

NSWG Call Summary

NEXT STEPS WORK GROUP

Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
Division of Academic and Technical Education

Perkins Collaborative Resource Network
<http://cte.ed.gov>

The Next Steps Work Group (NSWG) call was held on January 31, 2019, from 2 to 3 pm ET.

Updates and Announcements | OCTAE-DATE Staff

Sharon Miller from the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), Division of Adult and Technical Education (DATE) shared the following announcement.

Updates on the State Plan Guide, the Consolidated Annual Report (CAR), and the EDFacts Data Submission

OCTAE is finalizing responses to the comments it received on the draft State Plan Guide and making any necessary changes to the guide based on these comments. The responses and edited State Plan Guide will be posted on the Regulations.gov website soon, and states will have another 30 days to provide input on OCTAE's responses and changes.

OCTAE is also reviewing and responding to comments on the CAR Guide and the Perkins portion of the EDFacts Data Submission Guide. OCTAE will notify everyone via email when these responses and updated guides have been posted on the Regulations.gov website. These documents are also accessible via the Perkins Collaborative Resource Network website (cte.ed.gov) under "Quick Links."

2019 Data Quality Institute (DQI)

John Haigh reminded everyone about the upcoming DQI on February 12 and 13 to be held at the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C. He reminded those planning to attend to place their lunch orders.

Defining "Course" and "Credits": State Perspectives and Questions | Valerie Felder (Michigan Department of Education), Sharon Miller, and John Haigh (OCTAE)

Rebecca Moyer introduced Valerie Felder from the Michigan Department of Education to provide context for the call topic.

Valerie explained how Michigan's school districts set up and define courses based on local needs. Schedules, instructional hours, and credits awarded per course vary depending on the district and program. Under the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV)*, Michigan adopted program standards in which 12 segments are equivalent to completion of a career and technical education (CTE) program. Each program determines how these segments are broken up into courses. A student must take at least seven segments to be considered a CTE concentrator, and all 12 to be a completer. Michigan does not define a course at the state level; Valerie is interested in learning how other states define a course.

Pradeep Kotamraju shared that districts in Iowa enter the names and individual district codes for courses into a data collection system, and staff at the state department of education map this information to corresponding School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) codes. The first five digits are the SCED code, and the subsequent three digits are the Carnegie credits attached to that code. The CTE bureau can extract the course name and Carnegie credits from this code and then identify the concentrator threshold. Iowa plans to do something similar under the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)*.

OCTAE-DATE Liaisons

Allison Hill

allison.hill@ed.gov

John Haigh

john.haigh@ed.gov

Host

Rebecca Moyer

rmoyer@rti.org

Maryland functions similarly to Michigan: local school systems determine courses and credits based on need. The state's CTE framework defines the body of knowledge needed for each CTE program, which is divided into multiple buckets, each of which is assigned a SCED code. Districts then arrange those buckets as needed to create courses. For example, if they have a trimester vs. a semester, they can assign two to three different local courses to the same SCED. One SCED is equal to one course to standardize it across local school systems.

Patrick Bell shared that Nevada defines courses through a state-level course catalog that delineates course names, numbers of credits, and the courses that comprise a program sequence, including complimentary courses. Nevada has very accurate data reporting since schools are required to use those definitions. Last year, the state assigned SCED codes to courses.

Dennis Harden said that Missouri has been working to define a course as a series of lessons equal to one credit, and credits must be in a sequence to count toward concentrator status. Missouri's number of concentrators will increase under *Perkins V* since the state's current concentrator definition is completion of a three-credit course sequence. John asked if Missouri uses SCED codes. Dennis responded that the state has made progress toward doing that, but it still uses Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes.

In Montana, one credit is equal to one year of coursework at the high school level. An approved pathway must have one year of foundational coursework and a second year of an elective course, be offered in grades 9–12, and be taught by a teacher certified for grades 5–12. The state uses SCED codes for all courses.

Pradeep added that Iowa has mapped courses to SCED codes and identified program CIP codes. School districts choose CIP codes for their programs but typically assign the 00 or 99 codes, which are not as helpful. Under *Perkins V*, the state hopes to come up with a more systematized

way of assigning CIP codes. John asked if Iowa uses six-digit codes. Pradeep responded that it does.

