NASDCTEc Board of Directors' Meeting
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT
Approved January 2010

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was most recently reauthorized in 2002 as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. NCLB expanded upon the standards-based reform introduced in the 1994 reauthorization of ESEA. Among the significant provisions within NCLB are increased accountability for states, school districts, and schools; flexibility for states and local educational agencies in the use of federal education dollars; and a stronger emphasis on what has been proven to work through scientifically based research.

Career technical education (CTE) is one of the federal government's largest investments in workforce development, preparing Americans for success in postsecondary education, the workforce, and the military. At a time of unprecedented global competitiveness, it is vital for any high school reform measure to include 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 show 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.

 ***Individual Learning Plans* -** NASDCTEc supports the use of individual learning plans for all secondary students. These plans should include the student's academic and careers 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 Race to the Top grant program requires that teachers show improvement of one and a half grade levels in order to be considered "highly effective." Technical skills' competency are not generally measured by grade level. Therefore NASDCTEc encourages flexibility for CTE to meet these requirements if they are included in ESEA.

 Professional development **-** NASDCTEc believes that high-quality professional development under ESEA is a vital tool in maintaining high quality, innovative teachers for the classroom 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.

 Recruit Teachers from Industry **–** NASDCTEc advocates for opportunities for professionals from industry to use the expertise they have garnered in their career and share it as a teacher. The current economy has resulted in many talented individuals finding themselves unemployed. NASDCTEc recommends utilizing this talent in the classroom and therefore we propose that the reauthorized ESEA include a new program to recruit teachers from industry similar to the "Troops to Teachers" program. Any such program should also allow highly qualified professionals to teach relevant CTE and academic courses/programs.

Rigorous Standards

 College- and Career-Ready Standards **-** NASDCTEc believes that the nationally validated Career Clusters essential knowledge and skill statements represent a comprehensive definition of what constitutes the core of initial college and career readiness.[i] While NASDCTEc believes that there is great commonality between the knowledge and skills individuals need to be ready to successfully transition into postsecondary education and into the workforce, additional competency will be needed in some, if not all, of the 10 categories of knowledge and skills. For example, if an individual chooses to enroll in an environmental engineering program, s/he will require additional academic courses beyond most state graduation requirements. Similarly, if an individual chooses to enter the workforce immediately after high school and wishes to enter the medical field as a radiology assistant, his/her high school education would have to include additional academics such as anatomy and physiology, as well as technical content such as imaging procedures.

 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, employability 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 the 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.[ii]

 ***Common Graduation Rate* -** NASDCTEc supports a common graduation rate calculation to ensure fair comparisons and statistical reliability across all 50 states.

Data Systems

 ***Value-Added Growth Models* -** NASDCTEc advocates for the use of value-added growth models in measuring ESEA accountability systems. The current NCLB system of accountability unfairly punishes states and schools that make significant progress toward reaching proficiency levels, yet still fail to meet their adequate yearly progress performance target. 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 NCLB 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.

 ***Funding for Data Systems* -** NASDCTEc encourages additional funding for states to develop and improve data systems beyond funds awarded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Innovation

 ***Accelerated Learning* -** NASDCTEc supports the expanded use of accelerated learning programs, including dual and concurrent enrollment**,** 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 NCLB, as it is in the Perkins programs of study requirement. This will help students make a smooth and successful transition into postsecondary education.

 ***Use of Technology* -** NASDCTEc encourages increasing the use of technology in the classroom as a way to connect students who cannot access a traditional classroom. CTE programs at the secondary level use online learning to provide access to CTE courses, particularly in rural and low income areas. Because CTE embodies relevant, up-to-date technological advances and educational experiences, accessing current resources is critical. Distance and online learning should be utilized as a way to help schools alleviate the financial and capacity burdens exacerbated by the current economic downturn.

CTE is a great opportunity to augment and support the goals of ESEA. However, the Perkins program has not seen an increase in funding since 2002, and given the economic downturn, state budgets are struggling to maintain funding for CTE programs. A greater federal investment in CTE is needed now more than ever because ESEA, in conjunction with Perkins, can prepare students for competition in a global economy.

[i] http://careerclusters.org/resources/pos_ks/Essential%20Statements%20-%20100608.pdf
[ii] 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