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ABSTRACT

When the Secretary of Education recommended in the 1988 Fiscal Year Budget that the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act not be renewed, and therefore that vocational education receive no federal funds, the National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education (NASDVE) conducted their own evaluation of the effectiveness of the Act. A planning group from the organization organized the study and created a survey. The study was configured around four components: (1) determination of the availability of data in each state for the series of research questions in the implementation study; (2) an assessment of successes, problems, and recommendations regarding implementation of the Perkins Act; (3) selected vocational education data requests--to gather data from each state on vocational enrollments, number of programs, number of eligible recipients, and number of economically depressed areas; and (4) key example of effectiveness of the Perkins Act. Preliminary results from mailed surveys of these four areas suggested that vocational education is providing needed services and programs and that the federal aid they have received through the Perkins Act is critical to that success. The NASDVE, therefore, appealed for continuation of vocational education funding. (KC)

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**Reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational
Education Act, P.L. 98-524: The Results of
the National Association of State Directors
of Vocational Education (NASDVE) Study**

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**Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research
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**Reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act,
P.L. 98-524: The Results of the National Association of State
Directors of Vocational Education (NASDVE) Study**

BACKGROUND:

"Quality vocational and job training programs are an important part of the Nation's system of Education, and the decision to propose an end to direct Department of Education support in this area was a difficult one. However, current budget circumstances make it even more difficult to justify the singling out of vocational instruction--or any other particular part of the regular school curriculum--to receive categorical funding from the Department of Education.

In the first half of the century, the Federal Government was a major force in providing vocational training to the Nation's young people. Over the years, however, this situation has changed dramatically; and the Department of Education now is a very minor actor in the vocation education enterprise. State and local governments spend about \$11 for every ED dollar spent on vocational education. In addition the Department of Labor spends about \$3.2 billion on job training programs, and corporations spend an additional \$30 billion - \$40 billion on training programs for their employees. In view of this situation, the question must be asked whether an annual expenditure of more than \$800 million for vocational education is a good use of Federal education funds. And the answer must be no."

With this landmark statement which appeared in the Department of Education's Fiscal Year 1988 Budget Summary, the Secretary of Education sent a clear message to congress and the legislature as well as to the vocational community at large. In effect vocational education had been zeroed out of the federal budget for 1988, this in light of the recent passage 3 years earlier of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act in the late fall of 1984. The purposes of the Perkins Act are ostensibly to:

(1) assist the States to expand, improve, modernize and develop quality vocational education programs in order to meet the needs of the Nation's existing and future work force for marketable skills and to improve productivity and promote economic growth;

(2) assure that individuals who are inadequately served under vocational education programs are assured access to quality vocational education programs, especially individuals who are disadvantaged, who are handicapped, men women who are entering nontraditional occupations, adults who are in need of training and retraining, individuals who are single parents of homemakers, individuals with limited English proficiency, and individuals who are incarcerated in correctional institutions;

(3) promote greater cooperation between public agencies and the private sector in preparing individuals for employment in promoting the quality of vocational education in the States, and in making the vocational system more responsive to the labor market in the States;

(4) improve the academic foundations of vocational students and to aid in the application of newer technologies (including the use of computers) in terms of employment or occupational goals;

(5) provide vocational education services to train, retrain and upgrade employed and unemployed workers in new skills for which there is a demand in that State or employment market;

(6) assist the most economically depressed areas of a State to raise employment and occupational competencies of its citizens;

(7) assist the State to utilize a full range of supportive services, special programs, and guidance counseling and placement to achieve the basic purposes of this Act;

(8) improve the effectiveness of consumer and homemaking education and to reduce the limiting effects of sex-role stereotyping on occupations, job skills, levels of competency, and careers; and

(9) authorize national programs designed to meet designated vocational education needs and to strengthen the vocational education research process.

PURPOSE:

Given the backdrop, the new vocational education law (P.L. 98-524) passed in 1984, followed by a zero budget request by the Secretary in 1987 for fiscal year 1988, we come face to face with Section 403 of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act which mandates that the Department of Education conduct a National Assessment of Vocational Education (NAVE). To accomplish this mandate, the U.S. Department of Education established the National Assessment of Vocational Education, housed in the Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation with a budget of about \$3.7 million. The NAVE study team will prepare a final report to Congress due in the spring of 1989.

