

AGENCY OF EDUCATION  
Montpelier, Vermont

**TEAM: Career Technical Education**

**ITEM:** Will the State Board of Education endorse the State Plan for the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (“Perkins V”).

<p><b>SECRETARY’S RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b> That the State Board of Education endorse the State Plan for the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act.</p>
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**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:**

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act at Section 122 [20 U. S. C. 2342] states: “each eligible agency desiring assistance....shall prepare and submit to the Secretary (of Education) a State Plan for a 4-year period.”

The Act defines “eligible agency” as:

“a State board designated or created **consistent with State law as the sole State agency responsible for the administration of career and technical education in the State** or for the supervision of the administration of career and technical education in the State.”

Authority, consistent with State law:

16 V. S. A. § 41:

Authority of Agency of Education to accept and use federal funds to aid education

- (a) The Agency of Education is designated as the sole state agency to establish and administer any statewide plan required as a condition for receipt of federal funds made available to the State for any educational purposes, including career technical education and adult education and literacy. The Agency shall also be the agency to accept and administer federal funds that require administration by a state education agency having jurisdiction of elementary and secondary education.
- (b) Subject to the approval of the Governor, the Agency may accept and use federal funds. It may establish criteria and procedures to conform with any requirements established for the use of the funds and may take such other action as may be required to comply with any condition for receipt of federal aid.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. In July 2018, Congress passed the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (Perkins V). This act, like all federal education and workforce development funds, requires the states to develop a State Plan that identifies how the state will invest the federal funds.
  - a. Perkins shares definitions with and requires alignment between the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA).
  - b. The Agency of Education is responsible for the administration and implementation of ESSA and Title II under WIOA.
  - c. Perkins funds apply at both the secondary and post-secondary levels.
2. On May 15, 2019, the State Board of Education endorsed the strategic vision and goals for CTE as put forward by the Agency of Education.
  - a. The strategic vision and goals provide the guiding tenets for the priorities of our Perkins V State Plan. We are using the federal investments in our CTE system to further the goals established by the citizens of Vermont.
3. Over the late spring and summer of 2019, the Agency of Education's CTE team held working group meetings to begin to develop the details of the State Plan with partners:
  - a. Regular review and approval meetings between the Student Pathways Division Director and Assistant Director and the Deputy Secretary in order to ensure alignment between current policies and federal and state program objectives.
  - b. Post-secondary working group meetings with representatives from the Community College of Vermont, Vermont Technical College, University of Vermont, Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, and the Vermont Department of Labor.
  - c. Agency of Education's CTE team held working group meetings with representatives from regional CTE centers.
  - d. Agency of Education's CTE team held two joint working group meetings with representatives from both groups to identify and address concerns about secondary – post-secondary alignment and transitions from high school to post-secondary education.
  - e. A cross sector team that assisted Agency of Education's CTE team in designing the comprehensive local needs assessment which included a high school principal, regional development corporation representative, special populations coordinator, AdvanceVT, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from the state colleges and the Vermont Department of Labor.
4. In late summer and early fall, Agency of Education's CTE team met with the following groups, in many cases, overlapping an existing meeting schedule, in order to inform them of the emerging State Plan details, to solicit their feedback, and to have targeted discussions on equity and the needs of certain "special populations" defined in the law:
  - a. Vermont State Colleges System leaders
  - b. Presidents and Academic Deans of Community College of Vermont and Vermont Technical College
  - c. CTE Center Special Populations Coordinators

