**FY2024-2027 Perkins State Plan**

**Executive Summary**

In May 2024, the DESE Office of College, Career and Technical Education (OCCTE) will submit an updated Perkins V State Plan to the federal government aligned to the Department’s Educational Vision and the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), which provides approximately $23 million in federal funding annually to Massachusetts for implementing career-connected learning. Perkins is a grant distributed based on youth population and poverty levels in our state that targets our highest need learners and is meant to connect ELA, Math, and Science proficiency with relevant, real-world learning experiences.

*About the Draft and Public Comment Process*

The OCCTE sought input from relevant stakeholders throughout 2023 and has drafted the state plan to build on the Commonwealth’s strong foundation in career-connected learning and make adjustments that will improve efforts to provide all students in Massachusetts with access to high quality career-connected learning opportunities.

As required by federal statute, Massachusetts drafted and will submit a Perkins State Plan to the US Department of Education for a four-year period, covering federal fiscal years 2024 to 2027. The OCCTE will collect public comment from March 8 to April 7, 2024. After reviewing public comments and making any necessary updates, the plan will be shared for final review with all State-level approvers, including the Governor as required by the federal statute. The plan will be submitted to the US Department of Education by May 10, 2024. Once approved by the US Department of Education, the plan would be effective July 1, 2024.

The core areas of the state plan and key points of content are summarized below.

*State’s Vision for Education and Workforce Development*

The Perkins state plan processes ask states to align education and workforce to maximize effectiveness of federal funds. The Massachusetts state plan emphasizes the following highlights:

* Alignment between the WIOA State Plan, DESE Educational Vision, and Perkins State Plan yields a coherent vision, systems development, and service delivery to maximize outcomes.
* Enhance statewide infrastructure and resources to engage in strong partnerships with educational programs (provision of labor market data, development of regional Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), collaboration on program development), including to more clearly define the role of MassHire Boards in supporting schools and make the CLNA more effective at identifying local workforce needs and aligning educational opportunities.
* Continue joint planning between the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Executive Office of Education, and Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development to coordinate programming and braid funding sources to ensure pathways to employment for all students, multiple entry points to employment, and a “no-wrong-door and no-dead-end approach to youth workforce systems”.

*Leadership Fund Use*

The federal allocation includes a set-aside for states to operate statewide systems and resources for continuous improvement of secondary and postsecondary career-connected learning and career technical education systems. The Massachusetts state plan emphasizes the following highlights:

* Revision and development of responsive Career and Technical Education (CTE) Frameworks that frame immersive programs leading to employment when used in CTE, provide direction for use in all programs of study, and are easily accessible in an interactive format on the Career-Connected Learning Hub.
* Technical assistance and data resources that lead to continuous improvement including tiered Quality Support System for schools and statewide support for competency management and graduate follow up.
* Expansion of middle school career-connected learning to promote student planning and decision-making that leads to best-fit high school and postsecondary academic and career-connected experiences.
* Increase accessibility of CTE teacher testing to increase CTE teacher recruitment and licensure.

*Reserve Funding*

The federal allocation includes a set-aside for states to offer grants to secondary and postsecondary recipients for priority needs. The Massachusetts state plan emphasizes the following highlights:

* Use a targeted, data-driven approach for directing grant funds for program improvement and increasing access to high quality CTE programs.
* Use competitive approach for awarding grant funds for new and emerging program support, including small and rural schools.
* By combining targeted and competitive processes, increase flexibility to respond to data and meet specific community needs.

*Programs of Study*

Local recipients must offer defined programs of study to access Perkins funding. The Massachusetts state plan emphasizes the following highlights:

* State-approved programs are distinguished by program outcomes that prepare learners to access good jobs, contributing to a skilled workforce and an equitable and inclusive economy.
* Postsecondary programs lead to either an associate degree or industry recognized credential.
* Secondary programs include comprehensive career and academic counseling and lead to work-based learning experiences, workforce credentials, and/or college credits.
* Secondary programs include CTE Chapter 74 programs, Career Connections (N74), Innovation Career Pathways, Early College, and STEMTech Career Academies.
* Processes for review and approval of Innovation Career Pathways and Career Connections to be updated to reinforce Perkins alignment and increase clarity of program outcomes.

*Accountability*

The federal Perkins statute identifies specific accountability metrics that local and state recipients of Perkins funding must adhere to. The Massachusetts state plan emphasizes the following highlights:

* Perkins performance indicators include academic and career technical measures. Four of the seven secondary measures overlap with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and speak to high quality curriculum and instruction in ELA, Math, and Science, allowing for collaboration and coordinated systems of support between OCCTE and Office of Statewide Systems of Support (SSoS).
* Perkins program quality is measured by the percent of students engaging in work-based learning (WBL); WBL definition to be updated to be more accurate and provide more useful local and statewide data.
* Postsecondary Working Group to be formed to review Perkins definitions and metrics and create intentional postsecondary systems for Perkins.