SPAC and Design Team Progress Summary

Design Team Meeting 6
August 9–10, 2012

Introduction

As *Perkins IV* nears reauthorization, the Department's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) has invited stakeholders to offer recommendations for the next generation accountability system. In winter 2011, OVAE launched the State *Perkins* Accountability Congress (SPAC) initiative to (1) foster dialogue about performance measurement among federal staff and state representatives, (2) develop recommendations to inform reauthorization discussions, and (3) offer guidance to assist states in implementing future accountability requirements. Central to the initiative is the formation of an advisory group—the SPAC—composed of state directors and their secondary or postsecondary counterpart from each state, territory, and outlying area. Beginning in November 2011 and continuing into fall 2012, SPAC members are meeting to provide suggestions for student population definitions and measurement approaches for core indicators.

Stakeholder Involvement

OVAE is committed to engaging states and stakeholders from the CTE field in supporting the Department's strategic goal of remaking the *Perkins* accountability system. The SPAC is composed of three primary groups—the SPAC, a Design Team, and subject matter experts (SMEs)—that will contribute recommendations that the Department will consider when proposing new performance indicators.

SPAC

The 110 SPAC delegates—representing the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Republic of Palau—provide guidance, suggestions, and feedback to the Design Team on the proposed measurement approaches and address global issues that arise during the course of Design Team discussions. A total of four SPAC meetings are planned over the course of the project.

Design Team

OVAE has convened a Design Team composed of 44 secondary and postsecondary state data and accountability experts nominated by state directors and national CTE associations. Team members work closely with OVAE staff to create suggested definitions of student populations and approaches for measuring performance indicators. The Design Team has been asked to (1) identify CTE student populations to serve as the basis for measurement; (2) specify measurement approaches, including numerators and denominators; (3) discuss and suggest appropriate methods for reporting data, including timelines and instrumentation; and (4) identify issues or challenges.

A total of seven Design Team meetings will be held over the course of the project, with five meetings occurring virtually and two face-to-face meetings in Washington, DC.

SMEs

SMEs are nationally recognized experts in performance accountability systems and state longitudinal data systems (SLDS), who are asked to participate on an as-needed basis to support SPAC discussions and review draft deliverables. SMEs are instrumental in connecting *Perkins* accountability to performance and accountability efforts in other areas of education and the workforce, such as K–12 education, adult education, community colleges, higher education, and workforce programs.

Communication

Members of the project team are using a variety of strategies to convene participants, convey information, solicit additional stakeholder input, and ensure project transparency.

Webinars

The full SPAC and the Design Team have participated in a series of webinars to review proposed accountability definitions and measures and to make suggestions to improve the validity, reliability, and comparability of approaches. A project kickoff webinar, hosted on November 3, 2011, informed SPAC members of the project purposes and timeline, introduced the process for soliciting recommendations, and reviewed background material on relevant national accountability efforts. Subsequent webinars have included presentations from OVAE leadership and content experts and facilitated discussions.

In-Person Meetings

Over the course of the project, OVAE will host two in-person meetings of the Design Team, each lasting a day and a half, in OVAE's Washington, DC headquarters. These meetings offer an opportunity for team members to engage in face-to-face discussions where they can explore the detailed issues relating to each performance indicator and the overall accountability framework. Meetings combine presentations by OVAE leadership, plenary sessions involving the full Design Team, and facilitated breakout sessions.

SPAC Website

A public online information-sharing portal (http://cte.ed.gov/spac/) was launched at the start of the project to serve as a resource for SPAC and Design Team members, as well as interested stakeholders. Users may access the portal to review current documents, keep abreast of progress, view recordings of virtual meetings, and engage in discussions through an online Forum (http://cte.ed.gov/spac/index.php/forum/).

The Department Blueprint for CTE Transformation

In April 2012, the Department released *Investing in America's Future: A Blueprint for Transforming Career and Technical Education* (Blueprint).[1] The Blueprint sets out the Administration's goals for *Perkins* reauthorization,

[1] U.S. Department of Education. (2012). *Investing in America's Future: A Blueprint for Transforming Career and Technical Education*. Washington, DC: Office of Vocational and Adult Education. Accessed on June 18, 2012, from http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cte/transforming-career-technical-education.pdf.

laying out the following four core principles, which will support more rigorous, relevant, and results-driven CTE programming:

1. **Alignment**—connecting high-quality CTE programs with labor market needs to equip students with 21st-century skills and prepare them for high-demand, high-growth industry areas;

2. **Collaboration**—linking secondary and postsecondary institutions, employers, and industry partners to improve CTE program quality;

3. **Accountability**—improving academic outcomes and building technical and employability skills in CTE programs, using common definitions and clear metrics for performance; and

4. **Innovation**—emphasizing systemic reforms of state policies and practices to support CTE implementation of effective practices at the local level.

The work of the SPAC will inform Department efforts to transform the *Perkins* accountability framework by suggesting a more uniform set of definitions to assess student participation and program results. The approaches are intended to support more meaningful comparisons of results across and within states, as well as help identify equity gaps among students.

Indicators of Performance

OVAE initially charged the SPAC to examine six performance indicators that were identified as a high priority for legislative reauthorization (Table 1). Following the release of its Blueprint, the Department put forward a slightly different set of six performance indicators that promote Blueprint goals and build upon existing *Perkins IV* indicators. In keeping with existing practice, states would negotiate performance levels for these indicators with OVAE, and local consortia with their state, for each performance indicator.

