



NSBA Advocacy Institute 2017 CALIFORNIA BACKGROUND

Career and Technical Education

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as authorized through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides local education leaders new flexibility and tools to achieve California's vision for educational excellence and equity.

However, in addressing the needs of students for being college **and** career ready, Congress must also update the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act to reflect the realities and needs of the current post-secondary landscape and the opportunities and challenges facing the nation's economy.

The Perkins Act has long been a positive force for educational improvement and much of the law's basic framework remains effective, but schools require changes to help career and technical education (CTE) fulfill its potential for closing skills gaps and creating meaningful opportunities for students. Perkins programs are vital to California's efforts to strengthen the connections between secondary and postsecondary education.

Effective CTE helps prepare students for careers, as well as the post-secondary learning that virtually every career now requires. CTE programs improve student academic and technical knowledge and skills, align instruction with the economy's needs and benefit future employees and employers alike.

There are a number of areas in which Congress should improve the Perkins Act to promote expanded access for students to high quality CTE programs. These areas include alignment with the ESSA, ensuring expanded access for all students to participate in CTE programs that meet both the educational needs of the students and the employment needs of local communities.

Last year, the House passed the bipartisan [*Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*](#). It is expected that this legislation will be the premise for reauthorization efforts in 2017. The bill would align CTE with provisions for college- and career-readiness in ESSA, encourage greater public-private partnerships between school districts, employers and institutions of higher education; increase opportunities for apprenticeships and credentialing; retain current formula grant funding; and strengthen support for career guidance and academic counseling, as well as professional development for educators.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee postponed a mark-up of its respective bill due to concerns with specific provisions, including measures that would have restricted the authority of the U.S. Department of Education.

As Congress moves forward to modernize CTE, CSBA urges that legislation be approved that aligns skills with the 21st Century economy, facilitate partnerships with industry and other stakeholders, strengthens accountability and promotes innovation.

CTE programs need to be collaborative between both secondary and post-secondary institutions with the ability for students to attend high school and higher education courses simultaneously, and to work towards industry certifications in an uninterrupted manner.

In recent years, California prioritized deeply engaging all students in relevant learning experiences and helping them attain the strong foundations needed for success in college, career and life. A reauthorized and updated Carl Perkins Act would further strengthen those foundations.

TALKING POINTS:

It is time to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Act in order to update programs and allow them to better address the training and employment needs of students. Specific program recommendations include:

- **Perkins should support state and local efforts to expand access to CTE opportunities, particularly for students living in the nation's most economically distressed communities (both urban and rural).**
- **CTE programs should be collaborative efforts among school leaders, business, industry and higher education. The next Perkins Act should encourage local CTE committees that include employers as core members and who are tasked with conducting a comprehensive needs assessment as a first step in defining and delivering programs of study.**
- **ESSA provides that states demonstrate the alignment between academic achievement standards and CTE standards, as well as the ability for states to include additional measures of career readiness in holding schools and districts accountable for student achievement. The next Perkins Act should build on these improvements and require further alignment of academic goals, measures, supports and interventions, with those used for evaluating and improving CTE programs.**
- **Further, as with ESSA, states and school should have the authority to set long-term goals, interim targets, performance indicators (e.g., attainment of academic and technical skills, graduation rate, and post-secondary success) and implement an array of supports and interventions to promote continuous improvement in CTE programs.**

- In order to ensure that schools are able to hire high-quality candidates for CTE positions, Perkins reauthorization should provide incentives for states to address staffing challenges, including the flexibility address future workforce needs as they arise.
- There should also be district-designed professional learning opportunities that include core academic teachers and CTE teachers that also involve efforts to promote the incorporation of skilled trade experts into the classroom.
- The new Perkins Act should support the integration of CTE and dual enrollment, such as incentives for the development of courses of study based on industry valued curriculum and leading to industry-recognized certification.
- Finally, the new Perkins Act should also call on states to ensure students can easily transfer credits and skill attainment from high school to work and postsecondary education. These relatively simple steps can reduce tuition costs by helping ensure recognition of dual enrollment credits, reduce time to degree and avoid duplication of services between institutions.

INFORMATION POINTS:

- Bring information to your Representatives about what types of CTE programs you are offering and how you have coordinated those programs with both post-secondary institutions in your area and with local employers to meet employment demands.
- Your Representatives also need to know what barriers your district and/or county office of education is facing in expanding program offerings to meet student and employment needs.
- Bring information on success stories regarding how your students have achieved in graduating and moving on to post-secondary or employment opportunities.