Myths and Facts about Student Industry Certification and Licensure

The Carl D. Perkins Program Effectiveness Report (PER) includes a section for reporting student success at completing industry certifications and licensures. Judging by the phone calls and emails that TEA career and technical education (CTE) Unit staff members receive, this section of the PER is widely misunderstood. Below are the facts about some common student industry certification and licensure myths.

MYTH: The certifications and licensures on the PER list are the TEA approved or recognized certifications and licensures.

FACT: TEA does not have a list of approved or recognized certifications or licensures, so districts should not misconstrue the list in the PER to mean TEA approves or recognizes exams on that list and/or does not approve or recognize exams that are not on that list.

MYTH: The number of certifications your students take affects the CTE or Perkins funding the school district receives.

FACT: The number of certification or licensure exams a district offers its students does not affect the district's funding in any way.

MYTH: Every program of study or coherent sequence must lead to a certification or licensure.

FACT: Neither TEA nor USDE requires that each program, career cluster, or pathway must have a student certification or licensure attached to it.

MYTH: The certifications and licensures reported on the PER become part of the school performance accountability.

FACT: The certification and licensure exam list in the PER has no impact on a school's performance accountability. While TEA includes other CTE factors in its performance based monitoring, it does not include this measure (Perkins core indicator 2S1, technical skill attainment).*

MYTH: The only certifications and licensures that matter are those listed on the PER.

FACT: Many desirable student certifications and licensures do not meet the three criteria in the 2S1 definition,* so cannot be included in the PER list. TEA encourages districts to offer students the opportunity to earn any certification or licensure that has benefit and value to students, and that makes sense for the district and its programs. Districts may use Perkins funds to pay for any certification and licensure that is consistent with the purpose of the Carl D. Perkins Act, as long as districts make those opportunities available to all eligible students.**

MYTH: Districts should use the certification and licensure list in the PER to determine which CTE courses and CTE programs to support.

FACT: Districts should not use the PER exam list to drive course offerings or make purchasing decisions, or for any other purpose than to report 2S1 (technical skill attainment) data. Most student certifications do not meet the 2S1 definition,* and most CTE programs do not culminate in a related certification that meets the 2S1 definition.*

MYTH: *New certifications and licensures are never added to the list.*

FACT: TEA CTE staff members review the certification and licensure list periodically. This year the TEA CTE staff review resulted in a net gain of 39 certifications and licensures from the previous year, for a new total of 155 exams. The first year the PER was in eGrants, it listed 80 exams. Most additions are the result of districts recommending new exams through the PER.

The review also resulted in some certifications and licensures being removed from the PER list if these certifications and licensures did not meet the three criteria for inclusion.*

MYTH: *Districts should no longer offer students the certifications that TEA removed from the PER list.*

FACT: NO. While it is true that TEA removed a few certifications and licensures from the PER, each continues to be an important and appropriate certification for some students. An example of one of the certifications that TEA removed is the Tractor and Machinery Operation Certificate. It serves as an excellent example to illustrate why districts should not use the PER exam list to determine which exams to offer students. The Tractor and Machinery Operation Certificate is intended for students who are completing their first year of course work in the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Career Cluster, and therefore would not be considered "end of program".* **Certainly safety instruction and the curriculum content that emphasizes safety and safe practices are crucial**.

MYTH: *There is no value in recommending other certifications and licensures to TEA.*

FACT: TEA CTE staff members need district recommendations for certifications and licensures that meet the three required criteria.* This is how TEA CTE staff members gather information for the periodic review (above). Districts should use lines 156-166 in Section 5 of the PER to recommend exams.*

As you plan ahead for the success of the CTE programs in your school it is important to consider any and all certification and licensure opportunities that could benefit students. Careful planning will result in the ability to integrate certifications and licensures into the knowledge and skills of many of the courses. Equipping students with relevant industry recognized certifications and licensures is one more way to insure that the CTE programs in Texas can prepare students for the industries of the 21st century.

The sole purpose of the certifications and licensures list in the PER is to provide the data to measure and report both district and statewide performance on the Perkins core indicator for technical skill attainment (2S1). The state's definition of 2S1 is included in the State Plan for CTE. In order for a certification or licensure to meet the definition for that core indicator, it must meet all three criteria in the definition: 1) end of program, 2) industry recognized, **and 3) available and appropriate for secondary students.*

**Districts may not use Perkins funds to benefit individual students; however, districts may use Perkins funds to buy block seats for certification or licensure exams if the district buys enough seats for all eligible students and makes those seats available to all eligible students.