



Perkins Career and Technical Education Primer

Accountability

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) gives states greater flexibility to set performance levels in their accountability systems for career and technical education (CTE) programs. But it requires states to prioritize the performance of historically underserved students in those systems and involve stakeholders, as defined by the law, in the process during the development of state plans. The law also requires states to include in their accountability systems at least one measure of program quality for middle and high school students.

Accountability Indicators at the Secondary School Level

State plans for implementing Perkins V must include the accountability indicators listed below for students identified as “CTE concentrators” at the secondary school level:

- four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and, at the state’s discretion, the extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate;
- proficiency on state academic standards;
- percentage of high school graduates who participate in postsecondary education or advanced training, military service, or a service program; volunteer with the Peace Corps; or are employed;
- a new postsecondary indicator of CTE program quality such as the percentage of high school graduates who (1) earn recognized postsecondary credentials, (2) earn postsecondary credits, or (3) participate in work-based learning; and
- percentage of students in CTE programs that lead to “nontraditional” fields, as defined by states.

Annually, states must report data on student performance on these indicators in the aggregate and disaggregated by student subgroup. States must report this data for each CTE program or program of study or by career cluster in cases where it is impractical to disaggregate data by the CTE program or program of study.

Setting Performance Levels (Goals)

Perkins V eliminates the need for states to agree with the U.S. Secretary of Education on their performance levels for the accountability indicators required under the law. Instead, states must involve stakeholders in the development of their Perkins state plans and performance levels and institute a public comment process to gather feedback on the degree to which the performance levels

- meet the requirements of the law;
- support the improvement of all CTE concentrators, including student subgroups; and
- support the needs of the local education and business communities.

Additionally, states that want to adjust performance levels after the first two years of implementing the Perkins state plan must set performance levels that are higher than the actual performance of the two most recent program years (except in unusual circumstances).

Focus on Historically Underserved Students

States must account for the performance of historically underserved students when setting their performance levels for each of the accountability indicators under the law. States and districts are required “continually [to] make meaningful progress toward improving the performance of all career and technical education students including the subgroups of students” identified under the Every Student Succeeds Act—students from low-income households, students with disabilities, English learners, and students of color.



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