

OVAE Customized Technical Assistance to States

Recommendations to Improve the Quality of Perkins IV Accountability Requirements in California



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Background

In October 2008, 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 Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) accountability systems. In response, the California Department of Education requested support in developing strategies for:

- A. *Identifying a way for the local education agencies (LEAs) to collect technical skill attainment data that is stored electronically in their systems and then report it to the California Department of Education.* Measures are already in place that can provide information regarding academic attainment that is in line with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Collecting skill attainment is more challenging and needs to be aligned with the redesigned data collection system in California.
- B. *Collecting and reporting Tech Prep data.* California seeks assistance in refining its secondary and postsecondary measurement approaches and data collection procedures for Tech Prep measures.

Following consultation with Geoff Belleau, Visiting Educator, California Department of Education (CDE), Secondary, Postsecondary, and Adult Leadership Division and Chuck Wiseley, Specialist, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), Economic Development and Workforce Preparation Division, MPR researchers agreed the state would benefit from assistance with identifying ways to improve the state's collection and reporting of technical skill attainment and Tech Prep data.

Jim Schoelkopf, Senior Research Associate at MPR Associates, Inc., provided consultation services to the California stakeholders. Dialogue with California contacts took place via telephone conference calls and emails. Key representatives from California for the technical assistance activities included Geoff Belleau and Russell Weikle, California Department of Education and Chuck Wiseley, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

During the conference calls, MPR facilitated a discussion with state administrative staff responsible for Perkins IV accountability and improvement of CTE performance. This paper presents MPR's recommendations for identifying methods to collect and report secondary technical skill attainment and Tech Prep data, in light of federal non-regulatory guidance, to enhance the quality of Perkins IV accountability data in California.

Technical Assistance

State staff representatives agreed to a two-part technical assistance approach which included:

- A. *Identify procedures for electronic reporting of technical skill attainment data from LEAs*—MPR will facilitate a half-day meeting with the state and local staff to identify possible approaches to managing and reporting technical skill attainment data held at the local level. The meeting will also focus on ways to plan for integration of technical skill attainment data reporting into the newly redesigned California educational data collection systems, California Student Information System (CSIS), and California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS).
- B. *Assist the state in refining Tech Prep measurement and data collection approaches*—MPR will facilitate a half-day meeting with the state secondary and postsecondary staff to construct a system for collecting and reporting Tech Prep measures. The visit will focus on operationalizing Tech Prep population definitions and measures to align with federal non-regulatory guidance, guidance provided by the National Association for Tech Prep Leadership (NATPL), and California-compliant procedures for collecting and reporting that data.

Actions

A. Identify Procedures for Electronic Reporting of Technical Skill Attainment Data from LEAs

Significant efforts are underway to improve the quality of California's secondary level student data. California CTE staff has been engaged with the design, development, and implementation of a consolidated student data reporting system. When implemented, local education agencies will report CTE data directly through the consolidated system, potentially eliminating the need for a separate CTE data reporting system. The California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data Systems¹ (CALPADS) is being developed as a consolidated system to permit tracking of a student's academic performance, including CTE, over time. CALPADS is intended to meet the federal reporting requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as No Child Left Behind, and Section 113 accountability requirements in Perkins IV. CALPADS intends to reflect the data file specifications used for federal reporting through the ED*Facts* Initiative reporting portal known as EDEN (Education Data Exchange Network).²

¹ California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data Systems; <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sp/cl/>

² Education Data Exchange Network; <http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/index.html>

MPR researchers held a series of conference call meetings with appropriate California Department of Education (CDE) and California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office staff. The purpose of the conference call meetings was to establish the developmental and implementation status of the new consolidated data collection system and the feasibility of having the system accommodate reporting of secondary technical skill attainment. The CDE staff was seeking assistance on indentifying feasible modifications to draft CALPADS reporting templates that would accommodate local reporting of secondary CTE technical skill attainment data.

Conference Call Series:

- November 18, 2008
- January 27, 2009
- April 27, 2009
- May 15, 2009
- July 20, 2009
- August 20, 2009
- September 10, 2009

Participants:

- Geoff Belleau, CA Dept. of Education
- Russell Weikle, CA Dept. of Education
- Chuck Wiseley, CA Community College Chancellor's Office

The California Department of Education staff supplied MPR researchers with draft copies of the CALPADS data reporting templates being designed, relevant file specifications, and web links to assess the compatibility and adequacy of the data reporting templates with Perkins IV reporting requirements.

California Department of Education staffs, both CTE and CALPADS, are committed to identifying appropriate and reasonable accommodations within CALPADS to sufficiently meet the data reporting needs for Perkins IV and state-specific data needs for California. Geoff Belleau, CDE Visiting Educator, plays an instrumental role as the CTE data reporting contact monitoring the evolving CALPADS file structures and specifications.

