

KEY EXTRACTS

Perkins V State Plan: Vermont

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Background

In July 2018, Congress passed, and the President signed the Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the 21st Century Act (the “Act”) into law. The Act was a reauthorized version of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (aka “Perkins IV”). The reauthorized Act is referred to as “Perkins” or “Perkins V.”

As described in the purpose of the law:

“The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (“Perkins V”) is focused on systems alignment and program improvement. Perkins is critical to ensuring that programs are prepared to meet the ever-changing needs of learners and employers. Perkins affords states and local communities the opportunity to implement a vision for CTE that uniquely supports the range of educational needs of students, encourages exploration through career preparation and balances those student needs with the current and emerging needs of the economy.

Overview

Vermont’s State Perkins plan is oriented to both the Governor’s priorities:

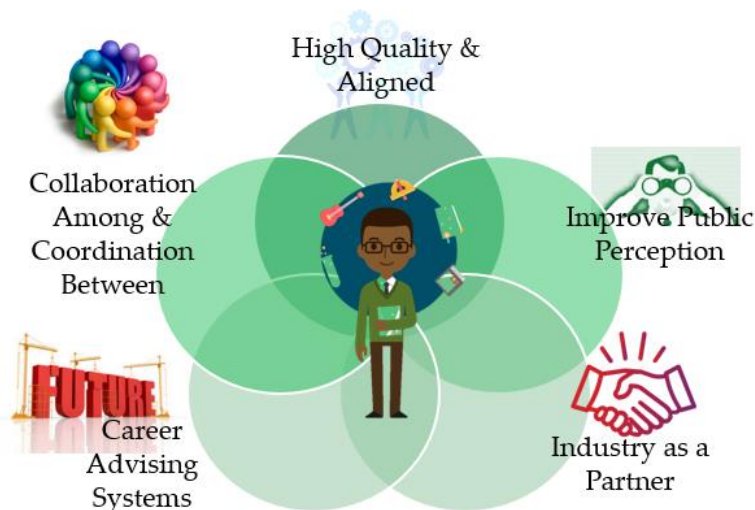
- protecting the most vulnerable populations,
- growing the economy, and
- making Vermont more affordable)

and priorities identified in the ESSA and WIOA state plans. It is also grounded by the Agency of Education’s strategic vision and five broad goals and related priorities.

Our vision for career technical education is:

All Vermont learners attain their post-secondary goals by having access to career and technical education systems that are equitable, efficient, integrated and collaborative.

We will achieve this by working toward these aspirational goals. Each goal will have several strategies:



- *Supporting only high-quality, rigorous, aligned CTE career pathway programs that are informed by available state, New England regional, and national labor market data.*
- *Engaging industry as a full partner in the creation, validation and maintenance of CTE programs.*
- *Developing and implementing career advisement systems that support career exploration and that allow all learners to be successful in pathways of interest.*
- *Supporting collaboration among systems and promoting coordination between systems as a means of ensuring equity and of providing students with a high-quality experience.*
- *Improving the public perception of CTE.*

The collective goals across CTE, Perkins, Workforce Development, and WIOA, speak to:

1. Protecting vulnerable populations and providing avenues for all Vermonters to access meaningful and relevant post-secondary education to be able to advance along a career path to employment with self-sustaining wages;
2. Using current labor market information to inform policy, regulation, and programmatic decisions;
3. The need for collaboration and coordination to ensure all aspects of the education and workforce development systems can function efficiently and equitably;
4. The critical role that business and industry plays in these systems;
5. The importance of visibility and promotion of these systems and the programs that comprise them; and
6. The importance of robust career advising and other support services for participants of all programs.

Goals & Strategies

By 2024, Vermont plans to use its federal investments under Perkins V to achieve four high leverage goals. More specific strategies are outlined in the State plan.

1. Offer high quality Career Pathways/Programs of Study aligned with high skill, or high wage, or in-demand occupations.
 - a. Continue and expand upon the State’s existing work to develop a State approved Career Pathways System.
 - b. All State Board of Education rules governing CTE in Vermont will be revised to be more reflective of other education and workforce development policies passed in the last five years.
 - c. Review and revise secondary CTE program standards
 - d. By working to ensure coherence among secondary education, career technical education, and post-secondary education systems, we will increase student

aspirations and participation in post-secondary education and training pathways.

