DQI-20: Operationalizing *Perkins V* while Coping with COVID-19

**Final Report**

November 5, 2020
DQI-20: Operationalizing Perkins V while Coping with COVID-19
2020 Data Quality Institute (DQI) Virtual Series

DQI-20 Virtual Series Overview

With Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) state plans submitted, states are now determining how to proceed with implementation, particularly with impacts that COVID-19 poses. To support states in navigating Perkins V implementation, the annual Data Quality Institute (DQI) was converted to a series of virtual meetings held between August and November 2020.

Hosted by the Division of Academic and Technical Education (DATE), which is part of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), the DQI provides state career and technical education (CTE) leaders an opportunity to share information and strategies and to tackle common challenges in using data to improve student and program outcomes.

The 2020 DQI virtual series—Operationalizing Perkins V while Coping with COVID-19—focused on CTE topics states are currently addressing. The eight-session series kicked off with a “Connect” session designed to enable state CTE directors to share lessons learned and innovative strategies developed during the Perkins V plan development and to discuss impacts of COVID on implementation plans. The kick-off was followed by a Perkins V: Accountability 101 session targeted to new CTE staff (or others wanting a refresher), and five “Learn” sessions that focused on specific topics of interest. Finally, a concluding “Report/Plan” session was facilitated for state CTE directors to discuss key outcomes of the “Learn” sessions and to identify strategies for their state accordingly.

This report provides an overview of each session, including speakers, key themes, and materials. Session recordings and materials are all available on the Perkins Collaborative Resource Network (PCRN): https://cte.ed.gov/accountability/2020-data-quality-institute.

DQI-20 Virtual Series by the Numbers...

8 virtual sessions
315+ unique participants
16 hours of learning time
50 States + DC & Puerto Rico
“Connect”

August 5, 2020, 2:00-4:00pm ET

The 2020 Data Quality Institute virtual series kicked off with the “Connect” session, which was designed to provide state CTE directors with the opportunity to network and share highlights from their state plans. Additionally, it provided the states an opportunity to ask each other questions related to operationalizing Perkins V and how they are addressing challenges presented by COVID-19.

→ Key Takeaways

- Assistant Secretary Scott Stump provided an overview of the national trends and highlights from the Perkins V state plans. Several highlights included
  - Several states have included specific initiatives that pertain to the Secretary’s key priorities (advancing apprenticeships, CTE STEM pathways, expanding dual/concurrent enrollment).
  - Several states, including Connecticut, Indiana, Maryland, and Nebraska, took strides in increasing requirements relative to size, scope, and quality under Perkins V.
  - Nine states have submitted their Perkins V plans as part of a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) combined state plan.
  - Most states will use their reserve funds, with 15 states using the full 15% allowed amount.
  - Twenty-seven states selected only one quality indicator; 10 states selected two indicators; and 9 states selected three indicators.
- During the Speed Data’ing activity, states had the opportunity to share highlights from their final Perkins V state plans. Highlights shared were captured in a shared document (available on the PCRN). Common areas of from the state highlights included the following:
  - collaboration between secondary and postsecondary,
  - use of reserve funds,
  - implementation of a comprehensive local needs assessment,
  - work-based learning programs, and
  - alignment to workforce needs (and/or WIOA).
- The ‘Coping with COVID’ ThinkTank activity provided states a forum to ask each other general questions about operationalizing Perkins V, as well as strategies for mitigating COVID challenges.
- The top three questions states had related to Perkins V implementation focused on the following topics:
  - work-based learning;
  - local Needs assessments; and
  - defining size, scope, and quality.
- Work-based learning and local needs assessments also emerged as top challenges states mentioned as related to COVID. Other commonly mentioned challenges related to the following topics:
  - virtual-only annual CTE conferences,
  - lack of K–12 assessment data,
  - maintenance of effort,
  - stakeholder engagement,
  - virtual credentialing/instruction, and
  - staff capacity.
The Perkins V: Accountability 101 session provided state CTE staff with an overview of Perkins accountability requirements, performance indicators, state definitions of numerators and denominators, and state-determined levels of performance. The session was presented by Perkins Regional Coordinator José R. Figueroa.

