



## Making the Most of Perkins V

Following the passage of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) in the summer of 2018, state education leaders are crafting four-year plans to implement the law, which are due to the U.S. Department of Education next

spring. They ought to take full advantage of the flexibilities Perkins V has to offer.

To increase students' access to career and technical education (CTE) programs, state education leaders must also push their agencies to align their Perkins plans with the plans for related laws like the

*State boards should tap into new flexibilities and convergence with ESSA and WIOA.*

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## The state plan for Perkins V must be developed in consultation with specific stakeholders.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). And at the state and local levels, they must take advantage of Perkins V's flexibilities and allowable uses, which may point them toward making some hard choices that will change the way funds were invested under Perkins IV.

The time to have those conversations is now. States are in the middle of required public consultations, and many have started drafting their plans.

### What Changed

The Perkins reauthorization changed the planning process, provided new flexibility on how state and local recipients spend their money, and reformed CTE accountability systems.<sup>1</sup>

Whereas the previous version of the law merely encouraged stakeholder consultation, the state plan for Perkins V must be developed in consultation with specific stakeholders, including those from secondary and postsecondary CTE programs, community representatives, the WIOA-established workforce development board, and members and representatives of special populations. Perkins V also requires that state plans undergo robust public comment and review and provides a 30-day signoff opportunity for the state's governor. Any changes or revisions to the plan must be submitted for public comment as well.

Local recipients of Perkins funds must conduct a comprehensive local needs assessment every two years. The needs assessment must examine student performance, program offerings, teacher capacity, and progress toward closing equity gaps. States may also tailor requirements for the needs assessments to meet local contexts.

Perkins V provides much greater flexibility in where state and local recipients can invest their funds. For example, the Perkins Reserve has increased in size from 10 percent under Perkins IV to 15 percent under Perkins V, and states may set aside these funds to foster innovation in CTE and promote programs aligned with high-wage, high-skill, or in-demand occupations.

The new law lifts a previous restriction on using Perkins funds below seventh grade. Funds

now may be used for career exploration in fifth through eighth grade.<sup>2</sup>

In a major change for accountability systems, states no longer must negotiate their performance levels with the U.S. Department of Education. Under Perkins IV, states had to negotiate with the department and agree on performance levels across each of the core indicators in the law for which they would be held accountable. Under Perkins V, states may set their own levels based on the law's criteria. One such criterion is that the levels of performance must apply equally for all concentrators in the state. Another is that schools must make meaningful progress toward improving performance for all CTE students and special populations.

Perkins V created a consistent, nationwide definition of a CTE concentrator: a student who completes at least two courses in a CTE program or program of study. Because the definition will increase the number of students included in the state accountability system, this change raises the stakes for designing the CTE system well.

In addition, Congress created the Perkins Innovation and Modernization Grant Program. The first solicitation for grants under the program were announced in April, with competitive preference priorities for promoting science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and serving low-income students and students attending CTE programs from Qualified Opportunity Zones.<sup>3</sup>

### Dual Enrollment and Early College High Schools

In a much more expansive way than Perkins IV, Perkins V encourages states and local entities to consider dual and concurrent enrollment and early college high schools (otherwise known as college in high school programs) as a pathway for postsecondary attainment in a student's desired career field.

Schools around the country have demonstrated that college in high school programs can propel students toward valuable, portable college credentials and degrees. Perkins V builds upon previous allowable uses in the 2006 law to expand how states can apply funds to dual enrollment or early college high school programs. For example, educators increasingly

use dual enrollment to advance high school students into postsecondary CTE classes so that they can secure their degree or credential and move into the workforce expeditiously.<sup>4</sup> Perkins V will continue to support the growth of dual enrollment courses.

States are to detail in their state plans how they will make opportunities available for students to engage in dual enrollment programs, which carries over from Perkins IV. New or expanded provisions that support dual enrollment include local use of funds, state leadership activities, local applications to receive funding, and accountability system indicators.<sup>5</sup>

Perkins V adds two allowable uses of funds for local recipients that directly affect college in high school programs, which must align with the district's needs assessment:

- expanded student access to college in high school programs with a CTE focus; and
- reduced or eliminated out-of-pocket expenses for participating students in special populations—that is, students with disabilities, low-income youth and adults, out-of-workforce individuals, single parents, displaced homemakers, homeless individuals, youth in foster care, young people with parents in the U.S. Armed Forces, and English language learners—to include fees, transportation, child care, and addressing mobility challenges.

The new law allows states to use funds to establish, expand, and integrate opportunities for students to participate in college in high school programs at no cost to them or their families. It also requires districts to include in their application to the state how they will provide the opportunity for students to participate in college in high school programs.

As part of their accountability systems, states are required to report on several indicators at the secondary and postsecondary levels. At the secondary level, states will choose to report at least one of the following as part of the indicator addressing program quality:

- the percentage of students graduating from high school with a recognized postsecondary credential;
- the percentage of students graduating from high school with postsecondary credits in

the relevant CTE program earned through a college in high school program; or

- the percentage of students graduating from high school who have participated in work-based learning.

