



Strengthening CTE: Putting the Pieces Together

Progress Toward Improving Access and Equity

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September 25, 2019



Well, good morning folks. I'm Chris Lenske, and I'm the grant specialist with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction CTE team. Thank you for joining us for this installment of the "Strengthening CTE: Putting the Pieces Together" series. Before we get started with today's presentation, please mute your microphone.

As you know by now, the Strengthening CTE for the 21st Century Act (or Perkins V) requires districts and consortia that seek Perkins funding to complete a comprehensive local needs assessment (which we refer to as the CLNA), the results of which must be included in the Perkins grant application and will drive your program decisions.

This webcast series addresses various requirements of the CLNA and provides technical assistance to get you going in the right direction. Webcasts in the series are recorded and posted to the DPI Perkins V website for viewing at your convenience. You have an opportunity to ask questions throughout this presentation through the chat feature on your screen.

Six Focus Areas

- I. Performance on federal accountability indicators
- II. Alignment to labor market needs
- III. Scope, size and quality of programs offered
- IV. Progress toward implementing programs and programs of study
- V. Recruitment, retention, and training of faculty and staff
- VI. Progress toward improving access and equity**

2

The Progress Toward Improving Access and Equity focus area of the CLNA requires you to evaluate your progress in providing equal access to CTE programs for all students. These call on you to focus on programs that lead to strong positive outcomes and maximize success for special populations in high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations.

In other words, are the strategies that you are using to assist students in accessing programs and overcoming barriers to participation or success working? Are they meeting the needs that students have? What resources are available to assist?

And, is your focus for these students on high-wage, high-skill, or in-demand industries or occupations.

What is the law targeting?

Reflection: Think about the students in your building

- Who is actively engaged and who is not?
- Based on data, which groups of learners have not yet accessed or benefited from CTE opportunities?
- To what extent are stakeholders (students, parents, support personnel) involved in informing equitable policies and practices?

3

Let's take a moment to think about the students in your building. Picture them in your mind's eye as they are walking through the halls of your building and into your classrooms. Picture which students are actively engaged. Now picture those who are not. Which ones appear to be disinterested in school. Can you picture who they are? Do they belong to a certain demographic? Perhaps you've wondered what their story is.

Use the data tools at your disposal to learn more about these students. Bring people with challenging lived experiences, students, parents, and support personnel to the table to learn more about what might be contributing to gaps in participation or performance.

Based on your data, do you know which groups of learners have not yet accessed or benefited from CTE opportunities? To what extent have stakeholders been involved in informing policies and practices related to access and equity?

This presentation will provide focus on what to look for in your data sets, and we'll explore how stakeholders can provide insight to help inform equitable policies, practices, and services.

Special Populations

- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals from economically disadvantaged families
- Individuals preparing for NTO fields
- English learners
- Homeless individuals described in (Sec. 725) McKinney-Vento – Homeless Assistance Act
- Youth who are in, or have aged out of, foster care
- Single parents, including pregnant women
- Youth with a parent who is in active duty with the armed forces.

4

The law requires that you disaggregate your data by demographics (as Mai Choua discussed in the student performance presentation) as well as the special populations listed here. The one population that you likely do not have information on at this time are the students who have a parent on active duty in the armed forces, but the others are in your data information systems. Work with your data folks on this. This does not mean that you need to search out who each individual student is, but instead, look for data trends.

How to review data

- Ask: Who has **access**?
 - Review disaggregated student data
- Ask: What are **performance** trends?
 - Review disaggregated student data
- Ask: Are **equitable practices** in **program delivery** taking place?
 - Review policies, practices, how input is gathered and strategies determined

5

Assessing access and equity in your programs can be broken down into three subsections: **access**, **performance**, and **program delivery**.

First, review disaggregated student data to determine if there are discrepancies in access or performance. Is there over- or under-representation of certain demographics or special populations in your programs? Review your district data **not only** to determine over- or under-representation of student groups in certain courses or programs, but also their performance in those programs. Who is completing? Who is not? Who is testing proficient in reading, science, and math, and who is not?

Related to **performance** – When you disaggregate your student performance data by special populations, look at how they are doing on performance levels? Are there gaps? Are there certain students who continue to be successful in accomplishing the goals of a class, or do you see trends of students who historically do not complete a program or lack proficiency levels? Ask, what is that gap and why might we be seeing that gap? Identify what can be done to address why the gap exists.