Key Takeaways

- The Perkins Web Portal enables states to submit data and reports including Consolidated Annual Reports (CARs) and state plan revisions, as well as to access monitoring check sheets and reports. Alternatively, states may submit secondary enrollment and performance indicator data through EdFacts. By December 2020, states will report on Performance Year 2019-2020 data through the submission of enrollment data, the narrative report, and financial status reports.

- Perkins V defines a CTE participant (Section 3(13)) and concentrator (Section 3(12)). These definitions are used to determine who is enrolled in CTE and should be applied to submitted enrollment data.

- Enrollment data, as well as performance indicator data, must be disaggregated into specific student populations related to gender, race/ethnicity, and special population status.

- Data must also be disaggregated by the 16 career clusters. States may add an additional career cluster, but any added career clusters must then be reported on for all reports, at both the secondary and the postsecondary level. States may wish to develop state CTE data guide/policy and procedure manuals to ensure consistency of data reporting protocols.

- States are required to report on at least one of three required secondary quality indicators. States may also report on additional state-developed quality indicators. Suggested measurement approaches were provided, but states are invited to contact their Perkins Regional Coordinator for further assistance.

- States must determine levels of performance through the state plan. States can revise the levels of performance by submitting a revised state plan if stakeholder input was gathered, the characteristics of actual CTE concentrators were considered, the revised levels are higher than the actual performance of the two most recently completed program years, and the revisions advance the state’s goals. States may wish to revise their performance levels due to unanticipated circumstances, which can include changes to assessments, data systems, curriculum, instructional delivery models, etc. The only exception is that states may not revise levels of performance if the state is implementing an improvement plan.
The Aligning Perkins V Data and Methods of Administration (MOA) Plans session provided states with information and an opportunity to discuss the alignments between MOA and Perkins V as allowed by the Memorandum of Procedures jointly released by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and OCTAE in February 2020. OCR oversees the civil rights compliance programs of state agencies that administer the CTE MOA program at the secondary and postsecondary levels. The MOA program ensures that students have equal access to CTE programs and activities regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

The session began with an overview from OCR lawyer Maria Litsakis and OCTAE Education Program Specialist Marilyn Fountain. Ms. Litsakis and Ms. Fountain provided an overview of the MOA and Perkins V programs, including a review of the 2020 Memorandum of Procedures; an overview of the purpose and content of state MOA plans, as well as data possibilities therein; and a discussion of how Perkins V data can be included in MOA plans, including disaggregated subpopulations, core indicators or performance, and examples from state MOA plans.

States were invited to present highlights from their state MOA plans, focusing on the alignments with Perkins V. State presenters included the state director and the staff member with responsibility for MOA data collection. Presenters included the following individuals:

- **Cathie Raymond**, CTE State Director, and **Mary Medina**, CTE Grants Supervisor, Career and Technical Education Unit, Arizona Department of Education
- **Sarah Health**, CTE State Director, and **Becky Giacomelli**, MOA Coordinator, Colorado Community College System
- **Nicassia Belton**, Director of Data and Accountability for Career Programs, Division of Career and College Readiness & Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement, Maryland State Department of Education
- **Erskine Glover**, CTE State Director, and **Michele Doughty**, MOA Coordinator, Office of Career Readiness, New Jersey State Department of Education

Following the state presentations, participants engaged in small-group discussion to discuss strategies and activities that supported collaboration and alignment between MOA and CTE planning.

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1. 2020 Memorandum of Procedures: [https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/memo-20200206-moa.pdf](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/memo-20200206-moa.pdf)

2. OCR’s authority is derived from the 1979 Vocational Education Guidelines (Appendix B to 34 CFR Parts 100 and 104 and Appendix A to 34 CFR Part 106).
Key Takeaways

- The 2020 Memorandum of Procedures and the flexibilities permitted therein in terms of types of data uses, types of reviews, and reporting flexibilities support greater alignment between MOA and CTE, which adds value for the system as they address goals of equity and access to high-quality CTE programming.