SPAC work will continue to focus on the initial set of indicators, and if the project timeline allows, may expand to address the additional Blueprint measure.

Table 1: Potential Performance Indicators

Indicator	SPAC	Blueprint
Enrollment for subpopulations in CTE		✓
Entrance into postsecondary, with and without remediation	✓	✓
Secondary enrollment in postsecondary education, with or without remediation	✓	✓
Attainment of industry-recognized certification or licensure	✓	✓
Attainment of postsecondary certificates and degrees	✓	✓
Rate of further postsecondary enrollment	✓	
Rates of employment and earnings	✓	✓

OVAE also is proposing a set of progress indicators upon which state and local grantees would be required to report, though no performance levels would be negotiated. These indicators include the number of dual credits earned, CTE credits earned that meet high school graduation requirements, and work-based learning opportunities completed.

Overall Issues for Design Team Consideration

The SPAC and Design Team are tasked with providing expertise and insight to assist the Department in developing definitions for student populations and approaches for measuring core performance indicators. During the course of project work, the team identified a number of issues that apply to multiple populations or indicator measures. This section summarizes overarching issues raised by team members relating to the accountability framework.

Secondary Threshold

Design Team members expressed a strong preference for being held accountable for the outcomes of secondary students who attain a minimum level of CTE course work. Students who achieve this minimum threshold at any point in their secondary education would be eligible to be included in the denominator of each performance indicator, where appropriate, when reporting accountability results.

Secondary Threshold: Students who completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year.

Points of Agreement

The Design Team has come to agreement on the following points relating to the secondary threshold.

- **Percentage of program**—States vary in how they assess student participation in programs, with some basing decisions on the number of courses a student completes, some on the number of credits or Carnegie Units a student earns, and some on the volume of standards a student achieves. A majority of participants favored standardizing measurement by basing the threshold on the percentage of a state-approved career preparation program that a student completes.
- **Threshold**—The Design Team agreed that students who completed "at least 50 percent" of the state-approved career preparation program would achieve the threshold. Members discussed the possibility of changing the language to "more than 50 percent" to ensure that students have exceeded the 50 percent threshold, reflecting a concern that for some programs, 50 percent represents one course of a two-course sequence. Members decided, however, to retain the "at least 50 percent threshold." The Design Team also considered using completion of at least 50 percent with enrollment in the next course in the program sequence, but determined that, because data are not analyzed until the end of the reporting year, that this approach would not offer additional information.
- **Technical content**—The Design Team agreed that only technical course work should apply toward calculating the CTE participation threshold. While academic course work might be considered an integral part of a CTE program or POS, this course work would not be considered for the threshold.
- **Timing**—The Design Team agreed that the reporting year should be aligned with the reporting year that each state defines for its *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (*ESEA*) reporting requirements. Adopting this approach supports states in making meaningful

comparisons of students who achieve threshold levels of CTE course taking with those participating in other types of educational programming.

Members also suggested that the timing of reporting for the Consolidated Annual Report (CAR) be aligned with the *ESEA* reporting schedule. Currently, states must report their data to the CAR by December 31 of each year, while *ESEA* data are submitted through ED*Facts* and are due by January 31 of the following year. Design Team members contended that because most of the secondary *Perkins* indicator results are reported through ED*Facts*, aligning the two submission timelines would be more efficient.

- **Defining career preparation programs**—Participants began the June 28, 2012, discussion by requesting OVAE guidance on what constitutes a career preparation program. The SPAC later discussed the definition in terms of how they would recommend an eligible program be defined. Most states supported using the Department's definition for programs of study. States agreed to the following definition of an eligible program, "Programs of study connecting secondary education and apprenticeship and/or postsecondary education or training leading to a degree, certificate, or certification tied to a high skill and/or high wage and/or high demand occupation."

Issues for Consideration

The SPAC and Design Team raised several points that will require continued discussion by team members during future meetings.

- **Program exceptions**—Are there exceptions to include secondary programs that do not require postsecondary education or training? One representative advocated for exceptions for programs like cosmetology, while other members indicated that only programs meeting the definition of a program of study—specifically that there be secondary and postsecondary components—be eligible.
- **Definition of high demand**—Some participants advocated for specifying a source for identifying high demand occupations, such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Other members had concerns about using this source, as the occupations included in the Bureau of Labor Statistics are only those that exist at the time projections are made; new occupations could be overlooked.
- **Minimum number of courses**—A participant expressed reservations about setting a threshold of "at least 50 percent" if a program consisted of too little course work. Others noted that courses can span different lengths of time; that is, two courses in a program may last one year each, while those in another program may last one semester each. It was also suggested that if a program has already met the approval criteria, then the program length will have been considered during the approval process.
- **Related CTE programs**—Some state or local sites offer programs that are highly related, with students taking similar course work in both. If two such programs exist, but only one of these programs receives federal CTE funds, should states restrict reporting only to the federally financed program?

Postsecondary Threshold

As with secondary students, Design Team members expressed a strong preference for being held accountable for the outcomes of postsecondary students who complete a minimum level of CTE course work. Students who achieve this threshold at any point in their postsecondary education would be eligible to be included in the denominator of each performance indicator, where appropriate, when reporting accountability results.

Postsecondary Threshold: Students who earned at least 12 cumulative credits (or the equivalent) in a state-approved career preparation program or completed a state-approved career preparation program of fewer than 12 credits (or the equivalent) by the end of the reporting year.

Points of Agreement

The Design Team has come to agreement on the following points relating to the postsecondary threshold.

