



Dear Representative James,

Budget Adjustment Act

I am reaching out as a follow up to the Southwest Vermont Superintendents' Legislative Breakfast held on Tuesday December 14, 2021. Vermont Legislators who attended were: Kathleen James, Brian Campion, Dane Whitman, Michael Nigro, David Durfee and Mary Morrissey.

The three regional technical centers are in a unique circumstance as they are not eligible to receive any Elementary and Secondary Education School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER) because they are not designated as Local Education Authority school districts. The district served by these technical center school districts received a total of 74.5 million dollars in the three different allocations of ESSER funds from the federal government with school districts served by being awarded the follow:

*Hannaford Career Center School District - 12.4 Million
River Valley Technical Center School District - 36.2 Million
Southwest Technical School District - 26 Million*

The centers have provided testimony to house education on three occasions in the last calendar year, once to senate education, and met with the representatives from the administration on three separate occasions. The administration contacted the White House and has been in contact with the congressional delegation about this matter, but because the three districts are not LEA's they are not eligible to receive ESSER funds.

Since Vermont Career and Technical Education Centers receive funding to operate based on student enrollments via the six-semester average, the centers have been uniquely impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The students who enroll in a CTE Center do so as a choice; this makes student visits and thoughtful experiences as middle schoolers and early high school, at the center of the utmost importance. Since the start of the pandemic in March of 2020 these Career Awareness and Career Exploration visits have not happened due the social distancing and "pod" restrictions which have been part of the mitigation strategies in every Vermont school. The three independent technical center school districts have not been able to hold over 6,000 student visits for students within our service regions. The break down per district is as follows:


*Hannaford Career Center School District - 2,000 plus visits
River Valley Technical Center School District - 2,040 plus visits
Southwest Technical School District - 2,200 plus visits*

Senator Alison Clarkson - Windsor County and Kathleen James - Bennington-4 have been supportive of the three independent (Regional) technical center school districts (Hannaford Career Center in Middlebury, River Valley Technical Center in Springfield, and Southwest Tech in Bennington) of funds made available via a

Budget Adjustment Act.

Other pandemic impacts to CTE enrollment in a CTE were misaligned schedules or fewer days a week because of hybrid schedules, lack of transportation for students on hybrid off days when the CTE center is in session, families decision not to send students because of the potential for mixing with other students, and other remote/hybrid learning challenges. The challenges to CTE funding due to the pandemic will continue until six semesters after the end of the pandemic. The Budget Adjustment Act amount will keep the three independents whole as far as staffing to pre-pandemic levels. Without this funding three independent technical center school districts will be faced with either staff reductions or significant tuition increases, which further exacerbates the competitive funding model CTE currently operates under. Hopefully, we can move to a funding model (ACT 189) which does not place CTE in competition with the high schools we serve. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration for our request.

Respectfully,


Michael P. Lawler
Superintendent/Director