

<p>Subject:</p> <p><i>Requirements for Regional Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center Agreements</i></p>	<p>Legal Reference—HB 1661 (2021-2022 legislative session)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSA 188-E
--	---

This Technical Advisory continues the New Hampshire Department of Education’s communication regarding new legislation, which was passed during the 2021-2022 legislative session. HB 1661, which was part of an omnibus bill, sets forth the requirements of the Regional Career and Technical Education Agreements (RCTEA).

The requirements for the RCTEAs become effective upon the adoption and effective date of the rules which are required pursuant to HB 1661.

During the 2021-2022 legislative session, HB 1661, which was part of an omnibus bill, was passed into law. HB 1661 addresses the following topics, all of which are discussed in greater detail below:

- Regional Career and Technical Education Agreements (RCTEA) and calendar conformity;
- Access to Instructional Time; and
- Credit Competencies.

Regional Career and Technical Education Agreements “RCTEA” and calendar conformity—

HB 1661 created a new section, RSA 188-E:1-a, which will require each regional career and technical education school—receiving and sending—to be governed by a Regional Career and Technical Education Agreement or “RCTEA.” In short, the RCTEA was created to address issues of calendar and schedule conformity. As such, the RCTEA agreements must minimize calendar and schedule conflicts to better support CTE students with as many hours as possible to fulfill their program requirements. To achieve this goal of conformity, each RCTEA must address the following issues:

- A calendar conformity agreement, in accordance with RSA 188-E:5, VII(a) and (b), by aligning the school calendars of sending schools with the school calendars of CTE programs at the receiving school;
- Schedule alignment needs such as disruptions due to differing start and stop times, unscheduled school closures or events, and daily class start/stop times;
- The provisions to fulfill the recognition of credits in RSA 188-E:5, XIII (this new paragraph was created by HB 1661, and is discussed in more detail below);
- Include a plan for sending and regional schools to provide tuition and transportation for any student from a sending school who wishes to attend a CTE program, subject to the attainment of prerequisites, space availability within the programs, and appropriate qualifications under the statute; and
- Sending districts shall be responsible for ensuring student schedules allow for full access to CTE programs that are offered at the regional CTE center, to include travel time.

RCTEA schools are encouraged to align teacher in-service days to allow for joint ventures in teacher professional development and other educational initiatives. There may not be more than 10 instructional days following Labor Day through the last student day of the school calendar year on which one or more of the school calendars of the districts within the agreement are not aligned. When CTE regions overlap, or students attend programs in more than one CTE, the provisions of this section shall apply to both regional centers.

The RCTEA agreement is required to be renewed every four (4) years and must be submitted to the Commissioner of the Department of Education for review and approval. While the Commissioner may not approve a RCTEA which does not comply with HB 1661, a RCTEA may contain provisions for a waiver by the commissioner of dissimilar days for extenuating or emergency purposes. If the Commissioner determines that all schools within the RCTEA have plans and are reasonably working towards the implementation of an aligned calendar to ensure compliance with the law, an annual waiver may be approved, but such a waiver cannot be extended beyond July 1, 2026.

Access to Instructional Time, RSA 188-E:5, VII—

HB 1661 also repealed and re-enacted RSA 188-E:5, VII, which pertains to access to instructional time. The law now reads that “[a]ll career and technical education students shall be given access to career and technical education programs for the instructional time for those programs.” The law still provides that the student’s career and technical education center and the sending district can submit a joint application for the commissioner to grant a waiver on a case-by-case basis from the instructional time requirement. However, a new provision was added to allow for a student waiver to be made on a case-by-case basis as well in accordance with the approved procedure in the RCTEA.

CTE Credits, RSA 188-E:5, credit competencies—

HB 1661 also added a new section to RSA 188-E:5 to address awarding subject credit toward district graduation by demonstrating proficiency in a regional career and technical education course which is embedded with content area competencies. Specifically, the new section, paragraph XII, provides as follows:

A student shall be awarded required subject credit towards district graduation by demonstrating proficiency in a regional career and technical education course or program that is embedded with content area competencies that meet or exceed the district subject and required course competencies. Sending school graduation competencies embedded in a career and technical education course or program used to earn the equivalent or to earn partial credit to satisfy the required graduation competencies shall align with the skills, knowledge, and work study practices as determined by the local school district and in accordance with the terms of the RCTEA. A student who demonstrates proficiency in the embedded CTE course or program competencies and who is determined to have met the content area academic standards required by the high school shall have such credits counted toward the required program area for a high school diploma.

This new section addresses access to CTE program issues for students—for example, if a student needs an additional math course for graduation, such a requirement could prevent the student from taking a CTE program. However, under this new provision, the student could demonstrate that the required math competency is part and parcel of the desired CTE program, thereby fulfilling the graduation requirement and still allowing for participation in CTE.

Effective Dates—

The provisions within HB 1661 which pertain to CTE as set forth above, became effective on July 1, 2022. However, the requirements for Regional Career and Technical Education Center agreements (RCTEA) pursuant to RSA 188-E:1-a and RSA 188-E:5, are not to be implemented until the administrative rules which are required to be created by these sections are adopted and effective.

For questions related to this Technical Advisory, please contact:

Jeffrey W. Beard, Ed.D
Deputy State Director for Career and Technical Education
Tel. 603-271-3729
Email: Jeffrey.W.Beard@doe.nh.gov

