

Written Testimony to Senate Education Committee

From: Jody Emerson, Superintendent/Director of the Central Vermont Career Center School District (CVCCSD) and President of the Vermont Association of Career and Technical Directors (VACTED)

March 27, 2025

Good afternoon, my name is Jody Emerson and I am the Superintendent/Director of the Central Vermont Career Center School District, and the President of the Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors (VACTED).

The Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors (VACTED) understands that change is needed in Vermont education. Our priority is preserving and increasing student access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) while maintaining its identity. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts regarding how to make CTE the most successful possible.

Recommendations:

- Provide a non-competitive funding model.
- Provide students the opportunity to learn in industry-aligned workspaces and on current industry equipment. Establish an annual budget and revenue stream for equipment purchase and refresh, and a construction budget for the purpose-built CTE center construction and renovation.
- Establish state-wide graduation requirements, which include CTE.
- Establish a statewide calendar, with common vacation days, holidays, and professional development.
- Ensure CTE courses are taught by licensed CTE instructors. It is critical that students exploring careers are taught by technical experts in the field, and that all industry safety protocols and expectations are affirmed throughout instruction.
- Establish a CTE teacher pay scale that recognizes industry experience and training, instead of formal college degrees.
- Establish a teacher preparation program that can be accomplished, with any level of incoming academic preparation, in two school years or less. Ensure the program requirements are limited to what a reasonable person, working full time in a new career, and with a family, can meet. Ensure programming is paid in full for all CTE instructors.