

Florida Credentials Review Committee

Meeting Agenda

BETTY EASLEY CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOM 148
4075 ESPLANADE WAY, TALLAHASSEE, FL 32399
DEC. 1 • 1 – 4 P.M. ET

Chair's Welcome and Remarks

Katie Crofoot
*Director, REACH Office
Executive Office of the Governor*

Consent Item

- Meeting Minutes

Katie Crofoot

Learner Pathways: A Snapshot of Alignment in Palm Beach County

Julia Dattolo
*President & CEO
CareerSource Palm Beach County*
Carrie Pasquale
Director, Educational Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives

Update: Credentials of Value

Keith Richard, Ph.D.
Florida Department of Education

Survey Results: LMEC Wage Bracket Preferences and Credential Sequencing

Adam Briggs, Ph.D., PMP
*Senior Director, Performance and Analytics
CareerSource Florida*

Building the Master Credentials List

Dan McGrew
*Vice President, Strategic Policy and Performance
CareerSource Florida*

Timeline Update

Andra Cornelius, CEcD
*Senior Vice President, Business & Workforce Development
CareerSource Florida*

Open Discussion and Public Comment

Chair's Closing Remarks

Katie Crofoot

Next Workshop – Jan/Feb 2022
Next Meeting – Mar/Apr 2022

Information Items

Consent Item 1

Approved _____
Disapproved _____

Consent Item 1

CREDENTIALS REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with Chapter 286.011, Florida Statutes and Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, and the approved Charter of the Credentials Review Committee, the CareerSource Florida professional team shall keep correct and complete records and recordings of minutes on the proceedings of the Committee.

FOR CONSIDERATION

- **Approve the Credentials Review Committee minutes for the Sept. 8, 2021 meeting.**
- **Approve the Credentials Review Committee minutes for the Oct. 26, 2021, workshop.**

**Florida Credentials Review Committee
Meeting Minutes
Sept. 8, 2021**

I. Call to Order

Katie Crofoot, Director, Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Office, Executive Office of the Governor, called to order the inaugural meeting of the Florida Credentials Review Committee at 1 p.m. on Sept. 8, 2021, at the Florida Capitol – House Meeting Room 12.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

Executive Coordinator Lisa Cramer conducted a roll call. The following members were present:

Timothy Beard
Michael Biskie
Robert Boyd
Kevin Carr
Marshall Criser
Katie Crofoot
Katherine Goletz
Lloyd Gregg
Jennifer Grove
Diane Head
Kathy Hebda
Adrienne Johnston
Henry Mack
Debbie Magruder
Jacob Oliva
Casey Penn
James Taylor

IV. Member Introductions – Each member gave a quick introduction of their organization, title, and background.

V. Welcome and Remarks – Ms. Crofoot welcomed everyone, explained the importance of the Florida Credentials Review Committee (CRC) and reviewed the agenda. Ms. Crofoot reminded the members to review and complete the Conflict of Interest form. Public comments are welcome and those interested may complete a public comment card. Ms. Crofoot introduced George T. Levesque, Shareholder, Gray Robinson, to speak on the Florida Sunshine Law and ethical requirements for members.

VI. Ethics Considerations and Sunshine Law Overview – Mr. Levesque gave an overview on the Florida Sunshine Law, addressing key points of the law including open meetings, conflicts of interest and public records.

VII. Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act Overview – Michelle Dennard, President and CEO, CareerSource Florida, thanked the committee for their

dedication to advancing education and workforce development efforts in Florida, and spoke to the comprehensive nature of the REACH Act. Ms. Dennard discussed CareerSource Florida's implementation of the REACH Act, a priority of House Speaker Chris Sprowls and Governor DeSantis.

- VIII. Overview of Committee Responsibilities** – Andra Cornelius, CEcD, CareerSource Florida Sr. Vice President of Business and Workforce Development reviewed the Framework of Quality, the Master Credentials List (MCL) and the current work led by the Florida Department of Education's Credential of Value workgroup, begun in May 2021, with Education Strategies Group (ESG). Ms. Cornelius discussed the creation of a definition of value and a framework for evaluating credentials. She discussed how the current MCL is composed of the 2020-2021 Career and Professional Education (CAPE) secondary and postsecondary lists, as required in law and approved by the State Board of Education. An example of what the MCL might look like was also shown.

Dan McGrew, CareerSource Florida Vice President of Strategic Policy and Performance, discussed the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) to Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) analysis required in the REACH Act. Mr. McGrew described the requirement of the CRC to establish a process for linking all new credentials. He discussed Florida Education & Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) data and the CRC's requirement to establish a new returned-value funding formula containing weights for wages and underserved populations.