Finally, consider your **program delivery** through an equity lens. Look at the accommodations, modifications, and supportive services you offer or don't offer. Examine your curriculum, instructional practices, materials, and

assessments for biased and discriminatory content. Identify potential barriers to participation in work-based learning, CTSOs, and articulated credit opportunities. Examine your strategies for addressing those barriers. Are they effective?

In consultation with stakeholders, develop plans to implement the strategies identified and determine measures to evaluate your progress on those strategies. One way to deepen this analysis is by conducting focus groups, surveys, or interviews with students from special populations, their parents, and internal or external community-based supports that work with special populations. These activities can uncover information about needs, preferences, and perceptions of how well programs are helping students reach their goals.

Consider who is at the table when developing equitable policies and practices. Do you have representation from those who have lived experience as someone with challenging circumstances and can speak to it?

Perkins funds can and should be targeted for use in assisting students to not only access but also to succeed in CTE programs.

DPI was required to do the same work at the state level. In other words engaging state-level stakeholders related to special populations. We went to our colleagues at the DWD division of vocational rehabilitation, special education, child welfare, and other agencies that work with special populations to learn about the barriers that certain students face. This also gave us the opportunity to share information about CTE and let them know that special populations are a focus in Perkins law.

Identify similarities in the students who are engaging in your programs as well as similarities in the students who are not. You can do this by first looking at what the data tells you about enrollment in CTE courses or pathways. Who is participating and who is not, including in dual enrollment, and technical skills attainment, such as industry-recognized credentials.

Questions to Consider

Are there enrollment discrepancies related to high-wage, high-skill and in-demand occupations?

How are special population groups performing in your pathway programs, including WBL, IRC, dual credit?

Are there enrollment or performance discrepancies between special populations in certain programs?

6

Here are some examples of specific questions to explore with your enrollment data:

- Are there enrollment discrepancies related to high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand occupations?
- How are special population groups performing in your pathway programs?
- Are there enrollment or performance discrepancies between special populations in certain pathways or programs of study, or related to work-based learning, industry-recognized credentials, and dual credit?
- Is enrollment of special populations in CTE proportionate to overall school enrollment?
- If you see disproportionality, there may be an access issue (whether real or perceived). What demographic do your concentrators make up? How does that compare with your school and community?

Questions to Consider

Discuss potential root causes for gaps and identify strategies for inclusion.

- Are promotional materials inclusive?
- Are special populations being actively recruited and encouraged?
- What barriers might there be to participating in work-based learning, CTSOs, IRCs, and articulated credit opportunities?
- What types of accommodations, modifications, and supportive services are offered to students? Is it enough?

7

If a particular student group is not participating, you'll want to question why. Ask, what is the root cause? How can we address the inequities we see and raise performance levels of students? What barriers currently exist that prevent certain student groups from accessing programs or succeeding in programs?

In addition to numerical data, consider how students are recruited. What do promotional materials look like? How are students encouraged to participate (or not) by counselors, teachers, or others, such as parents?

Is information on accelerated credit and credentials provided to all students? What types of work-based learning support is available?

Barriers might include unintended biases (explicit or implicit), lack of financial resources, including relationships with key people that can serve as supports. They are invisible, and they lack advocates or accommodations.

Assessing Access and Equity

Special Populations

- Individuals with disabilities
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- Individuals preparing for NTO fields
- English learners
- Homeless individuals described in (Sec. 725) McKinney-Vento – Homeless Assistance Act
- Youth who are in, or have aged out of, foster care
- Single parents, including pregnant women
- Youth with a parent who is in active duty with the armed forces.

Student Support Systems/Individuals

- Special education teachers
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- School social workers, counselors and nurses
- English learner school or community supports
- The district homeless liaison
- The district foster care liaison
- The county child welfare education liaison are
- Supports such as local mentoring or tutoring programs, faith based programs, literacy programs and others.

8

Deepen this analysis by conducting focus groups, surveys, or interviews with students from special populations, their parents (if appropriate), and community-based organizations that work with special populations. These activities can uncover information about needs, preferences, and perceptions of how well programs are helping students reach their goals.