- Some states have submitted consolidated Perkins and MOA monitoring plans. The state plan
  - outlines the state’s procedures for identifying providers of secondary, postsecondary, and state-operated CTE for Perkins and MOA CTE compliance reviews and monitoring;
  - includes a comprehensive evaluation-compliance-monitoring process under which each recipient’s system of CTE is evaluated and progress is monitored to ensure their compliance in the equity and access of high-quality CTE for all; and
  - combines the requirements for both Perkins V and MOA Office of Civil Rights programs.

- The structure of the MOA and CTE responsibilities within the state can impact the level of coordination and alignment. For example, in many states, CTE and MOA reside within the same office; in some states they reside in the same agency but different offices; and in some states, they reside in different agencies.

- Collaboration and strong working relationships between stakeholders were critical to the successful development of MOA state plans. Stakeholders minimally include MOA coordinators and CTE staff at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, but also include postsecondary leadership roles (e.g., Assistant Leadership for Student Success, Director of Academic and Program Compliance) and input from agencies with responsibility for workforce, family services, disabilities, and civil rights.

- Essential activities to the development and implementation of their plans were shared by states. Common activities included the following:
  - applying the knowledge gained during the U.S. Department of Education’s spring MOA conference;
  - supporting consistent and regular collaboration and communication between MOA and CTE staff through activities such as weekly or standing meetings; and
  - holding stakeholder engagement sessions to gather a wide range of inputs.

- Previous Perkins and MOA plans, along with agency-specific policies, were reviewed in depth. States were thorough in reviewing previous plans to understand where alignments were possible. States also had to consider any policies specific to their state or state agencies that would need to shape or be reflected in the plans.
2. Determining Concentrator Status

September 14, 2020, 2:00-4:00pm ET

The Determining Concentrator Status session provided participants with information and an opportunity to discuss key considerations for determining concentrator status and to share examples of how states have operationalized their concentrator definitions. It also encouraged participants to discuss strategies for collecting and reporting concentrator data.

The session began with an overview from José Figueroa, an Education Program Specialist at OCTAE. Mr. Figueroa outlined the timeline for submitting Perkins V data, presented the CTE participant and concentrator definitions from the legislation (see text box), and shared considerations related to calculating participant and concentrator data, reporting duplicate data, and reporting cluster data. In December 2020, states will be reporting the first year of participant and concentrator enrollment data.

- **CTE Participants** – The term “CTE participant” means an individual who completes not less than one course in a career and technical education program or program of study of an eligible recipient. Section 3(13)

- **CTE Concentrators** – The term “CTE concentrator” means — (A) at the secondary school level, a student served by an eligible recipient who has completed at least 2 courses in a single career and technical education program or program of study; and (B) at the postsecondary level, a student enrolled in an eligible recipient who has —
  - earned at least 12 credits within a career and technical education program or program of study; or
  - completed such a program if the program encompasses fewer than 12 credits or the equivalent in total. Section 3(12)

States were invited to describe how they are implementing the new statutory Perkins V definitions, focusing on strategies for identifying concentrators in state data systems. Presenters included the following individuals:

- **Angela Kremers**, Director, Division of Career and Technical Education, Arkansas Department of Education
- **Heather Luchte**, Director of Performance Management & Idaho SkillStack, Idaho Career and Technical Education
- **Jacque Treaster**, Director of Dual Enrollment and Career and Technical Education, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Montana University System
- **Elaine Perea**, Director, College and Career Readiness Bureau, New Mexico Public Education Department

Following the state presentations, participants engaged in small-group discussion to reflect on key takeaways from the state presentations and discuss the challenges that states encounter with operationalizing concentrator definitions.
Key Takeaways

- While concentrator definitions are established in the statutes, participants noted and appreciated the variation across states in terms of how these definitions are operationalized. For example, states shared different approaches to defining a “course” to count toward concentrator status, which ranged from using capstone courses, identifying credit values for semester- or year-long courses, determining competencies that must be included in a course, and establishing Carnegie credit unit requirements.

- States also discussed strategies for and challenges with developing business rules to calculate accurate concentrator counts, as well as challenges with gathering concentrator data from multiple data systems within a state and/or relying on self-report data from local education agencies. Participants acknowledged the need for close communication among state and local education CTE staff and data specialists.

