

iNACOL 2019 FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES



iNACOL's *2019 Federal Policy Priorities* issue brief highlights top issues in the K-12 education system and provides recommendations to address them.

With the 2015 [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA), states have new flexibility to redefine success, rethink accountability designs, modernize educator preparation for a quality workforce and pilot innovative, balanced systems of assessments. In addition, a focus on preparing students for their future in higher education and future employment is timely with the passage of the 2018 [Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act](#) (Perkins V),¹ providing states an opportunity to refocus and align pathways across K-12 and post-secondary education including career and technical education. This opens new opportunities for partnerships and pathways for educational success with skills and knowledge for careers and life. The pending reauthorization of the Higher Education Act offers a forthcoming opportunity for federal policymakers to incentivize modernizing educator and leader preparation programs as well as drive innovative educator development.

iNACOL's 2019 Federal Policy Priorities are an equity-driven and future-focused set of recommendations designed to ensure the nation's education system is [fit for purpose](#). The priorities are intentionally constructed to support moving future-focused states and localities forward from their [current state of education to future systems](#) capable of preparing all graduates with the knowledge, abilities and dispositions necessary to achieve success, to contribute to their communities and to advance our society.

¹ The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act was signed into law July 2018. It is the latest reauthorization of the federal career and technical education law, the [Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006](#).



PRIORITY #1

Launch a pilot program in the reauthorization of the [Higher Education Act](#) to encourage the development of innovative, fully competency-based and personalized [teacher and leader preparation programs](#).



PRIORITY #2

Remove barriers for states to participate in the [Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority \(IADA\)](#) by lifting the seven-state cap, by allowing adequate time for planning and statewide scale-up, and by making funding available for states to develop and stage implementation of high-quality, [innovative systems of assessments](#) that include performance assessments to support competency-based pathways.



PRIORITY #3

Support continued [expansion of broadband infrastructure](#) and increased access to Wi-Fi in schools and homes by fully funding the [E-Rate](#) and [Lifeline](#) programs.



PRIORITY #4

Target funding within [Perkins V](#) to encourage alignment of programs and credentials with personalized pathways and competency-based approaches across K-12, higher education and the workforce.

2019 FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE



Federal Policy Priority #1: Launch a pilot program in the reauthorization of the [Higher Education Act](#) to encourage the development of innovative, fully competency-based and personalized [teacher and leader preparation programs](#).

There is a need to modernize the preparation, training and ongoing development for teachers and school leaders to lead the change to student-centered learning. The capacity of the educator-leader workforce is essential for transformation of K-12 education systems to support success for all students. Many educators will require new skills to orchestrate, design and navigate anytime, anywhere learning as well as adapt instruction for students with varying levels of knowledge and competency development with future goals and interests. This will require significant shifts to pre-service preparation, certification, professional development and evaluation programs. Federal policymakers can play a critical role in this transformation, working to revise and align policies and programs that would make it possible to build an educator leader workforce with the expertise to ensure all students master competencies by graduation. Institutions of higher education and alternative programs train the majority of the educator workforce and investments are needed to prepare teachers to lead in personalized, competency-based learning environments. There is an opportunity in the Higher Education Act to launch an innovation pilot for teacher preparation that can equip teachers with the skills to teach and lead in future-focused, competency-based learning environments. The pilots would be designed to be innovative, competency-based models with personalized pathways for educators.



RECOMMENDATION

Launch an innovation pilot for modernizing teacher preparation in the Higher Education Act for pre-service providers to equip educators with the skills to teach and lead in competency-based environments.



EXPAND THE INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT PILOT

Federal Policy Priority #2: Remove barriers for states to participate in the [Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority \(IADA\)](#) by lifting the seven-state cap, by allowing adequate time for planning and statewide scale-up, and by making funding available for states to develop and stage implementation of high-quality, [innovative systems of assessments](#) that include performance assessments to support competency-based pathways.

