

Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)

Legislative Background

The bill was forwarded to the president for signature, and was signed into law on July 31, 2018 as Public Law 115-224.

Purpose of Act (Additions):

- Focus on increasing employment opportunities for special populations.
- Employability skills of students who are in a CTE POS.

Definitional Changes

Several definitions in current law were amended or added to align terminology with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Highlights of the changes and additions are included below.

Career and Technical Education

Significant changes were made to the definition of “Career and Technical Education,” (has implications as to what can be funded). The new definition requires that course content must be aligned with ESSA’s state-identified academic standards. There is a new emphasis on “in-demand” industry sectors and occupations. The definition also references “recognized postsecondary credentials”; limited to industry-recognized credentials, certificates, or associate degrees to ensure funding remains focused on sub-baccalaureate credentials. The definition also includes new references to work-based learning, career exploration, and secondary-postsecondary connection (which are not specifically required by the law).

Career and Academic Counseling

Adds out of school youth to the list of students who should be provided/have access to career guidance and academic counseling, including information about training, secondary education options, dual or concurrent enrollment programs, work based learning, financial literacy and support services as well as direct support for special populations to support persistence and completion of CTE POS or career pathways.

Credit Transfer Agreement

This new definition encompasses formal agreements among and between secondary and postsecondary education institutions that grant transcribed postsecondary credit. The definition specifically points out that these credits include those granted to students through a variety of means, such as dual or concurrent enrollment programs; on the basis of performance on technical assessments and more. This is referenced within the definition of an articulation agreement and in the secondary performance indicator.

Professional Development

A new, formal definition is modeled off the professional development definition in ESSA, but contains more CTE-relevant language. Professional development is defined as activities that

are integral for providing educators with the knowledge and skills needed to enable students to succeed in CTE, and that are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused, practicable and evidence-based. (A list of possible activities and topics is also included.)

Programs of Study

A new, formal definition for CTE programs of study is introduced here and emphasized throughout the legislation. A CTE program of study is defined as a coordinated, non-duplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary level that incorporates challenging, state-identified academic standards; addresses academic and technical knowledge, as well as employability skills (undefined in the law); is aligned to the needs of industries in the state, region, Tribal community, or local area; progresses in content specificity; has multiple “entry and exit points” (allowing for credentialing); and ultimately culminates in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential (industry recognized certificate, completion of apprenticeship certificate, license recognized by the State or Federal Government or associate or baccalaureate degree).

Special Populations

Two new categories of special population students are added to the current definition to align with ESSA.

- (a) individuals with disabilities;
- (b) individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth;
- (c) individuals preparing for non-traditional fields;
- (d) single parents, including single pregnant women;
- (e) out-of-workforce individuals;
- (f) English learners;
- (g) homeless individuals;**
- (h) youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system; and
- (i) youth with parents on active duty in the armed forces.**

Support Services

Services related to curriculum modification, equipment modification, classroom modification, supportive personnel, including paraprofessionals and specialized instructional support personnel and instructional aids and devices.

Work-based Learning

A new, formal definition of work-based learning emphasizes sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings (including internships) or simulated environments. Under the definition, work-based learning fosters in-depth, first-hand engagement with the required tasks of a career field and aligned to curriculum.

Local Application (Sec. 134)

The “local plan” is renamed the “local application” and is restructured into three pieces:

- a. the actual application components;
- b. the comprehensive needs assessment; and
- c. consultation requirements.

Application Components

State agencies may add additional requirements (as under current law), but the following specific elements are required:

1. A description of the results of the comprehensive needs assessment;
2. Information on the CTE course offerings and activities to be provided with Perkins funds, which shall include at least one state-approved program of study;
3. A description of how collaboration with local workforce development boards and other local workforce agencies, one-stop delivery systems, and other partners, will provide a series of career exploration and career guidance activities;
4. A description of how the academic and technical skills of students participating in CTE programs will be strengthened through integration of academic and CTE components of such programs;
5. A description of how activities will be provided to prepare special populations for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations leading to self-sufficiency; prepare CTE participants for non-traditional fields; provide equal access for special populations to CTE courses, and programs of study; and ensure that special populations will not be discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of special populations;
6. A description of the work-based learning opportunities that will be provided to students participating in CTE programs and how employers will be encouraged to develop or expand work-based learning opportunities for CTE students;
7. A description of how the eligible recipient will provide students participating in CTE the opportunity to gain postsecondary credit while still attending high school, as practicable;
8. A description of how the recruitment, preparation, retention, and training, including professional development, of teachers, faculty, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel will be accomplished; and
9. A description of how disparities or gaps in performance between groups of students will be addressed.

Comprehensive needs assessment

This is the largest addition to the application. The needs assessment must include five elements:

1. Student performance on the performance indicators, including the performance of special populations and subgroups;
2. Whether programs are of sufficient size, scope, and quality to meet the needs of all students served by the eligible recipient and are meeting labor market needs;
3. Progress toward the implementation of CTE programs and programs of study;
4. How the eligible recipient will improve recruitment, retention, and training of CTE professionals, including underrepresented groups; and
5. Progress toward implementation of equal access to high-quality CTE courses and programs of study, for all students.

Needs Assessment Consultation Requirements

Applicants are required to consult with a number of groups during the needs assessment process and development of the local application. These groups include secondary and postsecondary educators, administrators and other support staff; state or local workforce development boards; business and industry representatives; parents and students; representatives of special populations; representatives of agencies serving out-of-school youth, homeless children and youth; at-risk youth; representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations in the state (where applicable); and any other stakeholders required by DPI. Continued consultation with these groups is also required in order to address updates to the needs assessment, ensure that programs remain responsive to labor market and employer needs, give employers opportunities to provide input into programs, identify work-based learning opportunities, and ensure funding is coordinated with other local resources.