- **Cumulative credits**—Design Team members overwhelmingly agreed that a threshold of "at least 12 credits or equivalent" for programs of 12 or more credits is appropriate. The Design Team agreed that the use of equivalencies must be supported by written guidance, and members suggested using the Department's recently developed reference guide regarding credit hours.[2,3] Members also agreed that for any program consisting of fewer than 12 credits or equivalent, a student must complete the entire sequence to be included in the threshold.
- **Maximum time to earn credits**—SPAC members generally agreed that there could be a specific number of years to look back for the 12 cumulative credits. Members who advocated for a maximum number of years cited concerns about the viability of older credits toward current degree programs and a desire for standardization. Some members indicated that because data are analyzed locally, institutions may look at different timelines and it could be challenging to standardize their approaches. Other members preferred to use all the data available to them without a maximum number of years to look back, although they would be willing to apply a year limit.

Issues for Consideration

The SPAC and Design Team raised several points that will require continued discussion by team members during future meetings.

- **Current enrollment**—Any student with at least 12 credits or equivalent—regardless of whether she or he is taking CTE course work in the reporting year—would be included in the accountability results for the reporting year. SPAC members determined this issue is tied to the question of whether general education courses are included. If general education/academic course work is considered as part of the threshold, then students

[2] U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education. (October 29, 2010). Program Integrity Issues. *Federal Register*, *75*(209). Retrieved May 7, 2012, from http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-10-29/pdf/2010-26531.pdf.
[3] U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education. (March 18, 2011). *Guidance to Institutions and Accrediting Agencies Regarding a Credit Hour as Defined in the Final Regulations.* Retrieved May 7, 2012, from http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/attachments/GEN1106.pdf.

should not have to be taking CTE course work in the current year to be eligible. If it is not part of the threshold, then the Design Team will need to discuss whether current enrollment in technical course work is required in the reporting year.

- **Number of years to earn credits**—SPAC members did not identify a specific number of years to look back for credits.
- **Inclusion of general education courses**—During the April 2012 Design Team meeting, nine states indicated a preference for excluding general education courses when assessing whether students have met the threshold. Representatives of these states had concerns that including general education credits could result in some students reaching the threshold without taking much or any CTE course work. Seven states preferred including general education courses, suggesting that CTE POS—other than very short-term programs—are designed to incorporate both CTE and general education courses. Several states also had concerns about their ability to separate CTE and general education courses when assessing whether students have reached the threshold.

  Members were again evenly split on the issue of including general education courses during the June 2012 SPAC meeting. One member asked the Design Team to consider whether it would be possible for the definition to allow states to determine what courses are included, "Can we be consistent without being exactly the same?"

- **Credit awarded in high school**—As the measurement approach is currently written, all postsecondary students who have reached the threshold are included. Design Team members identified four separate categories of students affected by this question:
  - Students still in high school who have earned 12 college credits;
  - Students who earned 12 college credits while in high school and who are entering postsecondary education in the same POS;
  - Students who earned 12 college credits while in high school and who are entering postsecondary education in a different POS; and
  - Students who earned 12 college credits while in high school and who are entering postsecondary education but who are not in a POS (i.e., not enrolled in CTE).

  Design Team members appeared to generally agree that students who have earned 12 college credits but are still enrolled in high school should not be included in the reporting cohort.

- **Developmental education**—Design Team members have raised the issue of including developmental education and indicated that they were not inclined to do so. Some states award credit for developmental education, however, and would like to consider this option in more detail at a future meeting.

Accountability Framework

The issues outlined below relate to the overall *Perkins* accountability framework. SPAC and Design Team members have raised these issues for Department consideration but will not attempt to resolve them.

1. Will the Department provide guidance regarding programs that can be approved for *Perkins* funding?
2. New criteria for state-approved programs may reduce the number of approved programs, which may in turn decrease the number of students included in accountability reporting. What are the potential effects this reduction could have; for example, if it appeared that CTE participation declined significantly and suddenly?
3. Should the accountability framework address secondary students who drop out of high school prior to reaching the accountability threshold? Similarly, should the framework somehow consider postsecondary students who enter developmental education but leave postsecondary education prior to reaching the postsecondary education threshold?
4. Should the indicator definitions be associated with measuring consortium outcomes?
5. When should outcomes be assessed? Should this occur at both the secondary and postsecondary levels or upon completion of a full program of study (POS)?
6. Should the indicators and measures reflect longitudinal aspects of students' educational experiences?

Indicators

The following section describes progress the SPAC and Design Team have made in developing suggested measures for six performance indicators. The measure of each indicator is first presented visually, through a flowchart of the elements that comprise the measure. A narrative of the measure follows each flowchart, and includes information about the agreements reached as of the writing of this report, as well as remaining issues that the Design Team and SPAC will consider.

