**Oregon Perkins V Workgroups Impact Summary**

To help inform the development of its Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) state plan, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) convened four workgroups. The workgroups, representing key stakeholders (e.g. employers, regional coordinators, state agency representatives from K-12 and higher education, community colleges, virtual schools, etc.) were tasked with examining and developing recommendations to improve Oregon’s work-based learning; data and accountability; program of study application, review and approval quality; and career awareness and advisement structures. These recommendations will be used to guide the state’s overall investment and work in Career Technical Education (CTE), as well as its Perkins V state plan. While each workgroup focused on one of the aforementioned components of the CTE system, the feedback received from the workgroups has been analyzed and crafted into a set of cross-cutting recommendations.

Collective Impact

The Oregon workgroups each met four times, with the accountability workgroup meeting five times, from July through October 2019. In addition, there were several opportunities for the workgroups to give written input and reactions to proposed ideas, recommendations, tools and resources. Collectively, these workgroups influenced and affirmed state decisions, provided critical input, offered new ideas and suggestions, and made decisions to improve CTE in the state of Oregon.

Core to the workgroups’ collective impact was their affirmation of Oregon’s vision for CTE. Oregon’s state vision for CTE is to reimagine and transform learner experiences in order to enhance their future prospects, empower their communities, and build equity in an inclusive, sustainable, innovation-based economy. This vision served as a guide for the decisions and input the workgroups provided.

The workgroups collectively provided input into the following:

* Definitions for the size, scope and quality at the secondary and postsecondary levels;
* Oregon’s program of study quality framework;
* Accountability system decisions and performance targets; and
* The comprehensive local needs assessment.

The workgroups directly impacted state decisions regarding the state’s approach to drafting its Perkins V state plan. Considering input from the workgroups, the state is pursuing:

* Affirming that their commitment to equity is evident in the state’s Perkins V plan;
* Investing in piloting an approach to expand access to middle grades CTE;
* Underscoring their commitment to the program of study concept by reaffirming that only programs of study would be funded with Perkins V dollars (except for funds invested in middles grades/career awareness activities);
* Selecting work-based learning as the secondary program quality measure for Perkins accountability, but also begin the creation of a new “career and college readiness” indicator at the state level to measure elements such as college credit earned in high school and industry recognized credentials;
* Strengthening the secondary concentrator definition so that students must complete two credits in an approved CTE programs of study to qualify as a concentrator;
* Refining Perkins indicator numerator and denominator definitions to ensure data is as meaningful as possible;
* Expanding career awareness and middle grades CTE opportunities, including by building awareness of CTE by key stakeholders including parents/families;
* Committing to increase access to meaningful work-based learning for all students;
* Establishing a synchronized program of study application/renewal schedule by Career Cluster;
* Beginning to create statewide program of study templates which can be voluntarily adopted by local communities; and
* Leveraging work-based learning as a key area of cross-agency collaboration.

Cross-Cutting Recommendations

The workgroups developed recommendations that have cross-cutting influence on Oregon’s CTE system. Namely, the recommendations focused on improving and leveraging the systems to develop consistent statewide messaging, promote equity in CTE, ensure quality, enhance systems alignment in Oregon and streamline and improve processes.

Develop Consistent, Statewide Messaging Initiative

To achieve the full aspiration of the state’s vision for CTE, effort must be put in place to build awareness, understanding and support for greater participation and completion in CTE. Multiple workgroups mentioned that CTE still struggles with image issues, especially in underserved communities and among subpopulations. The numbers presented to the accountability workgroup indicated an opportunity to serve more students through CTE. And employers and educators alike felt that once students were in CTE, a strong network was needed to support work-based learning experiences.

Therefore, the first set of cross-cutting recommendations suggest the development of a more coordinated and consistent communications initiative to:

* Promote Oregon’s statewide vision for CTE.
* Increase awareness and understanding of CTE by various audiences.
* Create a statewide communications network/website to promote work-based learning.

