

# Every Student Succeeds Act

## Career Readiness Accountability

THE PASSAGE OF THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA) marked a major step toward ensuring that all students are prepared to graduate from high school ready for college and careers. The new law includes critical measures to strengthen the role of CTE in our nation's K-12 education system.

**IN TITLE I OF THE ACT**, the state plan is intended to be a blueprint for describing how states will administer ESSA programs, which includes creating academic standards, developing an accountability system and supporting activities at the local level. With respect to state standards, ESSA maintains the mandate that states must have challenging academic standards for mathematics, reading/language arts, science and any other subjects the state chooses. However, ESSA goes further by requiring states to show that such academic standards are aligned with the entrance requirements for postsecondary education in the state and any "relevant" state CTE standards. This is intended to ensure that students are graduating from high school college and career ready, but also helps to promote high-quality CTE as an important component of a state's educational goals.

In measuring performance, states must develop an accountability system that includes student achievement on academic assessments, graduation rates for high schools, English language proficiency, and a measure of student growth or other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools. Additionally, ESSA requires "not less than one indicator of school quality or student success," with specific references to possible indicators, such as student engagement, educator engagement, school climate, postsecondary readiness or any other measure identified by the state. These additional measures can include career readiness indicators, such as student completion of a CTE pathway, performance on technical skills assessments, attainment of an industry credential, and completion of postsecondary credit through dual or concurrent enrollment programs, among others. Many states already include career readiness indicators in their state accountability systems, some as part of their approved flexibility waivers from the old No Child Left Behind system.

Allowing states to utilize indicators of school quality and

### How Does ESSA Support Measures of Career Readiness in Accountability Systems?

- Aligns State Academic Standards with Relevant CTE Standards
- Allows for Indicators of Career Readiness in State Accountability Systems
- Provides Opportunity to Develop or Expand Existing State Efforts to Measure Student Career Readiness
- Allows for CTE Accountability Indicators on State/District Report Cards

student success in ESSA provides an opportunity to develop or further expand existing efforts to measure student career readiness in states, which in turn draws more attention and resources to CTE.

To report on performance, ESSA also provides the option to include CTE accountability indicators on state and district report cards. The inclusion of these measures, alongside other academic indicators, will help parents and students to make informed decisions about educational goals, while ensuring that policymakers, educators and the community understand the important role of CTE for student success in postsecondary education and the workforce. This information, such as student achievement on technical assessments and credential attainment, is already collected under the Perkins Act and will create no new data collection burdens.

*The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) is the nation's largest education association dedicated to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. For more information, contact: Mitch Coppes (mcoppes@acteonline.org or 703-683-3111), ACTE, 1410 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, www.acteonline.org.*