SECONDARY GRADUATION RATE

Measure: Percentage of accountably enrolled secondary students who graduated according to the state's computation of its graduation rate as described in Section 1111(b)(2)(C)(vi) of the *ESEA*

Denominator

Students who completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year and were included in the state's computation of its *ESEA* graduation rate in the reporting year

Criterion D1
Accountably enrolled: Completed at least 50 percent of program by the end of the reporting year

Consideration D1
Completion may be based on technical sequence credits earned, standards achieved, or courses completed

Implication D1
States will need to develop and apply consistent approaches for identifying the components of a program among local providers

Criterion D2
Enrolled in a state-approved career preparation program

Considerations D2
States must use consistent criteria for
- identifying career preparation programs
- reviewing/approving local applications

Implications D2
OVAE may wish to
- develop regulations for defining a career preparation program
- provide guidance for required components of funded programs

Criterion D3
Included in state computation of *ESEA* graduation rate

Considerations D3
- Assumes four-year cohort beginning with ninth grade
- States must
  - link to their *ESEA* definition/ reporting for graduation
  - use ED*Facts* to access these data

Implications D3
- Not all students who reach the threshold level of participation will be included
- Graduation data for the measure will be comparable to those data reported for other students

Numerator

Students who completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year, were included in the state's computation of its *ESEA* graduation rate in the reporting year, and received a standard high school diploma in the reporting year

Criterion N1
All denominator criteria

Criterion N2
Received a standard high school diploma in the reporting year

Consideration N2
States must limit reporting to accountably enrolled students who received a standard high school diploma

Implication N2
Students earning a GED or a certificate of completion, or who graduate in more than four years would not be counted

Secondary Graduation Rate

The measure of this performance indicator assesses the graduation rate of secondary CTE students who are included in a state's computation of its four-year high school graduation rates as described in Section 1111(b)(2)(C)(vi) of the *ESEA*.

Points of Agreement

The Design Team and SPAC discussed the measure and how the measurement approach aligns with each state's *ESEA* reporting requirements.

- **Population**—The population consists of ninth-grade students in the *ESEA* cohort who completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program.
- **Method**—States should conduct administrative record matches using the state's *ESEA* accountability data that are reported to ED*Facts*.
- **Graduation**—Measurement will be limited to students earning a standard high school diploma, as defined in the *ESEA*. This measurement approach will not include students who graduate in more than four years or who earn a credential other than a standard diploma. This convention is in keeping with how states report outcomes for all students under *ESEA.* States considered modifying the *Perkins* indicator to account for students who are currently excluded from the *ESEA* indicator, but determined that doing so could bias comparisons of state graduation rates of these students with the graduation rates of other student populations.
- **Alignment with other initiatives**—The measure and measurement approach are aligned with *ESEA* and *Perkins IV* reporting requirements.

RATE OF SECONDARY ENROLLMENT IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Measure: Percentage of accountably enrolled high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary education in the following reporting year

Denominator
Students who completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year and received a high school diploma or the equivalent in the reporting year

Criterion D1
Accountably enrolled: Completed at least 50 percent of program by the end of the reporting year

Consideration D1
Completion may be based on technical sequence credits earned, standards achieved, or courses completed

Implication D1
States will need to develop and apply consistent approaches for identifying the components of a program among local providers

Criterion D2
Enrolled in a state-approved career preparation program

Considerations D2
States must use consistent criteria for
- identifying career preparation programs
- reviewing/approving local applications

Implications D2
OVAE may wish to:
- develop regulations for defining a career preparation program
- provide guidance for required components of funded programs

Criterion D3
Received high school diploma in reporting year

Consideration D3
Includes students who received a standard high school diploma, GED, and other equivalent credentials

Implication D3
Includes more students than are counted in the graduation rate indicator

Numerator
Students who completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year, received a high school diploma or equivalent in the reporting year, and enrolled in any postsecondary institution in the United States in the second quarter following the end of the reporting year during which the student graduated

Criterion N1
All denominator criteria

Criterion N2
Found to be enrolled in any postsecondary institution in the United States

Considerations N2
- Enrollment includes public and private two-year and four-year institutions, apprenticeships, and private proprietary institutions
- Use of the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) needed to access data
- Includes enrollment in any program

Implications N2
- The NSC may be cost prohibitive
- Comparability may vary if the NSC is not used
- OVAE may wish to develop regulatory guidance defining what constitutes enrollment if the NSC is not used

Criterion N3
Found to be enrolled in the second quarter after the end of the reporting year during which the student graduated

Consideration N3
Assesses enrollment from October through December following the end of the reporting year

Implications N3
- Enrollment within two quarters will omit students who enroll later
- Data for 2011–12 will be reported in December 2013

Rate of Secondary Enrollment in Postsecondary Education

The measure of this performance indicator assesses the rate at which high school graduates who attain the threshold level of CTE course taking enroll in postsecondary education in the following reporting year.

Points of Agreement

- **Population**—High school graduates who completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year. The measure will consider students who reach a threshold level of participation rather than only students who are part of the *ESEA* ninth-grade cohort.
- **Types of completion**—Standard high school diploma, GED, and other equivalent credentials. The Design Team discussed and agreed that this measure will include more types of secondary completion than are considered in the graduation rate measure.
- **Postsecondary education**—Includes all postsecondary institutions in the United States offering education or advanced training.
- **Method**—States will conduct administrative record matches with in-state postsecondary institutions and will access the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to track student enrollments.

Issues for Consideration

- **Threshold**
  1. Should the measure be limited to students who completed a CTE program or also include those who met the enrollment threshold without completing their program? Some members have indicated that they prefer to focus on the results of students who completed a program rather than those who met only the 50 percent threshold.
  2. Should the measure be limited to graduates?
  3. Should apprenticeship programs be included in the measure? Some participants favored counting apprenticeship programs as a form of postsecondary education, with some questioning whether they should count course work at a postsecondary institution (e.g., academic courses offered within a community college) as part of the measure.
- **Timing**
  1. What is the appropriate timeline for assessing enrollment in postsecondary education? Secondary members discussed assessing placement into postsecondary education in the second quarter after the end of the reporting year. Postsecondary members suggested using the entire year following the reporting year, pointing out that, due to data availability, states will be unable

to collect placement data in time for a December 31 CAR submission date (i.e., June 2012 graduates would be assessed for enrollment between October 1 and December 31, 2012, so these data could not be reported until the following year). Given the delay, some called for giving students a full year to enroll before measuring outcomes.