First, it is important to engage students. Find out what their goals and dreams are. What are their perceptions? Why do they or do they not participate in CTE opportunities? Have them answer the question, what do you want to get out of participation. What would you need to participate? The answer might just be, “more girls in the class” or “I want to, but the classes conflict with my schedule,” or “I didn't think those classes were for me; nobody told me the details about it,” or “I never had a job before and I'm afraid,” or “I'd love to learn more about cars, but I'm in a wheelchair.” Engage these students as much as possible to learn about their interests and why they are or are not participating in CTE.

Sometimes it's not feasible to personally engage the students themselves, but you may want to get a broader perspective on the supports available. That is where the stakeholders on the right side of the list can provide insight.

Probably the most obvious groups are: special education teachers and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors or coaches. You probably have the most experience working with these individuals to provide accommodations for students to make their experience equitable.

But what about the other students? School social workers, counselors, and nurses at the table; the English learner school or community supports; the district homeless liaison (did you know that every district has a homeless liaison); the district foster care liaison and the county child welfare Education Liaison are good resources to bring into the discussion. Finally, other school or local community supports that you are aware of such as mentoring or tutoring programs, shuttle services, and volunteer agencies can provide information. These people know who the special populations are and can speak to road blocks, needs, and strategies to meet the needs.

Questions to ask the data and stakeholders might be:

- What accommodations, modifications, and supportive services are currently provided to ensure the success of special population groups? Which ones are most effective? Which ones are underutilized?
- What additional accommodations, modifications and supportive services would help ensure access and equity for all students within all programs?
- How well do teachers and other staff Identify potential barriers to equity (whether prejudicial, based on assumptions, or otherwise) and give voice to those inequitably impacted by school and district policies and practices.

Finally, consider your program delivery through an equity lens. Look at the accommodations, modifications, and supportive services you offer. Examine your curriculum, instruction, materials, and assessments for biased and discriminatory content.

With the involvement of these stakeholders, develop plans to implement the strategies identified and determine measures to evaluate your progress on those strategies.

Program Delivery

Identify strategies for engagement and program delivery

- Recruitment
- Support
- ACP

How will you create a structure to support special populations?

- What will you provide or provide linkages to?
- How will students access support?
- How will they know about it?

9

Consider that there is a robust system, processes, protocols and funding to ensure students special education students get what they need. But what about the other students on the list? What exists to make programs more equitable for them? They may also need targeted services.

Examine how you are delivering your programs, and consider creating a structure to support special populations.

What will you provide? How will students access the support?

Determine strategies to increase access by these learner groups.

- Again, how can you actively recruit students from special populations
- Consider how students are represented in the promotional materials. Whose faces are missing?
- What can be done to provide career counseling that helps students from special populations choose a pathway that fits their goals and strengths?

And don't forget to celebrate successes; celebrate what you are doing well and build off of that.

Program Delivery

You will be asked to:

- Identify gaps/root cause for the gaps
- Describe strategies you will use to overcome barriers that result in lower rates of access or performance gaps for special populations in courses and programs
- Describe programs designed to enable special populations to meet the local levels of performance
- Describe the activities that will prepare special populations for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations in competitive, integrated settings that will lead to self-sufficiency.

10

In the end, the Perkins needs assessment relevant to access and equity for special populations wants you to:

- Identify the gaps and root causes for the gaps.
- Describe strategies you will use to overcome barriers that result in lower rates of access to or performance gaps for special populations in courses and programs.
- Describe programs that are or will be designed to enable special populations to meet the local levels of performance.
- Describe the activities that will prepare special populations for high-skill, high-wage or in-demand industry sectors or occupations in competitive, integrated settings that will lead to self-sufficiency.

Summary

- Data analysis
- Root-cause analysis
- Identification of strategies through stakeholder engagement
- Identification of measurable outcomes

11

Once you've identified those trends, through examination of the disaggregated data, then, in consultation with stakeholders, determine the root cause (the "why") behind the numbers. and identify policies, procedures, and strategies that will lead to more equitable access and success of your students. Determine what the measurable outcomes will be. What do you expect in one year? And then in two years?

Thank you

Questions?

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12

That concludes the presentation. Now let's open it up for questions. Please submit any questions you may have by using the chat feature.