- d. CTE Center School Counseling Coordinators
  - e. CTE Work-Based Learning Coordinators
  - f. Adult CTE Coordinators
  - g. Representatives of the Regional Advisory Board's supporting the Independent Schools hosting state-approved CTE centers.
  - h. CTE Teachers:
    - i. Cosmetology and Human Services
    - ii. Construction Technology including Electrical, and Plumbing and Heating
    - iii. Visual Arts
5. During the fall and early winter, Agency of Education's CTE team presented broad details of the plan to:
    - a. Joint Regional Advisory Board meeting of Hartford Area Career & Technology Center, and River Valley Technical Center
    - b. Regional Advisory Board of Stafford Technical Center
    - c. State of Vermont's Workforce Development Board
    - d. Employers at Northwest Technical Center
  6. Over 350 individuals have been involved in helping us develop this plan.
  7. During the last week of January 2020, Agency of Education's CTE team held four public hearings on the plan.
    - a. Hearings were advertised in advance of the hearings in the public notice section of newspapers around the state including: the Newport Daily Express, The Caledonian Record, Rutland Herald, Bennington Banner, Brattleboro Reformer, The Valley News, St. Albans Messenger, Addison Independent, Burlington Free Press, Seven Days, Times Argus, and the Herald of Randolph.
    - b. Information was posted on the Agency of Education's website, Facebook events were created, and details were sent out via twitter. Events were created on the Agency of Education's event calendar on its website and were cross posted to the public hearing calendar maintained by the Secretary of State's Office.
    - c. Hearings were held from 6 pm – 8 pm, with food provided in:
      - i. Newport
      - ii. Springfield
      - iii. St. Albans
      - iv. Barre
  8. Agency of Education's CTE team held a public comment period from January 21 to February 21. Details were provided in multiple presentations and were available on the Agency of Education's website. Notice of the public comment period was included in the warnings for the public hearings. A separate e-mail in-box was created to help manage the submission of comments.
    - a. Agency of Education's CTE team included information about the public hearings in the Agency of Education's Weekly Field Memo.
    - b. Agency of Education's CTE team solicited feedback by targeted e-mails to other state, regional, and local entities.
  9. Consistent with Section 122(e)(3) of the Act, on March 6th, the final version of the State Plan was transmitted to the Governor's office to provide him an opportunity to sign off on the plan or to express his objections which will be submitted to the Secretary of

Education along with the plan. The Vermont State Colleges and Department of Labor were invited to lodge any objections to the plan. Those objections are due April 6<sup>th</sup>.

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PLAN:

The draft plan and final plan and any supporting resource documents are or will be available here: (<https://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/flexible-pathways/career-technical-education/perkins-v>)

**Purpose:** By 2024, Vermont plans to use its federal investments under Perkins V to achieve four high leverage goals.

- 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) 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
    - i) CTE programs standards will be updated, allowing for more equitable recognition of student experience regardless of their home high school. This will also allow for state-wide articulation agreements with post-secondary institutions. Program content will need to be adjusted and may lead to changes in programming.
      - (1) Content standards will be updated to include concepts related to green and sustainable practices related to environmental impacts.
    - ii) The Agency of Education will convene meetings by career cluster and pathways to update programs standards. This work will coordinate with middle and high schools to be able to articulate to a proficiency-based transcript, and with business, industry, and post-secondary<sup>[1]</sup>partners to help ensure content standards offer credentials as part of pathways to high-skill, or high wage, or in demand occupations after graduation.
    - iii) Related to this work, the Agency of Education will lead efforts to ensure the standards are consistently implemented and that the CTE programs are organized by explicit courses.
    - iv) The Agency of Education will support professional development aimed at ensuring teachers and other professionals can implement the new standards with fidelity.

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<sup>[1]</sup> It should be noted that during the public comment period, one post-secondary institution said that it will be virtually impossible to implement state-wide articulation agreements in most program areas because there is no standardization across like programs in our CTE centers. The work of updating standards will aim to bring some standardization to like programs across the regional centers in order to accomplish the goals of this plan.

- v) 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.
  - vi) By providing sense-making of all the 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<sup>[2]</sup>.
    - a) The Agency of Education will support the development and implementation of an annual state-wide conference for CTE.
    - b) The Agency of Education will strongly encourage 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 and annual professional development focused on 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 are adequately prepared to provide academically rich proficiency-based instruction.
    - e) Secondary and post-secondary CTE teachers and administrators will be better prepared through ongoing or annual 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 of Education will expand upon previous work with Vermont’s teacher preparation programs to ensure content related to career technical education and to integrating career awareness and career development across the curriculum are incorporated into the programs
    - b) The Agency of Education will, with partners, identify and publish on its website recommended course taking (including DE courses) from grades 9 to 14 via a formal program (plan) of study document to assist in advising students, based on their career interests and aspirations.
    - c) The Agency of Education 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 of Education will initially focus on understanding existing career and academic advising practice across our secondary education and CTE systems.
    - e) The Agency of Education will support ongoing professional development, particularly related to developing equity literacy in both formal and informal advising and counseling capacities. It is important that adults recognize and manage their own biases, to better help students and families challenge societal and cultural pressures,

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<sup>[2]</sup> This strategy represents opportunities for alignment with the state’s ESSA plan.

understand the opportunities in the labor market and post-secondary education, and meaningfully connect all the pieces.