- States shared other approaches to operationalizing concentrator definitions that included conducting alignment reviews to ensure CTE programs articulate across education levels and reflect labor market needs, creating public-facing data dashboards to share CTE information, and the use of badging to recognize postsecondary credit attainment among secondary students.

- Other observations raised by participants included the following:
  - Some states require that a student must pass the course in order to be counted as a concentrator.
  - Many states seem to be collecting data on completers, in addition to participants and concentrators.
  - Differing schedules at technical centers and in some early college programs (using block scheduling) can pose challenges for identifying concentrators consistently across states.
  - States are interested in further exploring opportunities to align Perkins V and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), such as by offering incentives for reporting concentrator data as part of revised ESSA plans for school quality and school success.
3. Quality Indicators

September 23, 2020, 1:00-3:00pm ET

The Quality Indicators session started with an overview of the legislative requirements for these indicators (5S1-5S6) and Q & A led by José Figueroa, who shared a map of states’ quality indicators.

The presentation was followed by a panel of state education agency staff who described their states’ approaches to defining and collecting data on their selected program quality indicators:

- **Jessica Vallelungo** (Louisiana): Attained Postsecondary Credential (5S1)
- **Connie Beene** (Kansas): Attained Postsecondary Credit (5S2)
- **Debbie Hamble** (Oklahoma): Participated in WBL (5S3)
- **Richard Kincaid** (Washington, DC): Participated in Work-Based Learning (WBL) (5S3)
- **Wendi Morton** (Utah): Other Quality Indicators (5S4-5), pathway completion and career readiness coursework
- **Ruth Durkee** (Vermont): Multiple indicators

Following the panel, participants moved into small groups and shared their key takeaways from the state panel, a challenge they have encountered in operationalizing their quality indicator(s), and questions for other states.

**Objectives**

- To increase understanding of key considerations for defining program quality indicators
- To provide opportunities for participants to understand how states are implementing program quality indicators
- To provide opportunities to collaborate and discuss program quality indicator data collection and reporting strategies with other states

**Agenda**

- Program Quality Indicators in Perkins V
- State Panel
- Breakout Group Activity: Making Meaning Jamboard (Takeaways, Challenges, ...
→ Key Takeaways

- Participants expressed interest in **how other states are managing work-based learning and data collection** even if their state selected another program quality indicator. Iowa and Oklahoma’s approaches for classifying work-based learning experiences and collecting data on work-based learning were of interest to several states.

- **Operationalizing quality indicators can present a range of challenges** including the following (in order of most commonly noted challenge):
  - defining high-quality work-based learning experiences for 5S3;
  - accessing and matching secondary-postsecondary data for indicators requiring cross-level data, such as data on transcripted dual credit for 5S2;
  - establishing effective processes and criteria for identifying high-quality, industry-recognized credentials with labor market value for 5S1;
  - managing program quality indicator development and implementation with limited staff and /or staff turnover;
  - responding to COVID-19 related issues such as
    - delays in the indicator development process, such as the identification of competencies and credentials for PS1; and
    - a need for high-quality remote work-based learning options;
  - ensuring data quality and consistency, and training local staff to report accurate data for the new indicators, particularly for 5S3; and
  - managing data system changes that involve different district data system vendors, and the time needed to institute changes with each.
4. Local Needs Assessments and Applications

September 30, 2020, 12:00-2:00pm ET

The Local Needs Assessments and Applications session provided states with an understanding of the local needs assessment (LNA) expectations and exposure to a breadth of implementation strategies across states.

The session began with an overview from OCTAE Education Program Specialist Marilyn Fountain. Ms. Fountain summarized the required components for every LNA and the annual or biannual cycle for LNA submission. She reviewed the expectation that every entity must complete an LNA at least once every 2 years in order to be eligible for Perkins V funds.

