



Nebraska State Plan for Career Technical Education

**In fulfillment of the requirements of the
Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006
P. L. 109-270**

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION

A. Statutory Requirements

- 1. Describe the procedures the eligible agency will use to obtain input from eligible recipients in establishing measurement definitions and approaches for the core indicators of performance for career and technical education students at the secondary and postsecondary levels, as well as for any other additional indicators of performance identified by the eligible agency. [Sec. 113(b)(1)(A)-(B), sec. 113(b)(2)(A)-(C)]**

Response

The Nebraska Department of Education will post the proposed measurement definitions and approaches for the core indicators of performance on the Nebraska Career Education website and use an internet-based survey to secure additional input. The Department will notify education leaders from community colleges, secondary administrators, and teachers to seek input. Additional input will be solicited for stakeholders through the normal channels of communications and with public hearings.

In addition, a statewide steering committee was formed to create an opportunity for review the processes and definitions. Coordination with the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS) that is currently in year one of implementation was instrumental in the development and connection to the individual student record reporting system. The committee provided initial feedback and priorities. The information was provided to stakeholders through a website dedicated to accountability information.

A statewide accountability summit was also held to discuss and gather additional input on the definitions and approaches for addressing the core indicators. Consensus was established on the process to use the NSSRS for the secondary data collection. The postsecondary data process continues to be developed as the processes used in previous years required additional input and planning.

- 2. Describe the procedures the eligible agency will use to obtain input from eligible recipients in establishing a State adjusted level of performance for each of the core indicators of performance for career and technical education students at the secondary and postsecondary levels, as well as State levels of performance for any additional indicators of performance identified by the eligible agency. [Sec. 122(c)(10)(A), sec. 113(b)(3)(B)]**

Response

The Nebraska Career Education staff will review the existing Federal Agreed Upon Performance Levels (FAUPL). Alignment will be made where it is required with NCLB for academic attainment and graduation rates. A statewide secondary accountability committee was formed to assist in establishing the State's adjusted levels of performance for the secondary core indicators, using valid and reliable approaches. The committee's recommendations were made available for public review and input.

A statewide postsecondary accountability committee has been formed to establish the state- adjusted level of performance for the postsecondary core indicators, using valid and reliable approaches for the core indicators. The committee's recommendations will continue to be available for public review and additional input will be solicited from stakeholders through various communication means.

3. **Identify, on the forms in Part III of this guide, the valid and reliable measurement definitions and approaches that the eligible agency will use for each of the core indicators of performance for career and technical education students at the secondary and postsecondary/adult levels, as well as any additional indicators of performance identified by the eligible agency, that are valid and reliable. Describe how the proposed definitions and measures are valid and reliable. [Sec. 113(b)(2)(A)-(B)]**

Response

Secondary

Academic Achievement, 1S1 and 1S2. This will be determined by the number of secondary CTE completers performing proficient or above on the Nebraska Student based Teacher led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS). The proficiency level for English language arts will meet the requirements for core indicator 1S1 and mathematics will be reported under 1S2. This is the same measure currently used by the state for determining Adequate Yearly Progress as defined in the NCLB guidelines.

CTE Technical Skill Attainment, 2S1. Lacking statewide skill assessments for all career programs of study, the state has determined that the most valid measure of technical skill attainment for core indicator 2S1 will be a similar process used under Perkins III. Locally determined methods that may include industry certification, third party assessment, locally developed criterion referenced assessments, or locally developed methodologies, that may include career and technical grade point average, are all options available to schools and depends upon the program of study area offered locally. A “rank of rigor” has been established when reporting the technical skill attainment through the student record reporting system that identifies the type of measurement used to determine technical skill attainment.

Over the next five years, Nebraska will continue to pursue options that ensure resources, tools, and options are available for measuring technical skill attainment. The use of the measure as a potential tool for use as validating articulated or dual credit is also a part of the planning that is underway. The ultimate goal may yield a measurement approach that has the numerator will be the number of secondary CTE concentrators who passed an end-of-program technical skill assessment that is aligned with industry-recognized standards, during the reporting year. The denominator will be the number of secondary CTE concentrators who took an end-of-program technical skill assessment during the reporting year.

