

## **A Strong and Healthy Start: Access to Career and Technical Education**

### **Purpose**

This document serves as a reminder to supervisory union and districts (SUs/SDs) to consider implications for and ensure access to Career Technical Education (CTE) programs when planning for a strong and healthy start to the 2020-2021 school year.

### **Introduction**

The State of Vermont's policy is that all Vermonters, including secondary students, should receive educational services that enable them to master the skills essential for further education and training and for successful entry into or advancement in the workplace (See 16 VSA §1521 (a)). As part of this policy, high schools are required to provide genuine access to career and technical education to eligible students (See 16 VSA §1541a (a) (1), §1545, §1551, and State Board Rules 2375 8. A., 2371 2., 3. and 8., and 2388 2. and 3.). This includes 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students' access to Pre-Tech Exploratory and Pre-Tech Foundations programs, and access to all other CTE programming for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students (and to 10<sup>th</sup> grade students based on the maturity of the student).

### **Ensuring Access**

To accomplish this requirement to provide genuine access to career and technical education to eligible students:

- High schools should meet regularly with regional technical center directors to ensure that student access to technical center programs is not negatively impacted by scheduling changes designed to meet COVID-19 informed changes to school schedules or plans for delivery of instruction.
- When considering whether a student has the required or recommended prerequisites for their desired CTE program, SUs/SDs 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, held back or have their ability to participate in a CTE program limited because of the COVID-19 school closure.
- Concerns that a student has fallen behind in meeting core academic proficiencies due to remote learning are not sufficient reason for a sending high school to deny a student the opportunity to attend the regional technical center. Technical center programs provide students with rigorous, applied learning in math, science and literacy that can, in

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conjunction with core academic classes, contribute significantly to a student's ability to meet core academic graduation proficiencies. However, technical centers and high schools should work closely together to address and resolve any concerns raised regarding the ability of students to meet proficiency-based graduation requirements.

### **Additional Planning Considerations**

Technical center tuition is calculated based on a three-year average (See 16 VSA §1552 (d)). As sending districts seek to reduce spending in light of education funding projections, they are reminded that reduced technical center enrollment in Fall 2020 will not save the sending district any money for that fiscal year.

Sending districts are required to provide transportation from the high school to technical center programs offered at the regional technical center and any other locations (See 16 VSA §1541a (a) (2) and §1563 (a) and (b); State Board Rule 2375 8. B.). Transportation provided by the sending district to technical center programs is a reimbursable expense (See 16 VSA §1563 and State Board Rule 2395 C.1.B.).