The timing of the conference call series was scheduled in response to CALPADS updates. As the CALPADS file specification development process became more detailed, the technical assistance cadre of California CTE staff and MPR researchers identified opportunities to create or modify CALPADS file specifications to address California's CTE technical assistance needs. Specifically, two file specifications were developed. One of the file specifications was created specifically for the LEA reporting of 2S1—technical skill attainment data.

a. CTE Pathway Code

A "CTE Pathway Code" is a coded value representing the file specification for a Career Technical Education Career Pathway. A Career Technical Education Career Pathway is the second level in a two-tier hierarchy of Career Technical Education Industry Sectors and Career Pathways. This category represents a coherent sequence of rigorous academic and technical courses that allows students to apply academics and develop technical skills in a curricular area. Career pathways prepare students for successful completion of state academic and technical standards and more advanced postsecondary coursework related

to the career in which they are interested. A pathway must be specified for each CTE concentrator.³

b. CTE Pathway Completer Indicator

The file specifications for CTE Pathways Completer is designed to specify whether or not a career technical education secondary concentrator has passed a locally developed and administered assessment, demonstrating competence in a specific career technical education course sequence (pathway). A “Y” indicates that the student is a Career Technical Education Pathway Completer; an “N” indicates that the student is not.⁴

File specification for “CTE Pathway Completer Indicator” serves as the reporting proxy for technical skill attainment. A student would be considered a CTE Pathway Completer only if they had demonstrated competency in a specific CTE course sequence through locally developed and administered assessments. The validity and reliability of the technical skill measurement remains dependent on the criteria established by California and the performance indicator definition approved by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE).

The 2008–09 program year data will be the first data collection using the “CTE Pathway Completer Indicator” as a reporting proxy. California Department of Education staff will continue to collect and report secondary technical skill attainment (2S1) data through their currently negotiated measurement approach.⁵ Both the current measurement approach and the “pathway completer” approach will be used for the 2008–09 data collection. The skill attainment data from both approaches will be analyzed and evaluated until state staff has assurance in the integrity of the “pathway completer” measurement approach.

The action steps for this portion of the technical assistance request were accomplished through the series of conference calls and did not necessitate an on-site meeting.

B. Collecting and Reporting Tech Prep Data

During the state’s transition to Perkins IV, California CTE leadership, with the support from the Joint Advisory Committee for Career and Technical Education (JACCTE), made the decision to maintain separate Perkins Title I (Basic Grant) and Title II (Tech Prep) funding streams. This funding decision obligated California to the Perkins IV, Section 203 Tech Prep accountability provisions. Since the Section 203 Tech Prep accountability provision

³ CALPADS File Specifications (CFS); FINAL; Version Number 1.3, Version Date 08/12/2009; <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sp/cl/systemdocs.asp>

⁴ CALPADS File Specifications (CFS); FINAL; Version Number 1.3, Version Date 08/12/2009; <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sp/cl/systemdocs.asp>

⁵ California Career and Technical Education State Plan, Appendix K. Accountability System For Secondary and Adult CTE Programs Assisted with Perkins IV Funds Administered by the California Department of Education; <http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/cs/ctep/print/htdocs/ctep/organization.htm>

were not stipulated in earlier Perkins authorizations, California did not have state or local processes in place for the collection and reporting of Tech Prep data.

As part of California's 5-year Perkins IV State Plan,⁶ Tech Prep will be jointly administered by CDE and CCCCO. The two agencies are jointly responsible for Tech Prep administration and accountability, including in part:

- Establishing state performance measures and levels as required by Perkins IV.
- Developing articulation guidelines that ensure systematic coordination with segmental and statewide standards.
- Reviewing and summarizing annual accountability reports submitted by the local consortia and facilitating strategies for evaluating the Tech Prep program, as necessary.
- Monitoring local consortia for fiscal and programmatic compliance.
- Producing required state and federal reports and conducting other functions as deemed necessary.

Sixty-nine percent of the State's Title II, Tech Prep grant award will continue to be allocated to local consortia by the CCCCO as described in the 5-year Perkins IV State Plan. The CDE will continue to reserve 31 percent of the Title II funds for Tech Prep improvement and expansion projects. As a part of this shared Tech Prep responsibility, the CCCCO assumes leadership for the implementation of the Tech Prep accountability provisions.