Attainment of a High School Diploma, 3S1. The measurement definition for this core indicator will not change with Perkins IV. The numerator will be the number of 12th grade CTE program concentrators earning a high school diploma by June 30. The denominator will be the number of 12th grade CTE program concentrators for the program year ending on June 30.

CTE Student Graduation Rate, 4S1. Nebraska is in the process of implementing a statewide longitudinal student data system during the 2007-08 school year. Until the four-year cohort data has been collected in 2011-2012 the use of the NCES graduation rate calculation is not possible and the state will not be able to disaggregate the CTE student graduation data requested for core indicator 4S1.

Therefore, for the 2007-08 through 2010-2011 program years, in accordance with the formula negotiated with the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) pursuant to NCLB, the CTE graduation rate reported for core indicator 4S1 will be a subset that includes the CTE concentrators of Nebraska’s approved NCLB graduation rate report.

The numerator will be the number of CTE concentrators who, in the reporting year, were included as graduates in the state's computation of its graduation rate as described in Section 1111(b)(2)(C)(vi) of the ESEA. The denominator will be the number of CTE concentrators who, in the reporting year, were included in the state's computation of its graduation rate as defined in the State's Consolidated Accountability Plan pursuant to Section 1111(b)(2)(C)(vi) of the ESEA.

Placement, 5S1. The placement of 12th grade CTE program completers will be based on the status of these students six months after the program year of their exit from high school. The state will continue to rely on placement data obtained from local agencies through mailings, phone calls, and other survey type instruments and electronically reported to the NDE through a post school survey template within the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System. The placement numerator will be the number of the 12th grade CTE program completers in the military, enrolled in further education or training, or employed six months after the program year exited from high school. The denominator will be the total number of the 12th grade CTE program completers who exited the high school.

Nontraditional Participation and Completion, 6S1 and 6S2. The measurement definitions for nontraditional participation and completion adjust over previous efforts of reporting. As a result of the individual student record system the opportunity to focus on the entire participant population and disaggregate for the nontraditional areas is now possible. In the past, Nebraska has used the narrower population of CTE concentrators as the population to determine nontraditional participation. The completion rate is calculated in the same way as the completion rate of all students, but only using the students enrolled in nontraditional programs of study.

Postsecondary

1P1: Technical Skill Attainment. Legislation – [Perkins IV, Section 113(b)(2)(B)(i)] Student attainment of challenging career and technical skill proficiencies, including student achievement on technical assessments, that are aligned with industry-recognized standards, if available and appropriate.

Performance Goal – The final agreed upon 2008-2009 performance level for this core indicator will be determined after April 1, 2008 through a process of negotiations with the U.S. Department of Education.

Validity and Reliability – Students successfully completing CTE courses must attain a foundation of basic academic and career and technical skills. Since content in CTE courses must meet state standards of rigor in academic and career and technical skill areas as well as meet business needs and labor market demand, students who earn a grade of C or better have attained a core set of competencies embedded in CTE programs.

The validity of this measure is based on the cumulative assessment of technical skill attainment, as measured by the tests, papers, projects, activities, demonstrations of competency, and other evaluative activities by local instructors, and reported in course grades of students to ensure that students have mastered the necessary academic and career and technical skills before they complete their postsecondary education. Student grade point average (GPA) then can be used as a valid and reliable unduplicated measure of students' technical skill attainment over their educational career.

The Technical Skill Attainment measure will use student GPA, reflective of grades indicating demonstrations of competencies attained, in "clearly occupational" or higher courses that contain a level of difficulty and technical skill attainment normally associated with courses that are at least above the introductory level in a sequence of CTE courses that make up a program.

Indicator – The state will use the existing approved Perkins III technical skill attainment measure as authorized by Section 113(b)(2)(D) of Perkins IV as the percentage of students earning a GPA of 2.0 or higher in CTE courses to assess technical skill attainment.

