

# **RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF POSTSECONDARY PERKINS IV DATA IN MONTANA**

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## **BACKGROUND**

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In October 2007, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), U.S. Department of Education, invited state directors of career and technical education (CTE) to submit requests for individualized technical assistance to improve the quality of their Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) accountability systems. In response, the Montana University System requested support in aligning its new postsecondary data collection and reporting system with Perkins IV requirements.

Following consultation with Kathy Wilkins, Perkins Accountability Specialist, Montana University System, MPR researchers and Montana staff agreed the state would benefit from assistance in refining postsecondary measures and measurement approaches as well as a review of the state's new technology for data collection and reporting.

Amanda Richards, Research Associate, and Dr. Steven Klein, Director, Preparation for College and Career at MPR Associates, Inc., provided consultation services to Montana. Dialogue with the state took place via telephone and during a one day site visit, and focused on reviewing the state's Perkins IV postsecondary measures and its new database for Perkins data collection and reporting.

During the site visit, MPR facilitated a discussion with postsecondary providers that covered several topics, including highlights of the Perkins IV act, changes from Perkins III to Perkins IV, Perkins IV accountability, and strategies for improvement. Immediately following the site visit, MPR provided Montana with a preliminary set of measure recommendations so the state could apply the discussion results to its State Plan approval process. This paper presents MPR's final recommendations for structuring population definitions and measures, in light of federal non-regulatory guidance, to enhance the quality of Perkins IV postsecondary accountability data in Montana.

**Postsecondary Measures**

	<i>Montana Draft State Plan and Indicator Support Documents</i>	<i>OVAE Non-Regulatory Guidance</i>	<i>Recommended Measure Definition Based on Discussion w/State Team</i>	<i>Methodology Based on Discussion w/State Team</i>
CTE Participant	A postsecondary/adult student who has earned one (1) or more credits in any CTE program area.	A postsecondary/adult student who has earned one (1) or more credits in any CTE program area.	A postsecondary student who has enrolled in a CTE program.	Montana identifies its postsecondary CTE students by looking at who has registered in a CTE program. The state indicates it does not generally have non-CTE students taking CTE courses, since a student must be registered for a program to enroll in most CTE courses. Therefore, identifying students who have enrolled in the program should capture most students under the “participant” definition.
CTE Concentrator	A CTE concentrator is a student who completes at least 12 credit units and indicates or demonstrates intent to complete his or her Perkins eligible program of study.	A postsecondary/adult student who: (1) completes at least 12 academic or CTE credits within a single program area sequence that is comprised of 12 or more academic and technical credits and terminates in the award of an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree; or (2) completes a short-term CTE program sequence of less than 12 credit units that terminates in an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree	A postsecondary student who: (1) completes at least 12 academic or CTE credits within a single program area sequence that is comprised of 12 or more academic and technical credits and terminates in the award of an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree; or (2) completes a short-term CTE program sequence of less than 12 credit units that terminates in an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree.	<p>Montana has programs longer than 12 credits and a few programs shorter than 12 credits. The state will discuss which of the &lt;12 credit programs terminate in a credential, certificate, or degree prior to including students from the programs in the concentrator pool.</p> <p>As with the participant definition, Montana will include only those students who have enrolled in a CTE program.</p> <p>Due to the data collection constraints, the state is unable to distinguish credits earned from remedial courses from credits earned in postsecondary courses. For this reason, some students may have a few remedial credits as part of the 12 credits that helps them achieve concentrator status.</p>

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1P1: Technical Skill Attainment	N:	Number of CTE concentrators who passed technical skill assessments that are aligned with industry-recognized standards, if available and appropriate, during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who passed technical skill assessments that are aligned with industry-recognized standards, if available and appropriate, during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who passed technical skill assessments that are aligned with industry-recognized standards, if available and appropriate, during the reporting year.	Include only those postsecondary concentrators who took and passed a third-party validated, industry aligned technical skill assessment.
	D:	Number of CTE concentrators who took technical skill assessments during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who took technical skill assessments during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who took technical skill assessments during the reporting year.	Include only those postsecondary concentrators who took a third-party validated, industry aligned technical skill assessment.

