

Executive Summary

The Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Vocational Education and Workforce Development (MDE/OVE&WD) completed a very successful 2004-2005 school year. Through the use of our State Administration funds, we have reviewed the progress of local districts in meeting adjusted levels of performance, provided technical assistance to eligible agencies, monitored and evaluated program effectiveness and compliance with applicable Federal laws. Our State Leadership funds have been used to assess the needs of special populations, expand the uses of technology in vocational education, make further strides in improving the academic, vocational, and technical skills of students, and support programs for special population students that lead to high-skill, high-wage careers. We have also provided funds for services that prepare students for non-traditional employment and have provided an allotment to serve individuals in the state correctional institution at Parchman.

A significant amount of time and effort was expended by MDE/OVE&WD in core indicator related activities. Staff members attended technical assistance meetings, conference calls and made individual contact with federal personnel to ensure compliance with the new core indicator requirements. Additionally, we trained each new Vocational Director on the Perkins law and the Core Indicators during a two-day orientation. We received a modified monitoring visit from the U.S. Department of Education with no major findings attached to it. The MDE database, known as MSIS (Mississippi Student Information System), which tracks student performance, special population indicators, as well as gender, and ethnicity factors by individual student is now fully operational. We have had three years to smooth out operational difficulties in our system and data collection.

The MDE/OVE&WD performance level values exceeded the secondary core indicators, with the exception of 4S2. NOTE: Gains were made in the Actual Performance Levels of all secondary indicators with the exception of 1S1, in which the Measurement Definition changed.

The MDE/OVE&WD performance level values exceeded each of the postsecondary core indicators, with the exception of 4P1 and 4P2. NOTE: Gains were made in the Actual Performance Level of six of the seven postsecondary indicators.

Our office conducted the following activities for secondary and postsecondary vocational staff to encourage and educate them is the delivery of services to students pursuing Non-Traditional programs:

Non-Traditional Special Populations Personnel Spring Meeting - devoted entirely to informing teachers of services available for non-traditional students and the occupational possibilities that exist for these students. Speakers are selected persons who are in non-traditional positions and who share ways to recruit and encourage students for these non-traditional roles. All special populations personnel were invited, with 180-200 attending.

Orientation for New Special Populations Personnel - conducted annually for new special populations personnel (approximately 50) to develop skills needed to be effective in the delivery of

services to students. Issues related to recruitment, services, and opportunities for the student in non-traditional roles were addressed.

Special Populations Fall Conference - addressed all issues concerning special populations personnel, including the need and opportunities for non-traditional students enrolled in courses in our career/technical centers. All special populations personnel were invited, with approximately 200 attending.

Vocational Counselors, Special Populations Personnel, Vocational Directors, and Program Area Teachers have a shared role in Non-Traditional Student Recruitment. All students in local high schools and junior highs are provided information regarding the opportunities available and are encouraged to consider the non-traditional roles as they plan for future training and employment opportunities. Benefits of the non-traditional role are discussed as well as specific training opportunities. Scheduled visits at the feeder schools with students in 7th – 10th grades each year as a part of recruitment activities: (1)“Career Day” programs offered throughout the year, (2) through power point presentations, (3) through brochures that outline training opportunities, (4) by visiting industry speakers, (5) with tours of the vocational center as well as (6) business/industry job shadowing. Vocational staff (counselors, special populations personnel, program area teachers, and directors) function as a recruiting team prior to and during student registration.

Vocational Counselors enhance their knowledge of non-traditional student needs by participating in professional development conferences provided by MDE/OVE&WD. Activities included presentations by speakers and planned industry visits/tours such as:

- Northrop Grumman Ship Systems Tour ... (Northrop Grumman employs a large number of non-traditional employees)
- New Vocational Counselor Training
- Nissan Plant Tour (observed many non-traditional employees)

Academic High School Career Center Managers provide career information that includes non-traditional information and encouragement throughout the year with career speakers, military career opportunities, business in the classroom involvement, and “online opportunities” in the career center through required career development activities.

We will enlarge and expand these types of training sessions and activities in the upcoming year to improve performance in these core indicators. These activities were successful on secondary and postsecondary levels. The percentage of Secondary Non-Traditional participants increased from 16.52% in 2004 to 16.63% in 2005. The percentage of Secondary Non-Traditional completers increased from 14.03% in 2004 to 14.17% in 2005. At the Postsecondary level, Non-Traditional completers increased from 6.03% in 2004 to 7.04% in 2005.

MDE/OVE&WD uses the following definitions for these terms:

Vocational Concentrators: Secondary – vocational students who have completed the first year of a two-year program and have enrolled in the second year of the program. Postsecondary –

vocational students who have completed 50% or more vocational or technical classes within a program.

