1 million dollar bond to address all of these issues.
- Additionally, to house our growing automotive and diesel programs, and to establish our Deep Roots Farm, the foundation of our Sustainable Agriculture program, our community passed a \$1.8 million bond in 2010 to build a second campus on donated land, purpose built for these programs.
- Our community loves what we do for kids, and takes great pride in the accomplishments of our graduates.
- That's the great news.
- The flip side is that each year we now have two significant bond payments, that come right off the top of our budget. Depending on the year, that bond debt can be upwards of 20% of our entire budget for the year.
- These bond payments greatly impact our overall cost to run this center, and cause our per student tuition rates to rise accordingly.

Boundaries:

- CTE Centers are organized with specific boundary areas assigned to them. These boundaries are established through State Board rule 2370.
- CTE Centers can only serve students who live in our boundaries, and students can only be transported to our centers within these boundaries.
- This means that if a student chooses to attend a CTE center outside of their assigned boundary, that student has to provide their own transportation. This is problematic for students who cannot yet drive, or who do not have their own car.

Hannaford Career Center:

- The boundaries for our service area include the Addison Northwest, Addison Central and Mount Abraham School Districts. These districts serve 17 distinct towns.
- All three of these districts, combined, give us a service area containing 1191 high school students. This means Hannaford Career Center can only draw from 3 school districts, made up of 17 towns, with a total of 1191 resident high school students.
- We have robust marketing activities including student visits, parent nights, homeschool outreach, attendance at sending school events, direct mailing, social media, middle school outreach, middle and high school clubs, and community events.
- Due to this, our enrollment has increased significantly over the past two years. However, we are now bumping up against the ceiling of those efforts.
- We now serve 1 in 3 Addison County high school students. Our current enrollment is 347 high school students, out of 1100, 32%.
- As stated above, our center has been completely modernized and renovated, and is ready to serve more students.
- Hannaford Career Center currently has room for 250 more students.

Stafford Technical Center:

- To our south, the boundary of Stafford Technical Center is significantly larger than Hannaford's. Stafford's boundaries contain 7 school districts, serving 32 towns, with roughly 2100 resident high school students.
- Stafford's CTE Director recently testified to the Senate Committee on Education, sharing that she had 447 applications for only 278 available seats. As a result, Stafford has to waitlist, or turn away, 169 students, because Stafford is full.
- In Stafford's catchment area are a number of towns which are either closer to PAHCC than they are to Stafford, or are only slightly further from PAHCC than they are from Stafford.
 - Benson: is 25 miles from PAHCC, but 28 miles from Stafford.
 - Orwell is 20 miles from PAHCC and 35 miles from Stafford.
 - Brandon is 19 miles from PAHCC and 14 miles from Stafford.
 - Goshen is 18 miles from PAHCC and 20 miles from Stafford.
 - Leicester is 11 miles from PAHCC and 22 miles from Stafford.
 - Sudbury is 15 miles from PAHCC and 22 miles from Stafford.

- Whiting is 12 miles from PAHCC and 25 miles from Stafford.
- If PAHCC's boundary changed, to include these towns:
 - Stafford could turn away less students.
 - PAHCC could serve students who otherwise would not have access to CTE.
 - Taxpayers would pay less because PAHCC's per-student tuition would decrease.
 - Students would have less distance to travel.
 - Business partners would have access to more trained technical graduates.

Chittenden County:

- In Chittenden County, to our north, there are two CTE Centers, Center for Technology Essex, and Burlington Technical Center, each with large service areas.
- Between Burlington Tech and the Center for Technology Essex, they serve 9 high schools, including three of the largest in the state.
- The boundaries of these two technical centers contain just under 7000 resident high school students, six (6) times more students than Hannaford Career Center's service region.

Bottom Line:

- Hannaford Career Center has the highest tuition in the state because we have to account for bond debt, and because we are not at capacity.
- We have a beautiful newly remodeled building, and a modern purpose built second campus, which could serve 250 more students.
- At the same time, hundreds of students are being turned away from CTE to our south and to our north because those CTE centers are at capacity.
- Hannaford Career Center was designed to serve 600 students. We currently serve 347.
- As part of the transformation of public education, the service areas for CTE centers need to be evaluated, based on today's demographics, and aligned so that more students have access to CTE.
- It does not make sense for CTE centers to both our north, and our south, to be turning students away from pursuing CTE, when the Hannaford Career Center would love to serve them, and has over 250 spots available, in a beautifully remodeled CTE center.

How Legislators Can Help - Bond Debt:

- We are hoping that while determining a new funding system for public education at CTE, the legislature will address bond debt. If the Hannaford Career Center receive less money per student through a foundation formula approach, but still has millions in bond debt, we will be unable to afford robust CTE programming for students.
- Our Board and community passed our bonds with the current funding mechanisms as context. That context currently allows us, with community support via our annual budget vote, to charge a tuition amount allowing for strong CTE programming, while also paying down debt.

- If that context changes, and we receive a foundation formula which does not allow for our higher cost based on bond debt, we will have no choice but to cut programs, since salary and benefits make up 70% of our budget.
- Less money, but the same level of debt, would severely impact CTE in our region.

How Legislators Can Help - Boundaries:

- Redraw CTE Service Region boundaries, accounting for current demographics, CTE center capacity, and industry needs.
 - Evening out CTE center boundaries is solvable.
 - It does not make sense for CTE centers to both our north, and our south, to be turning students away from pursuing CTE, when the Hannaford Career Center would love to serve them, and has over 250 spots available, in a beautifully remodeled CTE center.
- This would make a huge impact for students who would have more access to CTE programs, for taxpayers who would have reduced per student costs at Hannaford Career Center, and for economic development as more students pursue career pathways needed in our region.

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