The National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education (NASDVE) felt a strong need to design and implement an independent study assessing the impact of the Perkins Act. Their rationale was supplemented by the fact that the Vocational Education Data System (VEDS) was no longer mandated. Hence the nationwide data base was not available save for the states which voluntarily maintained the VEDS system. The results of the study would provide another data source to the Congress which would be independent and separate from the effort being conducted by the NAVE through the U.S. Department of Education. Through the leadership efforts of NASDVE and strong support from the Vocational Education Offices in Colorado and Oklahoma a planning team, representative of the states, was charged with designing a study and preparing an implementation plan for, "An Assessment of Successes, Problems, and Recommendations Regarding Implementation of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act."

TIMELINE:

The planning team met several times during the summer of 1987 and spring of 1988 to outline the study and to begin the data collection phases.

Concurrent with the meetings of the planning team, the State Directors of Vocational Education were apprised of the progress of the study.

- Fall 1987 Pilot Participation Survey Due
NASDVE Fall Meeting—decision point
- Winter 1987 NASDVE Winter Meeting
 - Participation survey results
 - Refined study plan
 - Draft state survey instrument
 - White paper recommendations
- Spring 1988 NASDVE Spring Meeting
 - State Survey results
 - White papers (draft)
 - National data compilation
- Fall 1988 NASDVE Fall Meeting
 - Final reports and papers
- Winter 1989 NASDVE Winter Meeting
 - Reauthorization position paper

The initial study plan which the planning group proposed was configured around four components:

Carl Perkins Implementation Study: Data Availability Survey--The purpose of this survey was to determine data availability in each state for the series of research questions that constitute the Implementation Study. The results of the implementation study were the basis to target a more specific data request in the later phases of the overall plan.

The survey was designed around the purposes specified in the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act. An operationalized statement of the intent of the study was provided and the specific research questions needed to fulfill the intent of the study were identified. Respondents across the states were asked to indicate what types of statistical, case study, final report, project summary or other evaluative data they had available across each of the purposes of the legislation by the following categories:

- Educational level
 - Secondary
 - Post-secondary/adult
- Quality of data
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
- Completeness of data
 - No missing data
 - Some missing data
 - Significant omission

- Reporting methods

Duplicated
Unduplicated

In the late winter of 1988, the Data Availability Survey was mailed to each of the states along with the Assessment Questionnaire and the Selected Vocational Education Data Request which are described in the next sections.

An Assessment of Successes, Problems, and Recommendations Regarding Implementation of the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act--The purpose of this survey was to provide evidence of both the successes and problems associated with or encountered during the implementation of the purposes of the Perkins Act. The data obviously will be important as guidance to Congress during the reauthorization hearings.

The assessment instrument again was structured around the purposes of the Act defined in the law. Respondents were asked the following questions about each of the purposes:

- What problems have you encountered in implementing this purpose of the Act?
- What has worked well in implementing this purpose of the Act?
- What would you recommend to better implement this purpose of the Act?

Selected Vocational Education Data Request--The purpose of this data collection was to gather information from each state in four areas: (1) vocational enrollments, (2) number of occupational and non-occupational programs, (3) number of eligible recipients, and (4) number of economically depressed areas.

Programmatic data for the 1987 program were requested for the following questions.

- What were the enrollment data for the following populations?
Total number of secondary enrollments
Total number of adults by community/junior college and by area/technical school
- How many educational agencies (LEAs) and postsecondary educational institutions were considered eligible recipients?
Number of LEAs (secondary)
Number of postsecondary educational institutions

- How were "economically depressed areas" designed? Please check.

By county
By school district
By service delivery area
Other (specify)

- How many occupationally specific and non-occupationally specific programs were offered at the secondary and postsecondary/adult levels?

Secondary

Occupationally specific and non-occupationally specific

Postsecondary/adult

Occupationally specific and non-occupationally specific

Key Examples of Effectiveness of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act -- The purpose of this phase of the data collection was to provide opportunities to the states to share descriptions of key examples of accomplishments in their respective state based on Carl Perkins funding. A second phase of this data collection was supplemented by a statistical data request.