2P1: Credential, Certificate, or Degree. Legislation – [Perkins IV, Section 113(b)(2)(B)(ii)] Student attainment of an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree.

Performance Goal – The final agreed upon 2008-2009 performance level for this core indicator will be determined after April 1, 2008 through a process of negotiations with the U.S. Department of Education.

Validity and Reliability – Students enter community colleges for a variety of reasons, such as transfer, degree or certificate attainment, job training, skill development, or lifelong learning. These goals are dynamic over time as students persist through collegiate programs or return to upgrade skills. Students may attend college sporadically over the years as they proceed through their evolving educational goals. Expectations are different, however, for those with careers who are looking for job skill upgrading or lifelong learning and those training for a new career with no employment history.

Indicator – This measure is the percentage of concentrators who have successfully completed a minimum "threshold of 12 or more units of related coursework" in a CTE program area or received a vocational certificate of less than 12 units and who: 1) receive a degree, certificate, or equivalent; or 2) complete a transfer program and are classified as transfer ready.

3P1: Student Retention or Transfer. Legislation – [Perkins IV, Section 113(b)(2)(B)(iii)] Student retention in postsecondary education or transfer to a baccalaureate degree program.

Performance Goal - The final agreed upon 2008-2009 performance level for this core indicator will be determined after April 1, 2008 through a process of negotiations with the U.S. Department of Education.

Validity and Reliability – This indicator is based on considerations of the work of the Data Quality Initiative, Performance Measurement Initiative, Perkins reauthorization, and State Plan guidance from OVAE. Administrative data will be used to develop student persistence within the community colleges and transfer to baccalaureate institutions through student tracking systems available to the Nebraska community colleges.

Indicator – This measure is the percentage of CTE student concentrators who have successfully completed a minimum "threshold of 12 or more units of related coursework" in a CTE program area and who: 1) persisted in education at the community college level or 2) transferred to a four-year institution. Work continues to define the parameters for determining the measure of persistence.

4P1: Student Placement. Legislation – [Perkins IV, Section 113(b)(2)(B)(iv)] Student placement in military service or apprenticeship programs or placement or retention in employment, including placement in high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations or professions.

Performance Goal – The final agreed upon 2008-2009 performance level for this core indicator will be determined after April 1, 2008 through a process of negotiations with the U.S. Department of Education.

Validity and Reliability – This measure will move from follow up survey data collection to use administrative data matches that identify student transitions to employment, apprenticeship, and military service. Although this indicator includes transitions to military service, no procedures are currently in place at the Nebraska community colleges that meet FERPA guidance from the U.S. Department of Education. Work will continue to grow and expand the opportunities to connect to the Workforce Investment Act and the use of Administrative Data to achieve an accurate and relevant depiction of the placement success for postsecondary education graduates.

- 4. Describe how, in the course of developing core indicators of performance and additional indicators of performance, the eligible agency will align the indicators, to the greatest extent possible, so that information substantially similar to that gathered for other State and Federal programs, or for any other purpose, is used to meet the Act’s accountability requirements. [Sec. 13(b)(2)(F)]**

Response

The Nebraska Career Education staff recommends and supports the development of measures, data collection, and reporting through the processes already being used. Additionally, it is the intent of the staff to use existing processes to reduce duplication of effort and use consistent and reliable data. Additional input on alignment and duplication will be solicited from stakeholders in the Nebraska Department Education as well as through the normal communication methods and public hearings.