IX. Action Item

1. Credentials Review Committee Charter

Mr. McGrew reviewed the committee charter document.

Ms. Crofoot called for a motion to approve the committee charter.

Motion: Marshall Criser
Second: Michael Biskie

There was no discussion and no comments from the public.

The action item passed unanimously by a vote of 17 to 0. The committee approved the charter as presented. REACH Office Director Katie Crofoot was named Chair of the CRC as outlined in the charter.

X. REACH Act and Related Work Underway

Chair Crofoot introduced the next presenters to review work currently underway.

1. Emily Passias, Ph.D. Director, Education Strategy Group, shared with the committee information on how other states (Alabama, North Carolina, Hawaii, and Ohio) have approached the challenge of identifying occupations and credentials aligned to their workforce talent needs.

Keith Richard, Ph.D., Statewide Director, Career & Technical Education Quality, Florida Department of Education, gave an update on the Credential of Value work group and how it will inform the CRC's work, with their third work group meeting held on July 30 focusing on credential sequencing and the value of that process. Dr. Richard also spoke about a survey issued to businesses and partners on sequencing and how the work group plans to incorporate employers in its work to ensure the voice of industry is recognized and there is employer validation, with the support of CareerSource Florida, the Florida Council of 100 and others.

Additionally, Dr. Richard gave an update on the creation of a workforce education data platform that is being designed to inform and support the work of the CRC, the REACH Office, CareerSource Florida and the Departments of Education, Economic Opportunity and Children and Families. The three main functions of the platform will consider workforce supply and demand, program return on investment and program quality, ensuring consistency and creating a common understanding of the outcomes of Florida's workforce ecosystems.

2. Education Meets Opportunity Platform (EMOP) – Alli Phillips, COO, PAIRIN introduced herself and spoke to the three main project components:

- Data integration (build and standardize collection)
- Data rationalization and analytics (define, standardize and store); and
- Data utilization (create dashboards/Ad hoc reporting capability)

Ms. Phillips said the company has contracted with Skills Engine, Clarion and Research Improving People's Lives (RIPL). Work began in May 2021, with expectations that a dashboard should be produced by June 2022.

3. Labor Market Estimating Conference (LMEC) – Adrienne Johnston, Deputy Secretary, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

Ms. Johnston provided an update on her work with the Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the workplan relating to the first meeting of the LMEC on Oct. 6. The product of the LMEC will serve as the official data source for Florida on supply and demand gaps. She also described how the CRC will use that product.

XI. 2021-2022 CRC Timeline

Mr. McGrew walked the committee through the 2021–2022 timeline, CRC deliverables and due dates.

XII. Open Discussion/Public Comment

Member Lloyd Gregg inquired about where the CRC information will be maintained. Mr. McGrew informed the committee that all information will be located on CareerSource Florida's website and the committee's work will be transparent and available to all.

Mr. Gregg requested more information on what the Florida Department of Education's contracted groups are doing through the Credentials of Value workgroup.

Member Michael Biskie also commented that he would like more information. Chair Crofoot said additional information will be shared with the committee as work progresses for the committee's input and decisions throughout the process.

Member Jennifer Grove asked whether the EMOP platform being built would have a public facing component. Chancellor Henry Mack said it's currently reserved for staff and legislative staff; however, there have been conversations regarding a public facing component, as this information could be very useful to parents, students and faculty.

XIII. Closing Remarks

Ms. Crofoot thanked the members for their commitment and time. She expressed gratitude to Speaker Sprowls for his vision and the landmark legislation to transform Florida's education and workforce system. This committee has a key role in supporting this vision and responsibility in ensuring the success and alignment with the Governor's goal to achieve a stronger, more competitive Florida. She thanked the CareerSource Florida team for their support of the committee. The next quarterly meeting of the committee will be in December.

XIV. Adjournment

Chair Crofoot adjourned the meeting at 3:18 p.m.

**Florida Credentials Review Committee
Framework of Quality Workshop Minutes
Oct. 26, 2021**

I. Call to Order

Katie Crofoot, Director, Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Office, Executive Office of the Governor and Credentials Review Committee Chair, welcomed members of the Florida Credentials Review Committee (CRC) at 9:30 a.m. on Oct. 26, 2021, via Microsoft Teams.