The information requested that a single example of effectiveness in relation to a specified purpose of the Carl Perkins Act be provided either at the secondary level or the postsecondary/adult level. Where appropriate, it was suggested that the examples could illustrate programs, services, or activities focusing on the following: increased capacity to deliver vocational education, dropouts, basic skills, teen parents, or community-based organizations configured in the following fashion:

- Context - Describe the situation, environment, or market faced. Include target groups and/or program improvement needs.
- Input - Describe the Perkins Act resources used to meet the situation. Specify other resources as appropriate.
- Process - Describe the programs, activities, or services used to intervene.
- Output - Describe products, students, curricula, teachers, etc. improved or produced by the programs, activities, or services.
- Outcomes - Describe the consequences or impact of the program, activity, or service on the situation, environment, or market.

It was the feeling of the Design Committee that the information provided on these forms would complement reported statistical data. In addition to supplementing the report which would be shared during the reauthorization hearings, the data could be presented to Congressional representatives and other legislators from the individual states.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE NASDVE STUDY:

To date, at the time of the preparation of this paper, the Board of Directors of the National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education (NASDVE) has not released the full results of the entire study pending resolution of reporting and data presentation issues.

A Preliminary Review of the FY87 Performance Reports from across the states is however available and this information has been released by the NASDVE. The data analysis phase of the information from 43 Performance Reports were analyzed over the late winter of 1988-89 through the efforts of Carole Johnson and Jackie Friederich from the Colorado Community College and Occupational Educational System. The data in the Performance Reports were reviewed using the purposes of the Perkins legislation as a backdrop. An examination of their report provides the following snapshots of critical information which is supported by statistical and narrative data that bode well for attesting to the overall impact and effectiveness of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act.

- Across the board -- state-by-state, school-by-school, and ultimately, program-by-program, vocational educators are designing, implementing and evaluating vocational programs and ancillary projects which are meeting not only students needs but the needs of the nation as a whole.
- Data across the board support the fact that all of the mandates of the Perkins law are being addressed. In the words of the author of the report "It is apparent that vocational education is not just surviving. It is thriving."
- Evidence exists that strongly suggests that federal dollars are the source of programming in many cases that otherwise would not be undertaken or available to serve the targeted students or the impacted audience.
- Even though the federal share is small, perhaps even as small as a 5% allocation, that presence provides critical impetus and funding to the underserved populations identified and highlighted in the legislation.
- Entirely new programs have been crafted in areas such as sex equity and equal access, health services and the like which are targeted to serve the underserved populations identified in the Law. The federal dollars have also been the source significant efforts in the areas of program development, modernization and expansion.
- The direct impact of Perkins funding is manifest in programs for the underserved, professional staff development, program development, modernization and expansion, curriculum development, as well as in research and evaluation activities, intrastate cooperatives, technology programs, infusion of the basic skills into the traditional vocational program, and curriculum content alignment to articulate applied vocational skills and academic subject matter.

- The programmatic accomplishments attained under the Perkins legislation have been a strong public relations tool in support of vocational education.

As the authors point out, "Nationally, every expedient is being expended toward meeting and exceeding the mandates of the Perkins Act. It is apparent from the Performance Reports that federal funds are needed if states are to serve the diverse populations in the nation's schools. The reports represent a continuous effort at all levels to improve the quality of education and training for participants in vocational education to assure that all graduates have the literacy and employability skills they need to become productive members of the American economic mainstream (Johnson and Friederich, 1989).

CONCLUSIONS:

This independent assessment of the Perkins Act conducted under the auspices of the National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education should provide Congress with an unbiased snapshot of not only the success of vocational education but also with areas in the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act which may require rethinking and reconceptualizing prior to reauthorization. These efforts in concert with each other will provide sound guidance, leadership and direction to congress during the reauthorization hearings. This study is especially critical and timely to vocational education given the apparent conflict of interest in terms of NAVE, internal to the U.S. Department of Education, conducting the mandated assessment of the Perkins Act.

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