During the term of the OVAE technical assistance services to California, state agencies confronted budgetary limitations that resulted in the furlough of state staff. This state condition impacted the ability to fully address the scope of the technical assistance request. CCCCO staff were challenged with being able to devote sufficient time to adequately participate in technical assistance activities. Chuck Wiseley and MPR researchers determined the Tech Prep phase of the technical assistance would be suspended. CCCCO staff indicated, again because of budget limitation, any process development resulting from the technical assistance would probably not be implemented until budget conditions improve.

California Department of Education Request for Assistance with Secondary Tech Prep Data Collection

The CDE career and technical education staff, after learning of the CCCCO decision to suspend their part of the technical assistance request, indicated that they had additional questions they would like to be addressed. CDE staff and MRP researchers held a conference call to develop strategies to:

⁶ California Career Technical Education State Plan;
<http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/cs/ctep/print/htdocs/ctep/home.htm>

- Resolve state CAR reporting issues with 3S1 and 4S1, and
- Consider alternatives to California Basic Educational Data System⁷ (CBEDS) codes to more accurately collect secondary Tech Prep enrollment.

Resolve state CAR reporting issues with 3S1 and 4S1

Discussions pertaining to the collection and reporting of 3S1 and 4S1 for California centered on the state’s recognition of a single high school diploma issued by local school districts. Alternative certifications or diplomas, although offered by local school districts, are not recognized by the California Department of Education. Reporting on the local award of alternative certifications or diplomas is not required by the CDE.

General Education Development (GED) certificates are administered and awarded through California’s adult education system. Students earning a GED in California are not currently enrolled in a school district and are not considered in the calculation of a CTE participant or a CTE concentrator. The delivery of GED certificates through the adult education system makes CDE access to GED data a challenge. GED data is currently not being used as a Perkins IV accountability dataset for the calculation of 3S1—Secondary Completion.

State discussions are underway to include GED data as part of Cal-PASS⁸ data reporting in the future. With the inclusion of GED data through Cal-PASS, CDE staff will then have more effective access to the GED dataset that can then be used in the calculation for 3S1, if appropriate. Until GED data access is attainable, Perkins accountability reporting for 3S1 will rely on the data that is currently accessible with the intent to add GED when the dataset is accessible.

Consider alternatives to California Basic Educational Data System⁹ (CBEDS) codes to more accurately collect secondary Tech Prep enrollment

State CTE staff recognizes there is currently the potential for undesirable count duplication of secondary Tech Prep students. CTE programs, not necessarily each course, have been assigned a CBEDS code to help identify CTE enrollment. In some cases, a CBEDS code for a CTE program may include more than one course. However, only one of the courses with a CBEDS code may actually be a Tech Prep course, which is identified by awarding college credit as authorized through a secondary-postsecondary articulation agreement. The current data collection system offers the capability to “flag” only a CBEDS code for Tech Prep identification, not an individual course that may be embedded within the CBEDS code.

State staff and MPR researchers discussed two options to be pursued:

⁷ California Basic Education Data System (CBEDS); <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/>

⁸ Cal-PASS; California Partnership for Achieving Student Success; <http://www.calpass.org/>

⁹ California Basic Education Data System (CBEDS); <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/>

- Create a duplicate CBEDS code that indicates the Tech Prep portion within a CBEDS code; or,
- Add a field column within the reporting table that would disaggregate the enrollment counts to include (1) the existing enrollment count for a student enrolled in the CBEDS code program and/or course; and (2) add a column for the enrollment count of those students enrolled who have also earned Tech Prep credit within the CBEDS code program and/or course.

After assessing the potential for each option, it was concluded that CDE staff would pursue the feasibility of having California’s data reporting system accept two CBEDS course entries to identify Tech Prep student counts from total CBEDS student enrollment for the particular CTE program and/or course.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested for strengthening Perkins IV data collection and reporting processes:

- Implement the use of the “CTE Pathway Completer Indicator” as the reporting proxy for technical skill attainment. Stipulate with local secondary CTE providers that a student is defined as a CTE Pathway Completer only if they demonstrate competency in a specific CTE course sequence through locally developed and administered technical skill assessments.
- Pursue the inclusion of GED data as part of Cal-PASS¹⁰ data reporting. When available to CTE staff, use GED datasets in the calculation for 3S1. When additional datasets are included in the calculation of 3S1, CTE staff will need to assess the impact of the additional data on the negotiated 3S1 performance level. Changes impacting the performance level calculation for the 3S1 may necessitate renegotiation of this performance level with OVAE.
- Modify the existing CTE data system reporting table to include acceptance of two course entries that would be used to disaggregate CBEDS enrollment counts to: (1) count students enrolled in the CBEDS code program and/or course; and (2) count students who have earned Tech Prep credit within the CBEDS code program and/or course.

¹⁰ Cal-PASS; California Partnership for Achieving Student Success; <http://www.calpass.org/>