Vocational Completers: Secondary - vocational students who have completed both years of a two-year program. Postsecondary - vocational students who have completed all vocational or technical classes within a program.

Tech Prep Students: are individuals who participate in a defined sequence of vocational courses within an articulated occupational program.

OVE&WD used the years 1996-97 through 1998-99 to establish our baseline data for negotiation purposes and is reporting 2004-2005 data for this report. In comparing our performance for the 2002-2003 school year to our goals and standards, MDE/OVE&WD considers the activities, plans, and expenditures used to be effective in making substantial progress toward reaching our objectives. We use the data available to work with the secondary and postsecondary institutions that are experiencing difficulty meeting the standards. Program performance data is prepared for each Local Education Agency (LEA). The program performance data is provided to the LEAs in the form of District Summary Reports. District summary reports list the individual programs and display their performance characteristics, and performance status. Programs that have not met the standards are so designated. The LEA is required to develop and submit individual program improvement plans for the programs that did not meet the standards. Non-Traditional numbers have been difficult for the state of Mississippi historically. We have devised a sub grant process to address this issue. The sub grant process will be described later in this document.

A. Program Administration

As required by Sec. 122(a)(1) of P.L. 105-332, the Mississippi State Board of Education (MBE), through the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Office of Vocational Education and Workforce Development (OVE&WD) has prepared and submitted to the Secretary, a State plan for a 5-year period that met the requirements of P.L. 105-332 Sec. 122(c)(1-21) Plan Contents, and prepares and submits such annual revisions as the eligible agency determines to be necessary. The MDE/OVE&WD established and provides support for vocational and technical education activities to be assisted that are designed to meet or exceed the State adjusted levels of performance.

Mississippi supports and has implemented secondary and postsecondary vocational and technical education programs, including programs conducted by eligible agencies to develop, improve, and expand access to quality, state-of-the-art technology in vocational and technical education programs.

The MDE/OVE&WD identified, supported, and funded a variety of activities in the implementation of the State Plan this past year. The purpose of the state and local activities and programs funded through Perkins III is to achieve or exceed the established Final Agreed-Upon Performance Levels.

Five percent (5%) of the Perkins III Grant Allotment was used for Administration of the State Plan. The plan was purposefully developed incorporating provisions to: establish, collect and

disseminate performance information; award grants to Local Education Agencies (LEAs); distribute funds; write and submit State plan and annual revisions; and coordinate activities with State workforce development entities. The State Plan specified the processes and procedures for: reviewing local plans and progress toward meeting the state's adjusted levels of performance; monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness; assuring compliance with all applicable Federal laws and providing technical assistance to the eligible agencies.

Ten percent (10%) of the State Allotment was used in conducting State Leadership activities that included: provision of \$60,000 State Leadership funds for services that prepare individuals for non-traditional employment; provision of State leadership funds in an amount not more than one percent of the State allotment to serve individuals in the State correctional institution at Parchman. Additional required state leadership activities conducted include the following: an assessment of vocational and technical education programs carried out with funds under the Perkins III that includes an assessment of how the needs of special populations are being met; developing, improving and expanding the use of technology in vocational and technical education; professional development programs, including providing comprehensive professional development for vocational and technical, academic, guidance, and administrative personnel; support for vocational and technical education programs that improve the academic, and vocational and technical skills of students participating in vocational and technical education programs; supporting partnerships among local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, adult education providers, and, as appropriate, other entities; and support for programs for special populations that lead to high-skill, high-wage careers.

\$60,000.00 of Non-Traditional funds has been granted in 2006 to Secondary districts for use in executing approved district proposals submitted to describe recruiting and retention efforts aimed at non-traditional gender students. Each school district was given the opportunity to apply for approximately \$500.00 for use as a Non-Traditional grant. Districts were required to describe the way the grant would be used to attract Non-Traditional gender students to enroll in occupational skills programs. Grants were issued after OVE&WD approval of district proposals. We feel that by pushing the funds to the LEAs, we provide better support and incentive for LEAs to identify the programmatic needs and the methods that will best attract Non-Traditional students.

