



Innovating for Equity and Excellence

Recommendations for Implementing Perkins V

At a time when innovation and flexibility have been lauded and prioritized in federal education policy, the passage of the **Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)** presents a unique opportunity for state education and workforce leaders to explore innovative ways to transform postsecondary outcomes for historically underserved students. The urgency of the moment is evident. While 80 percent of good-paying jobs require postsecondary education,¹ in 2017 less than 50 percent of Americans between twenty-five and sixty-four years old held a quality credential beyond high school.² The statistics are even more alarming for Americans from historically underserved groups. Only about 24 percent each of Latinos and Native Americans and about 30 percent of African Americans held an associate's degree or higher in 2017.³

Meanwhile, a lack of qualified teachers presents a significant barrier to ensuring that all students have access to high-quality career pathways. In a nationwide listing of teacher shortages in School Year 2017–18, thirty-two states reported a shortage of career and technical education (CTE) educators and more than forty states reported shortages of educators in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields.⁴ This data reveals an urgent need to improve and innovate learning opportunities to ensure that more young people, particularly those who historically have been underserved, are prepared for the growing demands of the U.S. economy.

But with urgency comes an exciting opportunity for educators, policymakers, business and industry leaders, and community members to collaborate to deliver on the promise of the new Perkins V law—“to develop more fully the academic knowledge and technical and employability skills of secondary education students and postsecondary education students” who participate in CTE.

As organizations that work with and represent education researchers, policymakers, practitioners, students, business leaders, state and local advocates, and CTE leaders nationwide, **we offer the following recommendations for implementing Perkins V in states:**

- 1. Align Perkins V with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).** States should (a) align their college- and career-ready indicators of school quality and student success under ESSA with the program quality indicators required under Perkins V; (b) adopt high-quality CTE pathways and programs of study as a school improvement strategy; (c) align efforts to attract, prepare, and retain CTE educators with efforts under Title II of ESSA; and (d) align challenging state academic standards under ESSA with relevant CTE standards.
- 2. Prioritize improving the performance of student subgroups.** States and eligible recipients should implement improvement plans for student subgroups who do not meet state-determined performance levels on the core indicators of performance in the law.
- 3. Prioritize high-quality CTE programs and programs of study.** States can utilize reserve funds and state leadership funds to implement innovative high-quality, evidence-based CTE programs for students of all backgrounds.

More than 95 percent of all jobs created since the Great Recession have gone to workers with at least some college education.⁵ The reauthorization of key federal laws, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, ESSA, and Perkins V, affords states the flexibility to innovate for equity and excellence and close the skill gaps in workforce preparation that currently exist for too many Americans.

These recommendations are grounded in evidence-based programs and promising approaches for preparing students for the twenty-first-century work environment. They provide states with practical guidance for applying Perkins V, with a focus on meeting the needs of historically underserved groups of students.

We encourage states to take full advantage of this unique moment to prioritize equity and quality when implementing Perkins V, utilizing these recommendations and strategies to engage educators, policymakers, members of the business community, and leaders at institutions of higher education to realize the power and promise of Perkins V for *all* students.

For additional information about Perkins V, visit all4ed.org/perkins.



Endnotes

- 1 A. P. Carnevale et al., *Three Educational Pathways to Good Jobs: High School, Middle Skills, and Bachelor's Degree* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2018), <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/3pathways/>. A “good job” is defined as “paying a minimum of \$35,000 for workers between the ages of 25 and 44 and at least \$45,000 for workers between the ages of 45 and 64. This results in 2016 median earnings of \$56,000 for workers without a bachelor’s degree, up from \$55,000 in 2015; median earnings of \$75,000 for workers with a bachelor’s degree or higher; and overall median earnings of \$65,000 for all good jobs.”
- 2 Lumina Foundation, “A Stronger Nation: Learning Beyond High School Builds American Talent,” <http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2019/#nation> (accessed March 26, 2019).
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 U.S. Department of Education, “Teacher Shortage Areas,” <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/pol/tsa.html#list> (accessed June 28, 2019).
- 5 A. P. Carnevale, T. Jayasundera, and A. Gulish, *America’s Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2016), <https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Americas-Divided-Recovery-web.pdf>.

The **Alliance for Excellent Education** (All4Ed) is a Washington, DC–based national policy, practice, and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all students, particularly those underperforming and those historically underserved, graduate from high school ready for success in college, work, and citizenship. all4ed.org

The **Center for American Progress** (CAP) is an independent nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans, through bold, progressive ideas, as well as strong leadership and concerted action. CAP’s aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the country. americanprogress.org

JFF is a national nonprofit that drives transformation in the American workforce and education systems. For thirty-five years, JFF has led the way in designing innovative and scalable solutions that create access to economic advancement for all. jff.org

The **Learning Policy Institute** (Institute) conducts and communicates independent, high-quality research to improve education policy and practice. Working with policymakers, researchers, educators, community groups, and others, the Institute seeks to advance evidence-based policies that support empowering and equitable learning for each and every child. Nonprofit and nonpartisan, the Institute connects policymakers and stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels with the evidence, ideas, and actions needed to strengthen the education system from preschool through college and career readiness. learningpolicyinstitute.org

The **Linked Learning Alliance** (Alliance) serves the coalition of educators, employers, and community organizations dedicated to improving the education system and advancing equity and excellence through expanded access to Linked Learning. The Alliance provides a collective voice for this field, advocates for policies that support the Linked Learning approach, sets the quality standard for Linked Learning in practice, and brings diverse stakeholders together to improve outcomes for students. linkedlearning.org

NAF is a national network of education, business, and community leaders who work together to ensure that high school students are college, career, and future ready. NAF’s educational design ignites students’ passion for learning and gives businesses the opportunity to shape America’s future workforce by transforming the learning environment to include STEM-infused industry-specific curricula and work-based learning experiences, including paid internships. naf.org

The **National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc.** (Center for Assessment), a Dover, NH–based not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation, strives to increase student learning through more meaningful educational assessment and accountability practices. The Center for Assessment engages in deep partnerships with state and district education leaders to design, implement, and evaluate assessment and accountability policies and programs, and to design technically sound policy solutions to support important educational goals. nciea.org

Photos by Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action



@All4Ed



facebook.com/All4ed