- 5. On the forms provided in Part C of this guide, provide, for the first two years covered by the State plan (July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008 and July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009), performance levels for each of the core indicators of performance, except that States submitting one-year transition plans are only required to submit performance levels for part of the indicators as discussed above. For performance levels that are required, the States’ performance levels, at a minimum, must be expressed in a percentage or numerical form, so as to be objective, quantifiable, and measurable; and require the State to continually make progress toward improving the performance of career and technical education students. [Sec. 113(b)(3)(A)(i)-(ii)]**

Response

The FAUPL with negotiations will be submitted for approval by the Regional Accountability Specialist (RAS) and the additional negotiations will occur after April 1, 2008.

a. Section 113(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Perkins Act requires a State to measure career and technical education students’ attainment of “challenging academic content standards” and “student academic achievement standards” that a State adopted pursuant to section 1111(b)(1) of the ESEA. The Perkins Act further requires a State use its State’s academic assessments (i.e. the State’s reading/language arts and mathematics tests) implemented under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA to measure career and technical education students’ attainment of these State standards.

Thus, two of a State’s core indicators must be career and technical education students’ proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics as measured under 1111(b)(1) and (3) of the ESEA. Accordingly, under the Perkins Act, a State must report the number or percent of its career and technical education students who score at the proficient level or above on the State’s assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics administered under the ESEA to measure the academic proficiency of secondary career and technical education students against the ESEA standards.

Response

It is the State's intent to use the exact information, processes, and reporting used for No Child Left Behind for Perkins accountability through use of NSSRS, as described in A(2) on page.

The staff of Nebraska Career Education agreed that lower standards for career and technical education students would not send the correct message to stakeholders. The consensus at this time is to adopt the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) cut scores approved by the Nebraska Department of Education. For reporting of No Child Left Behind data, the Department of Education makes the following exceptions:

- Thirty is the minimum number of students in a subgroup for reporting purposes
- The required number of students in a subgroup for accountability purposes is thirty
- In order to provide more validity and reliability to decisions about AYP based on subgroups.

Nebraska will use a cell size of 30 for students who are English Language Learners (ELL) and students with disabilities. These numbers were chosen following a statistical analysis and have been approved for No Child Left Behind purposes. The same exceptions will be used for Perkins reporting.

b. Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv) of the Perkins Act requires a State to identify a core indicator to measure for its career and technical education students at the secondary level “student graduation rates (as described in section 1111 (b)(2)(C)(vi) of the [ESEA]).” Thus, a State must report the number or percent of its career and technical education students whom the State includes as graduated in its graduation rate described under the ESEA. To ensure that a State's schools are making AYP as required under section 1111(b)(2)(A) of the ESEA, some States have established Statewide AMOs for graduation rates under section 1111(b)(2)(C)(vi), and others States have defined AYP only to require improvement in the graduation rate each year.

Response

Again, it is our intent to use the exact information, processes, terminology, and reporting procedures currently used in Nebraska for NCLB purposes. It may be more challenging in calculating graduation rates as most students will not achieve the “CTE Concentrator” status until their junior or senior year in high school.

It is our intent to compare graduation rates and develop disaggregated reports comparing CTE and non-CTE populations. It is our intent that the reports would have the same format as used for the AYP indicators in Nebraska.

The Department strongly encourages your State to reach agreement on “adjusted performance levels” required under section 113 of the Perkins Act for the three core indicators discussed in (a) and (b) above that are the same as your State's AMOs that your State adopted to ensure that your State's schools are making AYP as required under section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA. However, as noted above, your State may not have established AMOs for graduations rates under the ESEA, or your State may wish to propose performance levels for these core indicators that are different from your State's AMOs. If so, your State must provide baseline data using your State's most recent year's achievement data or graduation rate under the ESEA, propose performance levels, and reach agreement with the Department on “adjusted performance levels.” (The Secretary is considering whether to issue regulations requiring a State to agree to “adjusted performance levels” under the Perkins Act that are the same as the State's AMOs or targets for graduation rate under the ESEA. If the Secretary decides to regulate on this issue and adopts final rules, a State may be required to amend its State plan.)

Response

The Nebraska State Board of Education has approved proficiency standards for reading, mathematics, and writing. For Nebraska, the graduation rate is measured using the number of students who graduate from a public high school with a regular diploma (not including a GED or any other diploma not fully aligned with the state's academic standards) in the standard number of years. Nebraska includes in the graduation rate the number of students with disabilities who are entitled to services up to the age of 21 where the Individual Education Plan warrants the additional time to meet graduation requirements. The number of high school graduates and dropouts by grade has been reported to the Nebraska Department of Education for the last five years.