II. Roll Call

Executive Coordinator Lisa Cramer conducted a roll call. The following members were present:

Katie Crofoot
Michael Biskie
Diane Head
Kathy Hebda
Jacob Oliva
Casey Penn
Jennifer Grove
Bob Boyd
Henry Mack
Katherine Goletz

- III. Welcome and Remarks** – Chair Crofoot welcomed everyone to the informational workshop. Chair Crofoot asked members to ask questions, share their thoughts and provide feedback. Ms. Crofoot reviewed the agenda, thanked the CRC for their input on the draft employer engagement survey and mentioned that public comments are welcome and time will be provided.

- IV. Labor Market Estimating Conference** – Amy Baker, Coordinator, State Office of Economic and Demographic Research

Ms. Baker gave an overview on the newly established LMEC, a recap of the Oct. 6 conference, and a review of the current publication identified as a test product and plans for future convenings.

- V. Education Strategy Group (ESG)** – Presentation by Keith Richard, Ph.D., Statewide Director, Career & Technical Education Quality Florida Department of Education; Kathleen Mathers Principal Education Strategy Group; and Emily Passias, Ph.D. Director Education Strategy Group

Dr. Passias provided an update on the collective work regarding:

- Framework of Quality
- Lessons Learned from Other States (Ohio and North Carolina)
- Status Update on Employer Engagement Survey/Focus Groups
- Committee Input on Criteria for Credential Sequencing

This led to discussion about the wage bracket information and the five wage brackets provided by the LMEC test product.

VI. Timeline Updates – Andra Cornelius, CEcD, Sr. Vice President, Business and Workforce Development, and Dan McGrew, Vice President, Strategic Policy and Performance, CareerSource Florida

Ms. Cornelius noted there will be modifications to the timeline based on recent events including approval to maintain the current MCL (Master Credentials List) for the 2022-2023 academic year, as well as the upcoming LMEC in mid-January 2022, at which a “simple” supply and demand will be produced for all bands of education (below high school through advanced degrees).

CRC members were informed that the next in-person meeting will be held in Tallahassee Dec. 1. Ms. Cornelius and Mr. McGrew will break out the decision points for the committee, providing information through workshops and receiving member feedback and decisions. In the interim, members are welcome and encouraged to request any data needed to facilitate their work.

VII. Open Discussion/Public Comment: No comments

VIII. Closing Remarks

Chair Crofoot thanked House Speaker Chris Sprowls and the committee members for this important work supporting our Governor’s goal to make Florida No. 1 in the nation in workforce and education.

IX. Adjournment

Committee Chair Katie Crofoot adjourned the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

Florida Credentials Review Committee

Survey Response Summary

Following the Oct. 26, 2021, Framework of Quality Workshop, a survey was sent to all Credentials Review Committee members to share thoughts on two critical components of the Framework of Quality:

1. Middle- to high-level wage thresholds
2. Bottom-level wage threshold to evaluate credentials in a sequence

Survey Results

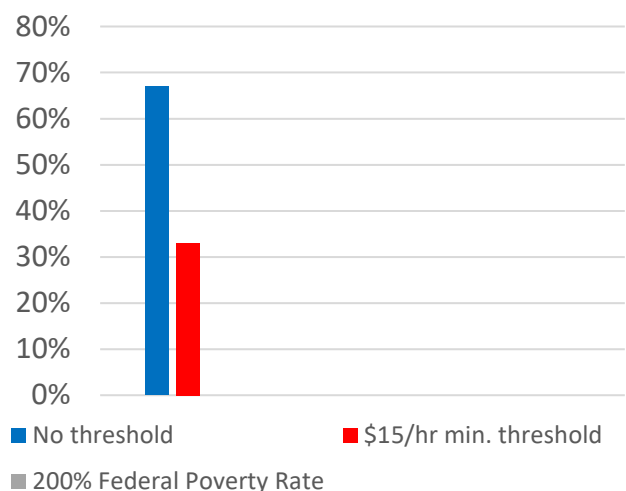
Q1: When determining actual wage dollar thresholds for “middle-level to high-level,” on which of the following methodologies should the definition of middle and high level be based?

Q2: What “basement” or “bottom” wage threshold should be used in order for a credential to be evaluated for stackability? In other words, stackable credentials will only be evaluated for stackability if they at least meet a basement or bottom wage threshold of: (options depicted in chart below)

Wage Basis?



Threshold?



* There were no votes in support of the option “200% of the federal poverty rate.”