Permissible activities implemented through use of 10% State Leadership funds include: (1) supporting and funding technical assistance for eligible recipients including: on-site monitoring and technical assistance; on-site monitoring, and technical assistance to determine how the needs of special populations are being addressed and how programs are designed to enable members of special populations to meet state performance levels, (2) monitoring and assessment of pilot courses/programs assisted under the title, and is defined further under 10% State Leadership fund activities, (3) assessing and evaluating state performance in respect to achieving the agreed upon adjusted levels of performance for core indicators, (4) supporting and funding programs to improve career guidance and academic counseling programs that assist students in making informed academic, vocational, and technical education decisions, (5) supporting and funding technical assistance to Tech Prep Consortia to assist in the establishment of agreements between secondary and postsecondary vocational and technical education programs in order to provide postsecondary education and training opportunities for students participating in such vocational and technical education programs, such as Tech Prep programs, (6) supporting cooperative education, (7) supporting vocational and technical student organizations, especially with respect to

efforts to increase the participation of students who are members of special populations, (8) supporting vocational and technical education programs that offer experience in, and understanding of all aspects of an industry for which students are preparing to enter, (9) supporting family and consumer sciences enrichment programs, (10) supporting education and business partnerships, (11) providing support to improve or develop new vocational and technical education courses, and (12) providing assistance to students, who have participated in services and activities under this title, in finding an appropriate job and continuing their education.

To expand on the activities provided in number 11 of the permissible activities, all new curriculums contain additional math, science and reading items embedded in the curriculum. In addition, each curriculum is written with 21st Century learning skills, advanced technology skills and is tied to the appropriate licensure/certification for that course.

The integration of the activities conducted during the past year coupled with: the services delivered by special population personnel employed in the LEAs, capital equipment purchased, instructional aids purchased, and short term adult programs funded with Perkins III 85% funds has resulted in the realization of significant benefits to students served, the school districts and communities, the business and industry sector, and the State of Mississippi in general. The Financial Status Reports, included as a part of this report, reflect the expenditure of Perkins III, and State funds as required for reporting purposes.

The implications of the assessment and evaluation of state performance in respect to the final agreed-upon adjusted levels of performance for the 2001-2002 year are that there has been significant and meaningful accomplishment in the past year and that there continues to be a need to purposefully focus efforts in the present and coming years that will produce additional gains. We have streamlined our postsecondary data collection processes.

B. Program Performance

Under P.L. 105-332 (Perkins III), the State Board of Education negotiated final levels of achievement for the core performance indicators. Narrative regarding the performance data for each core indicator is presented on the following pages. In the assessment of performance, there have been changes in the definitions as they relate to the indicators. At the secondary level, for the measurement of Academic Attainment and High School Completion, for example, the FLE for Completers is no longer used, in place of the FLE, Completers must pass four subject area tests. At the postsecondary level, the ACT Work Keys is no longer used. In its place, Completers must obtain a given level on the TABE Test (or a test that is comparably equivalent to TABE). Summary tables for secondary and postsecondary indicators and the revised Measurement Definitions are detailed on pages 6 and 7. This is the first year in which live data has been collected for these new assessments.

Summary tables for secondary and postsecondary achievement with respect to the baseline values and the final agreed-upon indicators of performance are on the next two pages. The tables reporting the performance accountability statistics in numerators and denominators are in files included with this report.

State of MISSISSIPPI
Comparison of Adjusted Performance Levels for 2004-2005 to Actual Performance Levels for 2005

Secondary

Core Indicator	Measurement Definition	Final Agreed-Upon Baseline Level	Final Agreed-Upon Performance Levels for 2004-2005	Actual Performance Levels for 2005
1S1	Numerator: Completers who pass the four subject area tests Denominator: Concentrators eligible to graduate	90.18%	69.10%	93.64%
1S2	Numerator: Completers who attain a given level on exams/tests/profiles Denominator: Concentrators eligible to graduate	90.18%	50.38%	93.80%
2S1	Numerator: Completers who pass the four subject area tests Denominator: Concentrators eligible to graduate	90.18%	69.10%	97.91%
3S1	Numerator: Those students placed in the Military, Advanced Education, or Employment Denominator: Concentrators	60.15%	63.15%	91.57%
3S2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4S1	Numerator: The sum of males plus the sum of females participating in non-traditional programs Denominator: All males and females participating in non-traditional programs	14.13%	15.03%	16.63%
4S2	Numerator: The sum of males plus the sum of females who completed non-traditional programs Denominator: All males and females who completed non-traditional programs	14.38%	15.28%	14.17%

Comparison of Adjusted Performance Levels for 2004-2005 to Actual Performance Levels for 2005

