# MEMORANDUM

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner |
| **Date:** | February 19, 2025 |
| **Subject:** | Career Technical Education: Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Vocational Technical Education, 603 CMR 4.0 (Recruitment and Admissions) |

I am presenting to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) proposed amendments to 603 CMR 4.00, the Regulations for Vocational Technical Education, for a vote to solicit public comment. As described in more detail below, these amendments relate to changes in admissions practices. The proposed amendments also address terminology – e.g., updating references to this type of education from “vocational” to “career technical.” I anticipate returning to the Board for a vote on the final regulations in May 2025.

**Student recruitment and admissions**

Since October 2024, the Board has had three special meetings and three Career Technical Education (CTE) Committee meetings relating to the topic of admissions in CTE schools. As part of these presentations and during public comment, superintendents, parents, school committee representatives, principals, school counselors, and community advocates representing CTE and sending school communities have shared their experiences. Through these discussions, we have considered the full picture of how CTE schools connect with students beginning with recruitment through admission and enrollment. Importantly, we have examined admissions data on both the state level and school level, as well as enrollment data through a series of presentations.

The information shared has identified the themes that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) has addressed in the proposed regulations, including improvements to recruitment, access to middle schools, and the use of selective criteria for admission.

Middle school access. CTE schools have shared challenges reaching and providing recruitment information to middle school students. The updated regulations include a middle school pathway exploration policy for sending schools, to be shared with the Department annually along with an attestation of its implementation.

Selective criteria and lottery. The amended regulations require that—when there are more applicants than available seats—students are admitted by lottery, consistent with any local agreements that may be in place among sending schools. The proposed regulations specify that only two selective criteria may be used to create the lottery pool: attendance and discipline, with the limits on how those criteria may be used as set forth in the regulations.

**Updated terminology**

The proposed regulations also respond to feedback from students and families, as well as national practice, including by updating references to this type of education from “vocational” to “career technical.”

Elizabeth Bennett, Associate Commissioner of College, Career and Technical Education, Nicole Smith, Director of College, Career, and Technical Education, and Caitlin Looby of our legal staff will join us for the discussion.

A redlined version of the regulations is attached, along with a motion to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments.

Enclosures:

603 CMR 4.00 Strikethrough version of relevant portion of regulations showing amendments

Motion: 603 CMR 4.00