ESSA provides flexibility for states to redesign systems of assessments to better align to student-centered learning. In ESSA, all states are now allowed to use a variety of assessment types, including formative and performance-based assessments, together to create statewide, balanced systems of assessments. States can also apply to the U.S. Department of Education for the new Innovative Assessment Authority pilot program, in ESSA Section 1204, which allows states to pilot next-generation systems of assessments in collaboration with a subset of districts prior to scaling statewide. One implementation challenge is IADA's requirement for scaling state pilots statewide within five to seven years. This time frame is too narrow for most states to plan, create processes for calibration and moderation for comparability, implement high-quality systems of assessments, evaluate and scale up statewide effectively in five to seven years. Developing a plan and model for statewide scale-up with quality assurance checkpoints, consistency and evaluation is important. The other major issue with IADA is that it does not allow for any planning time, nor does it provide funding for states to redesign systems of assessments. In sum, the IADA needs to be strengthened and revised to provide a pilot program and resources to allow states to create space for competency-based pathways to advance high-quality, deeper learning opportunities - and the balanced assessments that create alignment - that would dramatically advance student achievement and better prepare students for higher education and employment success. To achieve this goal, the federal government should remove the limitation of a seven-state cap in ESSA for IADA's implementation. The federal government should also extend the amount of time a state can take to plan and implement the pilot - beyond the five years currently required - to develop the necessary processes for comparability, calibration and moderation across pilot schools and districts. Additionally, it should expand their pilots using additional phases to add new districts statewide over an approved, extended timeframe.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Congress should amend section 1204 of ESSA, the [Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority \(IADA\)](#), to remove barriers to state participation in the pilot, with implementation of high-quality performance assessments to support competency-based pathways:

- ▶ Lift the cap on the number of states that could apply to participate in the IADA;
 - ▶ Include language that allows states planning time prior to starting implementation and to scale up;
 - ▶ Allow adequate time for states to scale up new systems of assessments statewide with high quality, by removing or providing greater flexibility in the time to statewide implementation;
- Make funding available for states to develop and improve on [innovative systems of assessments](#).



Federal Policy Priority #3: Support continued [expansion of broadband infrastructure](#) and increased access to Wi-Fi in schools and homes by fully funding the [E-Rate](#) and [Lifeline](#) programs.

To prepare students to succeed in the 21st century, student access to technology and the internet is a requirement and an equity imperative. Comprehensive broadband infrastructure provides states, districts and schools with access to the internet for learning purposes. The Federal Universal Service programs, including E-Rate, (which subsidizes internet access for schools and libraries), and the Lifeline program, (which supports low-cost home access), are increasing equitable student access to powerful learning opportunities. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) oversees the E-Rate and Lifeline programs. It issued long-awaited modernization orders for E-Rate in 2014 and for Lifeline in 2016. To keep pace with the accelerating demand for connectivity and adequate bandwidth as schools transition to student-centered learning, continued support and commitment from the FCC for these programs are necessary. Unfortunately, the need for E-Rate funding will soon surpass the cap on funds available; further, FCC leadership has indicated that it may discontinue the Lifeline program.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ The FCC should examine how much funding is needed for E-Rate to keep pace with the accelerating demand for high-speed broadband connectivity and ensure equitable access to a variety of high-quality learning pathways for all students.
- ▶ The FCC should continue implementation and support for the Lifeline program.



LEVERAGE RESOURCES AND ALIGN POLICY FOR POSTSECONDARY TRANSITIONS

Federal Policy Priority #4: Target funding within [Perkins V](#) to encourage alignment of programs and credentials with personalized pathways and competency-based approaches across K-12, higher education and the workforce.