- e. By providing sense-making of all available local, state, and Federal funding options related to post-secondary education, we aspire to reduce the overall burden of student loan debt.
2. Ensure the CTE teacher and leader workforce is prepared for a student-centered education landscape and supported in a continuous improvement environment.
 - a. The Agency will support the development and implementation of an annual state-wide conference for CTE.
 - b. The Agency will advocate for districts to provide up to two common professional development days for CTE during the school year.
 - c. Secondary and post-secondary CTE teachers will be better prepared through ongoing professional development ensuring they have the most up-to-date technical knowledge and skills in their industries.
 - d. Secondary and post-secondary CTE teachers will receive opportunities for collaboration with secondary educator colleagues, professional learning, and supports to ensure they provide academically rich proficiency-based instruction.
 - e. Secondary and post-secondary CTE educators will be better prepared through ongoing professional development focused on supporting historically marginalized populations.
 3. Build on career and academic advising across the continuum of secondary to post-secondary education.
 - a. The Agency will expand upon previous work with Vermont's teacher preparation programs to ensure that both CTE content and integrating career awareness and career development across the curriculum are incorporated into the programs.
 - b. The Agency will, with partners, identify and publish on its website recommended course taking (including DE courses) from grades 9 to 14 via a formal plan of study document to assist in advising students, based on their career interests and aspirations.
 - c. The Agency will work to support implementation of comprehensive career guidance systems in high schools, in partnership with regional CTE centers and related Perkins investments
 - d. The Agency will support ongoing professional development related to developing adults' equity literacy in both formal and informal advising and counseling capacities.

- e. Every school district serving students in grades 7-12 will benefit from Perkins and existing state funds through improvements upon career guidance systems and career development activities in coordination with the regional CTE system.
 - f. Ensure that every student can participate and succeed in all aspects of a CTE program, including introductory programs.
4. Ease and simplify transition points.
- a. Through quarterly Perkins coordinating meetings, there will be an increase in state-wide collaboration and coordination between secondary CTE, including CTSOs, and post-secondary education, eventually working to include middle and high school partners.
 - i. As part of the state's anticipated career advising and ongoing Career Pathways development work, partners across the K-12 and post-secondary education systems will establish common processes and supports to reduce barriers to employment and continued training and education.
 - ii. The Agency will require state level articulation agreements to be in place for state developed career pathways programs and will require programs of study to be implemented at the local level.
 - iii. As part of the Agency's broader implementation of flexible pathways, the Agency will work to improve and expand career and college counseling and career exploration programming through technical guidance such as the Flexible Pathways Implementation toolkit.
 - iv. The Agency will develop criteria for recognizing secondary CTE programs as "pre-apprenticeship." Through promotion of these programs and their connections to Registered Apprenticeship programs we will see an increase in registered apprentices.
 - v. The Agency and partner post-secondary institutions will ensure that dual/concurrent enrollment courses in CTE centers are accessible to students, regardless of the qualifications of their teacher or the location of the CTE center.
 - vi. Earlier exposure to career development activities is essential to our success. Students in 7th & 8th grades should have exposure to career exploration and career development activities involving regional CTE centers. All students in 9th and 10th grade should have access to introductory CTE programs, whether they are provided via distance learning platforms like VTVLC, by a CTE center at the partner high school, or via some other delivery model.

- vii. The Agency will continue to provide support and guidance to IEP teams who are helping students with disabilities transition into CTE and into the workforce after high school.

Plan Development

Strategic Vision

In late winter 2018, and in anticipation of Congress passing a reauthorized version of Perkins, the Agency of Education (AOE) engaged in a six-month long multiphase process to involve the public and interested stakeholders in developing a strategic vision and aspirational goals for CTE in Vermont. During this process the AOE interviewed a cross-section of Vermonters including students, parents, CTE administrators, school administrators, industry representatives, workforce development partners, and policy makers; deployed a fifty-question online survey with more than 40% of the responses obtained from students and families; and held an all-day in-person meeting with a broad group of stakeholders who helped the Agency to interpret the data collected and form the vision and goals for CTE in Vermont. We also validated the results by meeting with focus groups of CTE students and teachers in four randomly selected regions of the state.

Working Groups and Surveys

During the late spring and summer of 2019, the Agency formed four working groups: secondary CTE, post-secondary CTE, joint secondary/post-secondary CTE, and comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA). Community College of Vermont, Vermont Technical College, Vermont Department of Labor and Vermont Student Assistance Corporation participated in the post-secondary meetings.

