
MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Ruth Durkee, JD, State Director of Career Technical Education
SUBJECT: Career Technical Education Update
DATE: September 9, 2021

The CTE Team is located within the Student Pathways Division at the Agency of Education. The work of the team is led by me and overseen by Jay Ramsey, Student Pathways Assistant Director, who also oversees the work of the adult education and literacy team. We are a small team of three full-time employees, plus a career pathways coordinator position for which we are about to begin recruiting. If you know of potential candidates, please encourage them to apply and explore this opportunity.

CTE Recovery Planning: In June, CTE centers submitted Recovery Plans for the 2021 – 2022 school year. The plans detail how CTE centers and partner high schools will collaborate to support students' well-being, mental health, and social emotional learning needs and ensure student engagement and academic progress. Each center was required to have Regional Advisory Board approval of the plan before it was submitted to the Agency of Education CTE Team. Review and response to the plans was coordinated within the Student Pathways Division.

The plans submitted were detailed and highlight many excellent student-centered strategies. More information can be found in the Summary of Best Practices and Needs document which is included in the materials for the September 15 State Board meeting. Many of the identified needs will require funding beyond what CTE centers have budgeted.

Secretary French has encouraged LEAs to use a portion of their ESSER funds to support CTE recovery needs (<https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-memo-french-use-of-esser-funds-to-support-regional-career-technical-education-centers.pdf>).

GEER Funds: During the fall of 2020, Governor Scott allocated \$4,488,802 of Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds to Vermont's regional CTE centers. CTE centers submitted grant applications detailing how they would use these funds to respond to the pandemic and still be able to provide robust career technical education during the 2020 – 2021 school year. Common uses of these funds included:

- Additional supplies, tools, and equipment so that students did not have to share and that could be sent home with students on days when they were not receiving in-person

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instruction at the center. Many teachers re-designed lessons to allow for students to master essential learning objectives through individual rather than group projects.

- Laptops and iPads capable of supporting software and applications that could not operate on Chromebooks or existing school laptops. Additional Chromebooks or laptops so that every student had a device to take home for periods of hybrid and remote learning.
- Upgraded teaching technology so that teachers could livestream demonstrations to students who could not be in person on any given school day.
- Upgrading broadband internet access at school and providing internet access to students who would not otherwise have access at home.
- Simulated labs, dissection kits, and mannequins to replace clinical training, work-based learning, or otherwise deliver CTE program content in new ways.
- Online textbooks, curriculum, and credentialing.
- Additional student work stations to allow for six-foot distancing.
- Additional staffing, including:
 - Instructional aides that allowed for half of the students to be in the shop/lab with the teacher while the other half worked with an aide on related content in a separate physical space.
 - Full-time substitutes to ensure reliable sources of extra coverage. When not needed to substitute, these staff members were used to support students in need of additional technical or academic help.
 - Part-time nurses when the nursing services of the attached high school were not adequate to meet AOE and Department of Health requirements.
 - Pay for summer work in addition to normally contracted hours/days.
- Transportation, including transporting students on days when sending high schools were operating on remote schedules but students could attend in person instruction at the CTE center.
- Delivery of tools and materials to students' communities, and often directly to students' homes, during times when learning was remote.
- Additional classroom space. Centers showed great creativity in using temporary structures or repurposing existing facilities to increase instructional space to allow more students to access in-person learning while meeting physical distancing requirements.
- New recruitment systems to recruit students for the 2021-2022 school year. As one director wrote in the GEER application, "Recruitment is the process that allows [CTE centers] to ensure that all students in the [CTE Center] service region know about the CTE programs available to them, how those programs can prepare them for careers and for post-secondary education and training.... Without students we will not be able to exist next year." CTE centers historically relied on in-person tours and visits by prospective students, family open houses, and other in-person events to inform students of what CTE centers have to offer. Centers used GEER funds to create videos, re-design informational and promotional materials to mail directly to students' homes, and to create on-line application systems.

Act 189 Report: On June 14, 2021 Secretary French submitted to the Vermont House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing, and General Affairs a report detailing the CTE Funding Pilot Projects and Middle School Collaboration work called for by Act 189 of 2018. On July 13, 2021 Deputy Secretary Heather Bouchey, Student Pathways Assistant Director Jay Ramsey, and I met with members of the House Education and Commerce and Economic Development Committees to discuss the report. The report recommends the legislature dedicate funding to complete a study of a funding model that was proposed by the three independent technical school districts. While there has long been discussion about the challenges inherent in the current CTE funding structure, the COVID-19 pandemic has further reinforced the need to think in new and creative ways about how best to fund and govern CTE in the future.

The Act 189 Report also highlights how the responsibilities of the Regional Advisory Board could be expanded and strengthened. Legislators attending the July 13th meeting expressed strong interest in re-visiting and revising the role of the RAB in the upcoming legislative session.

Perkins V Update: In July of 2018, Congress passed and the President signed into law the [Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act](#), a re-authorization of the Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006. The law is informally referred to as “Perkins V.” The State Board of Education endorsed the [Perkins V State Plan](#) on March 18, 2020.

Perkins V is dedicated to increasing learner access to high-quality CTE programs of study. It also has strong ties to the Every Student Succeeds Act, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and the Higher Education Act. In Vermont, public regional CTE centers, VTC and CCV are eligible to receive Perkins grants each year. Vermont’s two private schools that provide CTE are not eligible to receive Perkins funds directly, but a Consortium of the public school districts in their service region can receive funds that can in turn be contracted to support Perkins allowable activities at the private schools.

