

Unpacking *Putting Learner Success First* – State Self-Assessment

About *Putting Learner Success First: A Shared Vision for the Future of CTE*

Putting Learner Success First: A Shared Vision for the Future of CTE – released with support from seven national organizations in May 2016 – calls for a re-imagined education system where all learners have access to high-quality experiences that put them on a path to career success. This vision boldly challenges the status quo and calls for a transformation of the education system while also defining CTE’s role in igniting and achieving this goal.

The vision is anchored in five inter-related and equally important principles:

1. All Career Technical Education (CTE) programs are held to the highest standards of excellence.
2. All learners are empowered to choose a meaningful education and career.
3. All learning is personalized and flexible.
4. All learning is facilitated by knowledgeable experts.
5. All systems work together to put learner success first.

Key Policy Questions to Ask to Get Started

As you consider how to implement the various principles and actions of the vision, below are some guiding policy questions to jumpstart the process, organized as a worksheet.

The questions aim to support state leaders as they reflect on the progress their states have made and where progress is most needed, and can be used internally or to facilitate cross-sector and multi-stakeholder discussions.

You can either go through the entire worksheet or dive into any specific principle to get started.

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Principle 1: All CTE Programs Are Held to the Highest Standards of Excellence

A. Develop and implement rigorous review and approval processes and policies to ensure only high-quality programs of study exist

<p>1. Does your state have a clear definition or construct of a “high-quality CTE program of study?”</p> <p>1a. If yes, what is that definition and how do your state’s program approval processes and/or requirements at the secondary and/or postsecondary level reflect statewide commitment to this definition?</p> <p>1b. If no, what are the first steps that need to be taken to develop one? What barriers are in the way?</p>	
<p>2. What processes, policies or strategies are in place to ensure access to and completion of high-quality programs is equitable across learner subpopulations across the state at the secondary and postsecondary level?</p>	
<p>3. What data is currently being collected and used to support equitable access to high-quality programs among all learners? What data do you most need or want?</p>	
<p>4. How do accreditation requirements for postsecondary CTE programs support quality? How can they be built upon to raise the bar if they are set too low?</p>	

B. Align funding to high-quality programs of study

1. How does your state’s program of study **funding formula** at the secondary and/or postsecondary level support quality? Innovation? Industry demand?

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2. How can your state leverage federal and/or state funding to **promote quality programs**, including transforming, scaling down or defunding programs that are not meeting quality benchmarks?

C. Develop and implement sustainable processes for employers to inform, validate and participate in the implementation of programs of study

1. What role do **industry partners** currently play in reviewing, approving and/or validating CTE programs of study, standards and/or credentials at the secondary and postsecondary levels? Is this sufficient? Sustainable?

2. What role does **labor market information** play in the design and delivery of your programs?

3. Is there a **state or regional structure** or process in place that regularly convenes the K-12, postsecondary education, employer and workforce development communities to review labor market information and establish priorities for programs of study?

4. Are there local practices of successful employer engagement or program validation that can be **scaled**?

What are the next steps to improve and strengthen your programs and policies related to Principle 1: All CTE Programs Are Held to the Highest Standards of Excellence?

Relevant Resources

- [ACTE's High-Quality CTE Framework](#)
- [Raising the Bar: State Strategies for Approving Quality Pathways](#)
- [The State of Career Technical Education: Employer Engagement in CTE](#)
- [Career and Technical Program of Study Framework](#)
- [Credentials of Value: State Strategies for Identifying and Endorsing Industry-Recognized Credentials](#)

Principle 2: All Learners Are Empowered to Choose a Meaningful Education and Career

A. Develop and implement a career advisement system that allows all learners to be successful in a career pathway of interest

1. What career development and advisement opportunities are provided for learners at each level – elementary, middle, high school and/or postsecondary?	
2. In what ways do those career development and advisement activities, programs and policies in your state align with each other and make up a coherent system ?	
3. Where are the most significant gaps in career development and advisement system? How can they be closed?	
4. Are there local practices of successful career development that can be scaled ?	
5. How can the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and/or the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act be leveraged to support meaningful career advisement?	