While Perkins V includes new and expanded allowable uses for these programs, ensuring that states and local recipients are using their funding to support these programs is not enough. In their planning process, states must proactively prioritize these programs, build them into their accountability systems, and make decisions on how to change state funding to accommodate that priority.

State leaders have a role in educating local recipients about the allowable uses in the law, encouraging them to make investments that align with their local needs assessment. The changes cannot and will not happen in a vacuum. While the funding can be used in more ways, that flexibility will not make a meaningful difference if states and local recipients fail to invest differently—in dual enrollment and other places in the law where the federal government is encouraging states and districts to act.

## Alignment with Other Federal Laws

In writing Perkins V, Congress intentionally decided to more closely align Perkins with other federal laws that overlap in their interactions with education or workforce policies, including ESSA and WIOA. With the right leadership to align implementation, these laws can work together to develop a coherent pipeline between education and the workforce.<sup>6</sup>

The main alignment opportunities between the federal laws focus on planning, data, and accountability. For planning purposes, the timelines for submission of Perkins and WIOA's four-year plans have been synchronized so they both will be due to the U.S. Department of Education in spring 2020. This is designed to encourage states to look at ways to match their planning efforts for the laws, align them where possible, and avoid duplication. For example, some of the required consultation activities under WIOA planning match closely with similar requirements under Perkins as it relates to consulting with each law's special populations.<sup>7</sup>

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**That flexibility will not make a meaningful difference if states and local recipients fail to invest differently.**

March 2019).

<sup>4</sup>I know of simulated workplace sites located in Ohio, Alabama, Missouri, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Australia.

<sup>5</sup>Governor Jim Justice, “West Virginia State of the State Address” speech (February 8, 2017), <https://www.c-span.org/video/?423620-1/governor-jim-justice-delivers-west-virginia-state-state-address>.

<sup>6</sup>To learn more about Simulated Workplace, visit [www.simulatedworkplace.com](http://www.simulatedworkplace.com).

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Education Across Three Decades” (Washington, DC: National Assessment of Career and Technical Education, U.S. Department of Education, 2013), [https://www.rti.org/sites/default/files/resources/cte-trends\\_finaldraft.pdf](https://www.rti.org/sites/default/files/resources/cte-trends_finaldraft.pdf); Jay Rojewski and Xue Xing, “Treatment of Race/Ethnicity in Career-Technical Education Research,” *Career and Technical Education Research* 38, no. 3 (2013): 245–56.

<sup>2</sup>Advance CTE, “Making Good on the Promise: Understanding the Equity Challenge in CTE” (Silver Spring, MD: author, September 2018).

<sup>3</sup>George Ansalone, “Tracking: A Return to Jim Crow,” *Race, Gender & Class* 13, issue no. 1/2 (2006).

<sup>4</sup>Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, “Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006: Report to Congress on State Performance Program Year 2014–15” (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, March 2018); National Center for Education Statistics, “Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002, Third Follow-Up,” table H134 and table 5A (2012), <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/h134.asp> and [https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/els2002/tables/CTE\\_ELS\\_table5a.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/els2002/tables/CTE_ELS_table5a.asp).

<sup>5</sup>Gary Orfield and Erica Frankenburg, “Brown at 60: Great Progress, a Long Retreat and an Uncertain Future” (Los Angeles, CA: Civil Rights Project, May 2014).

<sup>6</sup>Tim Waid, “Race Issues in Career and Technical Education: A Snapshot in Black and White,” *Techniques* 79, no. 3 (March 2004), <https://www.questia.com/magazine/1G1-114168003/race-issues-in-career-and-technical-education-a-snapshot>.

<sup>7</sup>National Center for Education Statistics, “The Condition of Education” (Washington, DC: US Department of Education, May 2019), <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2019144>.

<sup>8</sup>Anthony P. Carnevale et al., “Good Jobs That Pay without a BA” (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2017).

<sup>9</sup>Draws on Advance CTE, “Making Good on the Promise.”

<sup>10</sup>Advance CTE, “The Values and Promise of Career Technical Education: Results from a National Survey of Parents and Students” (Silver Spring, MD: author, 2017).

<sup>11</sup>Illinois State Board of Education, “School Wellness: 5Essentials Survey” (Springfield, IL: Regulatory Support and Wellness Division, 2019), <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/5Essentials-Survey.aspx>.

<sup>12</sup>Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, “College and Career Readiness: College and Career Advising Professional Development Series,” webpage (Malden, MA: author, 2019), <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/hqccp/>.

<sup>13</sup>Institute of Education Sciences, “What Works Clearinghouse Intervention Report: Dual Enrollment Programs” (Washington, DC: IES, 2017).