- f) Every school district serving students in grades 7-12 will have the opportunity to benefit directly or indirectly from Perkins and existing state funds in some way, primarily through improvements or expansions upon career guidance systems and career development activities in coordination with the regional CTE system.
  - g) Ensure that every student can participate in and succeed in all aspects of a CTE program, should they choose to participate in one, including introductory programs.
    - (1) One access point is offering multiple modalities for access and participation. One such instance is distance CTE offered through Vermont Virtual Learning Collaborative - a resource for delivering introductory CTE programs to at least half of the regions of the state. In offering expanded virtual and distance learning, it will be important to ensure that Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams contemplate the accommodations and modifications that will be necessary for students with disabilities to be successful.
- 4) Ease and simplify transition points.
- i) Through quarterly Perkins coordinating meetings, there will be an increase in state-wide collaboration and coordination between secondary CTE, including Career Technical Student Organizations (CTOs), and post-secondary education.
    - (1) The membership of these meetings may expand to include middle and high school partners.
  - b) 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.
  - c) The Agency of Education will work to ensure new opportunities for collaboration and coordination are explored and can be supported with Perkins or state funds, including the formation and support of consortia.
  - d) The Agency of Education 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.
  - e) The Agency of Education will create, publish, and train education stakeholders on state-wide credit transfer agreements.
  - f) As part of the Agency of Education's broader implementation of flexible pathways, the Agency of Education will work to improve and expand career and college counseling and career exploration programming through technical guidance such as the Flexible Pathways Implementation toolkit.<sup>[3]</sup>
  - g) The Agency of Education will develop criteria for recognizing secondary CTE programs as "pre-apprenticeship." Through promotion of these programs and their connections

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<sup>[3]</sup> <https://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/flexible-pathways>

to state Registered Apprenticeship programs, we will see an increase in registered apprentices.

- h) The Agency of Education 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.
- i) Earlier exposure to career development activities is essential to our success. Students in 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grades should have some exposure to career exploration and career development activities that involve the regional CTE centers. Students in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, regardless of their zip code, should have access to introductory CTE programs, whether they are provided via distance learning platforms like VTVLC, or provided by a CTE center at the partner high school, or via some other delivery model.
- j) The Agency of Education will continue to provide support and guidance to IEP teams working to support students transitioning into CTE and into the workforce after high school.

These goals will be achieved by paying attention to special populations in the accountability process, as described subsequently. At a minimum, by requiring program improvement plans oriented to the special populations identified in the law we serve to close equity (opportunity and achievement) gaps <sup>[4]</sup> for those vulnerable populations. The accountability system requires a continuous improvement process (i.e., comprehensive local needs assessment) that encourages data- and evidence-based reflections on student needs and informs improvement strategies linked with investment in specific programs and services that more effectively support every student.

1) ACCOUNTABILITY:

Refer to these documents, available through the link:

<https://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/flexible-pathways/career-technical-education/perkins-v>

- a) "Accountability for Special Populations"
- b) "Accountability for Secondary"
- c) "Accountability for Post-Secondary"

2) ALIGNMENT:

Refer to these documents, available through the link:

<https://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/flexible-pathways/career-technical-education/perkins-v>

- a) "Overview - Cross-walk of Strategic Vision and Goals"
- b) "Alignment – Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment"
- c) "Overview - Career Pathways & Programs of Study"

3) TRANSPARENCY & USES OF FUNDS:

Refer to these documents, available through the link:

<https://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/flexible-pathways/career-technical-education/perkins-v>

- a) "Key Federal Definitions and Proposed State Criteria"
- b) "Overview – Size, Scope, and Quality"
- c) "Transparency – Budget and Allocations"
- d) "Transparency – Required Uses of Funds"

**TIMELINE:**

1. The State’s Final Plan submission is due to the U. S. Department of Education by April 15, 2020.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

There are limited policy implications. The Agency of Education is proposing to use these funds in support of it’s already identified vision and goals. These funds are being invested in the state to further the aims of the vision.

**EDUCATION IMPLICATIONS:**

This State Plan outlines how the state intends to use federal funds to improve and expand, in the context of our Education Quality Standards, opportunities for students through coordinated career and college counseling, advising, and development activities; to expand and improve articulation and credit transfer options for students to increase transparency and access and as a means of shortening the time it takes to complete a credential or degree; and improve post-secondary enrollment and completion rates at partner institutions.

Our accountability system is linked to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA). We intend to ensure that assessments of student proficiency in mathematics and English language arts are relevant, applicable, and value-added for the juniors and seniors in CTE programs whom will be assessed. We also want to ensure that those assessments can provide real-time actionable information to inform appropriate interventions by educators.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Limited fiscal implications. This is not a new set of funds from the Federal government.

**STAFF AVAILABLE:**

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