State Education Agency Playbook

Unlocking Career Success

This playbook provides ways in which State educational agencies (SEAs) and teams can blur the lines between high school, postsecondary education, and the workforce. SEAs play a significant role to Raise the Bar for student success by developing an *education-to-workforce system* focusing on Unlocking Career Success.

Step 1 Create Unified Vision	**Step 2** Leverage Public and Private Funds	**Step 3** Strengthen Partnerships	**Step 4** Align Accountability Systems

Create a unified vision

The SEA's visions can serve as an animating force to bring together multiple partners and distinct priorities to improve the lives of youth. Several states have developed goals that link educators, employers, community-based organizations, and others as equal partners in attaining the state's vision. When establishing a unified vision across education and workforce systems, consider how to:

🔓 *Develop and expand policies that promote the four keys to Unlocking Career Success* through legislation, regulation, and state plan development (e.g., ESEA, Perkins, WIOA) and policy and other procedural guidance to create a career-connected vision and guidance for implementation.

🔓 *Create programmatic, fiscal, and accountability policies and practices* that incentivize local educational agencies (LEAs) and others to implement career-connected learning alongside technical assistance, professional learning communities, and other supports to ensure that career-connected learning opportunities exist for every student.

🔓 *Build from existing practice and infrastructure* like supporting high-quality career & technical education (CTE) programs to expand career-connected learning, investments in innovation, and opportunities for LEAs to leverage best practices and create professional learning communities.

Tools to establish a unified vision across education and workforce systems:

Review Governance Structures	In Indiana, the Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship was created by Executive Order in 2019 to focus on the implementation of statewide policies for apprenticeship and work-based learning. South Carolina formalized an inter-agency memorandum of understanding that spans education and workforce agencies to advance industry engagement throughout the state. In Kentucky, the TRACK program is a partnership between the state's Department of Education and Office of Apprenticeships to provide high school students with pathways into registered apprenticeship and to enable employers to select CTE courses to support their apprenticeship programs.
Blend College and Career Readiness	Connect college- and career-readiness policies and statewide goals through existing state plans, which include state plans required under ESEA, Perkins, and WIOA. For example, Delaware's ESEA plan outlines expectations for students to be college and career ready and defines related metrics as part of the state's high school accountability model which are identical to performance indicators in the state's Perkins plan. Similarly, Kentucky's High School Graduation Regulations establish student expectations for a "ready graduate," which includes the state's work-based learning program.
Develop Shared Terminology	In Texas, the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative is a collaboration across the states' Education Agency, Higher Education Coordinating Board, and Workforce Commission to produce a strategic framework, common definitions, and quality standards for work-based learning and a library of workforce credentials. In Illinois, the Career Pathways Dictionary provides definitions for career pathways systems, related terms, and relevant criteria that were developed by multiple state agencies and stakeholders. In Kentucky, the Work-Based Learning Manual provides information on different types of WBL and implementation advice including how to address student participation legal barriers.

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Leverage public and private funds

There are multiple funding sources that SEAs can use to implement a vision of career-connected learning. Federal funds, including Perkins and ESEA formula funds, as well as discretionary grants can be leveraged to support a statewide vision and to implement each of the four keys to <u>Unlocking Career Success</u>. State and philanthropic funds can also be leveraged for statewide initiatives. When leveraging federal, state, and philanthropic funding, consider how to:

Create a funding plan that includes federal, state, and private resources that support the four keys to <u>Unlocking Career Success</u> and how these funds could be leveraged to support innovation, how federal or state resources influence regional or local resources, and a plan to incorporate philanthropic or other funds to support system needs.

Braid financial resources to leverage federal and state funds across the P12, postsecondary, and workforce systems to create and scale career pathways and to provide wrap-around and transition services for youth, which can include flexibilities in Perkins and other federal funding (e.g., see guidance on <u>ARP</u>, <u>Apprenticeship</u>, and <u>Educator Preparation</u>).

Link financial investments with student opportunity which includes a review of existing federal, state, and private funds to ensure that resources support and incentivize the types of outcomes that are best for youth, such as supporting dual or concurrent enrollment programs that are clearly aligned to postsecondary credentials vs. general education.

Tools to leverage federal, state, and philanthropic funding:

Braid Federal Funds	Ensure that there are multiple complementary funding sources to support career-connected learning. <u>Maryland Works</u> is a Maryland State Department of Education grant that leverages ESSER III funds to establish an industry-aligned and statewide apprenticeship program. Delaware <u>braided ESSER, GEER, and philanthropic funds</u> to launch a $16 million expansion of its <u>Delaware Pathways</u> program. There are also several funding sources within Perkins that states can take advantage of such as reserve and state leadership funds. <u>Ohio's Equity for Each Competitive Grant</u> uses the Perkins V reserve fund to promote promising practices to improve equity in CTE.
Leverage State Funding	<u>Florida's CAPE Act</u> made Florida one of the first states to provide dedicated CTE funding to school districts and postsecondary institutions. Many states have similar policies and financial practices.
Create Flexible Funding	SEAs can utilize flexible funding from philanthropic and employer groups to diversify funding, supplement funding gaps, and launch statewide initiatives or programming. The <u>New Hampshire Charitable Foundation</u> and the Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire funded up to $10,000 for career pathways programs that support partnerships between high schools with area businesses and local chambers of commerce. Massachusetts utilizes state <u>workforce funding</u> through their local workforce development boards to support work-based learning opportunities for students. Many states and communities also leverage summer youth employment funds to scale work-based learning opportunities for youth.

