

### **Next Steps Work Group Recommendation to U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education**

State participants of the Next Steps Work Group (NSWG) are committed to the accountability provisions stipulated in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. At the same time, state CTE agencies are striving to respond constructively to activities for the implementation of state longitudinal data systems (SLDS). Because of the unique nature of CTE in bridging the education sector and the workforce development sector, attention is also given to activities related to the Workforce Data Quality Campaign. The NSWG participants are in a position to see the similarities and overlap between some of the performance indicators being collected and reported by both the education and workforce sectors. Effective performance measurement of career-related education programs is inadequate without access to employment data. Access to employment data could result in a mutual benefit for both education and workforce systems; specifically, the education sector needs to know about the economic and workplace outcomes of their students, and the workforce system needs to know about further education and credentialing of career preparation program participants. However, there are structural obstacles that restrict access to data sources that would streamline the collection and reporting of similar, if not duplicative, data.

There appears to be a movement toward federal funding agency requirements for submission of unit-record data for auditable performance measurement. The Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) for WIA participants stands as one example of a data model for federal workforce programs. The K-12 education EDEN/ED*Facts* unit record system has a similar intent, including CTE unit record data and directly computing performance measures for secondary Perkins students. These systems require not only that the education system and the workforce system acquire unit-record data from both education and workforce sources, but they be permitted to do some redisclosure of that data. Current data regulations often prohibit all redisclosure. An example is:

- Based on one state's Attorney General's interpretation of FERPA, community and technical colleges are not providing credentialing information at the unit record level on WIA participants, and therefore the data cannot be counted in performance measures.

The NSWG recommends action by federal officials within the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education and the U.S. Department of Labor, Education and Training Administration to conduct a comparative analysis of Perkins and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) data requirements for performance measurement. In addition, where required performance data similarities or duplication exist, and there are structural obstacles to the mutual access and sharing of such data, an action plan is developed to remove such access or sharing barriers. With the focus on state longitudinal data systems and data quality campaigns, an effort to confront barriers to data access across education and workforce sectors and federal agencies is timely.

One encouraging initiative the NSWG would cite as a promising effort to address cross-sector data access is the multi-state Wage Record Interchange System 2 (WRIS2). This effort continues the mission of the original WRIS purpose in providing access to out-of-state wage record data for WIA accountability purposes. Access to the same data by Perkins would enhance data quality for Perkins accountability purposes.