Perkins V requires that all grant recipients complete a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) every two years. The CLNA has six required areas of focus: Student Performance and Accountability; Alignment of CTE Programs to Labor Market Information; Program Size, Scope, and Quality; Programs of Study; Faculty and Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Professional Development; Ensuring Equity and Lowering Barriers to Access.

Perkins grant recipients will engage in the CLNA process from September 2021 through March 2022. The AOE CTE Team has scheduled a series of technical assistance workshops to facilitate the process and share resources, data collection and analysis tools, and effective practices.

Perkins V accountability measures for secondary CTE program concentrators include:

- 4 year and extended high school graduation rates;
- academic proficiency in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science;
- student placement 6 months after high school graduation;
- post-secondary credentials earned;
- dual enrollment credits earned;

- participation in work-based learning;
- percentage of students enrolled in and completing programs preparing them for nontraditional fields (fields where less than 25% of the workforce is either male or female).

In addition to the federal accountability measures, Vermont is also collecting data and setting performance targets for the percentage of students enrolling in pre-tech courses in 9th and 10th grades; the percentage of pre-tech students who subsequently enroll in a CTE program in 11th and/or 12th grade; and the overall percentage of high school students who enroll in a CTE program.

WorkKeys: As of the 2020 – 2021 school year, Vermont is using WorkKeys Applied Mathematics and Workplace Documents assessments to determine CTE students’ proficiency in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Students who score at a Level 5, 6, or 7 on these assessments are considered proficient. Once a student has scored at a Level 5 or above on these two assessments, the student then takes the WorkKeys Graphic Literacy assessment. Students who score at a level 5 or higher on all three WorkKeys assessments earn the National Career Readiness Certificate, which also serves as a post-secondary credential for Perkins V accountability purposes.

Beginning this year, CCV will accept CTE students’ WorkKeys scores as an indicator of eligibility for Fast Forward and Dual Enrollment courses. Students who earn the NCRC at a Level 5 or above will no longer need to take Accuplacer assessments in order to enroll in most CCV courses. In addition, CCV will award two elective credits to students who matriculate at CCV after high school and who earn the NCRC at a Level 5 or above.

The CTE Team has convened a WorkKeys Work Group to discuss successes, challenges, and next steps for CTE centers in using WorkKeys. Eight of Vermont’s CTE centers are represented on this Work Group. The group met three times between February and May 2021 and will continue to meet during the 2021 – 2022 school year. One topic on the agenda for their meetings this year is how CTE centers might partner with VTVLC to offer math courses designed to help students improve their scores on the Applied Mathematics assessment.

Post-Secondary Credentials: Perkins V and WIOA both include accountability measures that pertain to the number of individuals who earn post-secondary credentials. The Agency’s CTE and Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) teams are meeting to develop a shared list of approved post-secondary credentials and to draft a written process for how new credentials will be reviewed and added to the approved list moving forward. Vermont’s ESSA State Plan also includes attainment of approved post-secondary credentials as part of its “college and career ready” indicator.

Hybrid and On-line CTE Course Instruction: In preparation for the 2020 – 2021 school year, and as part of the state’s emergency response early in the pandemic, we were able to repurpose Perkins funds to support the expansion of Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC) and to ensure that CTE teachers would be able to access online delivery tools. VTVLC offered professional development opportunities for CTE teachers to help them prepare for delivering some or all of their program content in an on-line format. The past year reinforced our understanding that while for some CTE programs, on-line instruction is far from ideal, other

CTE programs are well-suited for on-line or hybrid instruction. Vermont's Perkins V State Plan also identifies the need to explore new CTE program delivery options to meet the needs of Vermont employers and to provide opportunities for students, particularly students in geographically remote areas, to access CTE content that is not available in their region.

VTVLC, and CTE Directors are now beginning conversations about how some CTE program content could be delivered on-line as standard practice in the future, allowing students across Vermont to access CTE instruction that is not available in their designated CTE service region. As an example, River Bend Career and Technical Center in Bradford started a Cyber Security program last year. Currently, it is the only program of its kind in Vermont, and its content lends itself well to on-line instruction. A program like this is well-positioned to enroll students from any region in the state, once a variety of logistical issues have been identified and resolved.

Proficiency Alignment and Update: During the 2021 – 2022 school year, the AOE contracted with Kris Breen, a former Burlington Technical Center administrator, to work with CTE program teachers to update CTE program competencies/anchor standards and align CTE technical content with Vermont's Sample Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs). This work will be posted to the AOE website within the next two weeks, but in the meantime, I have shared the Advanced Manufacturing, Manufacturing, and Mechatronics proficiency document with you.

The CTE Team and the Vermont Association of Career Technical Education Directors (VACTED) will collaborate this year to provide teacher professional development opportunities to build on this work. The AOE will also enter a second year of contracted services to update CTE Pre-Tech Exploratory program anchor standards and alignment to PBGRs. The contractor will also inventory all Pre-Tech Foundations (introductory) courses currently offered by CTE centers to identify any needed next steps to ensure relevant course content, quality, and rigor. The additional focus on Pre-Tech Foundations is part of the Agency's on-going strategies, outlined in the Act 189 report, to expand access to CTE.