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Build and strengthen partnerships

Career pathway programs often span P-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems, requiring coordination among state and local governments and partnerships with employers and community facing organizations. Through intermediary organizations or cross-agency teams, states can develop strategic partnerships and support youth career pathways. When building and strengthening partnerships, consider how to:

🔒 *Codify roles and responsibilities* that bring together different agencies and organizations as part of a cross-cutting management team to ensure that each partner is responsible for leading specific actions and to create both individual and shared accountability to support the success of the group and the initiative.

🔒 *Leverage community partners* including community-based organizations, non-profits, and other intermediary organizations to support system innovation, build and scale relationships with the community and with employers, and to support braided funding models that better connect with private, philanthropic, and corporate funders.

🔒 *Engage the state and/or local workforce development boards* to connect in-school and out-of-school youth programs that are administered through WIOA and other workforce development funds that may be state issued to support youth employment and student transition as well as to expand wrap-around services for youth.

Tools to build and strengthen partnerships across the state:

Create Cross-Sector Partnerships
SEAs can create programs that support innovative teaching and learning. The Massachusetts's Innovation Pathways is a collaboration among the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Department of Higher Education to ensure that new college and career pathways are carefully designed to offer high-quality preparation for college and career. Tennessee's Innovative School Models is a grant program that supports partnerships between local education agencies, postsecondary institutions, and employers to rethink educational models that prepare students for postsecondary education and careers.

Develop Policies Across Agencies
SEAs can partner with higher education agencies or systems to develop robust statewide policies on dual enrollment that close equity gaps. In Illinois, the Dual Credit Quality Act established a state partnership agreement between P12 and postsecondary institutions to expand dual credit and increase course rigor, transferability, oversight, and accountability. The Delaware Technical Community College regularly shares instructors with LEAs under a partnership agreement to blur secondary and postsecondary education, especially when programs are co-located on the college's campus.

Seek Innovative Solutions
Create opportunities for LEAs to demonstrate innovation through policy, resources, and grants. Butler Tech's 5th Day Experience initiative in Ohio allows students to attend school virtually, participate in work-based learning, or attend specific campus programming on the fifth day of each school week – thanks to a state waiver to allow the school system to modify their academic calendar.

Support Intermediaries
SEAs can support and invest in intermediaries to accelerate career-connected learning like Washington's Career Connect Intermediary Grant program which provides funding to support intermediaries, organization that help bridge industry and education.

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Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Create Unified Vision	Leverage Public and Private Funds	Strengthen Partnerships	Align Accountability Systems

Align accountability systems

Data and student information is required to continuously improve career-connected learning programs. States play a strategic role in the development and alignment of monitoring routines, accountability and data models, and administrative policy and procedures to support data-informed decisions and the implementation of the four keys to Unlocking Career Success. When developing strong monitoring and accountability systems, consider how to:

Develop performance management routines that are asset-based, occur within traditional LEA planning cycles, and support LEAs to identify existing best practices, areas of growth and opportunity, and identify technical assistance or financial supports that can assist the LEA to scale the four keys to Unlocking Career Success.

Leverage existing federal requirements like accountability models in Perkins to improve program coordination, monitoring, and accountability across federal programs, such as through ESEA, Perkins, and WIOA, to provide support to LEAs to produce accurate, timely data to inform annual or more frequent improvement cycles.

Support research driven partnerships to identify and scale evidence-based practices that are replicable across LEAs and those that can be used to inform state policy development and iteration, as well as to better link educators, policymakers, and researchers within the career-connected learning system.

Tools to develop strong monitoring and accountability systems:

Review Accountability Systems

States can incentivize the adoption of high-quality programming by developing common measures and a coordinated data collection model across ESEA, Perkins, and WIOA. Washington Education Research & Data Center combines state education and workforce data into a statewide longitudinal data system to inform policy and decision making.

Maryland's Longitudinal Data System collects and organizes student and workforce data from all levels of education and the state's workforce. Alabama established the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation to braid education and workforce funding through modifications to their ESEA, Perkins, and WIOA state plans to support the Alabama Career Pathways Model. In 2022, ED approved amendments to Alabama's ESEA state plan to include new indicators of college and career readiness to support CTE programs and in-school youth apprenticeship.

Support Data-Driven Decisions

Many SEAs make regular updates to policy based on real-time data and systemic feedback loops like the Alabama Terminal on Linking Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS), a statewide longitudinal data system design to empower agencies and businesses with data to regularly adjust career pathways programs based on economic needs.

Tools to develop strong monitoring and accountability systems (continued):

Consider Quality Frameworks

SEAs often develop statewide frameworks that outline quality metrics and create accountability structures for local education agencies. The Texas Education Agency provides a list of approved CTE programs and aligned industry-based certifications to inform its Perkins funding model. Texas also created the Effective Advising Framework to provide local education agencies with a blueprint for comprehensive school counseling systems. Indiana subsidizes a pre-approved list of liberal arts and technical dual enrollment courses, caps student costs, and requires each high school to offer at least two dual credit courses, in addition to including work-based learning as a requirement for high school graduation. Illinois also provides guidance on its Employability Skills Framework and Model Program of Study Guides to inform specific career pathways development and to guide implementation and evaluation.

Invest in Technical Assistance and Monitoring Routines

Another primary function of the SEA is to provide technical assistance targeted reviews, and/or monitoring. Texas created a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Guidebook to provide Perkins funded programs with guidance and to assist local educational agencies in their use of regional labor market information. States also establish conditions to manage quality, like New York's Department of Education requirement for work-based learning experiences to be registered for a five-year period and for students to earn academic credit, and Florida's Department of Education annual audit of course offerings in the state CTE system to analyze the alignment of secondary and postsecondary programs to in-demand, high-skill and high-wage employment opportunities.

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