PRINCIPLE 6

Program Improvement and Accountability

- Data are collected, shared, and utilized to improve outcomes and demonstrate accountability.

Principle 6 is about performance measures, data gathering processes, monitoring progress on performance outcomes, tracing student progress through the educational system, and continuous program improvement.

Principle Overview

The sixth Guiding Principle is Program Improvement and Accountability.

Essential Concepts:

•Partnerships continuously monitor and improve on their performance results

•meet the state's adjusted level of performance.

•Partnerships develop or review mechanisms to gather and analyze data

Performance Measures

Accountability

•state and local performance accountability systems to document state CTE outcomes

•performance indicators are used to set targets for improvement over time

•local Partnerships to use data sharing relationships and data collection mechanisms with the ultimate goal of improving and enhancing performance results (Watford & Malagon, 2008).

•these data are used to make decisions about the goals that are set for improvement

•data-driven continuous improvement process

An example of a *tool* that Partnerships can use to monitor performance measures is that of a *data dashboard*.

•visual representation

•easy-to-read

•understandable format (Rice & Taylor, 2003).
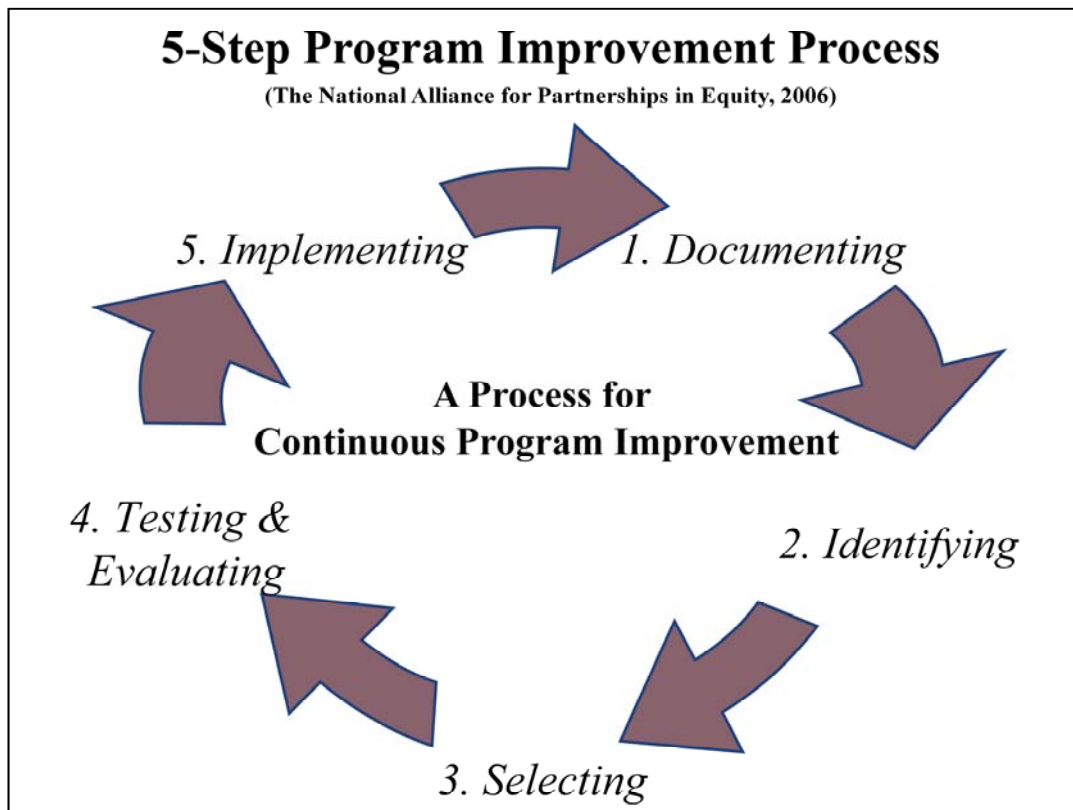
Levels of Implementation

State Level

•Perkins IV measures reported to the federal government

•P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act

- the bill requires the ISBE, ICCB, and IBHE jointly establish and maintain a longitudinal data system

    - link early learning, elementary, and secondary school student unit records with institutions of higher learning student unit records

•Examples of states with similar longitudinal data collection systems include Florida, California, and Oregon.

Regional (Partnership) Level

•current and projected labor market data for regional economic and workforce needs.

•identify occupational skill shortage areas

•determine which Programs of Study should receive priority for development.

Local Level

•reaching targets for improving achievement gaps or lowering dropout rates

•links improvement to accountability and visa versa

•data sharing agreements to track students between and within the educational system

•need to be developed and reviewed regularly

5-Step Program Improvement Process
(The National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, 2006)

5. Implementing   1. Documenting

A Process for
Continuous Program Improvement

4. Testing &
Evaluating   2. Identifying

3. Selecting

Continuous Program Improvement

Program improvement is a continuous process

A basic example of a continuous improvement model in education is the 5-step program improvement process developed by the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity.

The 5-step process includes:

1. *Documenting* performance results: Describing performance on core indicators over time

2. *Identifying* root causes: Analyzing performance data, additional information, and methods to determine causes of performance gaps

3. *Selecting* best solutions: Identifying and evaluating potential solutions by examining underlying logic and evidence

4. Pilot *testing* and *evaluating* solutions: Evaluating solutions prior to full implementation

5. *Implementing* solutions: Implementing fully tested solutions and evaluate performance (National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, 2006).

To create a *culture of continuous program improvement*:

•must have professional development

•collaborative use of data

•shared responsibility

Programs of Study is an improvement strategy.

Increased Accountability

Accountability is the practice of holding educational systems responsible for the quality of their outcomes.

