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Item S

Our **vision** for career technical education is that all Vermont learners can attain their post-secondary goals by having access to career and technical education systems that are equitable, efficient, integrated and collaborative.

We will achieve this by:

Goal: Supporting only high-quality, rigorous, aligned CTE career pathway programs that are informed by available state, New England regional, and national labor market data.

- Strategies to support this goal:
 - Working with employers, the Agency of Education will develop and communicate rigorous career pathway programs in key sectors of the state's economy -- identified every 5 years using labor market information for high-skill, high-wage, in-demand, or high-social need careers.
 - The Agency of Education, through its career pathways initiatives, will work to increase access to multiple types of advanced college and career ready coursework including advanced placement, career technical education, dual enrollment, and apprenticeship-style experiences.
 - The Agency of Education will make available to secondary schools resources and tools related to career pathways and integration of the career pathways approach into the personalized learning plan development process.

Improvement Spotlight: Students, and the adults who support them, need access to tools that will help them make academic decisions in high school, and how those decisions connect to post-secondary aspirations. These tools should also help them understand the pathways available to transition seamlessly into college, apprenticeships, and the workforce. This is already work the Agency is charged with leading in Act 69 of 2017 and Act 189 of 2018.

- The Agency of Education will develop and recommend statewide standards and evaluative tools to determine the level of quality, rigor, and alignment.

- The Agency of Education will conduct state-wide outcome reviews on CTE programs intended to make recommendations for improvement or discontinuation to regional CTE centers.

Improvement Spotlight: Regardless of whether a student participates in a state-developed CTE career pathway/program of study, or if they elect to participate in a locally developed CTE program, they should have some assurance that those opportunities are equal in quality and rigor, and in alignment to similar programs in other parts of the state. Programs that do not provide substantively similar outcomes as their counterparts in other areas of the state should be required to change to equally advantage the students in that program. Updating program standards will help ensure that programs are meeting industry expectations and student needs. Program quality indicators and related reviews of content and delivery are required of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V).

- Local school systems will more purposefully align their curriculum with and to the CTE centers and their programs to ensure students have the skills necessary to access and benefit from CTE.

Improvement Spotlight: By ensuring students have the academic preparation necessary to be successful in a CTE program, the aspirations of and opportunities for students to continue education and training beyond high school increase. Additionally, ensuring that the curriculum is connected, aligned, and integrated allows for coherence in the implementation of the Education Quality Standards.

- The Agency of Education will communicate standards and practices that will ensure students, regardless of where they live, are awarded the same academic recognition for learning in their CTE program.

Improvement Spotlight: Students in CTE programs currently report that the transcript recognition they receive for their experience in CTE programs is highly variable and is dependent on their home high school. The variance in recognition represents a significant inequity in the current functioning of the system.

Goal: Engaging industry as a full partner in the creation, validation and maintenance of CTE programs.

A partner as defined here refers to business/industry as an owner of the success or failure of the system to produce individuals with highly valued skill sets.

- Strategies to support this goal:
 - The Agency of Education and CTE centers will seek out involvement from business and industry leaders in key sectors to validate the academic, technical, and professional competencies of CTE programs, and to assist in career guidance and exploration activities, up to and including work-based learning.
 - Regional CTE centers will involve employers and partner schools in develop and managing the program curricula and outcomes.

Improvement Spotlight: Business and industry have historically been involved in the working of CTE programs and in the technical centers. By explicitly stating we will look to them to be involved, we are ensuring that our programs will be teaching the academic, technical and workplace skills necessary for success in the 21st century workplace. This strategy also increases the likelihood that businesses and students will have direct contact, therefore increasing aspirations of students to pursue employment in the high-skill, high-wage, and high-need areas of the economy.

- Industry will be asked to assist in the identification and valuation of credentials both as part of the development and articulation of career pathways and as part of their overall recruiting and organizational development strategies.

Improvement Spotlight: A priority of the state’s workforce development system is credentials of value. As we ask employers about the types of credentials they value in candidates, we can ensure that these credentials, or the steps to earning a specific credential, are in place in CTE programs. By including these in CTE programs, we provide an opportunity to reduce student loan debt, and ensure students are earning credentials that will be relevant to the careers that exist now and in the future.

- The Agency of Education will coordinate with other state agencies and relevant partners and initiatives to reduce burdens on employers so they can focus on the business of their business.

Improvement Spotlight: By coordinating efforts, we ensure that employers are not overwhelmed with “asks” at the state and community level. Many schools are now engaging with employers to help provide career education both in and out of the classroom; high schools are offering work-based learning as part of their career education efforts. These are positive trends that can only be improved with coordinated effort.

- Industry will be asked to recognize and seek out completers of CTE programs, especially those that are completers of State-approved career pathway programs.

Improvement Spotlight: By asking employers to seek out completers of CTE programs, we are necessarily ensuring that student experiences in CTE programs lead to future opportunity. The CTE experience should be seen as an asset. This strategy will also help educators, adults and family members, and the community to realize the value of career technical education.

Goal: Developing and implementing career advisement systems that support career exploration and that allow all learners to be successful in pathways of interest.

