

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.



Every Student Succeeds Act

Career Guidance and Counseling

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.

TITLE IV OF ESSA has consolidated multiple programs that provide for a range of student support services into a single block grant. Under ESSA, states and school districts would have the flexibility to use this funding to support activities that advance the use of technology in the classroom, improve school climate and provide students with a well-rounded education. ESSA recognizes the academic rigor of CTE programs by including CTE in the definition of a well-rounded education, alongside other critical subjects that contribute to the academic and career success of all students.

To support a well-rounded education, funding provided through Title IV of ESSA can ensure that school counselors have greater access to the resources and information they need to help students make informed decisions about their futures. ESSA encourages school districts to offer college and career guidance programs, which may include career awareness and exploration activities that expose students to a range of career options and the educational pathways aligned to their long-term goals.

This section of Title IV also allows school districts to implement effective strategies for training school counselors in the use of labor market information. Professional development can be provided for counselors that enable them to use this information to identify local workforce needs, so they can better advise students on careers in growing fields available in their community.

Additionally, counselors could use funding in Title IV of

How Does ESSA Support Career Guidance and Counseling?

- Encourages School Districts to Offer College and Career Guidance Programs
- Promotes Career Awareness and Exploration Activities
- Supports Training for Counselors on Using Labor Market Information to Advise Students on Postsecondary and Career Goals
- Promotes Efforts to Increase Financial Literacy for Students
- Increases Awareness of Federal Financial Aid Opportunities

ESSA to increase students' financial literacy, so they have the tools to make smart financial decisions. Counselors can also implement activities that help to inform students planning to pursue postsecondary education about the federal financial aid options available to them to pay for their education. Increasing student awareness of financial aid programs can break down barriers to accessing programs that lead to a degree or other postsecondary credential that will support students' career success.

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Academics and CTE in the Classroom

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ONE KEY CHANGE IS THAT UNDER ESSA, states may now reserve up to 3 percent of their allocation under Title I funding for disadvantaged students to provide “direct student services.” This reserve allows states to award funds directly to high- need school districts that may be used to cover the costs of participation in CTE coursework that is aligned with state academic standards and leads to an industry-recognized credential, which would not otherwise be available to students. This funding could offer an opportunity for districts to supplement their Perkins funding and expand access to CTE programs of study and career pathway programs to more students.

In addition, the local plan required by Title I of ESSA provides a more detailed picture for how school districts will use federal funds to support the goals and activities outlined in the law. For example, districts may support efforts to integrate academic and CTE content in the classroom—an important theme that will be echoed throughout ESSA's provisions on CTE. This can be done through developing and implementing coordinated instructional strategies that may include experiential and work-based learning opportunities for in-demand careers and occupations. CTE can also be an important part of local efforts to promote effective strategies to transition students from middle grades to high school and on to postsecondary education. Additionally, ESSA allows those schools in greatest need of assistance that are operating schoolwide and targeted assistance programs to develop and implement dual or concurrent enrollment programs to provide postsecondary coursework and opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credit while in high school.

ESSA recognizes the academic rigor of CTE programs by including CTE in the definition of a well-rounded education. Along with English, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, history, and the arts among others, CTE is counted as a critical subject that contributes to the academic and career success of all students. As part of a well-rounded education in ESSA, CTE could be integrated in comprehensive literacy instruction in Title II, and as part of expanded learning time opportunities for students through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

How Does ESSA Support Rigorous Academics and CTE Content in the Classroom?

- Allows for Direct Student Services to Expand Access to CTE Coursework
- Supports Development of Coordinated Instructional Strategies, Including Experiential Learning Opportunities
- Recognizes CTE as Component of Well- rounded Education
- Expands Access to CTE and Academic Programs through Technology
- Promotes CTE in Literacy Education and Expanded Learning Opportunities

Well-rounded education is an important part of Title IV of ESSA, which provides funds for a range of support services for students. Title IV allows states and districts expand access to CTE and academic programs through the use of technology. Funds can be used to improve student achievement by promoting innovative technological practices in the classroom, such as increasing access to online dual or concurrent enrollment opportunities, CTE courses and programs leading to a recognized postsecondary credential. Title IV also promotes “safe and healthy students,” by encouraging districts to improve instructional practices that provide students with information on safe relationship behavior, with a focus on preventing assault, domestic abuse and dating violence. In high schools across the country, CTE family and consumer sciences courses have long incorporated education on safe relationships as part of the curriculum, and CTE educators can utilize ESSA resources to help their students learn how to build healthy relationships.

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Teacher Recruitment, Training and Professional Development

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AN IMPORTANT FUNCTION OF ESSA is to support educators through recruitment, training and development opportunities, and Title II is the part of the law dedicated to preparing teachers, administrators and other education professionals for career success. Through funding provided under Title II of ESSA, states and districts can offer specialized professional development that focuses on strategies for integrating academics and CTE. These programs encourage teachers to identify linkages across subjects, while providing common planning time to coordinate lesson plans and pedagogy. In order for students to take advantage of the benefits of integrated content in the classroom, these provisions will ensure that educators in CTE and academic subjects have the tools they need to help students make real-world connections between academic success and future career goals.

Title II also encourages state and local efforts to develop or expand alternative routes to state certification of teachers, including mid-career professionals from other fields and occupations who want to become educators. Attracting qualified individuals with previous business and industry experience to the teaching profession is beneficial for CTE, particularly in areas that are experiencing shortages of CTE educators.

Additionally, under Title I, ESSA allows those schools in greatest need of assistance that are operating schoolwide and targeted assistance programs to develop and implement dual or concurrent en-

How Does ESSA Support CTE Teacher Recruitment, Training and Professional Development?

- Supports Specialized Professional Development for Academic and CTE Teachers
- Provides for Common Planning Time to Develop integrated Content
- Encourages States to Develop Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification
- Supports Individuals with Experience in Other Fields Who Enter the Teaching Profession
- Promotes Secondary/Postsecondary Collaboration to Integrate Academics and CTE Content in Dual and Concurrent Enrollment Programs

rollment programs to provide postsecondary coursework and opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credit while in high school. Activities funded in this section include training and joint professional development among secondary and postsecondary educators for the purpose of integrating academic and CTE content in such programs.

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