2. Is a delay in reporting acceptable? Given the delay between when students leave high school and data are reported for the CAR, some questioned whether placement data would be useful for program improvement purposes.

- **Method**

1. What should states do if they do not have resources to access the NSC? Participants questioned whether the Department might take steps to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the NSC on behalf of states to facilitate matching and reduce the costs of accessing NSC data.

2. Is it acceptable to use surveys to collect postsecondary enrollment? Some Design Team and SPAC participants expressed concern about the possibility of not being able to conduct administrative record matching with the NSC or state postsecondary education systems and inquired whether the Department would accept the use of surveys to track enrollment in postsecondary education.

3. What, if any, standards for collection should be established? If other approaches, such as mail or electronic surveys are used to collect data, should common data collection standards be adopted across states? If so, what is the source for these standards? For example, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has developed standards for universe data collections that might be considered.

4. Who is responsible for collecting and reporting data for this measure? One member expressed concern that there might not be enough data collected at the postsecondary level to report these results accurately or that the state postsecondary system may not be willing to share their data with the secondary one. Who is charged with collecting these data?

RATE OF EMPLOYMENT—SECONDARY

Measure: Percentage of accountably enrolled students who graduated from high school who did not enroll in postsecondary education in the following reporting year and who were employed or in the military at any time during the following reporting year

Denominator
Students who completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year, received a high school diploma or the equivalent, and were not found to be enrolled in a postsecondary institution in the United States in the following reporting year

Criterion D1
Accountably enrolled: Completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year

Consideration D1
Completion may be based on technical sequence credits earned, standards achieved, or courses completed

Implication D1
States will need to develop and apply consistent approaches for identifying the components of a program

Criterion D2
In a state-approved career preparation program

Considerations D2
States must use consistent criteria for
- identifying career preparation programs
- reviewing/ approving local applications

Implications D2
OVAE may wish to
- develop regulations defining a career preparation program
- provide guidance for required components of funded programs

Criterion D3
Not found to be enrolled in any postsecondary institution in the United States in the reporting year following the reporting year in which the student graduated

Considerations D3
- Use of the NSC is needed to access out-of-state data
- Includes public and private two-year and four-year institutions, apprenticeships, and private proprietary institutions

Implications D3
- NSC may be cost prohibitive
- Comparability across states may vary if the NSC is not used
- Not all students or institutions are covered by the NSC

Criterion D4
Received a high school diploma or the equivalent in the reporting year

Consideration D4
Includes students who received a standard high school diploma, GED, and other equivalent credentials

Implication D4
Includes more students than are counted in the graduation rate indicator

Numerator
Students who completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year, received a high school diploma or the equivalent, were not found to be enrolled in a postsecondary institution in the United States in the following reporting year, and were found to be employed or in the military at any time in the following reporting year

Criterion N1
All denominator criteria

Criterion N2
Employed in any job or enlisted in the military in the United States at any time during the reporting year following the reporting year in which the student graduated

Consideration N2a
Assesses employment in the entire year after the end of the year a student graduates. The enrollment indicator assesses enrollment only two quarters after the end of the same year

Implications N2a
- There will be a lag period before results are reported
- Indicators will have different time periods
- Students who graduate earlier in the reporting year have more time to secure employment

Consideration N2b
Counts employment in any job

Considerations N2c
- Requires identifying eligible data sources, such as state unemployment insurance (UI) wage records, Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES), Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS)
- Determine if results are comparable to other national initiatives

Rate of Employment—Secondary

The measure of this performance indicator assesses the rate at which high school students who achieved the CTE course taking threshold found employment or enlisted in the military during the following reporting year. The measure excludes those who were found enrolled in postsecondary education.

Points of Agreement

Design Team members discussed the employment measure during their in-person meeting held on February 22–23, 2012, in Washington, DC. The points of agreement identified below reflect that discussion and are not yet final.

- **Population**—Students who completed at least 50 percent of their state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year and who graduated from high school with a standard diploma, GED, or equivalent.
- **Type of Completion**—Follow-up is limited to students who earned a standard high school diploma, GED, or other equivalent credential.
- **Follow-up Strategy**—States should conduct administrative record matches to state unemployment insurance (UI) wage records and federal employment data through the Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) or other available systems such as the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS2). Design Team members raised other methods of collection, such as surveys. Surveys may provide more detailed information than administrative record matching, but can be administered very differently across and even within states. This document presents the preferred approach for follow-up with the recognition that the Department may provide guidance or regulations to clarify what is allowable.

Issues for Consideration

- **Population**

  1. How should enrolled students be treated? Excluding students who enroll directly in postsecondary education following graduation risks losing important information. Might the employment outcomes of enrolled students be collected separately as an informational measure (i.e., no performance levels set)? Or should both types of students (not enrolled and enrolled and working) be included in the measure? Members agreed that states should not be penalized for students who are not employed because they are focusing solely on their education.

  2. Should the measure be limited to students who complete a program? Currently the population includes students who achieve a threshold level of CTE course work and graduate; they may not have completed the CTE program.

- **Employment**

  1. What constitutes a reasonable and realistic employment objective? Students may find different types of employment immediately following high school, including part-time or episodic work. Should there be a threshold for assessing employment that captures the different types of work in which students may engage?