A state panel presented highlights from their assessments and applications, focusing on tools used for LNA implementation. State presenters included state directors and staff members with responsibility for LNAs. Presenters included the following individuals:

- **Nicassia Belton**, Director of Data and Accountability for Career Programs, Division of Career and College Readiness & Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement, Maryland State Department of Education
- **Brian Pyles**, CTE State Director, Office of Career and Technical Education, Michigan Department of Education
- **Jeralyn Jargo**, CTE State Director, Career and Technical Education, Minnesota State
- **Monique Burton**, Division Manager for Data Analysis, Assessment & Contracts, Bureau of Career and Technical Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education

Following the state presentations, participants entered breakout rooms where they created posters about their LNA strategies and tools. Participants engaged in small-group discussion around the experience of implementing LNAs during COVID and plans for implementing LNAs in the future.

**All LNAs must evaluate and/or describe the following components:**
- student performance;
- size, scope, and quality;
- labor market alignment;
- progress toward implementing CTE programs;
- recruitment, retention, and training of faculty and staff; and
- progress toward improving access and equity.

**Objectives**
- To provide an overview of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) legislation to ground the conversation and familiarize attendees who are new to Perkins V
- To provide opportunities for participants to learn how other states are implementing CLNA
- To provide opportunities to discuss CLNA tools and templates with other states

**Agenda**
- Local Needs Assessments in Perkins V
- State Panel
- Breakout Group Activity: LNA Jamboard Posters
→ Key Takeaways

• Beyond inclusion of the minimum set of categories required in the legislation, **states described a variety of approaches to developing their template and implementing the LNA process.** For example, some states went above and beyond to add other content to their template, such as components related to state reporting requirements. States shared a multitude of guidance and support tools for LNA implementation including informational webinars, staff trainings, data dashboards, technical assessments, example data tables, and reserve funds to assist with stakeholder engagement.

• **States felt the LNA could help grantees move from compliance to continuous improvement.** The LNA acts as a tool to promote a growth mindset and move from data collection to data use for program improvement. It is also allowing them to move toward a comprehensive approach to planning programs and support services.

• **States discussed how the LNA is an opportunity to move the needle on CTE-goals.** For example, states said that the LNA enables new types of collaboration and planning. Participants shared that conducting the LNA at the regional level allows for a macro-level approach and vision for CTE programs and alignment. Participants, especially those completing a joint Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) plan, mentioned opportunities to align work with other state agency activities, such as regional workforce development efforts. Additionally, states said that the LNA provided an opportunity to implement new or updated systems, software, and dashboards. For some, this was also challenge because they had to update the systems and train staff in a short-time frame.

• **During COVID-19, states are struggling with virtual implementation of stakeholder meetings.** In some cases, virtual meetings made it easier for stakeholders to connect across distances, but some participants also reported lower participation and issues with internet access for attendees. Participants discussed ways to be intentional with their communications strategy, such as sending materials ahead of time and using the meeting time to have an active dialogue.

• **States faced challenges in the first year of implementation** including uncertainty about how to set benchmarks for quality criteria, conduct an improvement process, or instruct locals on linking activities and budget with the LNA.

• Overall, states agreed that the **LNAs are evolving as states begin and move through the initial cycle of implementation.** Most states expressed interest in course corrections and further developing their assessments and supplementary tools and trainings. Participants talked about items they would do differently next time, such as creating an electronic application and training for staff on how to analyze the data.

• **Other observations** included the following:
  - The type of **involvement of postsecondary varied across states.** In some states, postsecondary is completing the LNA assessments separately from secondary, while in others, LNA regions were designed to include multiple local education agencies and at least one college. States voiced interest in figuring out how to better share data and jointly plan when secondary and postsecondary are involved, particularly in areas where they did not previously collaborate.
  - **States faced issues with data sharing across secondary and postsecondary** due to state law.
  - **States jointly planning for WIOA are aligning their regions for LNA completion,** providing more Labor Market Information (LMI) data, and aligning the labor market and sector strategy with the WIOA portion.
5. Data Collection for Special Populations

October 7, 2020, 1:00-3:00pm ET

The Data Collection for Special Populations session provided states with information and an opportunity to discuss special populations data collection strategies and issues, in alignment with the changes set forth in Perkins V. OCTAE Perkins Regional Coordinator Allison Hill provided an overview of the changes related to special populations in Perkins V:

- adds three new special populations subgroups: homeless individuals, youth in foster care, and youth with parents in active military service.
- expands uses of funds to recruit special populations and to support or reduce out-of-pocket expenses for special populations students.
- requires an evaluation of the performance of students, including an evaluation of performance for special populations subgroups.
- requires a description of progress toward implementation of equal access to high-quality CTE courses and programs of study (POS), including strategies to overcome barriers, providing programs that are designed to enable special populations to meet the local levels of performance, and providing activities preparing special populations for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations.
- requires local applications to include how students, including students who are members of special populations, will learn about their school’s CTE offerings. Local applications must also describe how the recipient will:
  - provide activities to prepare special populations for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations;
  - prepare CTE participants for nontraditional fields;
  - provide equal access for special populations to CTE courses, programs, and POS;
  - ensure that members of special populations will not be discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of special populations; and
  - address disparities or gaps in performance between groups of students.

Four additional presentations were delivered:

- **Luke Rhine**, CTE Director for the Delaware Department of Education, shared Delaware’s overall approach to student equity and special populations. Delaware uses equity as a guiding principle, linking it to organizational structure and staffing; lines of delivery and technical assistance; and operational procedures, accountability, and research.
- **Ian Beagles**, CTAE and Perkins Data Specialist, and **Heather Denny**, State

**Objectives**

- To increase understanding of and awareness of strategies for data collection for special populations, with a focus on the new special populations in Perkins V
- To provide opportunities for participants to understand how states are collecting and using special populations data
- To provide opportunities to collaborate and discuss special populations data collection with other states

**Agenda**

- Federal Overview of New Legislative Requirements for Special Populations
- Special Populations ThinkTank Activity
- State Panel
- Breakout Group Activity: Rose, Bud, Thorns
Coordinator for Homeless Education, both of the Montana Office of Public Instruction, shared their strategies for collecting data on and supporting homeless students enrolled in CTE. They shared that Montana’s homeless students have a lower graduation rate (80%) than the total graduation rate (90%). However, when a homeless 12th grader is enrolled in CTE, the graduation rate equals with the overall rate (90%).

- **Kevin Springman**, Research Associate with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, shared Pennsylvania’s strategies for using special populations data, including informing Perkins V retention and transfer practices, professional learning opportunities and resources, onsite compliance methodology, and hiring nontraditional consultants.

- **Lesley Keeling-Olson**, Director of Perkins Grants at Temple College in Temple, Texas, provided a local perspective. She described strategies for data collection, including intake and self-identification policies and processes; strategies for supporting students aging out of foster care; and the use of a social worker to develop a strong referral network.

→ **Key Takeaways**

- **Postsecondary systems collect data that can be used for special populations reporting** through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, admission/registration records, self-reported surveys or questionnaires, and intake forms for student services. Some postsecondary systems coordinate with the entity that administers foster care. States shared that not all postsecondary institutions collect these data.

- **Perkins V has strengthened the partnerships between the state CTE office and the state’s McKinney-Vento coordinator for data collection on homeless students** and for supporting their success in CTE programs.

- Many states leverage partnerships with state agencies that administer foster care to collect data on students who are in or aged out of the foster care system.

- **States have varying levels of strategies in place regarding students with an active military parent**, in part reflecting the geographic proximity to military bases in a state or district. Some of the strategies employed include the following:
  - providing statewide training to districts on how to provide support services to military youth;
  - providing training to local military bases on CTE courses;
  - participating in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children to help address issues unique to this population;
  - collecting districts or colleges self-reported data; and
  - surveying parents.

- **Participants noted that this data collection aligns with ESSA requirements at the secondary level**. However, at the postsecondary level, it may make more sense to collect data on students who are active members of the military.

- **Many states struggle with obtaining data sharing agreements with the appropriate entity**. Many state agencies and institutions are reluctant to enter data sharing agreements due to concerns about legal implications and violating privacy. Other states noted the importance of including legal counsel for both entities in planning conversations. Many states are working toward revising data systems to include new required data fields.

- **Many states shared concerns around the quality of self-reported data**.