Nebraska uses the formula for graduation rate from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). Graduation rate (G) is defined by NCES as the proportion of students that begin in ninth grade and go on to complete twelfth grade with a diploma. Nebraska includes students who complete high school under the IEP exception. A General Education Development (GED) certificate does not meet requirements that are comparable for receipt of a regular high school diploma. The graduation rate standard of 83.97%. Schools will be considered as having achieved AYP if they meet or exceed the standard or if they have made improvement toward the standard.

6. Describe the eligible agency's process for reaching agreement on local adjusted levels of performance if an eligible recipient does not accept the State adjusted levels of performance under section 113(b)(3) of the Act. [Sec. 113(b)(4)(A)(i); sec. 122(c)(10)(B)]

Response

It is recognized that as a part of the legislation the local level can negotiate adjusted levels of performance if they do not accept the state-adjusted level. For purposes of public comment and during the transition year and during the first two full years of the five-year plan, the state-adjusted levels of performance will apply to all recipients. The decision allows the state and locals to evaluate the actual performance data for the new measures, the new definitions, and the new data collection systems that are in process with the implementation of Perkins IV.

After the two years of implementing the five year plan, the state-adjusted levels of performance will be reviewed and modified, if necessary and following establishment of the state baseline, the consideration to engage in local education agency negotiations with Nebraska Career Education for an adjusted performance level will be considered.

The process would be developed, but might include the recipients to formally request a change in performance levels to Nebraska Department of Education. This request would include a recommended level of performance based on valid and reliable data, as well as a rationale based on logical reasoning. A high level of alignment with AYP and Special Education improvement plans would be pursued as a part of this process as well.

7. Describe the objective criteria and methods the eligible agency will use to allow an eligible recipient to request revisions to its local adjusted levels of performance if unanticipated circumstances arise with respect to an eligible recipient. [Sec. 113(b)(4)(A)(vi)]

Response

In the event of unanticipated circumstances, the local grant recipient can apply for a one-year waiver from core indicators. This waiver, or “hold harmless” provision may be extended depending on the nature of the unanticipated circumstances. The waiver will be considered by the Nebraska Department of Education. The criteria for a waiver would include:

- Recipient fell below the agreed-upon performance level.
- An unanticipated circumstance can be documented that would have impacted performance levels (natural disaster, epidemic, serious illness, or death of a faculty member, etc.).
- Local recipient has formally requested a change in performance levels to NDE. If more than a one-year waiver is necessary, the state would evaluate the need to renegotiate the agreed upon performance level.

The implementation of this policy procedure would be reviewed bi-annually for effectiveness and the necessity of the option for schools.

- 8. Describe how the eligible agency will report data relating to students participating in career and technical education programs in order to adequately measure the progress of the students, including special populations and students participating in tech prep programs, if applicable, and how the eligible agency will ensure that the data reported from local educational agencies and eligible institutions, and the data that is reported to the Secretary, are complete, accurate, and reliable. [Sec. 122(c)(13); sec 205].**

Response

The timeline and format of the disaggregated career and technical education reports will be aligned to the greatest extent possible with the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) reports published by the Nebraska Department of Education. Examples of the Nebraska AYP format can be viewed at <http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us/Main/Home.aspx>.

The Nebraska Career Education Staff will continue to review the data elements for reliability and validity as they are applied at the program, school, and state levels. Because of data variability, it was also determined that populations less than 30 would not be reported in the performance standard of the subpopulations. As a rural state this will be a common occurrence for many subpopulations.

It is a stated goal to move from data collection and reporting for compliance to a focus on program improvement, and it was (and still is anticipated) that the completion of the transition year will be used to test some of the data elements and reporting and to adjust, as necessary.