Note: According to recent information from OVAE, states should endeavor to report only on students who have taken third-party assessments, even though that may be a small percentage of students within a state. States with statewide approval processes for local assessments may choose to combine those results with third party assessments. States that do not plan to implement or expand use of third party or state approved assessments may consider reporting on other types of assessments for all students. Because Montana does currently not have a state approval process for locally developed assessment and the state team expressed interest in expanding use of third party, industry aligned assessments, MPR recommends the state use the following measurement approach:

Report on the percentage of students passing third-party, industry-aligned assessments (formerly called the “gold” level assessments). In the Consolidated Annual Report narrative, report the percentage of students who were assessed using third-party assessments and outline the state’s plans for expanding usage of third-party assessments to more program areas. Students who are assessed using an approach other than third-party validated, industry aligned assessments will not be reported as part of this measure.

- Numerator: Number of CTE concentrators who took and passed technical skill assessments aligned with industry-recognized standards during the reporting year.
- Denominator: Number of CTE concentrators who took technical skill assessments aligned with industry-recognized standards during the reporting year.

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2P1: Credential, Certificate, or Degree	N:	Number of CTE concentrators who received an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who received an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who received an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree and left postsecondary education during the reporting year.	Include only those postsecondary concentrators who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>received a degree, certificate, or industry-recognized credential during the reporting year and</li> <li>did not enroll at any time in the following academic year.</li> </ul>
	D:	Number of CTE concentrators who left postsecondary education during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who left postsecondary education during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who left postsecondary education during the reporting year.	Include only those postsecondary concentrators who did not enroll in the following academic year.

**Eligibility to receive an award**

During early discussions, Montana indicated it is able to determine which students were eligible to receive a degree or certificate, but left without applying and paying for the credential. In the interest of crediting colleges and universities for helping students achieve their goals, MPR originally recommended Montana include the language, “who received or were eligible to receive an industry-recognized credential certificate or degree” as part of the 2P1 measure definition. However, including students who were eligible to, but did not, receive an award complicates measures 3P1 and 4P1, and some postsecondary providers indicated they were not sure how to determine that status for their students. In addition, while students may be accomplishing their goals and leaving with the knowledge and skills they need for their next steps, a formal award can often be more “portable” in the future, allowing the student to provide proof of their skills and knowledge.

Upon further consideration of these issues, MPR recommends Montana not include “eligible to receive” as part of 2P1 or any other measure. However, that information may be very valuable to the state as it endeavors to minimize barriers to student success, and Montana may want to collect that data for internal program improvement purposes.

**Defining an exiter**

Montana is currently considering the length of time it should wait before considering a student an exiter. The concept of 365 days or one year was brought up, and the state will have further discussions with postsecondary partners to determine the final amount of time that will be used. MPR recommends Montana consider a student as having exited if s/he does not enroll at any time during the following academic year. For example, if a student is enrolled in the fall of 2008 (the 2008-09 academic year), but does not enroll at any time during the 2009-2010 academic year, she is considered an exiter. This means that some students will be unenrolled for longer periods before determining they are exiters; however, the alternative would require Montana to track students individually over a standard period of time, which is inconsistent with other measures and unnecessarily complicates data collection and reporting.

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3P1: Student Retention or Transfer	N:	Number of CTE concentrators who remained enrolled in their original postsecondary institution or transferred to another 2- or 4-year postsecondary institution during the reporting year and who were enrolled in postsecondary education in the fall of the previous reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who remained enrolled in their original postsecondary institution or transferred to another 2- or 4-year postsecondary institution during the reporting year and who were enrolled in postsecondary education in the fall of the previous reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who remained enrolled in their original postsecondary institution or transferred to another 2- or 4-year postsecondary institution during the reporting year and who were enrolled in postsecondary education in the fall of the previous reporting year and who did not earn an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree in that year.	Include only those postsecondary concentrators who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• were enrolled in fall of the reporting year and</li> <li>• did not earn a degree, certificate, or industry-recognized credential during the reporting year and</li> <li>• were identified as enrolled in the same or another higher education institution during the fall or spring of the following year.</li> </ul>
	D:	Number of CTE concentrators who were enrolled in postsecondary education in the fall of the previous reporting year and who did not earn an industry recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree in the previous reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who were enrolled in postsecondary education in the fall of the previous reporting year and who did not earn an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree in the previous reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who were enrolled in postsecondary education in the fall of the previous reporting year and who did not earn an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree in the previous reporting year.	Include only those postsecondary concentrators who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• were enrolled in fall of the reporting year and</li> <li>• did not earn a degree, certificate, or industry-recognized credential during the reporting year.</li> </ul>

