

Vocational Education--Tech-Prep Education (CFDA No. 84.243)

I. Legislation

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, P.L. 101-392, Title III, Part E (20 U.S.C. 2394) (expires September 30, 1997). Although appropriations are authorized in the statute only through FY 1995 (with a one-year extension under General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) through September 30, 1996), the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act, 1997 (P.L. 104-208) essentially authorized the Act through FY 1997 and extended availability of funds through September 30, 1998.

II. Funding History

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>
1991	\$ 63,000,000
1992	90,000,000
1993	104,123,000
1994	104,123,000
1995	180,000,000
1996	100,000,000

III. Analysis of Program Performance

A. Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Tech-Prep Education Program is to develop systematic links between secondary and postsecondary institutions to better prepare students to make the transition from school to work. Tech-prep is a planned sequence of study in a technical field beginning as early as the ninth year of school. The sequence extends through two years of postsecondary occupational education and includes an articulation agreement between secondary and postsecondary institutions that form consortia. Tech-prep education can also include an apprenticeship component of at least two years following secondary instruction. Tech-prep integrates academic and vocational education, and teaches students mathematical, scientific, communications, and technological skills needed to earn a two-year associate degree or a two-year certificate in a given occupational field.

B. Strategies to Achieve the Goals

Under Title III-E of the Perkins Act, federal funds are distributed to states according to a statutory formula. States, in turn, give grants for planning and implementation to eligible local consortia of secondary and postsecondary institutions on a competitive or a formula basis. States administer tech-prep through their state Boards of Vocational Education and are responsible for providing federally required plans and reports, reviewing and processing applications for local projects, and providing technical assistance.

Activities provided under the Tech-Prep Education Program include developing tech-prep curriculum appropriate to students' needs; providing in-service training for teachers; providing training to counselors on student recruitment and counseling to ensure successful completion of tech-prep, and providing equal access to the full range of Tech-Prep Education programs to special populations; and providing preparatory service to help all populations participate in such programs.

C. Program Performance—Indicators of Impact and Effectiveness

Increase the number of vocational education students earning postsecondary education credentials.

According to data from the National Evaluation of the Tech-Prep program, tech-prep students are showing increasing rates of postsecondary enrollment. The national evaluation reports that the number of tech-prep students entering postsecondary activities increased substantially between 1994 and 1995. In 1993, 62 consortia reported that 3,645 tech-prep high school graduates entered postsecondary education institutions or programs that fall. In 1994, 149 consortia reported that a total of 14,509 tech-prep high school graduates had begun postsecondary programs in fall 1994. The 14,509 postsecondary students in 1994 represent 56 percent of the tech-prep students who graduated from high school in reporting consortia in spring 1994, up from the 1993 rate of 49 percent. These percentages, however, are computed on a very small portion of all consortia.

Although the majority of tech-prep postsecondary students are enrolled at community or technical colleges, more students reportedly chose to enter four-year colleges or universities in 1994 than in 1993. The proportion of tech-prep postsecondary students entering four-year institutions increased from 21 percent in 1993 to 28 percent in 1994.

IV. Planned Studies

The Department's five-year national evaluation of the Tech-Prep Education Program, which began in the fall of 1992, is in its final phase. The evaluation has two main focuses: (1) to describe tech-prep education at the state and local levels, and (2) to identify the best practices and effective approaches of local tech-prep projects for improving occupational education. Data collection began in the fall of 1993 for all three major components of the evaluation: a survey of state tech-prep coordinators, a survey of local tech-prep coordinators, and in-depth studies of selected sites. Several interim reports have been produced, and the final report will be available in 1998 when the evaluation is completed. No new studies of tech-prep have been planned.

V. Sources of Information

1. Program files.
2. The Continuing Development of Local Tech-Prep Initiatives (Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, 1996).
3. The Emergence of Tech-Prep at the State and Local Levels (Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, 1995).
4. National Assessment of Vocational Education (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

VI. Contacts for Further Information

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