Technical Assistance to States Module

Implementing the *Perkins V* Work-Based Learning Program Quality Indicator

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During the 2019–20 academic year, RTI provided technical assistance to states on implementing the *Perkins V* accountability indicator 5S3: Participated in Work-Based Learning. This module summarizes the findings arising from the four questions that guided the technical assistance:

1. How are states defining work-based learning (WBL) to promote quality and meet the needs of districts statewide, including in rural regions with few employers?
2. How are states operationalizing their WBL definitions for data collection, including distinguishing between different types of WBL?
3. What approaches and resources do states use to ensure the accurate collection of data on WBL for *Perkins V* accountability reporting?
4. What data are states collecting on WBL beyond participation, such as qualitative and quantitative information on students’ experiences and learning?
In addition, this module includes information on states’ adjustments to their WBL programs to accommodate restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings reflect consultations and interviews with state career and technical education (CTE) staff members from more than a dozen states, information shared by states during the 2020 Virtual Data Quality Institute, and reviews of Perkins V State Plans and other documentation. The module is intended to provide practitioners with examples of states’ approaches to implementing the WBL Program Quality Indicator rather than a comprehensive summary of state practice.

States consulted included Alabama, Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Tennessee, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.
How are states defining WBL to promote quality and meet the needs of districts statewide, including in rural regions with few employers? (Slide 1)

**Perkins V definition of WBL:** Sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.

Most of the 27 states that chose participation in WBL as their program quality indicator have customized the Perkins definition with additional specificity, such as the following:

- Allowable activity types, such as internships, apprenticeships, cooperative education experiences, clinical experiences, and WBL capstone courses
- Minimum number of hours requirements, which include examples from:
  - Ohio (250 hours throughout high school),
  - New York (54 hours), and
  - North Dakota (40 hours)
- Flexibility regarding the location of WBL, including at school, at employers’ facilities, and virtually
How are states defining WBL to promote quality and meet the needs of districts statewide, including in rural regions with few employers? (Slide 2)

State CTE staff described a need for flexible WBL definitions suited to a variety of CTE programs and school settings. State staff used stakeholder feedback to develop WBL definitions that balance rigor and feasibility and noted that the appropriateness of their definitions across districts statewide would take time to assess.
## Examples of State Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alabama</strong></td>
<td>Work-based learning is a structured component of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) curriculum that integrates classroom instruction with productive, progressive, supervised, work-based experiences/apprenticeships (paid) and internships (unpaid), related to students’ career objectives. Content is planned for students through a cooperative arrangement between the school and employer as a component of work-based learning.</td>
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<td><strong>Colorado</strong></td>
<td>Work-based learning provides hands-on or realistic experiences for secondary learners that relate to the students' CTE Program of Study. For <em>Perkins V</em> reporting, qualifying experiences will include: Apprenticeship, On-the-Job Training, Clinical Experience, Credit for Work Experience, Internship, Pre-Apprenticeship, Industry-Sponsored Project, School-Based Enterprise Managed by Students.</td>
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<td><strong>North Dakota</strong></td>
<td>North Dakota added the following to the <em>Perkins V</em> WBL definition: Option 1: Sustained interactions (including cooperative experiences): supervised experiences of &gt;= 40 hours on the worksite; Option 2: Simulated environments in an educational setting (which means any CTE-funded course) should strive for a minimum of 40 hours throughout a series of in-class projects/lab work, with each project/lab taking no less than 1 week or 5 successive hours of class time to complete.</td>
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How are states operationalizing their WBL definitions for data collection, including distinguishing between different types of WBL?

Some states limit data collection on WBL to intensive and sustained experiences for *Perkins V* reporting, such as internships or school-based enterprises.

**IA** Iowa’s *Work-Based Learning Guidebook* includes a WBL experience continuum and detailed definitions of the more intensive WBL programs (termed workplace experiences) tracked for *Perkins V* accountability. Iowa has also created a set of SCED codes to guide reporting.

