

Vermont Legislative Research Service

<https://www.uvm.edu/cas/polisci/vermont-legislative-research-service-vlrs>



Technical Education Funding in Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts

Vocational and Technical Education schools and programs are designed to teach practical and applied skills that are directly related to employment in current or emerging occupations.¹ This type of specialized education is also known as Career and Technical Education and may be referred to as CTE throughout the rest of this paper. CTE participation has been on a steady decline since 1992, with the percent of high school graduates earning CTE credits declining from 95% to 88%.² The decline in CTE participation has also been notable in Vermont, where there has been a decrease of nearly 6,000 students grades 9-12 who are enrolled in CTE programs since 2010. , states distribute funds based on measurable

¹ National Center for Education Statistics, “Vocational Education in The United States,” accessed March 28, 2021, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs/web/95024-2.asp>.

² Albert Y. Liu and Laura Burns, “Public High School Students’ Career and Technical Education Coursetaking: 1992 to 2013,”

(D) m

Maine

Maine has 27 career and technical high schools.¹⁸ As of 2017, fourteen percent of 9th through 12th graders were in one CTE program and six percent of students' education was focused in CTE.¹⁹ These rates are lower than the national and New England averages for proportion of public high school students who participate in CTE.²⁰ The Maine Department of Education reported that, as of 2015, students in CTE programs were three percent more likely to graduate high school than the state average.²¹ According to a 2017 report done by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, students who participate in at least one CTE experience in Maine experienced slightly higher levels of success than those who did not.²² They are three percent more likely to graduate, one percent to enroll in a two-year college, two percent more likely to be employed after graduation, and make more money after graduation. According to a report from the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, students who take concentrated CTE courses benefit from significant.²³

Maine CTE schools receive funding from three sources. These three sources are state education funding, federal education grants, and tuition reimbursement from sending schools.²⁴ The Carl D. Perkins grant is the largest federal education grant for CTE programs. The Carl D. Perkin's Act of 2006 provides a source of federal funding to states for the improvement of CTE programs.²⁵ For the 2019-2020 school year, roughly \$54 million was allocated to Maine's CTE centers from state funding.²⁶

Title 20-A, Chapter 207-A, Subchapter 3, Subsection 4725 of Maine's education statute gives instruction for CTE. It states that "each school administrative unit operating a secondary school shall provide career and technical instruction through a [CTE] center or region."²⁷

¹⁸ Maine Career and Technical Education Portal, accessed March 24, 2021, <http://mainecte.org/>.

¹⁹ Educate Maine, "Career Technical Education (CTE): Increasing Student Success by 100%," Maine State Chamber of Commerce, accessed March 24, 2021,

In 2017, Maine expanded CTE opportunities. Public Law Chapter 171 requires schools to provide access to appropriate CTE for middle school students.²⁸

Massachusetts

Currently, there are 88 Chapter 74-approved vocational and technical education schools or programs in The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.²⁹ About 20 percent of Massachusetts high school students participate

In Massachusetts' General Education Laws, Chapter 74 discusses Vocational Education specifically.³⁸ The Legislative body defines Vocational-technical education as “organized education programs offering sequences of courses designed to educate and prepare students for both employment and continuing academic and occupational preparation.”³⁹ Technical education programs that meet the Perkins Act definition of vocational technical education are deemed “Chapter 74-approved programs.”⁴⁰

Chapter 74 grants funding power for vocational technical education to multiple entities. The power of allocating federal funds is granted to the state treasurer for vocational-technical education.⁴¹ The trustees of vocational education schools along with the approval of the commissioner prepare financial estimates to maintain their schools for the next fiscal year.⁴² Section 42I instructs that the trustees shall prepare and submit a detailed budget as the governor and general court may direct.⁴³

A Chapter 74-approved CTE program resides in Weymouth, Massachusetts. Julieanne M. Gamache is the Director of Career and Technical education in the Weymouth Public high school. Along with the public-school education, there is a CTE program available to Weymouth students grades 9 through 12.⁴⁴ CTE-enrolled students at Weymouth High go to their “shop” classes at least once a day, unlike the common CTE specific high schools that often implement a rotating schedule of one week of shop education and one week of regular education.⁴⁵ The number of shop classes the Weymouth student attends each day increases in the specific grade level with 12th grade students attending up to five “shop” classes each school day. The town of Weymouth has a long history of vocational and tech education. Funding for the Weymouth CTE programs comes from the Perkins grant and the town district school committee funding. With CTE programs like culinary and cosmetology, there is a “revolving account” to grant specific programs a business-like freedom. The programs who receive income from the offered services take that money to fund certain supplies like hair supplies and baking instruments. Julieanne Gamache says there has been an increase in student applications for the Weymouth CTE programs. She claims that this rise in interest might be due to, “decreasing CTE stigma,” “increasing public knowledge of the program,” and “supportive administrators” at the school.⁴⁶ Furthermore, she believes that the COVID-19 pandemic showed many people the need for more unionized jobs like plumbing, electrical work, etc. With the increase of CTE program demand,

³⁸ The 192nd General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, “Mass Gen Laws Chapter 74 § 13,” <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter74>.

³⁹ Mass Gen Laws Chapter 74 § 1, <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter74>.

Gamache believes that soon, there will need to be discussions to address the need for more space to grant more enrollment opportunities to Weymouth pupils. Gamache proclaims, “I love my kids [enrolled in the Weymouth high CTE program] ... My kids go to college, training schools, the military, and to good paying jobs.”⁴⁷

~~The Official Record of the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Weymouth, Massachusetts, for the year 2010-2011. Volume 11152. TB/CIO-1152~~

Conclusion

There are several ways that different states fund Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs including student-based formulas, unit-based formulas, cost-based formulas, and funding individual CTE centers. CTE programs are important tools for growing the economy and providing affordable access to credentials that could lead to high wage jobs for populations who do not always thrive in standard classroom environments.⁵⁷ As Julieanne Gamache puts it, CTE students “go to college, training schools, the military, and to good paying jobs.”⁵⁸

This report was completed on April 19, 2021, by Maya Berger, Marjorie Brown, and Erin Tevnan under the supervision of VLRS Director, Professor Anthony “Jack” Gierzynski in response to a request from Representative Lori Houghton.

Contact: Professor Anthony “Jack” Gierzynski, 534 Old Mill, The University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405, phone 802-656-7973, email agierzyn@uvm.edu.