



# PERKINS V

FLORIDA'S STATE PLAN FOR  
THE STRENGTHENING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION  
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT (PERKINS V)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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#### Introduction

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) reauthorized the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. Perkins V functions as the preeminent federal investment for career and technical education (CTE) at both the secondary and postsecondary levels across the United States. Florida's State Plan (Plan) aims to guide the use of funds and establish statewide expectations around the future of workforce education for the next four years.

We know that a condition of Florida's continued economic success is the ability to educate for the future of work. This, in turn, requires the strengthening of the state's CTE programs and pathways in view of developing a robust ecosystem of innovation, entrepreneurship and cross-sector partnerships. Educational diversification matters for economic diversification and prosperity, especially in a post-COVID-19 environment. As Executive Order 19-31 rightly indicated, however, we must first understand how well our CTE programs and pathways are performing. Do they align to our state's workforce needs and opportunities? How are they incorporating skills to allow students to adequately grapple with the velocity of technological change, automation, machine and deep learning? To what extent are our CTE programs oriented toward our socio-economically challenged populations? How do they uplift the nearly 900,000 children currently living in poverty in the state of Florida? In short, how well do our state's CTE programs educate for economic and social mobility?

Florida's Perkins V State Plan, combined with the directives of Executive Order 19-31, provide a remarkable opportunity to align the entire CTE system to industry and the future of work. Additionally, it permits the refinement, expansion and the kind of innovation necessary to ensure Florida's future.

For example, while the State Plan continues its emphasis on sub-baccalaureate technical education, the Plan also stresses the value of experiential or work-based learning, entrepreneurship and computer science education. Additionally, the Plan focuses on the renewal of our stakeholder's efforts on issues of access and equity, especially for Florida's socio-economically challenged and other special populations.

Florida's school districts, technical colleges and state colleges receive approximately \$73 million in Perkins funds annually. Again, the principal purpose of Perkins V is to expand CTE opportunities for all students and to help Florida residents reap the benefits of CTE for professional success and wellbeing.

Gottfried and Plasman (2018) reported a large body of research detailing the positive consequences of students engaging in CTE courses and programs, including reducing the potential for dropout and increasing the rate of high school graduation. Dougherty (2016) & Val Michaels (2019) also



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attest to the fact that earlier and more frequent exposure to meaningful career conversations and coursework results in higher persistence and success rates among students, at least compared to those students outside of a career academy or pathway program. Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins (2015) now somewhat famously make the case for career pathways within the state college system, evidencing the same successes associated with students who engage in a more deliberate, career-aligned program of study. Moreover, across all grade levels, meaningful engagement in CTE coursework is more likely to result in higher employment and earning rates (Kreisman & Stange, 2017) as well as postsecondary and advanced degree attainment rates (Jacobson & Mokher, 2014; Maguire et al. 2009).

What follows is an executive summary of Florida’s Perkins V State Plan. It begins with a brief overview of the Florida economy and workforce education, and then moves to the main objectives of the Plan, discussing specific priorities and tactics of interest to educational agencies, Florida families, students and industry partners.

### Future of Work

Florida is preparing for a time of unprecedented change. By 2030, the state will be home to 26 million residents with one of the most diverse populations in the world. Now the 17<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world, we see technology and innovation impacting every industry and community. COVID-19 notwithstanding, our markets for goods, services and ideas – and our competition for talent, customers, investments and market share – are becoming globalized at an accelerated pace. Our educational system, centers and colleges can take advantage of these trends and become the leading system for workforce training and education – a state marked by global competitiveness in education, innovation and cultivating resilient, culturally competent, skilled graduates.

Already we are witnessing signs of economic recovery to pre-COVID levels. In February of 2020, Florida’s unemployment rate was steadily below the national average, creating 212,000 jobs in 2019 – with industries like finance, real estate, professional business services, technology, healthcare and trade contributing most to the Florida economy. In a post-COVID economy, we can expect emphasis on healthcare, advanced manufacturing, IT, and Florida’s other “essential” sectors. With the amount of people moving to Florida, the state needs to add 1.7 million new jobs by 2030 to accommodate the growth in the state population and keep unemployment rates low (Florida Chamber, 2030).