- 9. Describe how the State plans to enter into an agreement with each consortium receiving a grant under Perkins IV to meet a minimum level of performance for each of the performance indicators described in section 113(b) and 203(e) of the Act. [Sec. 204(e)(1)]**

Response

Individual recipients and consortiums will be treated the same regarding the level of performance. Each member school district in a consortium will be required to submit data on the core indicators of performance and meet the state negotiated levels of performance.

The performance measures for each member school of a consortium will be compared to the state FAUPL or the negotiated level. Any member school of a consortium that is required to submit an improvement plan will do so individually.

10. Describe how the eligible agency will annually evaluate the effectiveness of career and technical education programs, and describe, to the extent practicable, how the eligible agency is coordinating those programs with other Federal programs to ensure nonduplication. [Sec. 122(c)(8)]

During the period covered by this state plan, review teams from Nebraska Career Education Staff will conduct the following activities to annually evaluate the effectiveness of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 06 (Perkins IV) funds as follows:

1. During the State Plan Period of FY2008 through FY2013, NCE staff will conduct on-site monitoring reviews of all recipients of Perkins IV funds.
2. A “desk audit” (or an internal review of electronic and paper resources) will be conducted annually based on the Perkins accountability measures and other information submitted annually by local grant recipients.
3. When a local grant recipient has been identified for on-site review, a letter and copy of the Carl D. Perkins IV Monitoring Manual will be sent to the local grant recipient contact approximately four weeks prior to the team visit. During the on-site review visit, team members will meet with the appropriate staff to determine if the local grant recipient is meeting the goals and objectives identified in their Five-Year Plan and Annual Applications.
4. An exit interview will be conducted to discuss results and identify any significant findings. A formal letter will be sent following the on-site review.
5. In addition, coordination with the Continuous Improvement Integrated Visits (CIIV) process are emerging as a strategy to assist schools and the Nebraska Department of Education to effectively coordinate federal and state programmatic visits to reduce the local burden and duplicating efforts among multiple programs.

B. Other Department Requirements

1. Except as noted above with respect the States submitting one-year transition plans, you must provide all the information requested on the forms provided in Part C of this guide to report accountability data annually to the Secretary under section 113(c)(1)-(2), including:

(a) The student definitions that you will use for “participants” and “concentrators” for the secondary core indicators of performance:

• **CTE Participant:**

A secondary student who has earned one (1) or more credits in any career and technical education (CTE) program area.

- **CTE Concentrator:** A secondary student who has earned three (3) or more credits in a single CTE program of study area (e.g. health sciences or business administration), or
 - two (2) credits in a single CTE program area, but only in those program areas where 2 credit sequences at the secondary level are recognized by the State and/or its local eligible recipients.

(b) The student definition that you will use for “concentrators” for the postsecondary/adult core indicators of performance;

- **CTE Participant:**

A postsecondary student who has earned one (1) or more credits in any CTE program area.

- **CTE Concentrator:**

A postsecondary student who: (1) completes at least 12 academic or CTE credits within a single program area sequence that is comprised of 12 or more academic and technical credits and terminates in the award of an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree; or (2) completes a short-term CTE program sequence of less than 12 credit units that terminates in an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree.

(c) Baseline data for the core indicators of performance under section 113(b)(2) using data from the most-recently completed program year; and

Response

The baseline data for 1S1, 2S1, and 4S1 will be set at the state levels by the Nebraska Department of Education in making Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations. These state goals are posted at <http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us/Page/AYP.aspx?Level=st>.

The State of Nebraska Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, which details the accountability requirements for NCLB, is posted at <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplans03/nbcsa.pdf>.

For Nebraska, the definitions of several of the Perkins IV measures are substantially different than the Perkins III measures. At the secondary level this would be measure 2S1 – Technical Skill Attainment. At the postsecondary level this would include 1P1-Technical Skill Attainment, and 3P1-Student Retention and Transfer. For these measures it will be necessary to conduct research prior to proposing baseline data and annual performance goals. In addition, the approaches used to define nontraditional participant in Nebraska have utilized the determination of concentration as a part of the measurement approach. This will change as a part of the transition to the new measures that began during the transition year and will continue through the life of the legislation.

