

## SB 379 Vo-Tech Schools - Proposed Changes

Section 1 (d) - We like Senator McDonald's suggestion to require the State Board of Education to hold a public hearing in the community where a vocational-technical school is located prior to voting to close or suspend operations. We ask that you include that requirement.

Section 3(b) - We urge you to include representatives from vocational-technical school faculty and administration to the list of individuals and legislative committees who will replace the state-wide advisory committee. As one of our members testified last night, most often economic trends, emerging trades and workforce needs are identified first at the local level. Each school currently has a committee structure made up of trade teachers and local business representatives for each trade in each school. They currently attempt to perform the same responsibilities that this new language requires at the state level. We believe their input and experiences could be valuable resources for helping to direct the system's future.

Section 3(2) - Tracking graduates is an important way to evaluate the success of the vocational-technical high school system. We ask you to extend these requirements to the adult education programs as well.

Section 5 - Thank you for addressing the urgent transportation needs of the system. However, we are concerned that August 15 may be too late in the year to have buses inspected. If repair needs are significant, it could take more time to fix a problem and register the vehicle. A scenario such as this could keep students off a job site and limit their practical instruction at the beginning of the school year. We ask you to move up the inspection date to July 15 (or anytime after July 1) so that repairs and registrations can be made well in advance of the first day of school.

Section 6 - As was discussed at the public hearing, we ask you to consider language that would allow buses less than 10 years old to be replaced if they require consistent repair or sustain significant damage that renders them inoperable or unsafe. We would hope that these instances would be rare, but if they do occur, we need an avenue to address them.

Section 7 - We defer to the committee's judgment on requiring the vocational-technical school system to be a separate budgeted agency from SDE, but we are concerned that in bad economic times, this could leave the system more exposed to rescissions. A 3-5% rescission to a separate budget could have devastating effects. By remaining part of SDE's budget, the system is not immune, but does have some measure of cover.

Section 8 (b) - As we discussed at the public hearing, posting each individual school's budget online is a concern. It may invite criticism from those who have no in-depth knowledge of the system. We understand the Committee's desire to provide transparency, but are not sure this is the best way to do it. Information could be manipulated and distorted by disgruntled students, parents and opponents of the system. We wholeheartedly agree however that the General Assembly should have individual school budgets for transparency and oversight and we welcome that provision.

Section 9(b) - Thank you for addressing the issues of material and supply shortages. We support this section and ask you to add language that also requires delivery of those needed materials to the individual schools by the start of each school year.