Increased accountability is a major theme addressed in Perkins IV and closely linked to program improvement.

An example of a model for increased accountability for program improvement –

The Higher Learning Commission's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP):

•offers institutions of higher education an alternative process for program review and accreditation

•focuses on the internal workings of the institution and how critical processes are related to the mission or focus of the institution

•institutions are responsible for implementing data collection and the dissemination processes for the purposes of improvement

•institutions report on the data and research gathered as well as the implications of those data

•an institution involved in the AQIP process produces data that is utilized to guide institutional growth and improve educational experiences for students
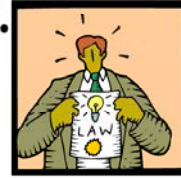
In Perkins IV

Title I, SEC. 113. ACCOUNTABILITY.

(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to establish and support State and local performance accountability systems, comprised of the activities described in this section, to assess the effectiveness of the State and the eligible recipients of the State in achieving statewide progress in career and technical education, and to optimize the return of investment of Federal funds in career and technical education activities.

(b) STATE PERFORMANCE MEASURES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible agency, with input from eligible recipients, shall establish performance measures for a State that consist of—

(A) the core indicators of performance described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (2);

(B) any additional indicators of performance (if any) identified by the eligible agency under paragraph (2)(C); and

(C) a State adjusted level of performance described in paragraph (3)(A) for each core indicator of performance, and State levels of performance described in paragraph (3)(B) for each additional indicator of performance.

Title II, SEC. 203. TECH PREP PROGRAM.

(e) INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each consortium shall establish and report to the eligible agency indicators of performance for each tech prep program for which the consortium receives a grant under this title. The indicators of performance shall include the following:

In Perkins IV

Title I, SEC. 113. ACCOUNTABILITY.

(A) The number of secondary education tech prep students and postsecondary education tech prep students served.

(B) The number and percent of secondary education tech prep students enrolled in the tech prep program who—

(i) enroll in postsecondary education;

(ii) enroll in postsecondary education in the same field or major as the secondary education tech prep students were enrolled at the secondary level;

(iii) complete a State or industry-recognized certification or licensure;

(iv) successfully complete, as a secondary school student, courses that award postsecondary credit at the secondary level; and

(v) enroll in remedial mathematics, writing, or reading courses upon entering postsecondary education.

(C) The number and percent of postsecondary education tech prep students who—

(i) are placed in a related field of employment not later than 12months after graduation from the tech prep program;

(ii) complete a State or industry-recognized certification or licensure;

(iii) complete a 2-year degree or certificate program within the normal time for completion of such program; and

(iv) complete a baccalaureate degree program within the normal time for completion of such program.

(2) NUMBER AND PERCENT.—For purposes of subparagraphs (B) and (C) of paragraph (1), the numbers and percentages shall be determined separately with respect to each clause of each such subparagraph.

An In Practice Example:

Multiple Measures: Examining and Interpreting Data

Anne Cothran, director of EFE System 040, reported on a process of data collection and program improvement that offers lessons for other practitioners. In this case, the EFE was approached by a high school principal within the region who noticed a high failure rate of students in CTE classes. The observation initiated an internal action research study that examined the course grades of approximately 1,200 CTE students in the region. The study used SPSS (a statistical analysis software program) to correlate CTE grades and corresponding grades in math and English for the same group of students. The correlations showed that students failing CTE courses were also failing math and English courses, shifting the focus of the study from specific CTE courses to a broader issue dealing with a student sub-population in need of supplementary instruction and more aggressive intervention.

At first glance, the data appeared to tell one story: of a teacher and a class that was showing high failure. But upon closer study the data revealed a problem of wider scale: failure that was attributed to high absenteeism. As a result, the schools designed interventions to address absenteeism, and they developed new data collection and analysis processes for the region. The decision to analyze previously unnoticed student sub-populations' academic and CTE course-taking and grades resulted in a permanent change in data collection and analysis that bridged academic and CTE curriculum.

DESIGN ELEMENTS

- Data-driven decisions are made with:
    - multiple forms of assessment and measurement
    - culture of program improvement
    - local improvement and regional development
    - labor market data
    - longitudinal data
    - reliable and valid data
    - performance targets
    - disaggregated and cohort based data

9

There are 8 design elements for Principle 6. For each of the design elements, tools and resources are provided to guide partnerships in the implementation. Also, an appendix is included, Appendix F, of the *STEM Equity Pipeline 5-step improvement model*. Please take a moment to review the design elements tools and resources and the Appendix for Principle 6.

Principle 6

Design Elements at a Glance

1. All programmatic activities, including professional development are evaluated for improvement and accountability using **multiple forms of assessment and measurement.**

2. Data are used to inform a **culture of program improvement** that uses data to improve instruction and programs.

3. Data are used within the organization and shared with partners to foster **local improvement and regional development**.

4. Relevant **labor market data** are used to inform program development and implementation.

5. A data collection system is developed with the capacity to collect **longitudinal data** on core indicators, performance measures, and workforce placement.

6. Procedures are implemented to collect **reliable and valid data** at each educational level and point of data collection.

7. Partnerships set specific **performance targets** and establish measureable goals for participant outcomes based on state adjusted level of performance on each indicator and are responsible for meeting those targets or providing plans of improvement.

8. Collected data are **disaggregated and cohort based** to provide gap analysis on different student groups for purposes of equity.

REFLECTION

- Why is data critical for program improvement?
- Who do you need to include in your data collection and utilization efforts?
- Where are your current data sources?
- What additional data is required to improve your CTE efforts?
- How will your Partnership utilize Principle 6 and its design elements to implement and evaluate your POS efforts?

Use these reflective questions to lead thinking and discussion about next steps for implementation and evaluation of Programs of Study efforts.