

NASDCTEc-ACTE Legislative Recommendations & Senate HELP Committee's Bipartisan Reauthorization Principles

The National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc) and the Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE) applaud the Senate HELP Committee's ongoing efforts to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins).

We were especially encouraged by the list of bipartisan principles recently released by the Committee that will be used as the foundation to renew this critically important law. These eight principles share much in common with our organizations' vision for Perkins reauthorization and we'd like to highlight and expand upon those points of intersection below.

"Make it easier for States and locals to run their CTE programs to serve all students who desire to gain access to CTE coursework, including students with disabilities."

Central to our recommendations for Perkins V is a commitment to ensuring all students have equitable access to high-quality CTE programs. This is achieved through our focus on increasing program quality through a new definition for CTE programs of study (POS). Throughout our recommendations we have strengthened Perkins' planning provisions related to student access to, participation in, and achievement as a result of CTE POS— all in an effort to ensure that every student has access to a high-quality CTE program. Our recommendations make clear that the next iteration of Perkins must broaden its focus on equity beyond simply gender. To do this, we have proposed a new local needs assessment that would more intentionally connect Perkins' planning, spending, and accountability requirements in a way that directs resources towards ensuring that all students are able to equitably participate and achieve within the context of a CTE POS, regardless of their geographic location, race, gender, disability, socioeconomic background, or any other population characteristic.

"Increase access to, and support of, career counseling for all CTE students."

Before students can pursue their interests and passions in the context of a CTE program of study, they must first become acquainted with the career opportunities available to them. Our recommendations direct states and local Perkins recipients to provide career exploration and development activities in a coordinated manner at both levels of the law's implementation. These activities would equip career counselors with relevant labor market information as they provide guidance and counseling to students. Significantly, our recommendations would empower students and their families to make important decisions about their education aligned with their career goals through participation in these activities.

"Maintain CTE as a formula program."

We strongly endorse the Committee's commitment to providing foundational support to the greatest number of programs and institutions by maintaining Perkins' formula grant structure. Our recommendations wholly support this principle and go on to emphasize the importance of maintaining the autonomy of the State Perkins Eligible Agency as the entity in each State with the responsibility of administering the Perkins grant to ensure formula funds flow to local recipients.

"Align with ESEA and WIOA (where applicable) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the education and workforce development programs."

Alignment to ESEA and WIOA is a key theme that is evident throughout our recommendations. While a separate document covers all of the specific elements of our proposal that align with WIOA, we have also based much of the local application and needs assessment components of our language on the work currently underway in the Senate to reauthorize ESEA. Additionally, and in order to reduce the

overall reporting burden of states, we have aligned reporting systems and related definitions with those already required within ESEA to the extent practical. Throughout our legislative proposal we have also heavily emphasized the need to continue to integrate CTE and academic instruction—something that we hope will be continued in Perkins V and in the next iteration of ESEA.

“Support the expansion of public/private collaborations with secondary and post-secondary programs, including alignment with State or locally-determined in-demand industries and occupations.”

Effectively engaging employers is all about relationships. While it’s difficult to legislate strong relationships at the federal level, our organizations are committed to ensuring that CTE programs of study, as well as the institutions and school districts that house them, are engaging with the employer community in a way that benefits students and employers alike. Our recommendations seek to ensure that businesses of *all* sizes have the opportunity for meaningful input into the development and implementation of CTE POS in both the state and local plan sections of our proposal. Through an annual local needs assessment and continuous required consultation with the employer community, we ensure that CTE programs are regularly assessing the relevancy of what is being offered to local labor market needs.

“Support efforts to integrate into and strengthen career pathways at the state and local levels.”

As mentioned above, our legislative recommendations hinge on the next Perkins law supporting CTE POS as the primary delivery framework for CTE. While CTE POS and career pathways—as defined under WIOA—share much in common, there are still important distinctions between the two concepts. The manner in which we have defined a CTE POS allows for it to serve as the delivery mechanism for the *educational component* of a career pathway as understood through WIOA. We have made several attempts throughout our proposal to encourage states and local Perkins recipients to support and collaborate with existing career pathways work where applicable.

“Address unfunded programs.”

As noted elsewhere in our submission, we have proposed a comprehensive replacement for Title II or “Tech Prep” of current Perkins law—a section that has been unfunded since 2010. This proposal would transform Title II of Perkins into a formula grant program, above and beyond that of Title I, to support innovation within the CTE enterprise. Our Title II proposal would allow for even greater state and local support of public-private partnerships focused on innovative approaches to delivering CTE. We have also proposed to replace Section 118 of the Perkins Act— a piece of the law that has been unfunded since 2006— with a conforming amendment for Title III of WIOA. Our intent with this recommendation is to more effectively coordinate the activities authorized under Perkins with the labor market information system already established in WIOA without the need for additional funding.

“Improve evaluation and research to support innovation and best practices.”

We applaud the Committee’s interest in evaluation and research within the CTE enterprise. Our legislative recommendations propose high-quality, frequent, and comprehensive research and evaluation of CTE through the continued use of a National Research Center for CTE as well as through the National Center for Education Statistics. To make research more relevant and actionable, we propose a streamlined research agenda that focuses on the elements of high-quality implementation of a CTE program of study and assessing the overall impact of Perkins’ implementation. This would include the dissemination of research findings and technical assistance to help states incorporate evidence-based best practices to replicate high-quality CTE.