

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act) was first authorized in 1984 and again in 1998. Its purpose is to increase the quality of technical education in the United States. In 2006, the Act was reauthorized as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006.

The new law includes three major revisions:

1. Replaces “vocational education” with “career and technical education”
2. Maintains the Tech Prep program as a separate entity with federal funding within the legislation
3. Maintains state administrative funding at 5 percents of a state’s allocation

The new law also requires the development of articulation agreements and strengthens local accountability provisions. The Perkins Act provides almost \$1.3 billion annually to career and technical education programs in all 50 states until 2016. Federal funds provide the principal source for innovation and program improvement. State and local funding supports the career and technical education infrastructure and pays teachers’ salaries and other operating expenses.

Funding

- Perkins Basic State Grant funds are provided to states that, in turn, allocate funds by formula to secondary school districts and postsecondary institutions.
- States have control over the split of funds between secondary and postsecondary levels.
- After this decision is made, states must distribute at least 85 percent of the Basic State Grant funds to local programs using either the needs-based formula included in the law or an alternate formula that targets resources to disadvantaged schools and students.
- States may reserve up to ten percent for leadership activities and five percent (or \$250,000, whichever is greater) for administrative activities.
- States also receive a Tech Prep grant that can be folded into Basic State Grant funds or used to provide grants to consortiums of secondary and postsecondary partners that develop articulated pathways.

Current Perkins law allows for more state and local flexibility and raises expectations for students participating in career and technical education by holding them to the specific, valid and reliable accountability standards. States and localities are working within the updated accountability system to develop effective methods to improve programs and measure student progress and success.

Sources:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/sectech/leg/perkins/index.html> (7/14/08)

http://www.acteonline.org/policy/legislative_issues/Perkins_background.cfm (7/14/008)