

Guidance for Career and Technical Education During COVID-19

Purpose

This communication for regional Career and Technical Education (CTE) centers and those schools offering state-approved CTE programs provides general guidance during school closure and for transition to summer. It should be considered in the context of other COVID-19 guidance issued by the Agency of Education (AOE) and other State agencies and departments.

Student Status Through the Balance of the School Year

Completers

CTE center directors and administrators should help their instructors establish a set of [critical proficiencies](#) that are essential for students' success and achievable under the current circumstances. In doing so, instructors will consider proficiencies needed for other purposes—certifications, employment, work-based learning, etc. When determining critical proficiencies, the AOE further encourages CTE centers to work with their colleagues (through virtual meetings) to collaboratively identify proficiencies that are absolutely critical for the success of students statewide and for their programs, thus paring down the number of proficiencies covered for the rest of the year statewide. Once these critical proficiencies are established and agreed upon for the programs in your center, completers can be determined.

For the 2019-2020 school year, completers will be those who meet all of the critical proficiencies identified by their center for their program. Each center will continue to identify the completers in the CTE database. This year, that identification will be based on this process. Centers will need to keep a record of the identified critical proficiencies for three years.

Concentrators

As defined in the state's Perkins V plan, a secondary concentrator is a student who has completed two courses (50%) of the program or program of study. We are amending the definition to reflect that the student completed those two courses as of March 18, 2020 when school closure began. We will work to verify concentrators with each center beginning in June.

For full-time centers:

- the method to determine concentrators will remain unchanged because they would have already passed the 50% requirement of 2 courses to be considered a concentrator by the time of school closure.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document, please contact:

Ruth Durkee, Education Programs Manager – CTE, Student Pathways Division, at ruth.durkee@vermont.gov

For part-time centers:

- first year students at part-time centers shall be considered concentrators when they were enrolled in and completed the first semester of the school year, continued participating through school closure in CTE to the end of the year.
- second-year students should have already met the criteria to be considered a concentrator.

Database Submission and Reporting

Data should be recorded in the state-wide CTE database in accordance with existing procedures for the school year. The March/April deadline for data submission will be waived and all of the data required for that submission can be reported with the end of year collection by June 30. The March 15 census snapshot will be reported by June 30 and should include only those students who were enrolled in programs on Friday, March 13, 2020, prior to the school closure ordered by Governor Scott, and *regardless* of whether or not a student continued to engage in their CTE program after the maintenance of education and continuity of learning phases.

All other expectations for the database submission remain, including the need to validate CTE enrollments with partner district superintendents. The database will be submitted via the state secure file transfer system, Globalscape. If any of these requirements cannot be met under current conditions, database administrators should confer with their center directors and with the CTE team at the Vermont AOE to determine how data will be collected and reported.

Adult CTE

CTE centers are encouraged to work closely with their adult CTE counterparts to coordinate efforts to support adult CTE programs. In accordance with gubernatorial directives and CDC guidelines, the AOE recommends opening CTE centers for technical work as soon as is allowable so that adult CTE students can get the most out of their CTE education and training. Adult CTE centers could, if permissible per State and CDC guidelines, consider opening their doors to adult CTE students by following stringent social distancing, disinfecting and staggered scheduling protocols during atypical hours, including during the summer.

It is suggested that centers formally review and revise their local policies on refunds for the cancellation of adult CTE courses prior to their completion. When doing so they should align with WIOA or other non-degree grant program requirements. For courses that could not be completed as scheduled, consider offering students or local businesses that paid for the CTE course the option to complete the course, at no additional cost, at a later date and/or issue tuition refunds to those who are not able to finish for COVID-19-related reasons.

Work-Based Learning

Technical centers can take a differentiated approach to dealing with their Work-Based Learning (WBL) students, according to local conditions and student needs. Work-based learning coordinators, in coordination with their respective programs instructors, will establish protocols to transfer WBL experiences into “for-credit” experiences. Students should be given all the

credit that is possible and should not be penalized for school closure, the closure of their place of employment, or for their decision to not participate in WBL because of the inherent health risk to themselves, their family and their community. State requirements to provide continuity of learning apply to students participating in WBL. As such, technical centers should describe their plans to provide continuity of learning for their WBL students for the remainder of the year, and what those students' participation, expectations and critical proficiencies will be for the remainder of the year.