Statewide surveys of special populations coordinators, CTE counseling coordinators, and adult CTE coordinators were conducted to develop a better understanding of the special populations they serve, the needs of those students, and the professional development needs of secondary CTE program teachers. The survey results were also used to develop a better understanding of special populations data collection protocols within the CTE system, and how they can be used to inform training and support of administrators and data coordinators across the state to increase accuracy and consistency.

Agency staff met formally and informally with the Director of Workforce Development at the Department of Labor initially to discuss opportunities for overlap between Perkins and WIOA, and then finally to plan opportunities for further collaboration on the use of WorkKeys and alignment among the various “career counseling” roles and responsibilities across state and Federal programs as part of the overall workforce development plan.

Public Comment

The AOE created an e-mail address to receive comments and directed interested parties to our website and to the e-mail address. The public comment period was open from January 22, 2020 to February 21, 2020. Information about the comment period was posted on the AOE website,

placed in the weekly field memo, monthly workforce newsletter, announced via social media, and direct solicitations from the CTE team were sent to individuals and organizations.

Public hearings were held in four regions of the state, and warned in accordance with state law in newspapers in surrounding communities:

- North Country Career Center, Community Room, Newport, VT 05855
 - Jan. 23, 2020 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- Howard Dean Education Center, Atrium, Springfield, VT 05156
 - Jan. 27, 2020 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- Bellows Free Academy, Auditorium, St Albans, VT 05478
 - Jan. 28, 2020 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- Central Vermont Career Center, Conference Room 136, Barre, VT 05641
 - Jan. 30, 2020 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

All in all, 379 individuals, many of whom were teachers, were involved in the process of developing the State plan.

Local Requirements & Processes

One of new components for Perkins V requires each eligible applicant to conduct a “Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA).” Vermont envisions the continuous improvement process where the key elements of “plan, do, check, act” are mapped to the CLNA, the grant application, and the accountability/program improvement requirements:

The State plan outlines both the content and the process for how the CLNA is to be conducted. The CLNA must be conducted every two years.

Process: There are three phases to the process:

1. Needs Analysis – determining needs by understanding target, quality, and performance thresholds to meet standards;
2. Gap Analysis -- measuring, assessing, and analyzing what the current state of performance, output and capacity is within the subject region; and finally,
3. Local Plan Development – identifying and prioritizing strategies that will address the performance gaps to meet standards.

Each applicant must ensure that, at a minimum, they have met with or consulted several groups or individuals identified in the law, ranging from secondary education partners, business and industry leaders, and parents.

Each applicant must complete the CLNA self-assessment tool created by the Agency of Education and must maintain records demonstrating compliance with the State plan and the law.

Accountability & Alignment with Other Federal Programs

Secondary Accountability

The Federal government’s investment of Perkins funds in the CTE system represents an investment in building, expanding, and improving a bridge from secondary education to the workforce. The education system investments come via Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the workforce development system investments are made primarily through WIOA. Each investment has a state plan that has a guiding vision and goals. It is critical to the success of the state’s efforts that there is alignment and ultimately coherence across the vision and goals of each program’s investments.

The following academic and college and career ready performance indicators are proposed for the secondary education system:

- Academic:
 - Graduation rate – both cohort and extended rates
 - Academic proficiency in English language arts
 - Academic proficiency in mathematics
 - Academic proficiency in science
- College & Career Ready (program quality measures defined in the law):
 - Industry recognized credential attainment (most equitably available, for Federal reporting)
 - Work-based Learning (state-level indicator)
 - Dual and concurrent enrollment (state-level indicator)
- Access Indicators (State optional):
 - Introductory course/pre-tech participation rate, reporting by high school in the region
 - Continuation rate from pre-tech to non-introductory CTE program
 - Program participation rate, reporting by high school in the region

Post-Secondary Accountability

The law requires the State to measure and report on the success of “concentrators” in post-secondary CTE programs. These success measures in the law are:

- 6-month placement after program completion
- Earned recognized post-secondary credential (includes industry recognized credentials, certificates, or degrees)
- Non-traditional program concentration (intending to measure the prevalence and persistence of men and women in programs that lead to occupations not traditionally filled by their gender) (e.g. men in nursing; women in engineering)

Vermont has also elected to develop a state-level post-secondary metric that looks at recent high school graduates who enter Community College of Vermont and Vermont Technical College with at least 6 post-secondary credits, a metric that communicates the

importance of the State’s investments in dual and concurrent enrollment programs as a means of elevating and advancing students along the pathway to post-secondary education.