Other states also track less intensive career awareness and exploration WBL options.

**GA** Georgia’s WBL coordinators collect aggregate data on student participation rates in awareness and exploration activities (e.g., guest speakers, job shadows) that are aligned to the state’s WBL standards.

**NJ** New Jersey collects data on all WBL activities among CTE and non-CTE students.
What approaches and resources do states use to ensure the accurate collection of data on WBL for Perkins V accountability reporting?

**MA** Massachusetts offers asynchronous virtual training tools and an annual convening on the effective use of the state’s database for tracking WBL placements.

Several states offer professional endorsements for WBL teachers and coordinators. Because these staff members oversee the submission of WBL data to the state, the training also addresses WBL data collection.

- **TN** The [Tennessee WBL certificate](#): Required for WBL teachers of record
- **IA** The [Iowa multi-occupations endorsement](#) covers WBL supervision data submission
- **GA** Educators in Georgia interested in serving as district WBL coordinators can earn the state’s [WBL endorsement](#)

**DE** Most states offer training workshops on CTE data collection annually in advance of data reporting deadlines; in addition, states including Delaware provide districts reports of their data to review for errors and encourage local data validation. Kentucky, for example, has [instructions for data validation](#) for district staff responsible for data collection.
What data are states collecting on WBL beyond participation, such as qualitative and quantitative information on students’ experiences and learning?

States shared examples of expanded WBL data collection already underway or in development, including the following:

- **WBL management systems**: Massachusetts’ Career Ready Database collects a variety of data on WBL students’ demographics and experiences. Staff members have used information on placement industry and occupation for system planning to inform program improvements, such as a recent effort to increase placements in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

- **CTE program approval applications**: Some Perkins V state plans propose using qualitative data on WBL submitted by districts for the CTE program approval process to assess program quality and consistency.

- **Cross-agency analyses**: Iowa’s Perkins V State Plan includes a goal to evaluate cross-agency data on WBL, including programs funded by non-Perkins sources, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
Implementing WBL During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The technical assistance team hosted a virtual discussion on strategies for supporting WBL during the COVID-19 pandemic. States shared the following examples:

- States and districts are updating WBL guidance and plans based on employer surveys and direct outreach asking about their willingness to participate, worksite safety precautions, and adaptations of day-to-day operations necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- To adjust student WBL plans, states are doing the following:
  - Reducing WBL hours requirements (e.g., Wisconsin)
  - Identifying opportunities for students to substitute project-based learning for onsite experiences (e.g., producing training videos or updating safety manuals)
  - Engaging with employers to set student goals that reflect limitations brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic
  - Leveraging career and technical student organization (CTSO) opportunities, including virtual competitions and job interviews
Conclusions (Slide 1)

Defining WBL: States are still in the process of determining the best way to balance rigor and flexibility in statewide definitions of quality WBL. States have customized the Perkins V definition of WBL by, for example, specifying the type and duration of the work-based experiences that can be counted.

Data collection on WBL participation: Some states limit statewide data collection to intensive, sustained WBL experiences as needed for Perkins reporting. Other states also collect data on lower intensity awareness and exploration WBL, such as job shadows and career fairs to track and incentivize these activities.

Data collection on students’ WBL experiences: Some states have systems or plans to collect data on multiple aspects of students’ WBL experiences, such as industry, employer, and duration, through online WBL management systems, program approval processes, and cross-agency data sharing. Staff members anticipate leveraging these data for program reviews and improvements.
**WBL data quality:** State strategies for ensuring quality data on WBL include annual trainings and webinars on CTE data submission as well as training and endorsements for educators and administrators who submit WBL data to the state.

**WBL and the COVID-19 pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic arrived amid many states’ implementation of statewide WBL programs. To adapt their plans, states are consulting with employers and adjusting WBL opportunities by reducing hours, finding substitutions for on-site experiences, and tapping CTSO resources.