Postsecondary

Core Indicator	Measurement Approach	Final Agreed-Upon Baseline Level	Final Agreed-Upon Performance Levels for 2004-2005	Actual Performance Levels for 2005
1P1	Numerator: Completers who attain a given level on the TABE Test (or its equivalent) Denominator: Completers eligible to finish their program of study	81.14%	81.50%	89.82%
1P2	Numerator: Completers who attain a given level on exams/tests/profiles Denominator: Concentrators eligible to graduate	81.14%	50.36%	95.53%
2P1	Numerator: Graduates Denominator: Concentrators	81.14%	44.48%	62.44%
3P1	Numerator: Those students placed in Advanced Education, Employment, or Military Denominator: Concentrators	59.65%	62.65%	89.54%
3P2	Numerator: Completers who are in Advanced Education, Employment, or Military and remained there for a minimum of 6 months Denominator: Completers who moved into Advanced Education, Employment, or Military	30.00%	31.00%	98.10%
4P1	Numerator: The sum of males plus the sum of females participating in non-traditional programs Denominator: All males and females participating in non-traditional programs	10.47%	11.37%	9.64%
4P2	Numerator: The sum of males plus the sum of females who completed non-traditional programs Denominator: All males and females who completed non-traditional programs	9.98%	10.88%	7.04%

Measurement Approaches and Data Quality Improvement

In prior years, OVE&WD captured data by program. This is the fourth year we have collected student level data for secondary vocational enrollees.

Academic- 1S1 and 1P1

Secondary – For School year 2004-05 OVE&WD was approved to use Subject Area Test Programs (SATP) data to determine and report graduation rate, because the Functional Literacy Examination has been phased out. This is consistent with the State of Mississippi’s NCLB plan for academic attainment.

Postsecondary - For School year 2004-05 OVE&WD was approved to use the TABE Test to determine and report Academic Attainment.

Vocational – 1S2 and 1P2

Secondary - The MDE/OVE&WD is using state developed occupational skills proficiency assessments to determine Vocational Attainment. OVE&WD uses a multi-level model of assessment tools to determine if individual students meet the given level for attainment of this indicator. Our plan calls for the use of (1) state tests/examinations, (2) national or state registry exams where applicable, and where neither state tests nor national or state registry exams are available, (3) competency profiles. Results of each of these measures are captured by the MSIS system.

Postsecondary - The MDE/OVE&WD is using state developed occupational skills proficiency assessments to determine and report Vocational Attainment. OVE&WD uses the Mississippi Vocational Curriculum Framework related criterion-referenced assessments. The state has developed a process for setting pass/fail scores and in determining the proficiency levels to indicate student attainment of vocational skills in each postsecondary examination. Again, a three-tier assessment system will be used. The regulated registry proficiency level (when available) will be used to indicate student performance in those programs. When registry examinations are not used then, where feasible, state developed examinations based upon curriculum framework competencies will be used. Where examinations are not available due to small enrollment numbers in vocational programs, student competency profiles will be used.

Diploma/Equivalent/Degree/Credential – 2S1 and 2P1

Secondary - The OVE&WD uses the Subject Area Test Programs (SATP) for determining attainment of the benchmark for Diploma/Equivalent/Degree/Credential Attainment. For School year 2004-05, we have been approved to use student level assessment results.

Postsecondary - MDE/OVE&WD is using Community College Graduation rates to determine and report Diploma/Equivalent/Degree/Credential Attainment. We collect data electronically from the postsecondary institutions regarding individual attainment of a degree or credential based upon satisfactory completion of the course of study as defined and approved by the college’s Board of Trustees. Each college operates under the Mississippi State Board of Community and Junior Colleges and maintains accreditation by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges.

Placement and Retention– 3S1, 3S2, 3P1, and 3P2

Secondary and Postsecondary - OVE&WD captures secondary student placement and retention data through MSIS but must still collect the postsecondary data directly from the individual Community/Junior Colleges, which are not included in the MDE MSIS system.

Non-Traditional Participation – 4S1 and 4P1

Secondary and Postsecondary –OVE&WD currently uses MSIS system data that demonstrates non-traditional participation of students in secondary education. This information includes gender, ethnicity, etc. National data on gender of individuals employed in various occupations is derived from the Current Population Survey, which is conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. The most recent data, the national household average for 1998, was published in the January 1999 edition of the BLS publication *Employment and Earnings*. A state crosswalk was developed between the most recent data of occupations and the state vocational/technical programs of instruction.

Non-Traditional Completion – 4S2 and 4P2

Secondary and Postsecondary – MDE/OVE&WD is currently receiving data from secondary LEAs and Community/Junior Colleges indicating completion and non-traditional participation. Under the MSIS system, all needed non-traditional completion information is collected for individual secondary students. In 4P2, we made a 1.01% performance increase in the FY2005 program year, from 6.03% to 7.04%.

Effectiveness of Improvement Strategies in Previous Program Year –

In program year 2004-2005 data in the tables reflects that MDE/OVE&WD has made progress in nearly all areas.

