



STATE DIRECTORS

National Association of State Directors
of Career Technical Education Consortium

The following comments are provided by the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc). Founded in 1920, NASDCTEc is the professional society of the state and territory agency heads responsible for career technical education. The association and its members have a commitment to quality education at the secondary and adult level. Our mission is to provide leadership for career technical education's role in education, workforce preparation and economic development.

Operational/Structural Suggestions

- We are not sure that the GPRA indicators correlate well with the Perkins indicators and as such may produce conflict. Further, we are not sure that the GPRA system is a productive one that measures the right things.
- Steps should be taken to firm up relationships and coordination between OVAE and DOL, particularly ETA. This needs to be a positive, collaborative working relationship. In addition, the same relationship building needs to be done between OVAE and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Office of Postsecondary. As CTE is viewed a tool in education reform, economic development and workforce development, these connections are essential and must be strengthened.
- OVAE may not be in the right line of command, organizationally. Under the last reorganization, OVAE was moved under the Under Secretary, which is almost exclusively higher education. It seems that this fit is ill placed, given the important connections that should exist between CTE and NCLB, postsecondary education and adult education. Structures and policies should make clear that CTE is not exclusively the purview of secondary or postsecondary but is both. Further, the fact that CTE plays a critical role in connecting all the learner levels (secondary, postsecondary and adult) is another consideration in its placement within the Department.
- As you know there has been a community college liaison for many years. The position was originally supposed to be housed in the Secretary's office, but has instead been placed in OVAE. We believe having a senior community college person (i.e. someone who has been a campus President) in the Department is critical. Thought should be given to placing this person in the office of the Secretary. However, having someone serve in this position trumps the placement of the person in the Department. We believe the priority should be ensuring the person has a right background, understanding, and appreciation for CTE and not just have a Title IV/HEA focus.

Thoughts about regulations, etc.

- There has been nothing egregious in guidance or regulations issued by the Department, but the rescission of the FERPA memo has caused quite a bit of backsliding. It would be helpful to have that reinstated.
- In addition, some sort of policy that allows for easier access to track students by social security numbers would be a tremendous help in our accountability efforts. The field has the will and



desire to follow students into postsecondary education and the workplace. This is essential to truly understanding long term labor market effects. However, the cost of data collection and the quality of the data collected under the current systems is prohibitive.

- The PART Tool used by OMB has been completely inappropriate for CTE and has been the “evidence” the Bush Administration has used to not fund Perkins. The PART tool was proposed as a research-based tool but was merely a political tool. We would like to sit down with the new leaders at the Department and talk about the most valid measures of success for CTE programs. Some correlation to the indicators in Perkins would be a beginning point.
- The process for getting guidance out has been cumbersome and slow. In some cases, the guidance has come after it is too late for states to do anything meaningful with it (e.g. guidance on state plans after most states had to have their plans into their state boards). Further, the timing of the negotiation process for performance indicators, as well as reporting of performance results could use some refinement.
- On a national level, NCES has no dedicated survey for CTE. In lieu of this, all the national research is the result of a cobbling together data from other NCES data sources and many of the NCES data sources are severely flawed as they do not include area technical schools in their sampling frames. Any NCES data that relies on CCD (Common Core of Data) has this problem. This is a serious issue because not only is the NCES data one of the primary sources for the National Assessment of CTE, but also because much of the research done by the National Research CTE also relies on this data as well.
- Given the economic downturn and its impact on state budgets, it is important for the Department to anticipate ways to deal with any requests for waivers of the state maintenance of effort provision of Perkins. The process is cumbersome and must be streamlined as the only time a state is going to ask for a waiver is in a time of crisis.

Secondary Postsecondary Split:

- A chart showing the split between secondary and postsecondary Perkins funding as a percentage by state is attached.

Budget and Appropriation Issues

- Because of across the board cuts in the FY 08 Labor HHS Ed Appropriations bill the funding level for Tech Prep dropped below the Hold Harmless level established in Perkins IV, which was set at the FY 98 level. Due to the formula this cut was disproportionately felt by small states such as AK, DE, NV, NH, RI, VT) to Tech Prep. It is important that funding for FY 09, at the least get to a level above FY 98 so this does not happen again this year.



- For Perkins Basic State Grants, a combination of years of frozen funding levels, across the board cuts, and inflation have eroded the ability of these programs to help create the pipeline of well educated and trained students that our country needs. Programs across the country are turning away students in critical need areas because they do not have sufficient capacity to enroll them (for example nursing and allied health fields). An increase in support of Perkins can help alleviate this capacity crisis. We can provide specific funding numbers if you would like.
- CTE programs have also been shown to keep students more engaged in school and thus lower drop out rates. A ratio of one CTE class for every two academic classes was shown to minimize the risk of students dropping out in a 2005 National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE) report.
- Students at schools with highly integrated and rigorous academic and CTE programs have significantly higher student achievement in reading, mathematics, and science than do students at programs with less integrated programs, as reported by the Southern Regional Education Board.

Policy considerations that the Incoming Administration might consider:

State's Career Clusters Initiative

- Assistant Secretary McNeil began the work around the 16 career clusters. In the absence of federal support, NASDCTEc continued to lead these efforts, in partnership with employers, educators at both the secondary and post secondary levels and labor leaders. The work of the State's Career Clusters Initiative has really been the road map our community has used to literally transform vocational education into career technical education that incorporates rigorous academic and technical content, links secondary and postsecondary education and prepared individuals for success in postsecondary education and the workplace. It has proven to be an effective way to drive programmatic change desired by Perkins IV.

For general information: www.careerclusters.org

Below are links to two sample plans of study:

Architecture and Construction http://www.careerclusters.org/resources/pos_ks/FoundationPOS/AC-Cluster-POS.pdf

STEM :

http://www.careerclusters.org/resources/pos_ks/FoundationPOS/STEM-Cluster-POS.pdf

We would be pleased to come in and speak with the transition team about the structure of the clusters and the work the impact the initiative is having across the country.



Green Priorities

With the energy challenges facing our country, combined with the innovation in areas such as biotechnology, CTE programs across are responding to these demands by bring “green” into its programs. We believe there are opportunities to infuse a “green” focus into each of the 16 career clusters, to further integrate important environmental priorities into all aspects of our economy.

There are specific examples of these sorts of programs that we can share. For example, California recently incentivized the development “green partnership academies.” New Jersey has a statewide focus on green education initiatives. We can provide more examples if you would like.

The Congressional CTE Caucus hosted a green event on the Hill in September that highlighted important green CTE initiatives. The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) has focused on this issue. <http://www.acteonline.org/content.aspx?id=4046&terms=green>

STEM

When policy makers and education and training leaders talk about STEM there seems to be an inordinate focus on engineering. While this is important, more focus needs to be placed on the many other critical jobs in all STEM fields. The myriad of technician level careers that go unfilled are the backbone to keep America running.

Overall Importance of CTE Careers

It would be helpful for the President and the Secretaries of Education and Labor to use their bully pulpit to talk about the importance of CTE careers. While it is important for people to be able to aspire to and afford four year degrees and beyond, the American public must be better aware of the rewarding and economically critical careers that can be available to people who complete CTE programs at the K-12, certificate or associate degree level as well. The country needs to know that these workers are valued and respected and that many of these fulfilling careers provide good wages and longevity.

Transitioning from Military to Civilian Careers

NASDCTEc has learned anecdotally that while people leave the military with strong skills in many technical areas they may be lacking certifications or other education and training which limits their ability to move quickly into civilian jobs. We have developed a preliminary discussion draft to address this issue through the Career Clusters Initiative. We have attached a copy of that draft for your consideration.