Moreover, innovation is transforming Florida industry, with at least half of today’s job functions possibly being automated using *existing* available technologies in just 10 years (Florida Chamber, 2030). By some measures, up to 85 percent of the jobs in 2030 may be in occupations that do not even exist today. We are also witnessing growth in the number of entrepreneurs, self-employed, contract and other “gig” employees. The number of gig employees, for example, is projected to double between 2019 and 2022. Many suggest we must nurture emerging industries in information technology, life science, simulation, space, logistics and new modes of communication, while helping established industries such as hospitality, tourism, healthcare and construction update, pivot and innovatively navigate change (Florida Chamber, 2030).



According to the World Economic Forum (2018), by 2022, nearly 85 percent of employers are likely or very likely to have expanded their adoption of user and entity big data analytics. Similarly, large proportions of companies are likely to have expanded their adoption of technologies such as the internet of things, and app- and web-enabled markets and cloud computing. Machine learning and extended reality are also poised to receive considerable business investment. By 2022, nearly 60 percent of employers expect they will have significantly modified how they produce and distribute by changing the composition of their value chain and nearly half will modify their geographical base. This means, that not only are businesses becoming more efficient, but, when determining job locations, companies overwhelmingly prioritize the availability of skilled local talent as their foremost consideration.

According to Harvard’s own David Deming and the World Economic Forum, however, technically skilled talent is not all that matters. By 2021, the most desirous employment skills will be “human skills” – things like mental agility, flexibility, communication, strong analytical and systems thinking and the capacity to be a value-creator, a rapid problem solver, entrepreneur or “intrapreneur.” This means schools and colleges must teach human skills alongside those necessary market driven technical skills if we are to adequately grapple with the velocity of technological change, automation, machine and deep learning.

Moreover, we know that the moral imperative our schools and colleges face is to assist in the social and economic mobility of its surrounding residents. By next year, 65 percent of all jobs in the economy will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school. We know, however, that only 49 percent of all Florida residents are readily equipped with an earned degree beyond high school. And while Florida represents a significant market share of the U.S. economy, our state’s 13.6 percent poverty rate includes 19 percent of children (870,000) under the age of 18, with 46 percent of all households in Florida unable to afford basic needs, such as child care, food, healthcare and transportation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018; ALICE, 2018). We must provide improved access to a *meaningful* postsecondary workforce-ready credential if not for the sake of the future of the Florida economy but for the professional and personal wellbeing of so many of our students and residents.

### Perkins V

Given the moral imperative to educate for the future wellbeing of all of Florida’s residents and the kind of economy Florida has the fortune of enjoying, Florida’s State Plan emphasizes experiential learning, a tighter and more intentional alignment to industry demand, increased access for special populations and a more innovative approach to *how* workforce education is structured and delivered. The State Plan has the following as its primary goals:

1. To ensure equal access for all individuals to educational opportunities that meet the workforce development needs of local communities and the state;
2. To align all technical and employability requirements of Florida’s employers to Perkins eligible academic programs;



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3. To recruit, support and retain qualified CTE teachers, counselors and administrators to foster the highest level of student achievement;
4. To provide students with seamless career pathways by offering programs of study which result in credentials of value;
5. To engage industry partners to drive program innovation and work-based learning opportunities; and
6. To provide comprehensive, career-focused counseling that allows students to make informed choices about their future.

To support these goals and to ensure maximum alignment with the Governor's vision for making Florida #1 in workforce education, the Plan proposes the following bold improvements over the previous (Perkins IV) plan:

1. A new requirement that school districts and Florida College System institutions conduct comprehensive local needs assessments (CLNA) to ensure funding is directed to programs in alignment with local workforce demand;
2. Increased emphasis on identifying and closing performance gaps for special populations, including underrepresented genders in non-traditional programs;
3. Enabling school districts and Florida College System institutions to use Perkins funding for registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship related technical instruction; and
4. Development of more rigorous standards to benefit students: it is now explicit that secondary (grades 6-12) CTE programs, must provide students the opportunity to earn a credential of value to use Perkins dollars; and it is now explicit that postsecondary (school district technical colleges and Florida College System) institutions must offer full CTE programs for students to complete.