  2. What is a "good" versus "poor" placement rate? Employment rates will vary with economic conditions, so what appears to be a low rate is actually quite good in a depressed economy. How will performance levels be set across states and across sites within states? Moreover, should targets be adjusted over time (up or down) to reflect external changes over which educators have little control?

  3. Is employment a valued measure at the secondary level? Policymakers often ask whether students who leave CTE programs are employed. While understanding employment outcomes for those existing secondary education students can offer useful information, members asked if it is appropriate for states to negotiate targets for this indicator because the educational goal may be for most students to continue on to postsecondary education. Encouraging states to increase employment rates risks creating perverse incentives.

- **Military enlistment**

  1. Should enlistment be considered differently than employment? Employment rates after high school will reflect the age and inexperience of many students. According to a contributor, military enlistments occur more frequently for recent high school graduates than for those at any other exit point in the pipeline. Might there be value in reporting military placements separately from the employment indicator or as a subpopulation to assess the relative types of transitions that students achieve?

- **Methods**

  1. When should employment be assessed? *Perkins IV* calls for student follow-up two calendar quarters after the end of the reporting year. While some team members continue to suggest that follow-up occur at this time, some called for assessing outcomes across the full year because doing so will not affect reporting timelines.[4] Allowing a full year to pass before assessing outcomes provides more time for students to find employment.

  2. Is it acceptable to use surveys to collect employment data? Some Design Team and SPAC participants expressed concern about the possibility of not being able to conduct administrative record matching and inquired whether the Department would accept the use of surveys to track employment.

[4] The second quarter after the end of the reporting year is October 1–December 31. Data are due to the CAR on December 31, so it is not possible to access employment data and report these data to the CAR by December 31.

3. What, if any, standards for collection should be established? Accessing state UI wage records or the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS2) requires that states have access to student social security numbers (SSNs). Given that not all states can obtain this access, should there be minimum expectations for the availability of SSNs to support this approach? And if other approaches, such as mail or electronic surveys are used to collect data, should common data collection standards be adopted? If so, what is the source for these standards? For example, NCES has developed standards for universe data collections that might be considered.

RATE OF POSTSECONDARY AWARD ATTAINMENT

Measure: Percentage of accountably enrolled students who were not enrolled in a postsecondary institution the following reporting year and who received a degree, certificate, or employer credential in the reporting year or following reporting year

Denominator

Students who earned at least 12 cumulative credits or equivalent in a state-approved career preparation program or completed a state-approved career preparation program of fewer than 12 credits (or equivalent) by the end of the reporting year and were not found to be enrolled in any postsecondary institution in the United States during the following reporting year

Criterion D1
Accountably enrolled: Has earned at least 12 cumulative credits (or equivalent) or completed a program of fewer than 12 credits (or equivalent) by the end of the reporting year

Considerations D1
- Assumes a threshold of 12 credits or equivalent
- Requires "equivalent" to be defined
- Consider alignment with other national initiatives

Implications D1
- Not all students who participate are included
- Students who meet the threshold through dual or co-enrollment are currently included

Criterion D2
In a state-approved career preparation program

Considerations D2
States must use consistent criteria for
- identifying career preparation programs
- reviewing/approving local applications

Implications D2
OVAE may wish to
- develop regulations defining a career preparation program
- provide guidance for required components of funded programs

Criterion D3
Not found to be enrolled in any postsecondary institution in the United States during the following reporting year

Considerations D3
- Assesses enrollment at any time in the following reporting year
- Use of the NSC is needed to access these data

Implications D3
- Waiting one year will result in a one-year lag for reporting
- Fall only may exclude students who attend during other terms
- The NSC may be cost prohibitive
- Comparability may vary if the NSC is not used

Numerator

Students who earned at least 12 cumulative credits or equivalent in a state-approved career preparation program or completed a state-approved program of fewer than 12 credits (or equivalent) by the end of the reporting year; were not found to be enrolled in any postsecondary institution in the United States during the following reporting year; and received a degree, certificate, or employer certification in the reporting year or the following reporting year

Criterion N1
All denominator criteria

Criterion N2
Received a degree, certificate, or recognized employer certification

Considerations N2
Includes state- or nationally recognized employer certifications that are
- identified by the state as high skill/high wage
- awarded by a third party
- administered by a proctored testing authority or organization, and
- on which the student receives a passing score

Implication N2
Comparability across states may vary due to different levels of access to these data

Criterion N3
Received degree, certificate, or employer certification during the reporting year or at any time during the following reporting year

Consideration N3
Designed to capture awards received from institutions and from external state or national certification organizations

Rate of Postsecondary Award Attainment

The measure of this performance indicator assesses the percentage of students who receive a postsecondary degree, certificate, or credential in the reporting year or following reporting year. The measure excludes students who continued their postsecondary education the following reporting year.

Points of Agreement

- **Population**—Students who earned at least 12 cumulative credits or equivalent in a state-approved career preparation program or completed a state-approved career preparation program of fewer than 12 credits (or equivalent) by the end of the reporting year and were not enrolled in a postsecondary institution the following reporting year.
- **Completion**—Includes degrees and certificates awarded by postsecondary institutions as well as state- or nationally recognized employer certifications that are identified by the state as high skill/high wage, are awarded by a third party, and are administered by a proctored testing authority or organization, and on which the student receives a passing score.
- **Method**—States will conduct administrative record matches using state longitudinal data systems for in-state postsecondary institutions and access the NSC for out-of-state student enrollments.
- **Enrollment in postsecondary education**—Includes U.S. postsecondary institutions offering education or advanced training. Access to data for all institutions may not be available, however, even through the NSC.