- Strategies to support this goal:
 - The Agency of Education will continue to ensure the Education Quality Standards are implemented with fidelity, particularly State Board of Education Rule 2120.
 - The Agency of Education will design and develop -- and CTE centers and their partners will implement -- career pathways programs that are intended to complement the personalized learning process.
 - The Agency of Education will assist in the coordination of professional learning opportunities that will support schools' implementation of career counseling to ensure students are able to benefit and be advantaged by the state's efforts to implement career pathways programs.

Improvement Spotlight: Students, and the adults who support them, need access to tools that will help them make academic decisions in high school, and how those decisions connect to post-secondary aspirations. These tools should also help them understand the pathways available to transition seamlessly into college, apprenticeships, and the workforce. This is already work the Agency is charged with leading in Act 69 of 2017 and Act 189 of 2018. In systems where there is limited or insufficient career guidance, the burden of paying for career exploration is shifted to the student who has to take out student loans and in many cases leave post-secondary school with debt and no degree. This is already work the Agency is charged with leading in Act 69 of 2017 and Act 189 of 2018.

- Regional CTE centers and partner middle and high schools collaboratively share the responsibility of providing career guidance and exploration activities for students to ensure college and career readiness of all students in the region.
- Regional CTE centers and partner middle and high school administrators and others responsible for personalized learning plan development work collaboratively to provide a coordinated spectrum of services and experiences to help students achieve their goals.

Improvement Spotlight: Coordination among systems that have never been asked to formally coordinate will have a lasting impact on students. As systems, communities, and families have been so focused for so long on getting students to college, it has left groups of students to be viewed as failures because there was one standard of success. We know that not everyone will go to college, and not everyone who goes to college will complete, but the one thing that remains true is that everyone will have a career. It is critically important that all students understand all of the opportunities that are available to them, regardless of their path after high school. This is already work the Agency is charged with leading in Act 69 of 2017 and Act 189 of 2018.

Goal: Supporting collaboration among systems and promoting coordination between systems as a means of ensuring equity and of providing students with a high-quality experience

- Strategies to support this goal:
 - The Agency of Education will address systemic and institutional inequities that emerge as a result of serving multiple high schools, including transcription of CTE program experience, transportation, meals, communication between schools, and other barriers that limit student access and opportunities.
 - Regional CTE centers will impact the lives of more students by ensuring CTE-related offerings are available in locations other than the CTE center.

Improvement Spotlight: By providing CTE offerings in locations other than the technical center, we automatically expand access to career technical education in Vermont.

- The Agency of Education will address the funding and governance challenges by scaling effective the Act 189 pilots.

Improvement Spotlight: By addressing the funding system we can remediate a major barrier for many students seeking access to career

technical education. It is frequently presented as a disincentive because CTE is expensive. The current funding system stifles innovation, limits expansion of offerings, and inherently creates a misalignment between program offerings and areas of need in the economy. This is already work the Agency is charged with leading in Act 69 of 2017 and Act 189 of 2018.

- Regional CTE centers and partner high schools, through cross-system curriculum coordination, career pathway program implementation, dual and concurrent enrollment, and credit transfer agreements, will ensure students are able to achieve their post-secondary goals
- System level administrators will increase opportunities for joint professional development across secondary and CTE staff.

Improvement Spotlight: By ensuring that secondary and technical center teachers, and post-secondary faculty can jointly participate in professional development, and by incorporating some of the key functions of the career pathways efforts, we can begin to address some of the systemic inequities that are caused when there is a lack of understanding between technical centers and secondary schools. This will lead to school systems understanding, valuing, and respecting the learning that takes place in technical centers, and vice versa, which will equalize the experience for students who choose that path.

Goal: Improve the public perception of CTE.

- Strategies to support this goal:
 - The Agency of Education and others will develop a communication plan in order to promote the success of CTE students.
 - The Agency of Education will coordinate communication to the public in partnership with the Department of Labor, State Workforce Development Board and regional CTE centers.
 - The Agency of Education will establish parameters for measuring rigor and value of CTE programs, conducting reviews of programs and making results public.
 - School system administrators will be asked to ensure the school counseling professionals working in their systems have a deep and consistent understanding of career technical education programs as a means of helping students pursue continued studies in an area of interest at their regional CTE center.

Improvement Spotlight: Collectively, these strategies will serve to improve how the public understands CTE, and the role it plays in both the education and workforce development systems. If we do not improve the public's understanding of CTE, it can serve to limit individual student's pursuit of opportunities available in technical education, and it could lead to a belief that the opportunities available there could be replicated elsewhere.

In recognition of the members of the Steering Committee that were involved in the creation and recommendation of strategies:

- Alex Beck, Workforce & Ed. Pgm. Mg., Brattleboro Development Credit Corp.
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- Meg Powden, Superintendent, Two Rivers Supervisory Union
- Leeann Wright, Director, Northwest Technical Center (St. Albans)
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- Doug Webster, CTE Program Coordinator, Agency of Education
- Greg Young, Personalized Learning Team, Agency of Education