As Perkins V also permits the use of funds for purposes under §123 and §124 of the Act, it also incentivizes the development of new CTE academic programs, the engagement of CTE faculty in new professional development opportunities, the scaling of entrepreneurship and computer science education, and other meaningful career and technical education related co-curricular experiences.

Efforts at scaling innovation in CTE must consider the role of an entrepreneurial mindset. We know that a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem matters for the future of the Florida economy (Prosperity Now, 2016). Business equity is the second largest source of wealth behind home equity, and for special populations, self-employment and the ability to effectively create value contributes to greater economic security. In short, becoming an entrepreneur is just as viable a path to improving Florida's economic and social mobility rates as is engagement in traditional CTE programs and coursework.



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Moreover, given the demand for an innovative and adaptable workforce, a thoughtful strategy that considers the possibilities around entrepreneurship education and start-up/scale-up incubation and acceleration is now critical to not just the health of the state economy but the relevancy of CTE for 21<sup>st</sup> century professional success. Building upon Florida's proud tradition of entrepreneurship education, Florida endeavors to study and develop practical solutions to the following guiding questions:

1. How does Florida promote self-employment, value creation and business start-ups as a viable career option for students?
2. How can CTE help cultivate entrepreneurial-related competencies and skills in students for a lifetime of meaningful employment?
3. How can CTE support interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial ways of thinking and acting across all career pathways?

From the championing of a statewide mechanism for supporting student startups, a robust co-curricular plan for the scaling of entrepreneurship education, teacher professional development and a more deliberate approach to the infusion of educational competencies related to entrepreneurship in its CTE programs of study, the State Plan will attempt to emphasize the relevancy of entrepreneurship for academic and professional success. Moreover, it will seek to aid students' ability to connect with existing start-ups or small businesses, and help build formal partnerships in view of advancing economic growth through an integrated approach to economic development and CTE.

Additional elements that make up the State Plan include the promotion of quality CTE programs that integrate academic, technical and employability knowledge and skills as part of a secondary to postsecondary career pathway, and the offering of more options for articulated credit and credentials of value.

For example, short but engaging industry certification preparation classes are an excellent opportunity for states like Florida to tackle concerns around economic and social immobility, improve education attainment rates and keep unemployment low. Far from being a false promise, when industry certifications are embedded or stacked within a secondary or post-secondary curriculum/program of study, they nearly always lead to an entry level position or result in higher levels of success and matriculation for students not otherwise exposed (Lumina, 2017). The success of students is particularly prevalent in credit-bearing certificate and associate science programs in state and technical colleges; and in credit-bearing and non-credit certificate programs in four-year institutions (Walsh, O'Kane, Noronha & Taska, 2019).

In addition to improved academic outcomes, Florida has seen the effect of earning a credential on entry level wages of students. Earning a credential was associated with higher wages for graduates of programs with embedded or stackable industry certifications within a degree program. The suggestion is that certifications are an excellent way to whet one's appetite about the efficacy of



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higher education on personal and professional wellbeing. This is why the State Plan intends to back school districts, for example, in their efforts to offer relevant CTE courses aligned to secondary professional academies, with industry certifications embedded along the way.

Moreover, the state college system has successfully galvanized interest around career pathways – focusing student academic and student achievement initiatives and programs around regional demand job opportunities. The pathways model is an integrated, institution-wide approach that guides each student from her point of entry to attainment of a high-quality postsecondary credential and career.

The Plan also focuses on better recruiting, preparation and retention of effective teachers, ensuring program alignment with labor market and business needs; providing training for high-wage, high-skill, high-demand employment; eliminating barriers and creating opportunities for all students to participate in CTE, particularly nine identified special populations; improving work-based learning, mentoring and internships; and promotion of apprenticeships for building real-world skills.

### Conclusion

In developing the Plan, the Florida Department of Education has worked tirelessly to ensure alignment with the Governor’s vision to make Florida #1 in workforce education by 2030. The Department conducted dozens of listening tours and stakeholder meetings to inform Plan decisions and strategy. Its vision is a bold one – one that will optimize system and state enthusiasm for the value of career and technical education for years to come.

Special thanks to Governor Ron DeSantis and Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran for their visionary leadership around the future of CTE – a vision that has helped inform the innovations in this Plan.

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