

OVERVIEW OF ILLINOIS FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS OF STUDY

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) is intended to provide students with the academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in the 21st Century knowledge- and skills-based economy. The major themes in Perkins IV are accountability, greater integration of academic and career and technical education (CTE), more coordination between secondary and postsecondary education, and enhanced involvement of business and industry. Collaboration among educational, business and community partners is necessary to address the major themes in Perkins IV, thus improving students' success.

To improve CTE, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL), and Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support (ICSPPS) have partnered to guide the development and implementation of "Programs of Study" called for in the legislation. In the state of Illinois, Programs of Study (POS) are sequences of courses that incorporate a non-duplicative progression of secondary and postsecondary (community college and university) elements which include both academic and CTE content. The collaborative approach is intended to engage all the necessary partners in the implementation of Illinois' Programs of Study. The emphasis of Perkins IV and Programs of Study are academic and CTE courses that allow students to pursue career pathways. Illinois Programs of Study implementation is state-wide, including the K-12, community college, and university levels.

To support reflective thinking and provide guidance for change in Illinois, OCCRL staff drafted six guiding principles and associated design elements to aid local implementation and evaluation of Programs of Study. Six workgroups of practitioners and state education leaders are reviewing and helping refine the guiding principles and design elements to create a final product that will serve as the conceptual framework for implementation and evaluation of Programs of Study. They are designed to foster systematic thinking and foster change at all levels: the state, the system, the regional partnerships, the organizations, and the classrooms, with educational personnel, students, parents, and other stakeholders. This framework is intended to be an emergent and dynamic guide for on-going thinking and reflection and not a static model for implementation and evaluation.

The Development Process, March 2007 – December 2008

To facilitate the implementation of the new federal legislation on CTE, the ISBE and ICCB sought input from K-12 and postsecondary education professionals from throughout the state. The OCCRL was commissioned in spring 2007 to support this endeavor through the planning and facilitation of regional meetings. Besides addressing the goal of collecting input on ways to align CTE with the legislation, the regional meetings were tasked with two additional objectives: a) to seize the opportunity to envision and formulate plans for systemic change, restructuring and improving practice, and b) to identify policy changes needed to enhance CTE programs statewide. In 2007 between late March and mid May, five regional meetings were held in the following locations: Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield; Parkland College, Champaign; Chicago Public Schools, Chicago; Waubesa Community College, Sugar Grove; and Rend Lake College, Ina. Over 150 participants representing secondary and postsecondary education were involved. In the spring of 2007, Debra Bragg, OCCRL, worked collaboratively with Mark Williams, ISBE, and Rob Kerr, ICCB, to facilitate the meetings, and she prepared an Executive Summary of the Regional Perkins IV Transition Meetings.

Additional research and reporting were completed. Dr. Bragg generated a report posing various questions regarding Programs of Study in Illinois, including implementation practices, standards, evaluation, and others. Collin Ruud, OCCRL research assistant, conducted preliminary research on several states' implementations of Programs of Study/CTE programs, outlining policies, procedures, and notable strategies of improving these programs. This overview of states was utilized to offer insights into Illinois Programs of Study. Further, a matrix was developed outlining several of the strategies on local implementation of Programs of Study within community colleges and K-12 school districts, along with a brief overview of what relevant literature says about implementation strategies, and a section for committee members to supply promising practices. OCCRL staff also contacted state agency staff in the following 18 states to ask about Programs of Study progress and development: California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. OCCRL research staff, Natasha Jankowski, Jason Taylor and Catherine Kirby conducted in-depth interviews with state CTE leaders in nine states. The findings revealed unique processes, strategies and lessons learned that were utilized in the further development of Illinois' Programs of Study.