Issues for Consideration

- **Inclusion/exclusion of students**
  1. Is it appropriate to exclude students who continue their postsecondary education in the following reporting year? Some students may receive a certificate or other credential during the reporting year—which may lead to employment—but return to take postsecondary courses the following year. These students would not be included in the measure until they exit postsecondary education, and if they do not earn another credential in the year they exit, the measure would not capture those earlier credentials.
  2. Would the numerator include those who were eligible to receive a degree or certificate but who did not actually receive it? In some colleges, students apply for their degrees and pay associated fees. Members report some students choose not to apply because they can transfer or obtain employment without the official award, or because they prefer not to pay the fee.
- **Reporting timeline**

1. Is it appropriate to look at attainment in the current reporting year and the full following reporting year? Students pursuing third-party certificates may not be able to take assessments before the end of the reporting year.

- **Completion**

1. How will students receiving more than one certificate be included in the data collection? There are degree and certificate programs in which students can earn numerous employer credentials.
2. Will noncredit postsecondary certificates be included in the indicator?
3. What should states do if the list of industry-validated certificates changes from year-to-year? Members expressed concern about frequent changes and the potential effects on comparability across years.

RATE OF FURTHER ENROLLMENT IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Measure: Percentage of accountably enrolled students who did not receive a degree, certificate, or employer credential in the reporting year or the following reporting year and who enrolled in postsecondary education in the following reporting year

Denominator

Students who earned at least 12 cumulative credits (or equivalent) in a state-approved career preparation program or completed a state-approved career preparation program of fewer than 12 credits (or equivalent) by the end of the reporting year and did not receive a degree, certificate, or employer certification in the reporting year or the following reporting year

Criterion D1
Accountably Enrolled: Has earned at least 12 cumulative credits (or equivalent) or completed a program of fewer than 12 credits (or equivalent) by the end of the reporting year

Considerations D1
- Assumes a threshold of 12 credits or equivalent
- Requires "equivalent" to be defined. Some suggested higher or lower thresholds
- Consider alignment with other national initiatives

Implications D1
- Not all students who participate are included
- Students who meet the threshold through dual or co-enrollment are currently included

Criterion D2
In a state-approved career preparation program

Considerations D2
States must use consistent criteria for
- identifying career preparation programs
- reviewing/approving local applications

Implications D2
OVAE may wish to
- develop regulations defining a career preparation program
- provide guidance for required components of funded programs

Criterion D3
Did not earn a degree, certificate, or recognized employer certification during the reporting year or at any time during the following reporting year

Consideration D3
Excludes students who received a postsecondary award in the reporting year or following reporting year

Implications D3
- Will result in a one year lag for reporting
- Comparability may vary depending on data source

Numerator

Students who earned at least 12 cumulative credits (or equivalent) in a state-approved career preparation program or completed a state-approved career preparation program of fewer than 12 credits (or equivalent) by the end of the reporting year; did not receive a degree, certificate, or employer certification in the reporting year or the following reporting year; and were found to be enrolled in any postsecondary institution in the United States at any time during the following reporting year

Criterion N1
All denominator criteria

Criterion N2
Found to be enrolled in any postsecondary institution in the United States

Considerations N2
- Includes enrollment in any program
- Use of the NSC is needed

Implications N2
- The NSC may be cost prohibitive
- Comparability may vary if the NSC is not used

Criterion N3
Found to be enrolled at any time during the following reporting year

Considerations N3
- Assesses enrollment at any time in the following reporting year
- Designed to capture awards received from institutions and from external state or national certifications

Implication N3
There will be a reporting lag; data will be reported approximately 18 months after the end of the reporting year

Rate of Further Enrollment in Postsecondary Education

The measure of this indicator assesses the rate at which students persisted in postsecondary education or transferred to another postsecondary institution in the following reporting year. The measure excludes students who received a postsecondary degree, certificate, or credential and left postsecondary education.

Points of Agreement

- **Population**—Students who earned at least 12 cumulative credits or equivalent in a state-approved career preparation program or completed a state-approved career preparation program of fewer than 12 credits or equivalent by the end of the reporting year and who did not receive a degree, certificate, or credential in the reporting year or following reporting year.
- **Method**—States will conduct administrative record matches using state longitudinal data systems for in-state postsecondary institutions and access the NSC for out-of-state student enrollments.
- **Enrollment in postsecondary education**—Includes U.S. postsecondary institutions offering education or advanced training. Access to data for all institutions may not be available, however, even through the NSC.

Issues for Consideration

- **General**
  1. How will the measure account for students who receive a certificate but remain in postsecondary education to pursue a degree? As currently defined, the measure would not measure the success of students who receive a credential but continue their studies.