Secondary:

1. Occupational skills attainment
2. Program completion rates
3. Placement rates
4. Non-traditional participation and completion

Postsecondary:

1. Academic Attainment
2. Occupational skills attainment
3. Program completion rates
4. Placement rates
5. Retention rates
6. Non-Traditional Completion

State and local activities and programs funded through Perkins III:

- Strengthen the academic, and vocational and technical skills of students by integrating academic and vocational education, offering a coherent sequence of courses, ensuring learning in core academic, vocational, and technical subjects,

- Initiate, improve, expand, and modernize quality vocational and technical education by providing students strong experience in and understanding of all aspects of an industry,
- Provide professional development programs to teachers, counselors, and administrators including preservice (including initial teacher preparation) and inservice, and
- Develop, improve, or expand the use of technology in vocational and technical education.

5% of the State's Grant for Administration has enabled us to:

- Develop the state plan,
- Establish, collect and disseminate performance information,
- Award grants to LEAs,
- Distribute funds,
- Write and submit State plan and annual revisions,
- Coordinate activities with State workforce development entities,
- Review local plans and progress in meeting the adjusted levels of performance,
- Monitor and evaluate program effectiveness,
- Assure compliance with all applicable Federal laws, and
- Provide technical assistance.

10% of the State's Grant for State Leadership Funds has enabled:

- **Required activities that included:**

Support and fund an assessment of the vocational and technical education programs carried out with funds under this title that includes an assessment of how the needs of special populations are being met and how such programs are designed to enable special populations to meet State adjusted levels of performance and prepare the special populations for further learning or for high skill, high wage careers;

(The MBE requires that all secondary vocational programs be evaluated as part of the state's overall accreditation model. Performance indicators are used to evaluate secondary, postsecondary, and programs in correctional institutions. Vocational programs must meet or exceed each state performance indicator. Local LEAs not meeting performance indicators are provided technical assistance from MDE/OVE&WD. Technical assistance is continued until the local LEA has met all statewide performance indicators for all programs. State program area supervisors are responsible for providing onsite technical assistance through individual conferences, inservice workshops, or other appropriate means. Program area supervisors must approve all LEAs corrective action plans submitted for vocational programs not meeting state performance indicators.)

Support and fund developing, improving, or expanding the use of technology in vocational and technical education to include:

- Training of vocational and technical education personnel to use state-of-the-art technology that may include distance learning,
- Providing vocational and technical education students with the academic, and vocational and technical, skills that lead to entry into the high technology and telecommunications field, or

- Encouraging schools to work with high technology industries to offer voluntary internships and mentoring programs.

Support and fund professional development programs, including providing comprehensive professional development, including initial teacher preparation for vocational and technical, academic, guidance, and administrative personnel, that:

- Will provide inservice and preservice training (including initial teacher preparation) in state-of-the-art vocational and technical education programs and techniques, effective teaching skills based on research, effective practices to improve parental and community involvement, applied methodology, and integration of academics and vocational and technical education,
- Will help teachers and personnel to assist students in meeting the State adjusted levels of performance established under section 113,
- Will support education programs for teachers of vocational and technical education in public schools and other public school personnel who are involved in the direct delivery of educational services to vocational and technical education students to ensure that such teachers stay current with the needs, expectations, and methods of industry; and
- Is integrated with the professional development activities that the State carries out under Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and Title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Support and fund vocational and technical education programs that improve the academic and vocational and technical skills of students participating in vocational and technical education programs by strengthening the academic and vocational and technical programs through the integration of academics with vocational and technical education to ensure learning in the core academic, and vocational and technical, subjects.

Provide preparation for non-traditional training and employment in high skill, high wage careers.

Support partnerships among local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, adult education providers, and, as appropriate, other entities, such as employers, labor organizations, parents, and local partnerships, to enable students to achieve State academic standards, and vocational and technical skills.

Serve individuals in State correctional institutions and institutions that serve individuals with disabilities to assist the individuals in meeting the state's adjusted levels of performance.

Support programs for special populations which includes single parents (including single pregnant women), individuals with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, individuals preparing for non-traditional employment, displaced homemakers, individuals with limited English proficiency or other barriers to educational achievement; to assist members of special populations in meeting the state's adjusted levels of performance and in preparing for high skill, high wage careers.

- **Permissible activities conducted using 10% State Leadership funds included:**

Support and fund technical assistance for eligible recipients including:

- On-site monitoring and technical assistance,
- On-site monitoring and technical assistance to determine how the needs of special populations are being addressed and how programs are designed to enable members of special populations to succeed and thus enable the State to meet performance accountability levels.
- Monitoring and assessment of pilot courses/programs assisted under the title.
- Assessment and evaluation of Mississippi's performance in achieving the state's adjusted levels of performance for indicators 1-9.

