



Issues Update

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

Perkins Act Reauthorization Moves in U.S. Congress

Reauthorization of the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act*, although currently presented with a new name, moved a step closer to reality when the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce unanimously approved **HR. 5587**, the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*. In spite of the new name being used in the House Committee now, it may well remain the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act* on final passage. The existing legislation is named for the late Eastern Kentucky Congressman Carl D. Perkins.

The *Perkins Act* sets the federal government's policy to maintain a system of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the nation. It sets guidelines and goals that have spurred innovation, accountability and relevance of CTE. The federal government provides appropriations representing about 7 percent of CTE expenditures nationwide, but states cannot receive the funds unless they follow the *Perkins Act* guidelines.

The legislation passed by the Committee shows the bipartisan support for CTE in Congress. It was introduced by Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA), who is co-chair of the Congressional CTE Caucus, and Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA). It was co-sponsored by Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-AL), Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL) and Rep. Jim Langevin (D-RI), who is the other co-chair of the Congressional CTE Caucus. Kentucky Second District Rep. Brett Guthrie helped shape the legislation and voted for its passage in Committee. Five of Kentucky's six congressional delegates, including Guthrie, are members of the Congressional CTE Caucus. Only Fourth District Rep. Thomas Massie is not a member.

Education and the Workforce Committee Chair John Kline (R-MN) supported passage and said after the vote, "Today we've taken another important step to ensure every American has access to the skills and education they need to compete in the workforce." In a fact sheet released by the Committee, it was noted the federal law had not been updated in almost a decade, and it no longer reflects the realities and challenges facing students and workers.

The next step for the legislation is the full House of Representatives. The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee is working on bipartisan draft legislation based on the principles it released last year. At this time, nothing specific has been released, although

congressional observers believe reauthorization of the *Perkins Act* is on the Committee's agenda.

What's in HR. 5587

For now, the action on *Perkins Act* reauthorization is in the House. According to an Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) analysis, here are the key elements of the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*. The bill proposes:

- Maintaining the Basic State Grant as a formula grant program, and maintains the current federal-to-state and state-to-local formulas.
- Establishing formal definitions for "CTE concentrator," "Program of study," and "Work-based learning," and emphasizing programs of study throughout the law.
- Simplifying the current accountability indicators, aligning where possible with other education and workforce reporting requirements.
- Increasing the amount of funds states can set aside as part of their "reserve fund" from 10 percent to 15 percent to assist rural areas or areas with a significant number of CTE students.
- Repealing the requirement that states must negotiate levels of performance with the Secretary of Education, and prevents the Secretary from withholding funds from a state for not meeting targets.
- Introducing a new local application process and a biennial needs assessment to be conducted in partnership with local stakeholders; this new process significantly streamlines the local plan process from current law.
- Streamlining local uses of funds, with an emphasis on career exploration and awareness activities, educator professional development, and implementing elements of high-quality CTE programs of study.
- Authorizing \$1.133 billion in funding for the Basic State Grant program for the first year the law takes effect, an increase over current levels, with increases for each of the five remaining years of the authorization.

A House Committee media advisory indicates the bill will help individuals compete for high-skilled, in-demand jobs. The key tenets of the legislation, according to **continued on back**

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a House Committee fact sheet, are empowering state and local community leaders, improving alignment with in-demand jobs, increasing transparency and accountability, and ensuring a limited federal role. Perhaps to emphasize the importance of local and state control in developing CTE programs for their citizens, the bill repeals the requirement that states must negotiate their targeted levels of performance with the Secretary of Education. Further, the bill prohibits the Secretary from withholding funds from a state that does not meet certain performance targets. State leaders are empowered to develop an improvement plan that best meets their unique circumstances.

Positive Reviews

Representative Guthrie met on three occasions with groups of CTE teachers and administrators in Bowling Green, Harrodsburg and Springfield to gather information on current *Perkins Act* programs and implementation. According to Rep. Guthrie's legislative aide, Emily Buckman, "Congressman Guthrie shared the concerns that were expressed to him during the roundtables he hosted in May with the Committee staff and believes this legislation reflects several of the principles that were touched on."