Additional products include a booklet (updated 7/16/08), found at <http://occr.ed.uiuc.edu/Projects/perkins/files/POSmailer.pdf> and PowerPoint slides found at <http://occr.ed.uiuc.edu/Projects/perkins/files/POSpowerpoint.pps> that provide an introduction to Illinois CTE Programs of Study. OCCRL research assistant, Natasha Jankowski examined guide books and information packets of other states to begin the process for the development of the booklet. Information was also gathered from the Career Clusters and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE). The State Planning Team determined the definitions for the state of Illinois. Next, the relevant information was compiled from the law, the agreed upon definitions, and agreed upon process for transitioning to Programs of Study. This compilation of information was utilized to craft the introductory booklet. The PowerPoint slides were made based on the booklet as a statewide accompaniment piece so that locals presenting the information could do so consistently. The booklet and PowerPoint slides were reviewed and approved by ICCB and ISBE.

Since the spring of 2007, there have been numerous meetings and conference calls involving a group of practitioners serving in an advisory role and the Programs of Study State Planning Team to further develop the plan of implementation and evaluation for the Illinois Programs of Study roll-out. The State Planning Team, which consists of approximately 30 members from four agencies (i.e., ISBE, ICCB, OCCRL, and ICSPS), continues to convene and collaborate as Illinois moves forward with Programs of Study. In addition, a leadership group meets quarterly for progress updates and key decisions. All of these information sources provided evidence of the need to establish a framework and to promote guiding principles and design elements. All of the supporting documents can be found at <http://occr.ed.uiuc.edu/Projects/perkins/documents.asp>

Guiding Principles and Design Elements Background

The guiding principles and design elements are based on an accreditation model and were created by combining information from the Perkins IV requirements, Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Workforce Investment Act (WIA), adult education, the Critical Skills Shortage Initiative (CSSI), the Community College Transition Institute (CTTI) and related initiatives. The guiding principles and design elements were cross-walked with the Perkins Indicators and state requirements from the 5-year plan, the Pathway Development Team (PDT) application, the Partnership for College and Career Success (PCCS) requirements, and ISBE's CTE Improvement and Perkins IV Grants supporting guidelines. They were also cross-walked with the National High School Center topic areas for school improvement, the Spellings Commission report on higher education, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), and other relevant resources and documents.

OCCRL has worked closely with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), the Illinois State Board of Education, (ISBE), and the Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support (ICSPPS) to draft a set of guiding principles and design elements for Programs of Study. Throughout fall 2008, workgroups involving educational, policy and business leaders are conferring on the Programs of Study framework for implementation and evaluation.

Six field-based workgroups were established (one for each principle). These workgroups are being facilitated by OCCRL staff, with personnel employed by the ICSPPS leading the professional development workgroup. Each workgroup was given the task to review and comment on the guiding principle and design elements.

In collecting input from the workgroups, the first step was to ask members of each group to react to the overall set of guiding principles and design elements that OCCRL had drafted. Next, the workgroups provided examples of promising practices associated with each guiding principle and design elements. Finally, ideas about evidence of impact will be gathered from each workgroup to help in the design of evaluation system to assess whether Programs of Study are being implemented successfully. This collective work is being conducted via three conference calls spaced throughout the fall term.

More about the guiding principles and design elements as well as resources can be found at <http://occr.ed.uiuc.edu/Projects/perkins/principles.asp>

Illinois Programs of Study Self-Assessment

A self-assessment tool was created to assist local partnerships in conducting a systematic review of current CTE programs to plan and implement Programs of Study. The self-assessment process is intended to facilitate reflective dialogue among partners and facilitate Programs of Study planning. The self-assessment tool is divided into six sections: *Section I: The Partners*, *Section II: Employers and Other Partners*, *Section III: Curriculum Inventory*, *Section IV: Programs of Study Readiness*, *Section V: Programs of Study Design Elements*, and *Section VI: Programs of Study Implementation Review*. The self-assessment tool can be found at <http://occr.ed.uiuc.edu/Projects/perkins/files/POSelf-assessment.pdf>

Professional development opportunities focused on Illinois Programs of Study are being made available with the first offering of a Self-Assessment Workshop on December 10, 2008. The Programs of Study Self-Assessment Workshop is designed to give stakeholders in Programs of Study (state policymakers, secondary and postsecondary administrators, faculty, and staff, and business professionals) a better understanding of this process and its usefulness in Programs of Study implementation.

A FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Principle	Principle Statement
1. Leadership, organization and support	Programs of Study are developed, supported and led with guidance from collaborative Partners.
2. Access, equity, and opportunity	Each and every student has access to educational opportunities and services that enable their success.
3. Alignment and transition	Education and training providers, with input from business and industry, enhance alignment that facilitates student transition through the educational pipeline.
4. Enhanced curriculum and instruction	Curriculum and pedagogy involve rigorous and relevant instruction that enhance learning and enable students to attain academic and technical standards and credentials.
5. Professional preparation and development	Comprehensive and continuous professional development that impacts teaching and learning is delivered to enhance the recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified instructional and administrative staff.
6. Program improvement and accountability	Data are collected, shared, and utilized to improve outcomes and demonstrate accountability.

Principle One: Leadership, Organization and Support

Principle Statement: Programs of Study are developed, supported and led with guidance from collaborative partners.

Design Elements:

1. Leaders support authentic collaborative partnerships that include secondary and postsecondary education and encourage the active involvement of business and industry and labor organizations; community-based organizations and community members; student organizations; parent organizations; and other organizations and agencies that benefit student transition to college and careers.
2. Leaders establish and communicate a vision, mission, and goals that are aligned with enabling federal and state policies and important components of the larger educational system.
3. Leaders encourage individuals at all levels to engage in shared decision making, encouraging the perspective of individuals and groups not always active in curriculum reform and organizational change.
4. Leaders nurture a collaborative culture of respect, high expectations, and demonstrable student outcomes and benefits for partners.
5. Leaders formalize genuine collaborative partnerships, including the roles and responsibility of member entities and create a formal memorandum of understanding to ensure clarity and accountability.
6. Leaders encourage the planning, implementation and evaluation of Programs of Study that are guided by active, joint secondary-postsecondary advisory committees.
7. Leaders encourage that resources including personnel, fiscal, curriculum, physical, and technology are adequate and distributed appropriately among partners.
8. Leaders encourage that partners receive technical assistance and technology assistance to support Program of Study implementation and continuous improvement.

Principle Two: Access, Equity, and Opportunity

Principle Statement: Each and every student has access to educational opportunities and services that enable their success.

Design Elements:

1. Various strategies are used to recruit, enroll, and retain students including students who are underserved, under-represented, and from special populations.
2. Processes are in place to identify and overcome gaps and barriers for learners in order to foster access to education and inclusion in educational programs including flexible time and location of programs.
3. Processes are in place to assist students to overcome barriers to initial entry or re-entry into secondary and postsecondary education.
4. Appropriate support services are available to promote student success, help student become college and career ready, and meet their educational goals.
5. The physical, virtual, and learning spaces of programs and support services are universally designed to promote state-wide access to education and successful transition.
6. Special population sub-groups are clearly identified so that their progress and success can be quantified and compared with other populations.
7. Programs and support services reflect learners' and their families' perspectives and interests in education and transition while addressing changes in resources and family role across settings.
8. Students have access to networks and resources to assist with curriculum, their career exploration opportunities and work-based learning.

Principle Three: Alignment and Transition

Principle Statement: Education and training providers, with input from business and industry, enhance alignment that facilitates student preparation and transition through the educational pipeline.