Support and fund programs to improve career guidance and academic counseling programs that assist students in making informed academic, and vocational and technical education, decisions.

Support and fund technical assistance to Tech Prep Consortia to assist in the establishment of agreements between secondary and postsecondary vocational and technical education programs in order to provide postsecondary education and training opportunities for students participating in such vocational and technical education programs, such as Tech Prep programs.

Support cooperative education.

Support vocational and technical student organizations, especially with respect to efforts to increase the participation of students who are members of special populations.

Support vocational and technical education programs that offer experience in, and understanding of all aspects of an industry for which students are preparing to enter.

Support family and consumer sciences enrichment programs.

Support education and business partnerships.

Support to improve or develop new vocational and technical education courses.

Provide assistance to students, who have participated in services and activities under this title, in finding an appropriate job and continuing their education.

The Office of Vocational Education and Workforce Development (OVE&WD) provides professional development activities annually for vocational teachers, counselors, administrators, and related personnel. Professional development programs and inservice activities are designed for education degree teachers and non-degree/non-education degree teachers.

The MDE OVE&WD also provides and procures professional development opportunities for vocational teachers, counselors, special populations personnel, administrators, and related

personnel annually through a Professional Development Institute Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

To accomplish the goals established by Mississippi Board of Education, a variety of Professional Development Institutes are offered in the following areas: Content Area Enhancement for Educators, Content Area New Initiatives, Current Trends and Issues, Technology in the Classroom for Teachers and/or Administrators, Technology in the Workplace for Teachers and/or Administrators, Institutes for Administrators (secondary and postsecondary), and Business and Industry Internships for Educators.

The Mississippi Department of Education provides summer institutes for secondary and postsecondary vocational educators and administrators. The summer institute activities incorporate: industry tours, content specific sessions, emphasis on integration of vocational and academic education, economic development, and other professional issues pertaining to teaching and education. We collect input for designing the institutes from local practitioners, state program supervisors, and administrators.

Professional development activities were provided for Tech Prep consortia developed upon the specific needs of partners within the respective consortium. Activities/inservice sessions delivered through the consortium included topics such as: Cooperative Learning, Team Teaching, Career Guidance, Building Teams, Technology Applications, Articulation, Integration of Academics and Vocational and Technical Education, and Leadership Implementation Training for Tech Prep.

The state's public universities and other agencies provide professional development activities where appropriate. We secure the delivery of such services through contractual arrangement. Some examples of these services activities provided include but are not limited to, the following:

- Orientation workshops for administrators and staff to effectively implement Tech Prep programs
- Applied methodology training for academic teachers
- Training for Discovery Course teachers and academic teachers in the application of technology in a new teaching environment
- Training for postsecondary Tech Prep instructors to teach the postsecondary Science and Technology course
- Curriculum and equipment update workshops for teachers to identify problems and find solutions
- Training for add-on endorsements for teachers who successfully complete intensive inservice workshops in Career, Computer, and Technology Discovery.

MDE/OVE&WD provided coordinated career guidance and academic counseling services for vocational and technical students.

Summary of professional development opportunities conducted for vocational counselors:

- New vocational counselor training (secondary and postsecondary)
- Postsecondary vocational counselors annual meeting
- Career Center Technicians annual session
- Annual Update Via Distance Learning

- Mississippi Counseling Association Annual Conference
- Tech Prep Counseling Component
- Materials Seminar
- Counseling Institute
- Other special sessions

(To ensure the success of vocational programs and students, active involvement of parents and business/industry representatives is essential. Therefore, representatives of key constituencies serve on leadership teams, craft committees, assessment teams, and in other areas. Additionally, members of local Tech Prep Consortia participate in articulation meetings, parent/teacher conferences, career days, and other activities. Members of key constituencies assist in providing and locating work-based and school-based learning activities and connecting activities to promote student career exploration, work readiness, and occupational preparation.)

MDE/OVE&WD improved academic and technical skills of students participating in vocational and technical programs through activities that resulted in the:

- Development of and continued revision of statewide curriculum frameworks which incorporate nationally recognized occupational standards and certification requirements (where applicable); related academic topics in mathematics, science, and communications; and workplace skills related to all aspects of an industry;
- Provision of professional development opportunities to instructors related to the integration of academic and occupational skills, new and emerging technologies and practices, implementation of national standards and certification requirements, and integration of workplace skills reflecting all aspects of the industry;
- Development and dissemination of recommended sequential courses of study which identify academic and vocational technical courses and programs which contribute to the development of academic and occupational skills in an occupational area or cluster; and
- Integration of academic and occupational skills in educational institutions through use of applied learning strategies and cooperative teaching activities between academic and vocational - technical instructors.
- Use of the internet in curriculum development and in the delivery of professional development as both a pedagogical and technological tool, the use of which, reduces out of class time and travel expensed for instructional staff, while teaching and demonstrating applications of current technology.