Promote Equity in CTE

The state has expressed a clear and compelling commitment to equity, which is a foundational concept in the state’s CTE vision. The complexity of prioritizing issues of equity requires care, diligence and a commitment to attend to it in each and every aspect of the CTE system. Therefore, equity very naturally resulted in a set of cross-cutting recommendations:

* Utilize the state’s commitment to expanding middle grades CTE as a key lever of its equity strategy by:
  + Expanding and extending career exploration, exposure and awareness
  + Supporting emerging occupational identify in younger learners
  + Helping learners, especially in underserved communities and who are part of special populations, build social capital
* Remember that learners of all ages - secondary, postsecondary and adult - can benefit from CTE and that as policies and decisions are made, all learners should be considered.
* Develop a work-based learning strategy that is flexible enough to accommodate the needs of learners who must work to help financially support their families, and those in rural areas.
* Utilize work-based learning as both career development and exploration strategy, as well as a skills-acquisition strategy, enabling more learners to gain transferable employability skills and develop their work portfolio.
* Build the capacity of educators to identify equity gaps in their data, conduct root cause analyses and implement strategies to close the gaps.
* Rebuild trust with communities that have been underserved by CTE.
  + Increase communications to build awareness of the power and potential of CTE.
  + Ensure quality programs of study are delivered in every community across the state.
  + Build capacity to support work-based learning experiences in every community across the state.

Ensuring Quality

Underpinning the state’s vision is the necessity to have quality programs of study available for any student that chooses to participate in CTE. This means having clear expectations and systems in place to define what is meant by quality and to have the supports (technical assistance, professional development, tools and resources) to help school districts and colleges close any gaps.

* Affirm the state’s commitment to programs of study, which translates into learners being prepared for an aligned program that links both secondary and postsecondary education.
* Support continuous improvement by establishing the programs of study quality rubric that provides direction on how to improve program of study design and delivery.
* Expand learner awareness of their interests and talents through robust career advisement activities, ideally beginning in the middle grades.
* Ensure learners have access to a robust career advisement system, ranging from career awareness through aligned work-based learning opportunities.
* Support the use of data-driven decisions through the use of the comprehensive local needs assessment.
* Promote the expansion and scaling of voluntary statewide programs of study to reduce duplicative efforts to invest in the creation of programs of study and increase the consistency of the learner experience across the state.

Enhance Systems Alignment

Achieving the state’s vision for CTE requires a “village” to coordinate and leverage funds, initiatives and partnerships to achieve an aligned system that supports each and every learner. This is an exciting time in Oregon for CTE. The secondary system has received a substantial investment by the legislature. The state has a robust network of STEM hubs. In addition, there is the emerging Perkins V state plan. To ensure a coordinated, rather than a siloed approach, the state must pursue activities to ensure alignment:

* Utilize the state’s commitment to work-based learning as a “dot connector” to bring systems and investment together toward a common goal.
* Coordinate the various communications campaigns to ensure a consistent message and to reach different audiences.
* Leverage and align other funds and initiatives, including current STEM initiatives focused on the younger grades, to emerging expansion efforts for middle grades CTE.
* Support systemic, meaningful collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education in the program of study application, design and implementation to:
  + Increase student transition and success in postsecondary education
  + Reduce remediation in postsecondary education
  + Increase on-time student completion of postsecondary education and thus, reduce student debt burden

Streamline and Improve Processes

The workgroups were universal in their request to make the policies and processes clear to understand and as streamlined as possible. To that end, they recommended:

* Ensure the program quality rubric implementation process is streamlined, supports both the secondary and postsecondary elements of a program of study, is led by CTE regional coordinators, and is focused on continuous improvement.
* Develop voluntary statewide programs of study to help reduce duplicative effort across the state.
* Streamline paperwork/requirements for work-based learning.

Support for Implementation

None of these recommendations can realize their full potential without an investment of time and resources. Collectively, the workgroups indicated the need for professional development, technical assistance, and resources to help build understanding, awareness and capacity of the state’s CTE system.

Each of the recommendations above has a component of needed technical assistance and professional development aligned to it - from building data literacy, to creating awareness and support for utilizing the program of study quality rubric and the new definitions of size, scope and quality.

While there are many resources under development, specifically, there was a request for the state to develop standards/guidelines for middle school CTE; clear definitions and terminology that can be used across systems; work-based learning manuals for business/industry, schools and educators; and statewide program of study templates.

While these additional resources may help to expand access to CTE opportunities to learners, the workgroups recognized the importance of leveraging existing networks and events to support the recommendations. The workgroups suggested reaching:

* educators at the regional coordinator meetings or the state ACTE conference.
* business and industry through existing networks and associations, such as the chambers of commerce or the Tribal Business Network

Workgroup members were interested in remaining involved in an ongoing way with the state, perhaps considering a statewide advisory panel, to continue to serve as a sounding board and thought partner as the state leads efforts to implement its ambitious vision.

To learn more about the workgroup discussions and recommendations, access the notes for each workgroup meeting [here](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FvCSg4wL42QznLNPv3lay2sR5aHSE5gN).