ACTE endorsed the proposed Act and expressed appreciation the bill included several ACTE policy priorities and legislative recommendations to strengthen CTE in the nation. ACTE and Advance CTE (formerly the national association of state directors of CTE) each released a statement in support of the legislation. Mirroring the bipartisan drafting and congressional support for the legislation, it has been endorsed by the American Federation of Teachers, the National Governors Association, and the National Skills Coalition.

What About Funding?

Reauthorization of the *Perkins Act* only means something if there is funding to implement the legislation. Fortunately, both the House and Senate are moving to include level funding in their respective versions of the Labor-Health and Human Services-Labor appropriation bill for Fiscal Year 2017, which starts on Oct. 1, 2016. The Senate Appropriation Committee, which includes Majority Leader Mitch McConnell as the second ranking Republican member of the Committee, approved its version in early June. The House was to vote on its version on July 13. Kentucky Fifth District Rep. Harold Rogers chairs the House Appropriations Committee.

As reported, both bills level fund *Perkins Act* programs at \$1.118 billion for the basic state grants and \$7.4 million for national programs. Kentucky receives about \$17.9 million of these funds to supplement CTE spending in

the state. CTE advocates consider this funding level as a victory since the Senate approved an overall cut of \$200 million to education programs, and it is reported the House version will cut education programs overall by \$1.3 billion.

The Senate and House both propose raising the Pell Grant level to \$5,935 (from \$5,815), but the Senate would allow year-round access to the grants, which the House does not include. The Senate included \$100 million for a program to grow and promote apprenticeships. The House did not include this provision. The Senate Committee cut the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) youth, adult and dislocated worker grants by 3 percent. The House is level funding the WIOA youth and adult grant programs, and provides a slight increase for the dislocated worker program.

The process is designed for bills to pass both houses of Congress, be reconciled, adopted and sent to the President for ratification by Sept. 30. In most years, due to congressional impasse, appropriations get rolled into omnibus continuing resolutions, such as the current year appropriation. Some who monitor congressional action believe it is likely there will be a continuing resolution again this year.

Back in Kentucky

During the last gubernatorial campaign, KACTE asked each candidate to respond to a set of questions regarding their positions on CTE. The responses from now-Governor Matt Bevin were the most detailed. With that in mind, it is interesting to note the Governor's latest round of appointments to the Council on Postsecondary Education, which is the governing body over public universities and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). All are from the business community.

Ron Beal, Bowling Green, is president of Luvata Tube Division. Ben Brandstetter, Hebron, is vice-president of Brandstetter Carrol Inc. Luke Mentzer, Lexington, works at Lexmark International. Joe Papalia, Louisville, is chief executive officer of Munich Welding and Deposition Technology Innovations. Vidya Ravichandran, Louisville, owns Glow Touch Technologies. Carol Wright, Tyner, is president of Jackson Energy Cooperative.

Individuals with a private-sector, business perspective typically have knowledge and understanding of CTE programs and their importance for workforce and economic development.

Kentucky Accountability System

At the June 8 meeting of the Kentucky State Board of Education, Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt, Ph.D., updated the Board on developing a new accountability

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system for public elementary and secondary education in the state. The new accountability system will address requirements in the new *Every Student Succeeds Act*, which replaced the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* known as *No Child Left Behind*. The Commissioner led a series of 11 town hall meetings in the spring, and he reported six overarching themes emerged from comments received at the meetings.

- Access and opportunity for students are critical.
- An emphasis on teaching is needed.
- Collaboration instead of competition among schools and districts needs to be the focus.
- Our children must be at the heart of the system.
- A well-rounded education is important and necessary.
- All subjects, both tested and non-tested, need to be valued.

Commissioner Pruitt appointed an Accountability Steering Committee to advise on the process that will lead to the first reading of the new accountability system by the Board at its January 2017 meeting. The Committee agreed on five guiding principles:

- The system should focus on the welfare of all students and promote good decision making for their benefit.
- The system should promote a holistic and quality education for all students.
- The system should reflect the Kentucky Department of Education's guiding principles of equity, achievement and integrity.
- The system should be simple and easy to understand.
- Data should be reported in a dashboard that better illustrates school/district progress or deficits than a single number.