Design Elements:

1. Non-duplicative curriculum is ensured through secondary and postsecondary collaboration for greater efficiency and alignment.
2. Educational alignment of course content and credit is fostered through articulation agreements that offer dual credit, alignment with entry level prerequisites, and lead to industry recognized credentials and/or certification.
3. Curriculum is aligned with relevant educational, state, and industry standards and certifications.
4. Programs are designed with multiple entry and exit points to high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations and encourage stackable credentials.
5. Programs include development of a coherent sequence of courses and programs that may lead to the baccalaureate degree.
6. Data-sharing agreements are developed for program improvement, program reporting, and the evaluation of student transition across educational levels to provide necessary support services and ensure student success.
7. Programs provide students with multiple opportunities to build and/or increase their “college knowledge” in order to make informed decisions about educational and occupational options.

Principle Four: Enhanced Curriculum and Instruction

Principle Statement: Curriculum and pedagogy involve rigorous and relevant instruction that enhance learning and enable students to attain academic and technical standards and credentials.

Design Elements:

1. Programs integrate academic and career and technical content to create contextual instruction that engages student interest and improves learning outcomes.
2. Programs infuse career exploration, development and guidance throughout the educational system.
3. Programs strongly encourage dual credit opportunities in career and technical education and academic courses to accelerate student learning and encourage transition to and success in college-level occupational programs.
4. Programs involve business, industry and community partners to provide relevant instructional opportunities (e.g. work-based learning, access to current technology, mentoring and leadership development, cross-cluster projects).
5. Programs' cluster-level orientation courses have a rigorous foundation of CTE and academic content that prepare students for more advanced academic and training level CTE courses.
6. Curriculum and pedagogy are designed to include the rigor and support services necessary to reduce the need for remedial/developmental education.
7. Programs include multiple measures of assessment designed for diverse learning styles that accurately determine acquisition of both academic and technical knowledge and skills.
8. Programs develop, improve or expand the use of technology to foster students' skills and reach more learners.

Principle Five: Professional Preparation and Development

Principle Statement: Comprehensive and continuous professional development that impacts teaching and learning is delivered to enhance the recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified instructional and administrative staff.

Design Elements:

1. Professional development activities are coordinated, when possible, with teacher certification or licensing, in-service and pre-service learning, other related professional development activities, or current local reform initiatives/school improvement plans.
2. Professional development activities are high-quality, sustained, intensive, comprehensive, and instruction-focused in order to have an impact on classroom instruction.
3. Professional development is designed to help all partners and stakeholders improve the quality of instruction in order to impact student achievement and meet the state annual adjusted level of performance (AALP).
4. Local leaders conduct needs assessments prior to designing professional development and involve stakeholders and partners in collaborative planning.
5. Professional development combines, when possible, resources with other regions and organizations to maximize resources.
6. Professional development includes, when possible, the sharing of best or promising practices based on scientifically-based research and data that demonstrate program effectiveness.
7. Professional development includes opportunities for secondary and postsecondary educators to collaborate to encourage curriculum alignment and integration.

Principle Six: Program Improvement and Accountability

Principle Statement: Data are collected, shared, and utilized to improve outcomes and demonstrate accountability.

Design Elements:

1. All programmatic activities, including professional development, are evaluated for improvement and accountability using multiple forms of assessment and measurement.
2. Data are used to inform a culture of program improvement that uses data to improve instruction and programs.
3. Data are used within the organization and shared with partners to foster local improvement and regional development.
4. Relevant labor market data are used to inform program development and implementation.
5. A data collection system is developed with the capacity to collect longitudinal data on core indicators, performance measures, and workforce placement.
6. Procedures are implemented to collect reliable and valid data at each educational level and point of data collection.
7. Partnerships set specific performance targets and establish measurable goals for participant outcomes based on state adjusted level of performance on each indicator and are responsible for meeting those targets or providing plans of improvement.
8. Collected data are disaggregated and cohort based to provide gap analysis on different student groups for purposes of equity.

Vital exchanges of ideas, information, and insights were the impetus and support for the development of these principles and design elements as a framework for local implementation and evaluation of Programs of Study. This collaborative effort is on-going. The work completed thus far would not be possible without the participation of the following individuals:

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