

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (Perkins) was originally authorized by the federal government in 1984, and reauthorized in 1998. Named for Carl D. Perkins, the act aims to increase the quality of technical education within the United States in order to help the economy.

On August 12, 2006 President Bush signed into law the reauthorization of the Act of 1998. The new law, the **Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006**, was passed almost unanimously by Congress in late July, 2006.

The new law included three major areas of revision:

- 1) Using the term 'career and technical education' instead of 'vocational education'
- 2) Maintaining the Tech Prep program as a separate federal funding stream within the legislation
- 3) Maintaining state administrative funding at 5 percent of a state's allocation

The new law also included new requirements for 'programs of study' that link academic and technical content across secondary and postsecondary education, and strengthened local accountability provisions that will ensure continuous program improvement.

Career and technical education is about helping students, workers and lifelong learners of all ages fulfill their working potential. First and foremost it's about high school and college education that provides students with:

- Academic subject matter taught with relevance to the real world, often called contextual learning.
- Employability skills, from job-related skills to workplace ethics.
- Education pathways that help students explore interests and careers in the process of progressing through school.

But career and technical education is also about:

- Second-chance education and training for the unemployed and those seeking to upgrade their employability skills.
- Education to earn additional degrees, especially when related to career advancement.
- Corporate training, continuing education, skills upgrades and refresher courses for those already in the workplace.

The Perkins Act provides almost \$1.3 billion in federal support for career and technical education programs in all 50 States. The law will extend through 2012.