Continuity of Operations

While decisions about continuity of operations for Agriculture programs -- in particular greenhouse operations, farm animal care, and any maple sugaring operations -- are held at the local level, the Agency strongly advises against student involvement in these activities due to the inherent risk of inequity of access to these opportunities and various aspects of a program. Schools may consider having animals cared for by local farmers, if and only if they can do so without risk of cross contamination or other health or safety issues.

Continuity of Learning

As part of the state effort to continue to provide continuity of learning after the closure of schools, supervisory unions and school districts were required by the AOE to file a Continuity of Learning Plan. Supervisory unions were guided to work with their constituent schools and CTE centers to coordinate efforts and build a complementary and coordinated effort to provide the best possible education and student support during school closure.

The CTE team is now asking all CTE centers to complete the [Continuity of Learning Plan](#). This will assist the AOE in better understanding the unique needs of CTE centers throughout the state, how coordinated and cooperatively supervisory unions are incorporating CTE centers into their CLPs, and the supports CTE centers need. Additionally, completed Continuity of Learning Plans will be a resource for CTE centers when completing Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, and for the AOE in sharing best practices across the state as we tackle a situation that is new to all of us. Please submit your CTE Continuity of Learning Plan to Ruth Durkee at Ruth.Durkee@vermont.gov by May 15, 2020.

After June 30, 2020

Summer Continuation

The Agency of Education is recommending that CTE centers have multiple plans for re-opening based on different timelines. CTE centers are encouraged to support students by using Perkins or local funds to run a tuition-free summer session that could include credential attainment camps or workshops to give students lab time to develop hands-on skills, or could even be an entire "summer semester" which could look like a continuation of the spring semester taking place over the summer. These summer activities can cross over with recruitment and new student orientation activities that normally take place. Technical centers can coordinate regionally in order to provide students access to technical education over the summer in consideration of personnel and resource challenges.

The CTE team is forming a small advisory committee of two to three directors and two to three instructors to explore and develop a state-wide approach to credential attainment camps.

Coordination with your 21C coordinator, culinary program or food service providers and local farmers/farmer's markets could be key to this effort. Data for these summer activities should be captured in the state database. Additional guidance will be given in the future as we better understand the types of activities technical centers will engage in over the summer.

Technical centers should consider updating policies, such as policies related to adults with diplomas, to ensure COVID-19-related considerations are addressed. Centers can permit any secondary CTE student who graduated, and wishes to return, to come back as an "adult with a diploma" tuition-free for up to two years, depending on local policies. This may assist those students affected by school closure to gain or maintain critical proficiencies within their related field.

Planning should also be underway so that centers can be ready for next year, and different potential re-opening scenarios. The enrollment, admission and interview processes can still be maintained with social distancing guidelines. Requirements are still in effect for meeting with IEP/504/EST teams in order to determine the appropriateness of CTE education as well as determining accommodations and modifications that may be necessary for students entering programs next year. Please refer to [existing AOE guidance on special education](#) to ensure alignment.

New Programs

If your center is considering starting a new program next year, the submission and approval process will be very similar to prior years. The [New Program Approval form](#) must be submitted by June 15, 2020. There will also be a program declaration survey sent out over the summer to be filled out by center directors that will inform possible changes to the state database. At this time the Vermont Agency of Education is asking centers that are planning on starting a new program in FY2021 to consider recruitment challenges as well as whether the time, money and effort will be worth it in this uncertain time.

Prerequisites

When considering whether a student has the required or recommended prerequisites for their desired CTE program, supervisory unions, school districts and schools should consider whether the student was on track to fulfill those requirements before school closure and allow any such students to enroll in CTE. No students should be punished or held back because of the COVID-19 school closure.

Resources

As part of Vermont's effort to support continuity of learning, the Vermont Agency of Education will be scaling its existing relationship with Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC) to provide an optional virtual learning management system (LMS) to support CTE centers as they shift to remote education statewide. This option will be at no cost to CTE centers. This online

system will provide access to curated and standards-based curriculum, instruction, and delivery mechanisms. The platform will allow CTE centers to leverage their personnel to rapidly meet the range of student needs and ensure continuity of learning for Vermont learners as communities navigate the coming months. In the coming days the AOE will provide additional details on accessing the platform, training and supports. Please refer to the [AOE website](#) regularly for more updates and resources.

Questions can be submitted to the AOE's [COVID-19 Question Response Form](#).