
The Next Steps Work Group (NSWG)

Subgroup on POS Measurement, Accountability and Evaluation: Draft Summary Report and Recommendations

Summary and Possible Tentative Recommendations

Between April 2010 and October 2010, a subgroup of the Next Steps Working Group (NSWG) was formed to discuss POS measurement, accountability and evaluation. The broad question the subgroup set out to answer was the following: *How will a state know that its POS implementation strategy is working?* As context for setting out the recommendations, the following three areas were discussed over several one hour phone calls. The three areas centered on: (a) POS definition; (b) POS as a process or outcome; and (c) the sufficiency of current Perkins and Tech Prep accountability indicators. Each of the above was discussed separately on the calls but answers to these three areas became increasingly co-mingled on all six calls. In addition, one call was exclusively devoted to addressing how to measure, evaluate, and account for, the postsecondary component of a POS.

The Context for POS Measurement, Accountability and Evaluation

The initial discussion among subgroup members led to the following three major areas of concern stated in question form:

1. How is a POS to be defined? Is POS to be part of CTE, or is CTE to be part of POS? What is the difference between POS and career pathways?
2. What is meant by POS measurement? What is the place of current Perkins and Tech Prep indicators? How are they positioned in any future measurement of POS, including discussing possible new measures? Viewing POS as a bridge or a link, what is the unit of analysis by which POS is being measured?
3. How are the criteria for POS identified? Do the ten POS components, and the sub-bullets under each of them, meet this condition? If POS is a strategy, then what are the appropriate measures which simultaneously fulfill the legislative and non-regulatory requirements for a POS and at the same time say something about POS success?

Providing partial answers to the above questions was where the subgroup felt it could add value to the burgeoning discussion around POS measurement, accountability and evaluation.

Some possible tentative overall recommendations that have come out of the subgroup on POS measurement, accountability and evaluation:

1. **A POS measurement, accountability and evaluation system should be less prescriptive and guided more by the framework elements such as the ten POS components put forward by OVAE.**

- 2. The current Perkins and Tech Prep accountability system has in it all the necessary elements needed to measure POS participation, progress, and success. Some additional secondary and postsecondary measures to fill in the gaps in the current Perkins accountability system should be considered, particularly those that provide additional information regarding POS participation, progress, and success. However, all effort should be made to create these additional measures within the existing Perkins accountability and evaluation system.**
- 3. View POS more as a strategy for helping CTE students, particularly at-risk students, engage, achieve and transition into, at, and from one education level to the next, whether it be sequential or non-sequential. Less attention should be paid to actual measurement of success within a POS, which in any case can be deduced from the current Perkins accountability system.**
- 4. It is important to maintain the distinction between a POS student and a non-POS CTE student, particularly at the postsecondary level, since both measurement and strategy are often dependent on local conditions and control.**

Unresolved Issues

Three issues still remain unresolved and need to be addressed in more detail in the future. First, an issue that needs to be tackled is whether the emphasis (and some might even say over-emphasis) on POS within Perkins IV is mainly a primary vehicle for enhancing secondary CTE. Second, there needs to be a full assessment of whether leaving those students, particularly “at-risk” ones, out of a POS measurement, accountability and evaluation system reduces the effectiveness of using POS as a strategy for improving secondary and postsecondary student performance. Third, if POS is to be seen as the need to have students, regardless of where they are coming from (secondary education, adult basic education, and the workforce development system), to engage, achieve and transition into postsecondary, then efforts must be made to bring corresponding legislation in line with one another so full advantage can be taken from POS implementation within individual states.