

Federal education policy should not only assist states, schools and colleges in meeting current needs but also seek to support systems as they innovate in response to future or anticipated needs. The National Assessment of Career and Technical Education has long-cautioned federal policymakers that the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) has indeed been a reflection of current needs, as it has evolved since the Smith-Hughes Act but in that evolution it has shed few of its mandates, requirements, or uses of funds. To that end, the law has become a reflection of nearly a century's worth of education and workforce demands, diluting its focus, effectiveness and ability to drive innovation.

To meet the needs of the future economy, NASDCTEc and ACTE chose to begin our process for determining Perkins priorities by taking a step back, assessing what the needs of the field are or will be and considering what role the federal investment in CTE should have as compared to state and local investments. To that end, this document proposes a set of recommendations and aligned legislative language that will bring clarity by streamlining the Perkins Act to focus on increasing access to high-quality CTE programs of study that are responsive to economic priorities. To accomplish this goal, it was necessary to craft new language that would in certain places replace entire sections of the current statute, while in other places, simply adapt existing language.

Our recommendations are based upon a set of design principles:

- **We believe the law should focus on increasing equitable access to high-quality CTE programs that are responsive to economic priorities.**
To accomplish this, we propose that the federal investment focus on the design and delivery of quality CTE programs of study that ensure a spectrum of career exploration through career preparation opportunities for all students, regardless of their geographic location, race, gender, disability status, socioeconomic background, or any other population characteristic.
- **We believe more coordination is needed between planning, spending and accountability.**
To accomplish this, we drafted new state and local plan language adding a needs assessment, significantly reduced and refocused uses of funds, and integrated requirements to ensure decisions and investments are guided by data.
- **We believe the law should continue to prioritize, and in fact should seek, to strengthen connections between secondary and postsecondary education.**
To accomplish this, we propose that all programs funded by the Act meet a more specific "CTE Program of Study" definition, linking secondary and postsecondary education and leading to meaningful credentials; as well as a state-level focus on systems alignment.
- **We believe that the law should emphasize increased engagement with business and industry in the design and implementation of programs.**
To accomplish this, we propose more robust stakeholder involvement in local planning and program delivery and required alignment of programs to labor market demands.
- **We believe the law should be streamlined to make it clearer and more consistent by ending duplication between and within sections.**
To accomplish this, we have significantly streamlined the law to focus on outcomes while giving states and local communities flexibility in how best to meet their state and/or local community's unique needs, as well as included significant WIOA alignment provisions.

This set of recommendations is informed by and reflective of research, builds upon the positive momentum begun under Perkins IV and focuses on what states, schools and colleges know works, while also ensuring currency and innovation of programs, expanding stakeholder engagement and a setting a high bar for quality. Our goal is that through this proposal CTE can help more students find success and to ensure country's economic strength and prosperity. What follows is language that covers the purposes, state and local plan sections, state and local uses of funds, accountability provisions, as well as a few new definitions.