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4P1: Student Placement	N:	Number of CTE concentrators who were placed or retained in employment, or placed in military service or apprenticeship programs in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter following the program year in which they left postsecondary education (i.e., placement for CTE concentrators who graduated by 6/30/07 would be assessed between 10/1/07 and 12/31/07).	Number of CTE concentrators who were placed or retained in employment, or placed in military service or apprenticeship programs in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter following the program year in which they left postsecondary education (i.e., unduplicated placement status for CTE concentrators who graduated by June 30, 2008 would be assessed between October 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008).	Number of CTE concentrators who completed a CTE program and were placed or retained in employment, or placed in military service or apprenticeship programs in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter following the program year in which they left postsecondary education (i.e., unduplicated placement status for CTE concentrators who graduated by June 30, 2008 would be assessed between October 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008).	<p>Include only those postsecondary concentrators who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>completed their CTE program during the reporting year (completion includes those who received a degree, diploma, or credential) and</li> <li>left postsecondary education (did not enroll the following academic year) and</li> <li>were identified as placed or retained in employment, placed in military service, or placed in an apprenticeship program in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter following the end of the reporting year.</li> </ul>
	D:	Number of CTE concentrators who left postsecondary education during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who left postsecondary education during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who completed a CTE program and left postsecondary education during the reporting year.	<p>Include only those postsecondary concentrators who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>completed their CTE program during the reporting year (completion includes those who received a degree, diploma, or credential) and</li> <li>left postsecondary education (did not enroll the following academic year).</li> </ul> <p>Note: The denominator of 4P1 is the same as the numerator for 2P1.</p>

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5P1: Nontraditional Participation	N:	Number of CTE participants from underrepresented gender groups who participated in a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	Number of CTE participants from underrepresented gender groups who participated in a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	Number of CTE participants from underrepresented gender groups who participated in a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	Include only those postsecondary participants who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>met the definition of participant defined above and</li> <li>participated in a program that leads to employment in a nontraditional occupation (as identified by NAPE) and</li> <li>are from the underrepresented gender group for the nontraditional occupation.</li> </ul>
	D:	Number of CTE participants who participated in a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	Number of CTE participants who participated in a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	Number of CTE participants who participated in a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	Include only those postsecondary participants who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>met the definition of participant defined above and</li> <li>participated in a program that leads to employment in a nontraditional occupation (as identified by NAPE).</li> </ul>

To link programs with nontraditional occupations, refer to the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) “Nontraditional Occupations SOC/CIP/Career Clusters/DOE Pathways Crosswalks” found at [http://www.napequity.org/nape\\_publications.htm](http://www.napequity.org/nape_publications.htm).

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5P2: Nontraditional Completion	N:	Number of CTE concentrators from underrepresented gender groups who completed a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators from underrepresented gender groups who completed a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators from underrepresented gender groups who completed a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	<p>Include only those postsecondary concentrators who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>completed a CTE program that leads to employment in a nontraditional field (include students who received a degree, certificate or credential) and</li> <li>are from the underrepresented gender group for the nontraditional occupation.</li> </ul> <p>Note: 5P2, unlike 2P1, does not require a student to leave postsecondary education in order to be included in the numerator or denominator.</p>
	D:	Number of CTE concentrators who completed a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who completed a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	Number of CTE concentrators who completed a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.	<p>Include only those postsecondary concentrators who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>completed a CTE program that leads to employment in a nontraditional field (completion includes those who received a degree, diploma, or credential).</li> </ul>

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