Kim MacDonald shared that North Carolina does not use CIP codes; rather, it uses its own four-digit course codes. Courses, clusters, and pathways are defined by the state and allow data systems to automatically identify concentrators. Kim anticipates a similar process under *Perkins V*. North Carolina's course definition stipulates a minimum of 120 hours of contact time with an instructor. Currently, the state defines concentrators as completing four courses in a sequence, but it has not yet finalized its *Perkins V* concentrator definition. North Carolina's proposed concentrator definition would be students who have completed a two-course sequence in a program of study, preceded by an introductory course.

Dawn Lindsley shared that CTE courses in Nebraska are assigned a six-digit state-level course code mapped to career clusters and six state-defined career fields. The state has model CTE programs of study that contain a minimum of three courses—introductory, intermediate, and capstone—and students have the option to take more than three courses if they wish. Some courses are year-long while others are semester-long. Dawn does not know if courses are mapped to SCED, but she does know that these courses are based on standards approved by the state board and delivered by certified or alternatively certified instructors. Districts with a specialized need can create local programs of study in collaboration with the state department of education.

Rebecca asked states to share their processes for determining these course definitions.

Courses in Iowa are defined by districts. Districts can change course names from year to year, which is one of the reasons why Iowa moved toward using SCED codes. Local school districts' application of Carnegie credits to courses varies, so the state assigns SCED codes to account for these differences. Iowa's Secondary CTE

Reporting Application ensures that school districts offer three sequential credits in four of six service areas, a state requirement. The state CTE bureau assists districts in identifying courses to meet the course sequence requirement.

John asked Pradeep whether Iowa's secondary and postsecondary levels use the same course titles and contact hours. Pradeep explained that the levels use different conventions for course names and credits but also noted that the CTE bureau is located within the Division of Community Colleges & Workforce Preparation, which facilitates data sharing and comparisons across level. The CTE bureau also manages concurrent enrollment data, so it can see when a secondary student takes a postsecondary CTE course. Iowa has state legislation called Senior Year Plus which has supplementary weighted funding for concurrent or dual enrollment. All 15 community colleges are accredited by the National Association of Concurrent Enrollment Program and therefore follow the same guidelines.

Christy Hendricks from Montana asked Pradeep if Iowa uses social security numbers to track students from secondary to postsecondary education. Pradeep responded that the collection of social security numbers is not allowed. Instead, students are assigned a student identification number that carries over from secondary to postsecondary education. The CTE bureau location within the Iowa Department of Education, which houses both secondary and postsecondary CTE, facilitates data sharing. It also has a relationship with workforce development partners to track students' employment outcomes.

In Arkansas, a credit at the secondary level is equal to 120 clock hours of instruction, unless a district awards credit for subject matter competency in compliance with the school district's approved plan under the Arkansas code.

Felicia Swanson commented that Alaska's rural, bush districts offer intensives for as little as one-quarter of a credit. She found other states' approaches to combining credits helpful.

John shared that the Common Education Data Standards version 7.1 was recently released. Robin Utz, who serves on the SCED CTE forum, noted that SCED codes are updated annually and that it might be useful for a group to review SCED and propose new codes for CTE. John asked states to contact OCTAE if they have any interest in participating in a session of this nature.

Patrick shared that Nevada is still developing course names. The state uses student assessments based on its CTE course standards to assess program effectiveness. As a part of its work through the New Skills for Youth grant, Nevada is working to connect secondary and postsecondary course data to track dual credit and dual enrollment as well students who continue in the same career pathway at the secondary and postsecondary levels. The state hopes to continue this work with the new *Perkins V*.

Dawn shared that Nebraska's state legislature approves the state definitions for a course and an instructional unit. Like Iowa, Nebraska uses unique student identifiers and has a longitudinal tracking system. Nebraska is also aligning secondary and postsecondary coursework; nearly all its community colleges recently signed dual credit standards that facilitate a seamless transition between secondary and postsecondary education.

Pradeep mentioned that he would be interested in learning how states are dealing with the academic standards indicator in *Perkins V*. Iowa will adopt a new academic assessment in April that will delay data availability. He asked: "How should this situation be handled for setting performance indicator targets, and how are other states handling four-year target setting?"

Elaine Perea from New Mexico asked whether states are considering making their lowest level courses non-CTE or if there are other solutions to adapting from a three- to two-course concentrator definition. Dawn shared that Nebraska's model programs of study have introductory, intermediate, and capstone courses. Clusters or fields usually have one introductory course option, but they have multiple series of intermediate and capstone

courses from which students can select. Dawn is unsure whether this will change based on the new concentrator definition.