Addressing Disparities or Gaps in Performance

At the state level, the Agency of Education will analyze data on the core indicators of performance to identify gaps in performance across students’ groups, across programs at CTE centers, and across each CTE center. The gaps in performance, particularly of special populations, and of historically marginalized populations, will be examined for trends across the state.

Recipients of the funds must report on these populations in the accountability model which includes data-informed improvement planning via the CLNA. Any population that is not performing well when compared to the larger population will require additional support and the needs would either be identified in the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, or the annual accountability determinations, or both. This ensures that Federal funds are used on programs and services aimed to close the performance gaps for our most vulnerable populations.

State Determined Levels of Performance and Local Performance Negotiation

At the beginning of the 4-year plan (2020-2021) the Agency will determine performance levels for the entire state, based on the average of the last three years’ worth of data. These data are disaggregated by school. The state will negotiate local performance levels with each school, based on their specific data in aggregate, and disaggregated by “special populations” and historically marginalized populations as outlined in the law and in the State plan.

Schools and CTE programs that broadly miss targets, or that miss targets for sub-populations of students will be required to create improvement plans and direct increasing percentages of their allocation to improving performance focused on specific populations of students.

Budget & Allocations

<p style="text-align: center;">PERKINS BUDGET SUMMARY</p> <p>Vermont 2018 Allocation: \$5,037,372</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Amount reserved for eligible recipients (85%):</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Reserve: \$400,000</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(split 50%/50% secondary/post-secondary)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Locals Funds Formula Distribution: \$3,881,766</p>
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(Split 75% to secondary; 25% to post-secondary)	
Amount reserved for State leadership activities (10%):	\$ 503,737
1% assigned to Community High School of VT	
\$60,000 assigned to promote “non-traditional” careers	
Amount reserved to administer the State plan (5%):	\$251,867

Section 111 of the law requires the Secretary of Education (U.S.) to allot to Vermont an amount that is not less than that received in FY18. In FY18, Vermont received \$5,037,372 (the “Perkins V allocation”).

From that allocation, and according to requirements and formulas described in Section 112 of the law, Vermont assigns 85%¹ of its allocation to be distributed to eligible secondary and post-secondary recipients by processes described in Sections 131 and 132 of the law, and addressed later in this section (primarily based on poverty as either indicated by Census at the secondary level or by number of Pell grant recipients at post-secondary level). Of the 85%, the budget will reserve² \$400,000 (9.34%) for a 50%/50% split between “secondary reserve” and “post-secondary reserve.” **Note that this is an increase for secondary of about \$40,000 and for post-secondary of about \$140,000 over amounts allocated under Perkins IV.**

The Agency of Education will award funds under section 112(c) using a competitive process. The maximum annual award for secondary will be \$25,000; for post-secondary it will be \$100,000.

Vermont will divide the remainder of the 85% into “Perkins Basic – Secondary” and “Perkins Basic – Post-secondary” budget lines via a 75%/25% split, respectively. We believe strongly that by assigning the majority of funds to programs that serve high school students, primarily through implementing or improving college and career

¹ Section 112(a)(1): “From the amount allotted to each State...the eligible agency shall make available – not less than 85% for distribution under section 131 or 132, of which not more than 15% of the 85% may be used in accordance with Section 112(c).”

² Section 112(c)

counseling and career development activities, we will have a greater impact on post-secondary career and college aspirations of those high school students, improve career and college readiness and reduce the need for remediation at the post-secondary level (and thus potentially reduce student loan burdens), improve transition points between secondary and post-secondary, and have a longer-lasting, positive effect on our students and citizens.

The law allows up to 10% of the Perkins V allocation held for “leadership” activities. Vermont will use the maximum of 10% to fund the following activities required or permitted by law:

- 1% of the Perkins V allocation (\$50,374) to serve individuals in State correctional institutions;
- \$60,000 for services that prepare individuals for non-traditional fields;
- 0.1% of the leadership fund³ (\$504) to help recruit special populations to enroll in CTE programs;
- Remaining funds (\$392,859), in addition to those outlined above, will be used in accordance with requirements established in the law and as detailed earlier in this plan.

The Agency of Education, as the eligible entity that receives these funds, retains 5% of the Perkins V allocation for administration of this plan.

³ Section 112(a)(2)(C): an amount shall be made available for the recruitment of special populations to enroll in career and technical education programs, which shall be not less than the lesser of (i) an amount equal to 0.1%; or (ii)\$50,000.