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There is also significant overlap between definitions and data requirements in Perkins, WIOA, and ESSA. Perkins V’s “special populations” overlap in several areas with ESSA’s “subgroups” and WIOA’s “individual with a barrier to employment.” As a result, Perkins V encourages states to be thoughtful in how they are collecting and using data for these populations in a way that is nonduplicative and can be applied toward each of the laws. In many cases, given that the agencies responsible for implementing ESSA, WIOA, and Perkins in a state may not be the same, leadership must ensure that agencies are being encouraged or required to coordinate.<sup>8</sup>

There are also opportunities for alignment in the construction of accountability systems. States that have selected the college and career readiness indicator as part of their ESSA accountability system may already have included one of the Perkins V measures of program quality. Those states may want to pick another indicator of program quality for Perkins V in order to maximize the ways in which they are assessing CTE program quality.<sup>9</sup>

## **Role for State Boards**

While most states are already developing their four-year Perkins V plans, states will continue to operate under the one-year transition plans they submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in the spring. In addition, the first local needs assessment process is under way.

Members of state boards of education must ask the right questions of state agencies and encourage leadership to capitalize on the new opportunities in Perkins V. During the planning period, state boards should be asking these questions:

- How will Perkins V funds support increased access to special populations to close equity gaps and increase attainment of industry credentials?<sup>10</sup>
- What is the right division of resources between secondary and postsecondary programs?
- How will the expanded reserve fund be used to incentivize high-quality CTE programs and encourage innovation?

- What should the accountability system look like for CTE programs, particularly as it relates to defining and measuring quality? How can that system be aligned with ESSA and WIOA?
- How will Perkins V funding contribute to an aligned educational system that produces graduates with the kind of in-demand credentials that local employers are demanding?<sup>11</sup>
- What should the employer role be?
- How can work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities be maximized?
- How can funding be leveraged to support early postsecondary opportunities, like dual enrollment or early college high schools, for CTE students?
- How can Perkins V be used to address many districts' shortages of teachers with the right credentials and certifications to teach CTE classes?

States and districts must begin to chart how they will support increased access to high-quality CTE during the current planning phase. Without leadership committed to capitalizing upon the opportunities of Perkins V, bureaucratic inertia risks squandering them.

As plan writing and consultation moves forward, state board leaders should ask tough questions about how their states are leveraging Perkins V reforms to encourage greater alignment with ESSA and WIOA. In addition, they ought to take advantage of new opportunities to realign how their states invest Perkins funding to support innovative, proven models for improving student access and success. Given the urgent need to get the U.S. education-to-workforce pipeline right—and particularly given the growing need for postsecondary credentials for the emerging workforce—states cannot wait for Perkins VI. ■

2013-001 (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

<sup>5</sup>College in High School Alliance, “Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act: Provisions of Perkins V Benefiting College in High School Programs” fact sheet (2018).

<sup>6</sup>Ellen Cushing et al., “Developing a College- and Career-Ready Workforce: An Analysis of ESSA, Perkins V, IDEA, and WIOA” (Washington, DC: College and Career Readiness and Success Center at American Institute for Research, March 2019).

<sup>7</sup>Advance CTE and National Skills Coalition, “Coordinating Across Perkins V and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act” (Silver Spring, MD: Advance CTE, 2018).

<sup>8</sup>Advance CTE, “Maximizing Perkins V’s Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment & Local Application to Drive CTE Program Quality and Equity: A Guide for State Leaders” (Silver Spring, MD, 2019).

<sup>9</sup>Canney, “Policy Toolkit.”

<sup>10</sup>Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, “The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act: Guide for the Submission of State Plans” (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, N.d.), [https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/docs/1830-0029-Perkins\\_V\\_State\\_Plan\\_Guide-Expires\\_4-30-22.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/docs/1830-0029-Perkins_V_State_Plan_Guide-Expires_4-30-22.pdf).

<sup>11</sup>ExcelinEd, “Credentials Matter: A National Landscape of High School Student Credential Attainment Compared to Workforce Demand” (ExcelinEd and Burning Glass Technologies, May 2019).

**State board leaders should ask tough questions about how their states are leveraging Perkins V reforms to encourage greater alignment with ESSA and WIOA.**

<sup>1</sup>Melissa Canney, “Policy Toolkit: Perkins V Reauthorization: Opportunities, Challenges, and Risks for States” (Tallahassee, FL: ExcelinEd, 2018).

<sup>2</sup>Advance CTE, “Perkins V: Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act” (Silver Spring, MD, August 2018).

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Education, “Applications for New Awards; Perkins Innovation and Modernization Grant Program,” *Federal Register* 84, No. 72 (April 15, 2019), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/04/15/2019-07456/applications-for-new-awards-perkins-innovation-and-modernization-grant-program>.

<sup>4</sup>Nina Thomas et al., “Dual Credit and Exam-Based Courses in U.S. Public High Schools: 2010–11,” *First Look*, NCES

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