In order to increase student achievement and teacher capacity, the MDE has improved curriculum, assessment, and professional development; integrated technology into schools and classrooms; and strengthened Level 1 and 2 districts. These themes are common to the Perkins III initiative and related federal initiatives and are critical to the state's educational improvement. OVE&WD activities are planned in recognition that these themes cut across all programs and that they are the driving factors for achieving educational excellence, supported by various federal, state, and private funding sources. A sampling of these activities include: participation of teachers in curriculum revision, evaluations that collect teacher input to identify topics and areas of need for upcoming professional development activities, and hosted industry tours and work experience programs for teachers to update and integrate industrial practices and techniques in the classroom.

- **85% Funds were used to provide vocational and technical programs that:**

Strengthen the academic, and vocational and technical, skills of students participating in vocational and technical education programs by strengthening the academic, and vocational and technical, components of such programs through the integration of academics with vocational and technical education programs through coherent sequences of courses to ensure learning in core academic, and vocational and technical, subjects,

Provide students with strong experience in and understanding of all aspects of an industry,

Develop, improve, or expand the use of technology in vocational and technical education, which may include:

- Training of vocational and technical education personnel to use state-of-the-art technology, which may include distance learning,
- Providing vocational and technical education students with the academic, and vocational and technical, skills that lead to entry into the high technology and telecommunications field, or
- Encouraging schools to work with high technology industries to offer voluntary internships and mentoring programs.

Provide professional development programs to teachers, counselors, and administrators, including:

- Inservice and preservice training in state-of-the-art vocational and technical education programs and techniques, in effective teaching skills based on research, and in effective practices to improve parental and community involvement,
- Support of education programs for teachers of vocational and technical education in public schools and other public school personnel who are involved in the direct delivery of educational services to vocational and technical education students, to ensure that such teachers and personnel stay current with all aspects of an industry,
- Internship programs that provide business experience to teachers, and
- Programs designed to train teachers specifically in the use and application of technology.

Develop and implement evaluations of the vocational and technical education programs carried out with funds under this title, including an assessment of how the needs of special populations are being met,

Initiate, improve, expand, and modernize quality vocational and technical education programs,

Provide services and activities that are of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective, and

Link secondary vocational and technical education and postsecondary vocational and technical education, including implementing Tech Prep programs.

85% Funds were also used to support activities to:

Improve or develop new courses--involving parents, business, and labor organizations as appropriate, in the design, implementation, and evaluation of vocational and technical education programs authorized under this title, including establishing effective programs and procedures to enable informed and effective participation in such programs.

Provide career guidance and academic counseling for students participating in vocational and technical education programs.

Provide work-related experience related to vocational and technical education programs such as: internships, cooperative education, school-based enterprises, entrepreneurship, and job shadowing.

Provide programs for special populations.

Support local education and business partnerships.

Assist vocational and technical student organizations.

Support mentoring and support services.

Lease, purchase, upgrade, or adapt equipment, including instructional aids.

Assist individuals who are interested in becoming vocational and technical education instructors, including individuals with experience in business and industry.

Improve or develop new vocational and technical education courses.

Support family and consumer sciences programs.

Provide assistance to students who have participated in services and activities under this title in finding an appropriate job and continuing their education.

Support non-traditional training and employment activities.

Support other vocational and technical education activities that are consistent with the purpose of this Act.

The MDE/OVE&WD will continue to carry out the provisions of our State Plan and will continue to provide quality education for every child enrolled in vocational technical education programs. The State Plan provides a strong foundation of support for building and sustaining an integrated system.

The State Plan for Vocational and Technical Education provides for the implementation, operation, and administration of programs that offer all students the opportunity to participate in rigorous, performance-based, comprehensive programs that: provide a core of academic reasoning and

interpersonal skills; provide a core of pre-employment and work maturity skills; prepare for first jobs in high-skill high-wage careers; and increase opportunities for further education, including four-year colleges and universities.

The expenditures of funds in the implementation of our state plan made it possible to successfully conduct many of the activities of the past program year. It is expected that continued funding and support of the activities conducted in this program year, will continue in the coming year to produce gains for all students and targeted populations.

