

## **Recommendations for the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was most recently reauthorized in 2002 as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. At a time of unprecedented global competitiveness, it is vital for any high school reform measure to include Career Technical Education (CTE) as a core partner. To remain competitive, our nation's educational and workforce systems must work to eliminate the silos of academic and CTE coursework, programs and systems. All secondary students must have the requisite academic and technical knowledge to be successful in college and careers. This demands that our federal policy promotes alignment and coordination between federal programs such as ESEA and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins). The following recommendations offer suggestions of how CTE can enhance and support the work high schools and area technical centers across the country are undertaking as part of ESEA.

### **Ensuring Student Success**

- ***Integrated Education Opportunities*** - NASDCTEc promotes the use of integrated academic and CTE curricula offered through comprehensive programs of study. Students are able to learn, retain and apply core academic content more effectively, and are more likely to complete their education when curricula are offered through relevant and rigorous CTE programs of study. When aligned to rigorous academic standards, NASDCTEc also supports students receiving academic credit for the successful completion of CTE coursework.
- ***School Counseling and Career Planning*** - NASDCTEc urges that comprehensive counseling, including career and academic counseling, be offered no later than middle school. This ensures that students and parents are informed on options and expectations, including course requirements, postsecondary entrance requirements and employment options.
- ***Personalized Learning Plans*** - NASDCTEc supports the use of personalized learning plans for all secondary students. These plans should include the student's academic and career goals, document progress towards completion of the credits required to graduate from their secondary program, and indicate the acquisition of requisite knowledge, skills and work-based learning experiences necessary for career success. An individual learning plan will assist students and their families in charting the course to achieve their educational and career goals.

### **Highly Effective Teachers**

- ***Teacher Preparation*** - NASDCTEc supports the expansion of teacher preparation for CTE teachers through both traditional and alternative means. The shortage of CTE teachers makes it difficult to offer CTE classes to the 15.6 million students enrolled in these programs. Because the current "highly qualified teacher" requirement of NCLB hinders the ability of CTE teachers to teach core academic content, NASDCTEc encourages flexibility for CTE teachers to meet these requirements. The "highly qualified teacher" requirement has also hurt efforts to integrate academic and technical content, specifically limiting efforts to allow rigorous CTE coursework from earning academic credit or meeting academic requirements for high school graduation.

- **Professional development** - NASDCTEc believes that high-quality professional development under ESEA is a vital tool in maintaining high-quality innovative teachers and any professional development in ESEA should include CTE teachers. Further, targeted professional development should be available to promote collaboration between academic and CTE teachers in the design and delivery of integrated curriculum.

### **Rigorous Standards**

- **College- and Career-Ready Standards** - NASDCTEc believes that there should be consistent, high quality college and career ready benchmarks for all students, regardless of where students live or which delivery system they use. Programs should be aligned to rigorous content standards that are national in scope, are informed by the needs of the workplace, and ensure excellence. NASDCTEc supports federal policy that encourages state adoption of rigorous college- and career-ready standards, such as those found in the Common Core State Standards and the Common Career Technical Core.<sup>i</sup> Increased consistency and rigorous standards will better equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in a global economy.
- **Multiple Measures** - NASDCTEc believes that students should be assessed in subject areas beyond English and mathematics. In order to be prepared for college and careers, students should not only have English language and math skills, but competency in relevant science, history, and CTE subject areas. In addition, career readiness skills like teamwork and communication skills are essential for college and career success and should be measured. NASDCTEc also supports the use of performance-based assessments, like the ones used in CTE, as a way to measure a student's competency in a subject area.

### **Improving High School Performance**

- **Dropout Prevention** - NASDCTEc encourages high school reform measures that seek to increase the high school graduation rate. CTE provides students with relevancy to their education, and as such has been proven to help decrease the number of disengaged students while increasing the number of students who complete their high school education.<sup>ii iii</sup>

### **Data Systems**

- **Value-Added Growth Models** - NASDCTEc advocates for the use of growth models in the ESEA accountability measures and negotiated targets. States and schools that make significant progress toward reaching proficiency levels should be rewarded for their progress. NASDCTEc also strongly urges a substantial transition period for the implementation of new accountability indicators or performance targets. Other federal programs, such as Perkins, will be affected by any changes made to current ESEA accountability provisions. States need adequate time to adjust their data collection systems and re-negotiate relevant performance targets.
- **Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems** - NASDCTEc supports the development and implementation of statewide longitudinal data systems that collect such information as academic attainment in mathematics and language arts, and graduation rates. The information gathered by these systems will allow states to make data-driven decisions that can improve student learning, better track the achievement of all students, and to report more accurate data to state and federal agencies. Further, we believe CTE data should be integrated into these data systems, thus incorporating essential information about technical skill attainment and transitions among learner levels and employment.
- **Comparability Across States** - NASDCTEc promotes data systems that are comparable across states. By improving the consistency of data collection, states will be better able to compare outcomes, coordinate state reporting strategies, share best practices, and identify gaps in services.

## **Innovation**

- ***Accelerated Learning*** - NASDCTEc supports the expanded use of accelerated learning programs, including dual and concurrent enrollment, transcribed credit, dual credit (taking college-level coursework and securing credit at both the high school and college levels simultaneously), and other versions of cross-crediting in secondary and postsecondary education. The type of coursework should be reinforced in ESEA, as it is in the Perkins programs of study requirement. This will help students make a smooth and successful transition into postsecondary education.

NASDCTEc believes ESEA must make clear in its purpose, planning requirements, uses of funds and accountability priorities that all students should be both college and career ready. Our recommendations encourage transformation of ESEA to be a more balanced partner with Perkins in supporting students as they explore their interests, aspirations and talents, and helping them build pathways to college and career success.

The persistent drop out crisis and skills gap, as well as the demands of the global economy deems *college and career readiness for all* not just a philosophy we aspire to but a necessary reality. This intensifies the urgency for improved alignment between CTE and ESEA. We look forward to working together to remove barriers to alignment and to create opportunities for improved collaboration.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.careertech.org/career-technical-education/cctc/>

<sup>ii</sup> Michael E. Wonacott, “Dropouts and Career and Technical Education, Myths and Realities No. 23” (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 2002), [http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/1a/b4/fc.pdf](http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1a/b4/fc.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Recent performance data collected under Perkins shows that CTE concentrators have a graduation rate of 93%, compared to the national average of 82%.