

Appendix A: Legislative Milestones Influencing Accountability in Federal Vocational Education Programs

A

1917: Smith-Hughes Act

- Required states to adopt minimum standards for teacher qualifications, plant and equipment, and hours of instruction in federally supported vocational programs.
- Required states to develop plans with approval of a Federal Board for Vocational Education.
- Identified the outcome of vocational education programs as preparing students to be fit for useful employment.

1963: Vocational Education Act

- Required states to conduct and use periodic evaluations of state and local vocational education programs in light of current and projected “manpower” needs and job opportunities.
- Reserved 3 percent of state grants for ancillary services, including program evaluation.
- Established an ad hoc federal advisory council to review and recommend improvements in vocational education programs.
- Revised state plan provisions to require more detailed assurances and descriptions.

1968: Vocational Education Amendments

- Continued requirements for evaluations based on labor market needs.
- Authorized funds for evaluation and other activities related to state administration.

- Limited federal funding only to vocational programs that could be “. . . demonstrated to prepare students for employment or for successful completion of such a program or be of significant assistance to participants in making an informed and meaningful occupational choice. ’
- Created a standing national advisory council to evaluate program effectiveness.
- Established state advisory councils with program evaluation duties.
- Required states to develop both long-range and annual plans.
- Mandated local plans.

1976: Vocational Education Amendments

- Directed states to evaluate the effectiveness of each local program within the 5-year duration of the state plan.
- Required programs that sought to impart entry-level job skills to be evaluated according to the extent to which program completers and leavers found employment in occupations related to their training (or pursued additional education) and were considered by employers to be well trained.
- Expanded the evaluation duties and enhanced the independence of state advisory councils.
- Created local advisory councils.
- Authorized technical assistance and studies from a national advisory council and a new national research center, and authorized a national data and occupational information system.

- Clarified and strengthened the evaluation and monitoring responsibilities of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.
- Expanded state planning duties.
- Required states to summarize evaluation findings in an annual accountability report and to assess current and future job needs within the state.

1982: Job Training Partnership Act

- . Pioneered use of performance standards to select service providers, encourage quality and efficiency, and target programs for rewards or sanctions.

1984: Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act

- Charged states with developing **measures** of program effectiveness in such areas as occupational skills and basic employment competencies, with separate measures for disabled individuals.
- Required states to evaluate not less than 20 percent of local recipients in each fiscal year.
- Continued requirements for advisory council evaluations, national data on completers and leavers, state needs assessments, and a national assessment of vocational education.
- Deleted requirement for states to evaluate job placement and employer satisfaction for program completers and leavers.
- Simplified state planning and reporting requirements.
- Established state technical committees to develop skill inventories for specific occupations.

1988: Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments

- . Amended the Chapter 1 program for disadvantaged students to require schools that did not meet standards for increased achievement among participating children to develop and implement “program improvement” plans.

1988: Family Support Act

- Created the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program for welfare recipients, which

required the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop outcome standards for judging individual progress by October 1, 1993.

1988: Hunger Prevention Act

- . Amended the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program to require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish performance standards for measuring the employment outcomes of participants.

1990: Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Amendments

- Required states to develop standards and measures of performance for vocational education programs, reflecting attainment of job or academic skills, school retention and completion, or placement.
- Required local recipients to: conduct an annual evaluation of vocational programs based on state standards and measures; review the progress of special populations; and assess student knowledge about the industry they are preparing to enter.
- Required local recipients that did not show substantial progress to develop and implement program improvement plans.
- Directed states to develop measurable goals and accountability measures for special populations and required local recipients to describe how access to programs of high quality will be provided for special populations.
- Required states to conduct an initial assessment of program quality and needs using measurable objective criteria.
- Authorized technical assistance, advice, and data collection on performance standards and evaluation by the Department of Education, the National Center for Research on Vocational Education, the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, and state advisory councils.
- Authorized grants to business-education committees to develop skill standards in trades and industries.