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Vermont Agency of Education Hires New Career Pathways Coordinator

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Barre, Vt. – Governor Phil Scott and the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) are pleased to announce the hiring of Dr. Oscar Aliaga as Vermont’s first ever State Career Pathways Coordinator. This position will help align Career Technical Educational (CTE) program offerings to the skill needs of key industries in Vermont’s economy, thereby ensuring students can access the education and training they need to obtain and advance in high-wage, high-growth careers in their home state. This position, proposed by the Governor and funded by the Legislature, represents the first state-level commitment to support career readiness.

Formerly a program director at the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, Aliaga is a national expert in career pathways systems. As a researcher and published author, he brings a thorough understanding of trends in high school students’ course-taking patterns and applied learning experiences. Aliaga also has extensive experience working with business and industry, CTE educators, college faculty, and workforce development partners throughout his career. In Vermont, Aliaga will work with education and employer stakeholders to build a statewide system of training and educational opportunities in high-growth sectors identified in the state’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies: health science, construction and green building design, advanced manufacturing, agriculture and natural resources, information technology/STEM, and hospitality and tourism.

“Career pathways will link our students to good paying jobs in our highest priority economic sectors, and the pathways will make clear to our students how to take advantage of programs in middle and high school to make sure they are developing the essential skills for good paying careers,” said Gov. Scott. “Ensuring Vermont students can access these programs is an important step to growing our economy and we are fortunate to have been able to recruit Dr. Aliaga to Vermont to spearhead in this effort.”

The creation of this position is the result of three years of hard work by multiple stakeholders and legislators, said Secretary of Education Rebecca Holcombe.

“For the first time we will put some muscle behind our efforts to align career readiness opportunities from grade seven through to college and careers in the sectors we expect to drive Vermont’s economic prosperity in the next generation,” she said.

“Currently, our schools, CTE centers and Vermont colleges provide excellent opportunities, but these opportunities are not coordinated or linked across levels and sectors,” said Deputy

Secretary Heather Bouchey. “Students currently have inconsistent understanding of what high-wage, high-demand opportunities lay beyond school, and what skills they need to develop to secure a job in which they can prosper,” she added.

“Many also don't know how various state-funded programs can lead to those opportunities, and believe advanced education to be prohibitively expensive. These current gaps leave some students less purposeful or focused in their progress through school,” Bouchey said. “The career pathways work will map out pathways students can choose to follow from grade seven through to college and careers, as well as how to leverage opportunities like dual enrollment, Fast Forward, early college, CTE programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials and post-secondary opportunities to achieve their goals.”

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