B. Provide all learners with authentic, real-world experiences linked to a career interest of their choice

1. Does your state have a clear definition of a “ work-based learning ”?	
1a. If yes, what is that definition and what range of activities and experiences fit within the full work-based learning continuum?	
1b. If no, what are the first steps that need to be taken to develop one? What	

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activities and experiences should be included in that definition?	
2. What data measurement tools and practices help you identify learners participating in work-based learning in your state?	
3. What state policies currently support or incentivize work-based learning along the full continuum in your state? What state policies may prohibit or limit work-based learning along the full continuum in your state?	
4. Are there successful local work-based learning programs or practices that can be scaled ?	
What are the next steps to improve and strengthen your programs and policies related to Principle 2: <i>All Learners Are Empowered to Choose a Meaningful Education and Career</i>?	
Relevant Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected to Careers: Expanding Employer Leadership in Career Development • What We Know about Guided Pathways • Connecting Classrooms to Careers: A Comprehensive Guide to the State Role in Work-Based Learning • Making Work-based Learning Work • Tennessee's Work-Based Learning Toolkit • Work-based Learning in California

Principle 3: All Learning Is Personalized and Flexible

A. Identify, build and scale policies and models that fully integrate academic and technical expectations and experiences

1. How do you currently support the integration of academic and technical instruction in your state? What barriers may prohibit such integration and how can they be overcome?	
2. What resources, assistance or professional development does the state provide to support the integration of academics and technical instruction at the K-12 and/or postsecondary level? How effective are these resources and how can they be strengthened or expanded?	
3. Are there successful local integration practices or efforts that can be scaled ?	

B. Identify, build and scale models of K-12 and postsecondary competency-based systems

1. Does your state have an overall strategy for K-12 competency-based pathways ? 1a. If so, where is or how can CTE be embedded in this strategy? 1b. If no, what are the first steps that need to be taken to develop one? What are the barriers?	
2. Does your state have an overall strategy for K-12 competency-based pathways ? 2a. If so, where is or how can CTE be embedded in this strategy? 2b. If no, what are the first steps that need to be taken to develop one? What are the barriers?	

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3. Are there successful local K-12 or postsecondary competency-based programs or practices that can be scaled ?	
4. How is your state supporting districts, schools and institutions that are already pursuing competency-based pathways (e.g., targeted technical assistance, resource development, communities of practice)? How do or can those support efforts align with CTE?	
5. How can the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, Every Student Succeeds Act and/or the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act be leveraged to support competency-based pathways at the secondary or postsecondary levels?	
<i>C. Fully align secondary and postsecondary programs of study to ensure seamless transitions</i>	
1. What state policies currently support or incentivize full alignment of secondary and postsecondary programs of study? What state policies may prohibit such alignment?	
2. How effective are your state's dual/concurrent enrollment, articulation and transfer policies and programs at connecting secondary and various postsecondary programs?	
3. How can the dual/concurrent enrollment, articulation or transfer opportunities be better leveraged or improved to support programs of study? What barriers are in the way of alignment?	
4. What types of professional development are provided to assist secondary and postsecondary educators in designing and implementing pathways that span education levels?	

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5. Are there successful local aligned pathway or programs of study that can be scaled ?	
6. How can the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, Every Student Succeeds Act and/or the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act be leveraged to support more seamless transitions across systems?	
What are the next steps to improve and strengthen Principle 3: <i>All Learning is Personalized and Flexible</i>?	
Relevant Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTE Clearinghouse on Academic Integration • Making Career Pathways Work: Curricular Design and Instructional Practice • Building a Strong Relationship Between Competency-Based Pathways and Career Technical Education • Guide to the Competency-based Learning Survey for Students • On the Path to Success: Early Evidence about the Efficacy of Postsecondary Competency-Based Education Programs • Early College High Schools: Model Policy Components • CTE Dual Enrollment: A Strategy for College Completion and Workforce Investment

Principle 4: All Learning Is Facilitated by Knowledgeable Experts

A. Modernize K-12 certification programs to ensure all learners have access to educators who are able to facilitate learning that prepares them for both college and careers

1. How effective are your state's certification options at meeting your state's teacher needs? What barriers stand in the way of streamlining certification procedures to make teaching more attractive to knowledgeable experts?	
2. Which certification programs are the most effective at placing qualified experts into the classroom?	
3. Does your state have any policies, programs or incentives to help districts and schools recruit industry professionals with sought-after technical knowledge and skills and demonstrated teaching ability?	
4. How effectively are your state's teacher preparation programs readying educators to teach career-ready skills, such as collaboration and teamwork, leadership, problem solving and career planning?	