2. **You must identify the program areas for which the State has technical skill assessments, the estimated percentage of students who will be reported in the State’s calculation of CTE concentrators who took assessments, and the State’s plan for increasing the coverage of programs and students reported in this indicator in future program years.**

The Nebraska state policies regarding secondary and postsecondary NCE programs are posted at <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/nce>. Nebraska does not currently have a statewide system of measuring technical skill attainment. The current measure of technical skill attainment at the secondary level is, “Concentrators that meet locally developed assessments or criterion referenced tests in Career and Technical Education courses or earning a grade of B or higher in the concentration area program sequence of career and technical courses.”

The current measure being used at the postsecondary level is: “Concentrators that have an accumulative aggregate GPA of 2.0 in all vocational courses with a 1.5 and 2.0 weighting in the state aid funding formula calculations.”

The pursuit of developing a statewide system that supports, collects, and develops a cadre of technical skill assessment resources would be pursued. The following process will be a priority of the collaboration and support of the Partnerships for Innovation (PFI) statewide consortium:

- The Nebraska Department of Education will survey programs located in comprehensive high schools and technical colleges on technical measures currently utilized.
- NDE will prepare a report listing programs statewide and the technical skill measures being used. Included in the report will be strategies for integrating and connecting with the current Student-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS) as a means to achieve validation of technical skill attainment. The report will be distributed to the state NCE program managers and school administration for review.
- A technical assessment team consisting of secondary and postsecondary representatives will meet to discuss existing technical measures and strategies for statewide implementation. Strategies must include programs for which specialized accreditation is available and those programs that do not have an accrediting organization.

The goal for beginning the implementation of the process will be in the spring of 2008 with the evaluation of results and recommendations available in the fall of 2008. The establishment of priorities and strategies that benefit the students, the programs, and the system will occur. The results of the first year’s data collection and testing will be reviewed for procedural changes and this will assist Nebraska to establish a state performance levels.

C. Procedural Suggestions and Planning Reminders

Your State is responsible for identifying, using national, state, or regional data, the career and technical education programs that lead to non-traditional fields. See section 113(b)((2)(A)(vi) and section 113(b)(2)(B)(v).

The existing lists provided through the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) that is annually updated using the Bureau of Labor statistics data will be used to identify the Career and Technical Education programs of study that lead to nontraditional fields until further guidance is provided on updating the list.

Your State is responsible for identifying, using national, state, or regional data, the occupations or professions that it will classify as high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand. See section 113(b)(2)(B)(iv).

The Nebraska Department of Education continues to work with the Nebraska Department of Labor to define high wage, high skill, and high demand occupations. Additional input will be solicited from other stakeholders in finalizing the definitions. Once the definitions are finalized, accessing the resources and tools such as CC Benefits and Labor Market Information will create a regional and statewide list of occupations that meet those definitions. The final definitions for Nebraska will be provided after additional research and public input has occurred.

Draft definitions are provided below:

1. **High Wage** – The Nebraska Department of Labor report occupational employment and wages in quartiles. The statewide totals and access to wage information is through the webpage <http://www.dol.state.ne.us/nwd/center.cfm?PRICAT=4&SUBCAT=4C> Working with the Department of Labor to determine the best strategies for high wage will occur during the transition year.
2. **High Skill** – One of the labor statistics that relates to this definition is “training requirement,” which generally refers to the level of education, training, or on-the-job experience required. Tentatively, we will suggest that occupations with a training requirement of Postsecondary Professional-Technical Certificate, Associate Degree or higher and long-term on-the-job training are considered High Skill occupations.
3. **High Demand** – According to the Nebraska Department of Labor, the average increase in demand for all occupations from 2004-2014 is projected to be 8.9 %. Tentatively, we might suggest that high demand occupations in Nebraska be defined as: Any occupation that statewide employs over 1,000. Any occupation that has an increase in employment of 15% or higher for the years 2004-2014 will be designated as high demand.