



Issues Update

April 12, 2021

Issues Update is a report from the Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) written by Executive Director Michael R. Stone and shared with members. As needed, *Issues Update* will report on state and federal Career and Technical Education (CTE) policy and legislative developments. KACTE and Stone can be reached at kmstone1951@gmail.com or 502-223-1823.

Federal Actions Impact CTE in Kentucky

The April 5 edition of the Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) *Issues Update* focused on state legislative and policy developments. This *Issues Update* will focus on federal items.

The federal impact on Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Kentucky education in general is noteworthy. Not only does the state receive about \$19 million in appropriations for CTE through the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act*, but also it will receive millions of additional dollars for education from the various federal COVID-19 pandemic relief measures. In addition, Congress sets the guiding policies that govern education and the Biden Administration's Department of Education enforces the regulations overseeing education policy.

THE LARGEST SOURCE on federal funds for education is part of the *American Rescue Plan*, the \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill passed and signed into law in early March. The *Perkins Act* is one of several federal education programs that can use almost \$127 billion designated for the *Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER)* fund. The uses can be to reduce class size; modify spaces to meet social distancing guidelines; modernize HVAC systems; hire more custodians, nurses and counselors; and improve transportation social distancing with more buses and drivers. Additionally, states must set aside 5 percent and local school districts 20 percent to address learning loss and the academic, social and emotional needs of students.

Almost \$40 billion is directed to the *Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEERF)* fund. Half of the money is to provide needs-based financial aid to students. The remaining funds can be used for implementation of safety protocols, distance learning programs, and student services to support mental health and social/emotional learning of postsecondary students.

Other provisions that may impact education are \$7 billion for the Federal Communication Commission's E-Rate program, which enhances internet access for students and educators, and \$362 billion for state and local relief, which can be used to support education.

An Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) advisory urges CTE leaders to become involved in the

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Kentucky Congressional Delegation Wields Influence

During his 2020 re-election campaign for the U.S. Senate, Mitch McConnell cited his leadership status saying it allowed Kentucky to "punch above its weight." His power was diminished when Democrats became the Senate majority in the 117th Congress as he no longer sets the Senate agenda, but as Minority Leader he directs the Republican positions. He also holds important policy development seats on the Appropriations and Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committees.

Most of the Kentucky congressional delegation hold important policy development seats that support the conclusion that the state has more impact than might be indicated by its size.

Senator Rand Paul is a member of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, which addresses education issues including the *Carl Perkins Act* that governs Career and Technical Education (CTE).

Although there only is one Democrat in the House from Kentucky, Rep. John Yarmuth (District 3) chairs the powerful Budget Committee and is a member of the Education and Labor Committee.

Both Rep. James Comer (1) and Rep. Brett Guthrie (2) also sit on the Education and Labor Committee. Guthrie was a contributor to the latest reauthorization of the Perkins Act.

Representative Hal Rogers (5) is a former chair of the Appropriations Committee and still holds key positions on Appropriations subcommittees.

In February, Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) officers were unable to visit federal legislative offices in Washington due to the ACTE National Policy Seminar being held virtually. The association communicated by letter and e-mail to thank the members for their support of CTE and the *Perkins Act*. Staff members of six of the eight members responded with reassurances of support for CTE.

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state and local decision-making process to secure funding to support CTE programs.

THE NEXT BIG SOURCE of federal funds may come through the **American Jobs Plan**, which is the infrastructure rebuilding plan proposed by President Joe Biden. There is wide support for rebuilding America's infrastructure, but there also is wide debate over what constitutes infrastructure and how much to spend. The President proposed about \$2 trillion in spending over eight years on programs ranging from road and bridge construction to addressing inequities among underserved portions of the population.

As proposed, the plan directs \$100 billion for K-12 school construction and modernization. It includes investments in electronic vehicle technology to electrify 20 percent of the nation's school bus fleet. \$100 billion is directed to expand broadband access. There is \$12 billion allocated for community college facilities and technology. Proven workforce development programs will receive \$100 billion to assist underserved groups set a path to careers before high school graduation.

The plan pairs job creation with next-generation job training program, targeting high-demand sectors such as

clean energy, manufacturing and care-giving. Job training for formerly incarcerated individuals and justice-involved youth will get \$5 billion.

Another \$48 billion will seek to expand the existing workforce development and worker protection systems. The President noted the U.S. currently spends one-fifth of the average that other advanced economies spend on workforce and labor market programs. Registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships are cited for investment. Other possible uses are creation of career pathway programs in middle and high schools, prioritizing access to computer science and high-quality CTE programs to connect underrepresented students to STEM and in-demand sectors. It encourages partnerships among education and employers. It supports community college partnerships that build capacity in job-training programs for in-demand skills.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION and Labor Chair Bobby Scott released the **Relaunching America's Workforce Act** that can implement parts of the President's workforce initiatives. Among item under Title I, the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**, are authorization of \$2.5 billion for adult employment and training, \$500 million to support existing registered apprenticeship programs, and \$2 billion for community college and industry partnership grants.

Title II, the **Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act**, authorizes \$1 billion to support CTE programs and activities. Included is modernization and expansion of physical and digital infrastructure, restocking of supplies that were donated for COVID-19 response, and work-based learning supports. A \$10 million administration authorization must be used to supplement, not replace, federal funding.