B. Prioritize professional learning opportunities that focus on retention of quality instructors, contextualized teaching and learning, and learner engagement

1. What professional learning opportunities are available that bring core academic and CTE instructors together? How effective are they? What would it take to improve or expand them? Who needs to be involved in such a change?	
2. What professional learning opportunities are available that focus on contextualized learning ? How effective are they? What would it take to improve or expand them? Who needs to be involved in such a change?	
3. What professional learning opportunities are available that focus on student-centered instruction ? How effective are they? What would it take to improve or expand them? Who needs to be involved in such a change?	

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4. Are there successful local professional learning practices or programs that can be scaled ?	
5. How can the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act and/or the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act be leveraged to support this type of professional learning?	
C. Build and support a pool of experts that instructors may draw upon to supplement learning	
1. Are there any strategies you are using in your state or region to increase access to experts for learners, such providing opportunities for part-time instructors, offering incentives, or partnerships across secondary and postsecondary institutions? 1a. If yes, how successful are such strategies? How can they be improved? 1b. If no, what are the first steps that need to be taken to develop a strategy? What are the barriers?	
2. What are the barriers that are limited or preventing industry experts from coming into secondary schools?	
What are the next steps to improve and strengthen Principle 4: All Learning is Facilitated by Knowledgeable Experts?	
Relevant Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State of Career Technical Education: Increasing Access to Industry Experts in High Schools • Improving the Quality of Career and Technical Alternative Teacher Preparation: An Induction Model of Professional Development and Support • 21st Century Educators: Developing and Supporting Great Career and Technical Education Teachers

Principle 5: All Systems Work Together to Put Learner Success First

A. Establish a common statewide vision and commitment to providing all learners with meaningful career pathways

<p>1. Does your state have a shared vision for learner success?</p> <p>1a. If yes, what is it? How are you implementing it?</p> <p>1b. If no, what are the first steps that need to be taken to develop that shared vision? Who needs to be involved? What barriers are in the way?</p>	
<p>2. In addition to secondary and postsecondary institutions, how well are other key institutional stakeholders, including workforce development agencies and business and industry engaged in pathway development in your state?</p>	
<p>3. What barriers exist to better connecting business and industry to pathway development in your state, and how are you overcoming them?</p>	

B. Coordinate federal and state policies, programs and funding to maximize investments and reduce inefficiencies

<p>1. What assets does your state have that are currently being utilized for education, career training and workforce development purposes (e.g., federal, state, local or private funding or programs)? What assets does your state have that <i>can</i> be utilized for education, career training and workforce development purposes?</p>	
<p>2. How effectively is funding being leveraged to expand and equalize access to high-quality career pathways?</p>	

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3. What barriers exist to braiding funding at the state, regional, or local levels, and how are you overcoming them?	
4. Are there any local or program-level examples of asset mapping or braided funding that can be learned from and replicated ?	
5. How can the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act and/or Higher Education Act be leveraged to support greater system-level alignment?	
<i>C. Develop and support sustainable partnerships and intermediaries to accelerate learner success</i>	
1. What organizations or entities (e.g., non-profits, workforce boards, sector partnerships, industry associations) currently support the development and implementation of career pathways in your state? What roles do those organizations and entities play?	
2. In what ways does your state most need support from intermediary organizations and partners?	
3. With what organizations does your state have the strongest partnerships ? What are the elements in place that makes these partnerships so strong and how can they be replicated in other partnerships?	
4. What support, resources or assistance does – or can – your state provide to local districts and institutions for supporting partnerships and/or intermediaries?	

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D. Build indicators of career readiness – for all learners – into federal and state accountability systems

1. How is your K-12 accountability system promoting, valuing and/or incentivizing learners to demonstrate career-ready outcomes?	
2. How is your postsecondary accountability system promoting, valuing and/or incentivizing learners to demonstrate career-ready outcomes?	
3. If your K-12 and/or postsecondary accountability system does not currently include any indicators of career readiness, what are the outcomes or measures that are the highest priority for your state?	
4. What recognition or incentives does the state offer to learners for demonstrating career readiness?	
What are the next steps to improve and strengthen Principle 5: All Systems Work Together to Put Learner Success First?	
Relevant Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College and Career readiness Begins with a Well-Rounded Education: Opportunities Under the Every Student Succeeds Act • In Their Words: Why Business Leaders Support CTE, Career Pathways and Career Academies • Talent Orchestrators: Scaling Youth Employment through Business-Facing Intermediaries • How States are Making Career Readiness Count: A 2016 Update • Destination Known: Valuing College AND Career Readiness in State Accountability Systems • Data Dissemination Strategies for Career and Technical Education in Nebraska