



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

**Perkins Career and Technical Education Act Reauthorization
Recommendations**

March 2016

With its emphasis on both secondary and postsecondary education technical skills, the Perkins Act is an important component in the education of young people with disabilities, putting them on the course toward postsecondary success and economic self-sufficiency. The current authorization of the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act does not exclude students with disabilities but it does not sufficiently address their needs either. To be fully included in education, students with disabilities and their families need to know their needs are being considered and that supports are in place to serve them. A strong reauthorization of Perkins with components that increase access for students with disabilities while creating strategic alignments with the recent reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA 2015) and the Rehabilitation Act (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, (WIOA 2014) will provide opportunities for youth with disabilities to reach the goals stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act of equal opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.

The following recommendations are made to increase access to Perkins programs for students with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities.

- 1) **Students with disabilities are a distinct population and should be recognized as such throughout the law, rather than listed as one of many “special populations.”** As written now, students with disabilities are one of the “special populations” to be served by Perkins programs. This is a large group that covers disabilities, poverty, parental status of students, English learners and others. Combining these groups dilutes the attention to any segment in need. We suggest that all of these groups be specifically addressed in the law and that students with disabilities are given specific attention in the areas of recruitment and continued support in Perkin programs.
- 2) **Include in state and local plans a description of how Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs will meet the needs of students with disabilities.** Both state and local plans should include a description of how CTE programs will effectively serve students with disabilities through recruitment, instruction, career counseling, and support of students with disabilities, including goals for enrollment and successful completion of CTE programs. The plans should include how CTE programs will utilize best practices including career development and exploration and career planning and management. These plans should also describe how CTE programs will incorporate universal design for learning (UDL) to enhance learning and how personnel within CTE programs will receive appropriate professional development on the effective use of UDL.

- 3) **States and CTE programs should describe in their plans how they will provide appropriate accommodations, assistive technology, and full access to technology for students with disabilities.** CTE programs must be able to meet the needs of students with disabilities, including the provision of accommodations and access to technology. CTE educators must be able to provide accommodations and ensure the appropriate use of technology for students with disabilities in CTE programs. Therefore, in State and local plans, in addition to describing how they will develop, improve, and expand access to appropriate technology, entities operating CTE programs should be required to describe how they will provide appropriate accommodations, assistive technology, and full access to technology for students with disabilities.
- 4) **The accountability system for CTE programs should require that data be disaggregated by each special population, including students with disabilities.** Currently, the law requires states to set performance measures and track core indicators of performance. This accountability system should also evaluate the outcomes for students with disabilities—disaggregated by disability category—when determining the effectiveness of CTE programs. Specifically, the accountability system should report the achievement, including the acquisition of industry certification(s), of students with disabilities as a subgroup and by disability category under IDEA.
- 5) **Evaluation of CTE programs should include an indicator relating to professional development provided to CTE educators and their ability to address the needs of students with disabilities.** All personnel, including CTE educators, need to have the skills required to effectively instruct students with disabilities. States and CTE programs must address this need by providing comprehensive professional development to all personnel who will serve students with disabilities in CTE programs. Specifically, staff and faculty of CTE programs should receive training, support, and technical assistance to ensure programs of instruction, curricula, and support services are developed according to the principles of universal design for learning.
- 6) **Assure CTE programs include students with disabilities in proportion to the population of students with disabilities as represented in the total student population.** Approximately 12 percent of children in preK-12 schools have a disability qualifying them for IDEA services. We suggest that all Perkins programs, secondary and postsecondary, strive to increase the percentage of students with disabilities served. Students with disabilities should be represented in any CTE program at least in similar proportion to the proportion students with disabilities are represented in the total student population. Eligibility requirements for CTE programs should be clear that the category of the student's disability is not a factor and, consistent with IDEA Regulation 300.116(e) that students with disabilities are not to be excluded because of needed modifications in the curriculum.

- 7) **Eligible entities should be required to use portions of their 5 percent set aside to enhance recruitment and services to students with disabilities.** A small portion, no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 percent of an eligible entity's allotment and not less than \$30,000, should be used for recruitment of students with disabilities. Another $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 percent and not less than \$30,000 should be used to ensure CTE instructors and administrators are trained in strategies and techniques to support students with disabilities in their programs. Strategies and techniques to support students with disabilities should include use of UDL to enhance learning.
- 8) **Define worksite learning as taking place in settings that are competitive integrated employment settings.** All students, especially those with disabilities, should be experiencing their worksite learning at businesses that provide their workers at the competitive rate of compensation and are integrated settings consistent with sec. 503 of the Rehabilitation Act (Title IV of WIOA).
- 9) **Retain the integrated course of study that includes both CTE skills and traditional academic skills.** At the secondary level, students with disabilities should continue to receive instruction in traditional academic content such as language arts, mathematics, and science as well as their instruction in career and technical education.
- 10) **Provide incentives to models that increase worksite learning while continuing to provide instruction in academic skills.** Programs that are able to create innovative models of instruction that increase worksite experience while continuing to provide high quality academic instruction should be rewarded with additional funds.
- 11) **A priority activity of national significance should assist local programs in serving students with disabilities.** Under Sec. 222 of the Act, the Secretary of Education should be directed to create programs that increase the capacity of states to support local programs so they can instruct students with disabilities in all offered programs.
- 12) **Align the activities of IDEA, ESSA, WIOA, and Perkins.** There are numerous activities required across these four major laws that can, if coordinated, compliment the experiences of students with disabilities and create strong opportunities for students to transition to successful employment and full participation in their communities (WIOA requires state VR agencies to use 15% of their budgets on transition planning). These opportunities should be highlighted in any Perkins reauthorization. These areas include but are not limited to:
 - a. cross program funding
 - b. vocational rehabilitation and benefits counseling
 - c. career and self-determination counseling
 - d. academic instruction that contributes to successful acquisition of industry certificates

e. competitive, integrated work experiences

ACCSES

American Foundation for the Blind
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism Speaks
Council for Learning Disabilities
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Easter Seals
Perkins School for the Blind
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
Teacher Education Division of Council for Exceptional Children
Institute for Educational Leadership
Learning Disabilities Association of America
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
School Social Work Association of America
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since 1973, the CCD has advocated on behalf of people of all ages with physical and mental disabilities and their families. CCD has worked to achieve federal legislation and regulations that assure that the 54 million children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into the mainstream of society. For additional information, please contact:

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