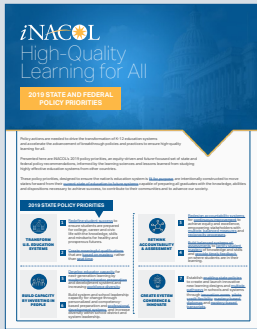
The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act of 2018 (“Perkins V”) gives states a new opportunity to strengthen postsecondary transitions through competency-based career and technical education pathways. Perkins V requires greater alignment of goals and indicators to ESSA and to the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA). WIOA invests in state and regional public-private partnerships and innovation, employment data, cross-sector partnerships and aligns job training and education to the workforce needs of the state. Perkins V aligns to WIOA by adopting its definitions of career pathways, workforce development, out-of-school-youth and post-secondary credentials. Further, it provides an opportunity to focus on high-quality career and technical education (CTE) pathways from secondary to postsecondary education systems. CTE pathways can motivate students to learn by clearly linking their academic studies with tangible outcomes leading to a meaningful credential. High-quality CTE programs provide experiential and real-life learning opportunities for students and allow students to demonstrate mastery of skills and knowledge through performance assessments. There is an opportunity to implement Perkins in a way that helps education and employment systems work together with CTE pathways to prepare all students for success. As the U.S. Department of Education develops regulations and guidance to implement Perkins V, it should ensure that state leaders are encouraged and have flexibility to modernize CTE, K-12, higher education systems, and meet future learning needs and workforce demands. This will require better alignment across credentials for building meaningful qualifications over a lifetime and more competency-based pathways for students to engage in meaningful educational opportunities toward goals.



RECOMMENDATION

As the U.S. Department of Education develops regulations and guidance to implement Perkins V, it should ensure that state leaders are encouraged and have flexibility to modernize CTE, K-12, higher education systems, and meet future learning needs and workforce demands.

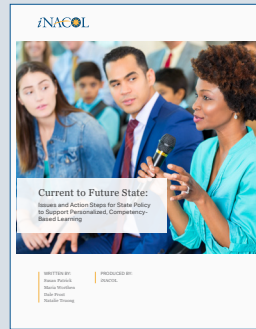
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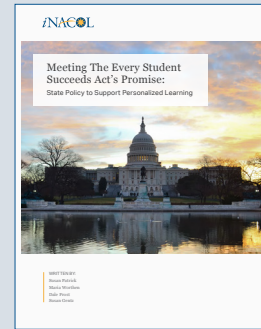
iNACOL – [2019 State and Federal Policy Priorities](#)



iNACOL – [Opportunities for Competency Education in the Reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Act](#)



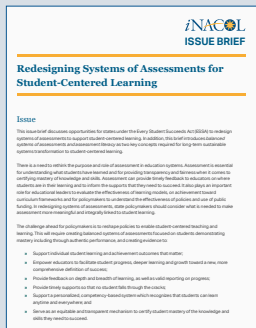
iNACOL – [Current to Future State: Issues and Action Steps for State Policy to Support Personalized, Competency-Based Learning](#)



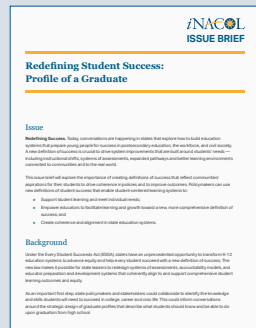
iNACOL – [Meeting The Every Student Succeeds Act's Promise: State Policy to Support Personalized Learning](#)



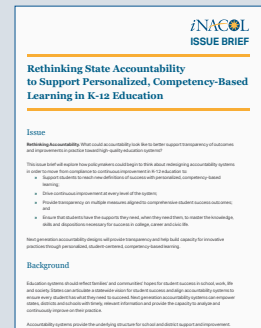
iNACOL – [State Funding Strategies to Support Education Innovation](#)



iNACOL – [Redesigning Systems of Assessments for Student-Centered Learning](#)



iNACOL – [Redefining Student Success: Profile of a Graduate](#)



iNACOL – [Rethinking State Accountability to Support Personalized, Competency-Based Learning in K-12 Education](#)

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The mission of iNACOL is to drive the transformation of education systems and accelerate the advancement of breakthrough policies and practices to ensure high-quality learning for all.

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