TESTIMONY DURING the confirmation hearings for Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, who later was approved by the Senate, indicated broad support for CTE both from the Secretary and members of Congress. The Secretary, who was Connecticut's education commissioner, said he was proud of his graduation from a technical high school. It was reported he hopes to see students in middle school through high school have more opportunities to explore CTE programs to learn about potential occupations and postsecondary education choices. He said it was important to provide students with pathways to college and career readiness.

ACTE reported that throughout the Senate hearing several members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee stressed the importance of CTE. The members discussed the need to remove the stigma surrounding CTE, and Secretary Cardona agreed. Senator Tammy Baldwin said it was important to offer CTE in middle schools, and Sen. Tim Kaine supported expanding Pell Grants for short-term CTE programs.

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Our Mission: Student Success

*2021 Career and Technical Education Summer Program
July 20-23, Galt House Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky*

CTE Summer Program Set for July 20-23 in Louisville

With vaccination of teachers and administrators available and enforcement of pandemic safety protocols for meetings, the 2021 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Summer Program will be held July 20-23 at the Galt House Hotel, Louisville. More than 200 professional development sessions covering every CTE pathway and teaching discipline are planned.

On April 12, registrations are more than 800, with about 90 percent choosing in-person attendance. Registration and housing reservations can be completed at www.kyacte.org. A limited, virtual registration is available. With more than 200 presentations, it is not financially or logistically feasible to provide every session virtually. Select sessions dealing with program area updates and critical programmatic issues will be provided through a secure website.

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TESTING WON'T go away, but schools will not be held accountable for the results. The Biden Administration will require administration of federally recognized standardized academic tests in 2021. The states will be able to give shorter, remote or delayed versions of the exams, but the Administration believes the data is needed to identify a strategy to help students recover from education loss during the pandemic.

A **BIPARTISAN** and broadly supported **Jumpstart Our Businesses by Supporting Students (JOBS) Act of 2021** was introduced in both houses of Congress. The Senate bill has 28 Democratic and Republican co-sponsors, and the House bill has six co-sponsors, three Democrats and three Republicans. ACTE, other educational organizations, and employer groups have endorsed the legislation.

It will expand the Pell Grant eligibility to high-quality, short-term job training programs. Current Pell Grant requirements block students from receiving aid for short-term certification requirements that could lead to initial or better employment in in-demand sectors of the economy. The credentials must meet **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act** standards and align with **Perkins Act** programs of study. The programs must be offered at an institution of higher learning, such as a community or technical college, and provide at least 150 clock hours of instruction over at least eight weeks.

APPRENTICESHIPS are gaining the attention of Congress, and President Biden endorsed the **National Apprenticeship Act of 2021**, which was introduced in January by House Education and the Workforce Committee Chair Bobby Scott. It is similar to legislation introduced in the last Congress. It has both Democratic and Republican co-sponsors.

The proposal amends the existing national apprenticeship program to include pre-apprenticeships and youth apprenticeships and defines guidelines for registered apprenticeship programs. The bill authorizes more than \$3 billion to fund the program in Fiscal Years 2022-26. To be available, those funds still would require appropriation. Scott sees the revisions creating 1 million new apprenticeship opportunities benefitting the economy by \$10 million.

In February, President Biden issued an executive order rescinding industry-recognized apprenticeship programs that were designed and implemented by specific businesses. The President noted the industry-recognized apprenticeship programs have fewer quality standards than registered apprenticeship programs. According to the President, industry-recognized apprenticeships lack rigor and do not require wage progression.

Reports and Studies

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and 37 other organizations endorsed **Without Limits:**

A Shared vision for the Future of Career and Technical Education. The document was issued by Advance CTE, the national organization of CTE State Directors. It emerged from the CTE Forward Summit held in the fall 2020 among nine national organizations, with 200 participants discussing the prospects for a new vision for CTE in America.

The attendees agreed it was time for a vision where each learner can access and be successful in high-quality CTE without barriers or limitations. **Without Limits** lists five related and equal principles:

1. Each learner engages in a cohesive, flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem;
2. Each learner feels welcome in, is supported by and has the means to be successful in the career preparation ecosystem;
3. Each learner skillfully navigates (his or her) own career journey;
4. Each learner's skills are counted, valued and portable; and
5. Each learner can access CTE without borders.

Implementing the vision will close equity gaps, improve workforce readiness, and leverage CTE as the catalyst in students attaining success in their career choice.

Advance CTE also released **Building Better Futures for Learners: A 50-State Analysis of Area Technical Centers.** ATCs are CTE-focused schools that serve multiple schools, districts, educational service areas, and workforce development areas or regions. There are 1,481 ATCs in 39 states. The report includes guidance on how to effectively use ATCs to ensure students can access and attain postsecondary opportunities and valuable credentials.

High-Quality CTE During COVID-19: Challenges and Innovations is a report released in March by ACTE. The biggest challenges faced by CTE teachers and administrators during the 2020-21 school year:

- motivating and engaging learners;
- providing hands-on learning and lab hours;
- providing work-based learning experiences; and
- preparing students for industry certifications and other performance assessments.

Twenty percent of those surveyed noted internet and technology access were major issues, as was supporting special and underserved populations. The report notes significant enrollment declines and suggests there will be future CTE instructor shortages.

The Charles Koch Foundation and the SkillUp Coalition reported a survey indicating 34 percent of Americans believe they will need to acquire new skills to advance their careers. More than half of those under 40 think they will need to enhance their skills. CTE would be the source of the re-skilling for 34 percent of those surveyed, and 70 percent believed an increase in CTE enrollment would benefit the nation.