

EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 5, 2021 | 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Teleconference

Commissioners present: Kellie Campbell, Nancy Brooks, Sarah Mell

Commissioners absent:

Advisors present: Jen Horowitz, Katie Salina of Let's Grow Kids, Lisa Townson of Vermont Women in Higher Education, Rhoni Basden of Vermont Works for Women

Guests present: Ruth Durkee, State Director of Career Technical Education for the Vermont Agency of Education

Staff present: Hannah Lane

Presiding: Kellie Campbell

Recording: Hannah Lane

Called to order at 10:02 a.m.

Meeting minute approval

April Meeting Minutes

Kellie moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Nancy.

Hearing no nays, minutes approved unanimously.

Conversation with Ruth Durkee

Ruth introduced herself. She serves as the State Director of Career Technical Education for the Vermont Agency of Education since April 6, 2020. She has been in technical education work since 1999; she previously served as the executive director of the Northern New England Tradeswomen, which became Vermont Works for Women, and then moved to the Agency of Education as Civil Rights Coordinator in 1999. She has a law degree with a focus in civil rights. Later, she went on to work at the Randolph Technical Center. She focuses her work on gender equity and broader equity in career technical education.

Kellie gave an overview of the Committee's work and some of our questions. Where are there opportunities to raise up data and draw attention to what's happening for youth in our State? We're thinking about putting together some one-pagers that highlight the middle- and high-school populations.

Ruth gave an overview of Perkins 5, which is a federal law that provides \$5.4 million, which is distributed by the AOE to Vermont's 17 regional technical centers, and CCV and VTC. Perkins gets reauthorized every 5 -10 years, most recently in 2018. There are some shifts in Perkins 5 that are informative for all of us. Perkin 5 comes with performance improvement accountability requirements. At the secondary level we look at graduation rates; academic proficiency in math, English language arts, and now science; program placement; the number of students who earn postsecondary credentials; the number who earn college credits in the program; and participation in programs leading to non-traditional fields. What's new under Perkins 5, is that any technical center that doesn't meet their indicators will have to dedicate 30% of its funds to those areas. Recruiting and retaining students in programs for non-traditional fields is an

area where there is lots of work to do; statewide 11.75% of students are in these programs. The state also has work to do to increase students earning postsecondary credentials, as well as student participation in English and math.

Non-traditional fields are defined as fields in which less than 25% of the workforce is one gender. Centers are needing to think more holistically about student growth and outcomes, and how their programs do and don't align to meet those program requirements.

Rhoni suggested that the Committee could think about a one-pager providing information about Perkins 5. VWW has a one-pager that looks at this and how VWW can help, but we could tie in with other organizations. There are programs where we need more males.

Ruth shared that, for example, in Architecture & Construction, we had 298 male students & 21 female or gender non-conforming, statewide. This data hasn't changed significantly in the time she's been working in technical education. Randolph and River Bend do the best in percentages of non-traditional enrollment. They do better recruiting female students to non-traditional than male students to non-traditional. Randolph has had a long-term relationship with VWW, and participates in their speaker series. They have a day where they invite female students to the tech center for a day, maintain contacts. Both of these centers are in smaller, rural communities. Messages about appropriate choices are different in Chittenden County, where students can be deterred from enrollment in the technical centers.

One field where we are doing very well statewide is in law & public safety, where the enrollment is about even between genders. We haven't done a good job statewide of documenting best practices and replicating that statewide.

Rhoni added that part of it comes down to the environment once the students enter the program. It's really on teachers to create that environment. That's what they've heard from their program participants.

Perkins 5 requires centers to disaggregate data by gender, and also by programs, and allows capacity building for administrators to better support teachers.

Sarah asked about diversity in areas other than gender.

Ruth will share that with us. Perkins 5 disaggregates data based on a number of categories. In Chittenden County, the center's enrollment mirrors the population data. Students with disabilities tend to do very well in technical education because there is a lot of support available.

Nancy asked about programs that encourage technical center students to enroll in College. This is an area where there is room for great improvement. Tech centers disproportionately enroll students from economically disadvantaged families.

Kellie asked about mentorship and retention. Are there mentorship programs build into any of the CTEs, or thoughts on mentorship?

VWW presented a program called Youth at Work, and takes students and plugs them into the CTE, but also with local businesses where they could go into work after they complete the program, with hopefully a dedicated point of contact at that business. There are also other mentorship programs that aren't specific to CTE. Being transparent about barriers, but also showing the trajectory is important for students so they can see paths for themselves.

VWW is also working with guidance counselors to have these conversations to make CTEs more appealing to female and non-binary students.

AOE's review has found that many students did report that they had been actively discouraged from tech center enrollment by guidance counselors or high school teachers.

CTE teachers come with an apprenticeship license and have to be licensed as teachers within a few years. They have a high turnover rate. Many CTE teachers take a pay cut to teach, and this makes it hard to fill the positions.

Kellie shared that she's thinking about how we understand people who support these cultural systems without being aware of it, vs. people who are doing it intentionally. How do we educate people about this?

We have models in technical centers of teachers who do a good job in some centers who take leadership and mentor new teachers; that makes a big difference.

Sarah suggested that we look upstream at the systems themselves, teacher training programs, etc.

Kellie asked Ruth if she has thoughts about how we can help?

Ruth shared that all the things we've talked about are important. We do not do a good job of true career exploration and planning. Many times CTE students say the first time people have talked to them about career planning is 11th grade, which is too late. Few students have discussions about translating interests/activities they like to careers that match. We need to link real-world facts to the information, including the economic implications of the decisions students make.

We didn't get a chance to cover the postsecondary Perkins pieces, there is work to do there. Ruth is willing to come back to continue to discuss this.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30.