RATE OF EMPLOYMENT—POSTSECONDARY

Measure: Percentage of accountably enrolled students who received a postsecondary degree, certificate, or employer credential; were not enrolled in postsecondary education the following year; and were employed or in the military at any time during the following reporting year

Denominator
Students who earned at least 12 cumulative credits (or equivalent) in a state-approved career preparation program or completed a state-approved career preparation program of fewer than 12 credits (or equivalent) by the end of the reporting year and were not found to be enrolled in any postsecondary institution in the United States during the following reporting year; and received a degree, certificate, or recognized employer certification in the reporting year or the following reporting year

Criterion D1
Accountably enrolled: Has earned at least 12 cumulative credits (or equivalent) or completed a program of fewer than 12 credits (or equivalent) by the end of the reporting year

Considerations D1
- Assumes a threshold of 12 credits or equivalent
- Requires "equivalent" to be defined
- Alignment with national initiatives

Implications D1
- Not all students who participate are included
- Students who meet the threshold through dual or co-enrollment are included

Criterion D2
In a state-approved career preparation program

Considerations D2
States must use consistent criteria for
- identifying career preparation programs
- reviewing/ approving local applications

Implications D2
OVAE may wish to
- develop regulations defining a career preparation program
- provide guidance for required

Criterion D3
Not found to be enrolled in any postsecondary institution in the United States during the following reporting year

Considerations D3
- Assesses enrollment at any time in the following reporting year
- Use of the NSC is needed

Implications D3
- The NSC may be cost prohibitive
- Comparability may vary if the NSC is not used
- Some students/ institutions not covered by NSC

Criterion D4
Received a degree, certificate, or recognized employer certification during the reporting year or following reporting year

Considerations D4
Includes state- or nationally recognized employer certifications that are
- identified by the state as high skill/high wage
- awarded by a third party
- administered by a proctored testing authority or organization on which the student receives a passing score

Designed to capture external credentials received after completing program

Implications D4
- Comparability across states may vary
- Excludes students who receive awards later
- Excludes students who leave without an award

Numerator
Students who earned at least 12 cumulative credits (or equivalent) in a state-approved career preparation program or completed a state-approved career preparation program of fewer than 12 credits (or equivalent) by the end of the reporting year and were not found to be enrolled in any postsecondary institution in the United States during the following reporting year; received a degree, certificate, or recognized employer certification in the reporting year or the following reporting year; and were found to be employed or in the military in the following reporting year

Criterion N1
All denominator criteria

Criterion N2
Found to be employed in any job or enlisted in military in the United States

Considerations N2a
- Requires identifying eligible data sources, such as state UI wage record data, SSA, FEDES, WRIS
- Determine if results are comparable to other national initiatives

Consideration N2b
Counts employment in any job

Criterion N3
Found at any time during the following reporting year

Consideration N3
Assesses employment in the entire year after the end of the year a student graduates.

Implication N3
There will be a lag period of at least one year before results are reported

Rate of Employment—Postsecondary

The measure of this indicator assesses the rate at which students who received a postsecondary degree, certificate, or employer credential found employment or enlisted in the military at any point during the following reporting year. The measure excludes those who were found to be enrolled in postsecondary education the following year.

Points of Agreement

- **Population**—Students who earned at least 12 cumulative credits or the equivalent in a state-approved career preparation program or completed a state-approved career preparation program of fewer than 12 credits or the equivalent by the end of the reporting year and who received a degree, certificate, or credential in the reporting year or following reporting year and were not enrolled in the following reporting year.
- **Follow-up strategy**—States should conduct administrative record matches to acquire UI wage record data and federal employment data through FEDES. Design Team members raised other methods of collection, such as surveys. Surveys may provide more detailed information than administrative record matching, but can be administered very differently across and even within states. This document presents the preferred approach for follow-up with the recognition that the Department may provide guidance or regulations to clarify what is allowable.

Issues for Consideration

- **Population**
  1. Should the measure be limited only to those who have attained a credential, or should it include all students who reached the threshold level of CTE course work, regardless of credential attainment? Some members have suggested that it is more appropriate to be responsible only for the employment of students who earn a credential.
  2. Must students complete their CTE program? Currently students must complete 12 credits and earn a credential, but it would be possible for students to earn a credential without completing the CTE program. For example, a student could reach the accountably enrolled threshold for participation in a computer science certificate program and earn an associate's degree before or without completing the computer science certificate.
- **Employment**
  1. What constitutes a reasonable and realistic employment objective? Students may find different types of employment immediately following college, including part-time or episodic work. Should there be a threshold for assessing employment that captures the different types of work in which students may engage?
  2. What is a "good" versus "poor" placement rate? Employment rates will vary with economic conditions, so what appears to be a low rate is actually quite good in a depressed economy.

How will performance levels be set across states and across sites within states? Moreover, should targets be adjusted over time (up or down) to reflect external changes over which educators have little control?

3. How should students who pursue further education be counted? Should there be a complementary measure of students who complete and go on to postsecondary education at a higher level?

- **Military enlistment**

1. Should enlistment be considered differently from employment? Might there be value in reporting military placements separately from the employment indicator or as a subpopulation to assess the relative types of transitions that students make?

- **Methods**

1. When should employment be assessed? In *Perkins IV*, the follow-up period is two calendar quarters after the end of the reporting year. The postsecondary members recommended that, because states will have to wait a full year to report employment even if they look at two quarters,[5] examining employment across the full year provides more time for students to find employment.

2. Is it acceptable to use surveys to collect employment data? Some Design Team and SPAC participants inquired whether the Department would accept the use of surveys to track employment.

3. What, if any, standards for collection should be established? Accessing state UI wage records or the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS2) requires that states have access to student social security numbers (SSNs). Given that not all states can obtain this access, should there be minimum expectations for the availability of SSNs to support this approach? And if other approaches, such as mail or electronic surveys are used to collect data, should common data collection standards be adopted? If so, what is the source for these standards? For example, NCES has developed standards for universe data collections that might be considered.

[5] The second quarter after the end of the reporting year is October 1–December 31. Data are due to the CAR on December 31, so it is not possible to access and report employment data to the CAR by December 31.