Implications for planning or revising improvement strategies - MDE/OVE&WD has a State Plan that provides for administering, supporting, and conducting the productive activities that are currently under way and will continue to be implemented in our strategic improvement plan. We will continue to refine and target improvement efforts so that resources will continue to be engaged in producing meaningful gains and progress.

We are continuing to work to insure the accuracy of the data collected by the MSIS data collection system. Each annual cycle of data collection results in refinement of system edits and the development of additional edits to assure accurate and valid data. We will continue to promote, emphasize, and enhance activities that result in the achievement of enrollees to enable them to complete the programs in which they enroll. We are focusing efforts on the agendas and contents for professional development activities and on providing technical assistance to teachers and administrators. This past year OVE&WD conducted twenty-nine (29) regional or individual in-service training workshops providing technical assistance and instruction to local administrators to help them understand the need for and the technical mechanics of correctly entering electronic data to be used in evaluating and describing program performance. The workshops specifically addressed descriptive programmatic statistical data and data collected on performance measures. The annual Local Plan Updates and Perkins sub-grants information to the LEAs has been deployed to a web based system that is used for grant management and the processing of Other Cost and Adult payments to the LEAs. The system also provides for the maintenance of payment records and LEA balances for budget line categories. We conducted Data Retreats for all secondary and postsecondary institutions. These Data Retreats were designed to break down occupational skills test results and give local education agencies tools and strategies to improve student performance. The Data Retreats will become an annual event and will become more streamlined and focused as we obtain more data.

Improvement Strategies for Next Program Year

Our improvement strategies incorporate activities that embrace each of the core indicators of performance. We will continue to conduct data submission workshops as we did last year, adding sessions on student level data.

Local Plan Updates were placed on the web for downloading and submission for the 2005-2006 school year. Professional development training is provided through hands-on, small group training sessions. In this manner, the Vocational directors can more accurately enter their annual Local Plan Update (LPU). Additionally, we will require the directors in the LEAs to address program and core indicator deficiencies in their annual LPU.

In the 2005-2006 program year, OVE&WD is providing special grant funds to secondary districts for the purpose of recruiting and retaining non-traditional gender students in vocational programs.

In response to the workplace and higher education, MDE and the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges have placed a high priority and emphasis on the improvement of reading, math and language skills as well as other measures of academic achievement for both academic and vocational - technical students. In the secondary arena, we are moving to the use of more stringent subject area tests. As each curriculum is rewritten, the curriculum includes greater emphasis on technology, academic skill, and licensure. Additionally, as the curriculum is rewritten, occupational specific tests are written to measure learning in the class. Professional development is designed to teach teachers the new curriculum and ensure mastery of the curriculum before the new course is unveiled. OVE&WD will continue providing well-designed and supportive activities to our client groups so that student achievement will continue to show increases in academic attainment.

Though MDE/OVE&WD met the performance levels set forth for vocational achievement and diploma/credentialing, it is very desirable to continue providing and supporting activities to improve program offerings and programs offered to enhance student performance. Some of the most productive and promising activities in these areas are: preservice and inservice professional development, upgrading curricula, providing technologically current instructional equipment, technical assistance (on-site and remote), the summer vocational conference, and workshops and summer institutes for administrators, teachers, counselors and special populations personnel. A Leadership Academy for Vocational directors has been instituted to train directors how to: be curriculum leaders, use the latest research, and be more effective in their jobs.

In the current year, we have required stronger articulation between secondary and postsecondary program offerings. There is now a Statewide Articulation Agreement in place. In conjunction with the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, there are now four (4) Statewide Articulation programs in place in the State of Mississippi. The plan is to begin adding additional Statewide Articulation Agreements annually. We have also begun an Exemplary Program process. This process is designed to identify Best Practices in programs across the state and encourage replication of these practices. The State of Mississippi is using the model designed and implemented by the National Dissemination Center at The Ohio State University.

In order to continue showing gains in the performance levels of the core indicators for placement and retention, it is necessary to continue to provide vocational and technical programs and services that are responsive to the needs of business and industry. We have placed a pronounced emphasis on business and industry partnerships in which, as partners, businesspersons and industry representatives participate in the development and revision of program purposes, objectives, and content. Representatives of business and industry will continue to be required as members of state and local vocational advisory and program craft committees. OVE&WD works closely with appropriate representatives of business and industry to determine what is needed in the curricula that are being rewritten.

As the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act progresses, the MDE/OVE&WD will play an active, cooperative role in continuing to help prepare the workforce through programs in the public education arena.

As described above, we have made significant gains through professional development activities that provide information and technical assistance to LEA staff engaged in the operation of programs having non-traditional gender students.

C. Data Files

The Combined Annual Report is being submitted through the PerkinsCAR.com website this year.