In response to Elaine's question, Pradeep offered Iowa's strategy of using two Carnegie credits to identify concentrators that allow for district-level variability in course offerings. His team will analyze this approach over the next few months.

Kevin Springman shared that Pennsylvania also has significant variation in course names and credit assignments across schools. The state has one- and two-year programs at 720 hours, three-year programs at 1,080 hours, and four-year programs at 1,320 hours. Pennsylvania selected 240 technical hours a year as equaling a course, or about 22 percent of a 1,080-hour program. To reach the concentrator status will require two years of 240 hours or more per year, or 480 hours for a one-year course.

In Kansas, districts assign credits to SCED codes based on recommendations set by the pathway review committee every five years. Pathways have introduction-, technical-, and application-level courses; for consistency, one course is generally one credit. A concentrator is two credits.

North Carolina is proposing to define a CTE concentrator as a student who has successfully earned three or more technical credits in a program of study. At least one course is a concentrator course, which is a second- or third-level course that builds upon skills acquired in a prerequisite course. The definition is intended to ensure that students engage in more advanced coursework that builds their skills. The state has gathered feedback from stakeholders on the definition and is interested in feedback from other states.

Nevada uses level-specific course numbers to indicate CTE participants (level 1), concentrators (level 2), and completers (level 3). Using the course numbers, the state can easily identify participants, concentrators, and completers in the data system based on the courses they take.

Like Nebraska, Alaska is moving toward identifying foundational courses, such as "career exploration" or "computer applications," that are appropriate for all programs in a cluster.

Shinlan Liu shared that New Jersey defined CTE participants and concentrators using the number of courses completed for *Perkins IV* and will likely do the same under *Perkins V*. A student who completes the first course is a participant, and one who completes two or more is a concentrator. A completer is a student who successfully finishes all courses in a sequence. The state recommends three courses in a sequence, which most districts offer. In schools with two course sequences, a student is a concentrator after completing the first course (matching the concentrator definition under *Perkins IV* that a student must complete 50 percent of the courses in a sequence). If all students are required to take a course in a school or district, it cannot count as the first course in a CTE program.

Rebecca asked states to share their definitions of credits at the postsecondary level.

Pradeep said that Iowa's definition of credits comes from accreditation agencies within the higher learning commission and vary by the instructional delivery method. For example, one credit is equal to 32 lab hours, 48 clinical hours, and 64 on-the-job training hours. In Iowa the standard is three credits per course, but some courses can go up to four credits. Courses with five or more credits typically have an internship component.

Speaking of her experience working in accreditation in Oklahoma, Dawn shared that Oklahoma's credit definition is based on clock hours, and the state higher education act specifies clock hour to credit equivalencies.

In Arkansas, credits are calculated based on the number of classroom hours per week during the term. Twelve classroom hours are equal to 12 credits, or four college courses. Individual courses can vary in length from one to three hours per course.

Oregon defines a credit as 16 hours of instruction.

Jim Williams from OCTAE asked if any states are considering a competency-based definition of a credit hour, which is an issue for ongoing negotiations on institutional eligibility. There have been requests to modify the credit hour definition to allow institutions and accreditors to determine how they will evaluate academic progress, but the U.S. Department of Education is interested in feedback about how to create standards or guidelines that ensure quality, protect taxpayers, and do not limit innovation.

Dawn shared that she had worked on this in some federal experimental sites in Oklahoma but found it challenging to transition clock hours to credit hours and equate those to competencies. The process is difficult to systematize and must be conducted on a program-by-program basis. The experimental site Dawn worked with chose to try this with five programs. The process involved program staff, program advisory boards, administration, and financial aid staff. The process was difficult and there was limited guidance at the federal level.

John encouraged everyone who will be attending the DQI to bring their course and credit definitions to share as an ice breaker.

Closing Remarks | Robin Utz (OCTAE), Allison Hill (OCTAE), and Rebecca Moyer (RTI International)

To conclude the call, Robin wished everyone a happy CTE month, and Allison thanked Valerie and all the state representatives for their input.

Allison turned the call back to Rebecca who asked states to send their questions to be used as topics for future NSWG calls.

The next NSWG call date is to be decided.

NEXT CALL:

TBD