Summary of Additional Feedback Provided

Middle- to High-Level Wages

Cost of Living/ Financial Stability Standard	Actual Wage Data from Earners
Wage classes can vary considerably from location to location; aligning with cost of living should be a factor	New companies to Fla. often offer higher wages to attract talent; demand resulting in wage volatility
Suppressed and untimely wage data prevents full clarity in some areas	Blend possible: bands based on today's actuals with regional overlay to account for cost of living?
Using actual wages, in a state with relatively low wages, may oppose the spirit of HB 1507	High variance for wages with occupations: actuals more relevant for each CIP code?

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Bottom Wage Threshold for Credential Sequencing*

No Wage Threshold	\$15/Hour Minimum Wage
Many occupations statewide not yet at \$15/hr.; also depends on how closely aligned credentials are to their next-level credential	For new job market entrants, starting at an established minimum wage seems better
If a mid to high threshold for credentials of value, stacking should meet same criteria	
Lack of wage stability until 2026 limits current reliability of this metric	
Bottom wage unimportant: context is stacked credential for living wage	

During the Credentials Review Committee meeting on Dec. 1, the CareerSource Florida team will facilitate additional conceptual discussions on the topics of wage and demand thresholds associated with various occupations in Florida. In January, the Labor Market Estimating Conference (LMEC) will provide a list of 400+ occupations, including bachelor's and graduate degrees, with average wages for each occupation. This product will permit "simple" versions of supply, demand, and of the gap between the two at the statewide level.

In July, the LMEC also intends to deliver analyses showing CIP-SOC linkages and supply-demand data more directly relevant to regional and local areas. This additional information will be important for connecting in-demand occupations to identified credentials of value and the programs that offer them. Beyond these largely CTE-related credentials, the Credentials Review Committee will consider how best to include *other* types of non-degree credentials such as industry certifications, licenses and designated apprenticeships. Pursuant to the REACH Act, this committee will determine in the coming weeks what constitutes middle- to high-level wages and whether any bottom wage thresholds should be set (the topics covered in the survey), while also discussing connections between in-demand occupations, employer-identified skills gaps, and the potential implications of various approaches to these topics for businesses and stakeholders across Florida's workforce, education and business development ecosystems.

Florida Credentials Review Committee

Framework of Quality Overview

What Is the Framework of Quality?

The Framework of Quality is a rubric by which workforce credentials are evaluated for inclusion on a Master Credentials List (MCL) for the state of Florida in alignment with federally-funded workforce accountability requirements. These accountability requirements include credential attainment, placement and median wage outcomes. Credentials to be evaluated include registered apprenticeship programs, industry certifications, licenses, advanced technical certificates, college credit certificates, career certificates, applied technology diplomas, and associate, baccalaureate and graduate degrees. The Master Credentials Lists will help the state direct funding to prioritize credentials of value and address the economic needs of Florida's citizens and businesses. Specific funding attached to the Master Credentials List is covered later in this document.

By statute, nondegree credentials should require:

1. Evidence the credential **meets labor market demand** as defined by the Labor Market Estimating Conference or **meets local demand** as identified by criteria established by the Credentials Review Committee.
2. Evidence the **competencies** mastered upon completion of the credential are **aligned with labor market demand**.
3. **Evidence of employment and earnings outcomes** for individuals obtaining the credentials and evidence that **earnings outcomes meet middle- to high-level wages**. Preference is given to credentials generating high-level wages.
 - Credentials that do not meet the earnings outcome criteria **must be part of a sequence of credentials required for the next level occupation that *does* meet the earnings outcome criteria** established by the Credentials Review Committee.

The Credentials Review Committee also will establish criteria to determine value for degree programs. As with nondegree credentials, these criteria shall include evidence the degree program **meets the labor market demand** as defined by the Labor Market Estimating Conference or **meets local demand** as identified by criteria established by the Credentials Review Committee.

The Credentials Review Committee will establish a process for **prioritizing nondegree and degree credentials based on critical statewide or regional shortages**.

Florida Credentials Review Committee

Critical Variables for the Framework of Quality

The following four data elements must be considered when defining the value of a credential:

1. **Labor Market Demand** – There are three elements of demand that must be considered for the Framework of Quality.
 - a. Labor Market Estimating Conference (LMEC) – Statute establishes a Labor Market Estimating Conference that will identify occupations that are in demand at the state, regional and local levels; high-skill; and have middle-level to high-level wages. The LMEC met on October 6 and issued its first publication of an occupational analysis for the state of Florida – (<http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/conferences/labormarket/index.cfm>).
 - b. Local Demand – Statute states that credentials must meet labor market demand as defined by the LMEC or meet local demand as identified by criteria established by the Credentials Review Committee.
 - c. Priority of Demand – The Credentials Review Committee will establish a process to prioritize nondegree and degree credentials based on critical statewide or regional shortages identified by the LMEC.
2. **Employment Outcome Thresholds** – The Credentials Review Committee must establish thresholds for employment outcomes of credentials to determine inclusion on the Master Credentials List. Employment outcome thresholds represent the ability of an individual who holds the credential to gain employment.
3. **Earning Outcome Thresholds** – The Credentials Review Committee must establish thresholds for earning outcomes of credentials that will determine inclusion on the Master Credentials List. Statute requires credentials meet middle-level to high-level wages. Earnings outcome thresholds represent the annual wages an individual who holds the credential can earn.
4. **Credential Sequencing** – Credentials that do not meet the earnings outcome threshold may be considered for inclusion on the Master Credentials List if they are part of a sequence of credentials that lead to an occupation that *does* meet the earnings outcome criteria. Education Strategy Group has conducted research on the stackable nature of credentials and elements the Credentials Review Committee may consider when establishing criteria for credential sequencing.

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How Will the Framework of Quality Be Used?

Once the Framework of Quality is defined by the Credentials Review Committee, credentials offered in Florida will be evaluated against the framework for inclusion on the Master Credentials List.

Education programs that confer credentials are offered by various entities including:

1. Florida Department of Education (DOE) – 12 state universities, 28 state colleges in the Florida College System, and 67 technical colleges and school districts offer degree and nondegree credentials at the secondary and postsecondary levels. The DOE also registers apprenticeship programs in Florida.
2. Private Education Providers
 - a. Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) – There are 30 private, non-profit colleges and universities in Florida serving more than 159,000 students. Credentials conferred are mostly at the baccalaureate and graduate levels.
 - b. Commission for Independent Education – There are nearly 900 non-public, postsecondary, mostly for-profit education institutions serving nearly 200,000 students throughout Florida that are governed by the Florida DOE's Commission for Independent Education. Institutions confer both degree and nondegree credentials at the postsecondary level. Degree credentials are at the associate, baccalaureate and graduate levels.
3. Other – Floridians also may obtain credentials through other means including self-study and preparation, attending licensed education institutions out of state or online, or from private entities authorized to offer education programs that lead to credentials.

Education Strategy Group plans to evaluate credentials offered by DOE against specific elements of the Framework of Quality approved by the Credentials Review Committee.

State-Funded Programs Linked to the Master Credentials List

Per statute, a number of state-funded education programs require that the program leads to a credential on the Master Credentials List. These programs include:

1. Incumbent Worker Training – Training grants issued by CareerSource Florida to businesses who train existing workers for new skills.

Florida Credentials Review Committee

2. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Credentials – Specific credentials that are necessary for the agriculture industry in Florida and identified by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services must be considered by the Credentials Review Committee for inclusion on the Master Credentials List.
3. Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act – The CAPE Act was established in 2013 to create a statewide planning partnership between business and education communities to identify programs of study and credentials that would help Florida expand and retain high-value industry and sustain a vibrant state economy. Public secondary and post-secondary institutions receive up to \$20.5 million in state incentive funds for CAPE programs based on credentials earned and completers. In order to be eligible for CAPE funding, programs must lead to credentials on the Master Credentials List. The Credentials Review Committee will establish a process by which credentials are submitted for review and evaluation for inclusion on the Master Credentials List. This new process will replace the previous CAPE application process for CAPE-specific credentials.
4. Open Door Grant – The Open Door Grant pays up to two-thirds of tuition for students enrolled in specified education programs that lead to credentials on the Master Credentials List. This grant is offered only through the Florida College System and the 67 school district postsecondary schools.
5. Money-Back Guarantee – Florida College System and school district schools are to identify programs that lead to credentials on the Master Credentials List that will be offered with a money-back guarantee, in which the cost of tuition will be refunded to students who are not able to find a job in their field of study within six months of completion.
6. New Workforce Education Programs – The State Board of Education must establish criteria for the review and approval of new workforce education programs at Florida College System and school district schools based on the Framework of Quality established by the Credentials Review Committee. Only programs that meet the Framework of Quality will be eligible for performance incentive funding from the state of Florida.

It is worth noting that the Master Credentials List **does not determine what education programs are offered or available in Florida**. Statute defines specific state-funded programs that MUST align with the Master Credentials List. The law does not limit what education programs are offered. Education providers and institutions that are not included in the state-funded programs defined in statute are not impacted by the Master Credentials List.

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Approach to Building the Master Credentials List



Florida Credentials Review Committee

Meeting and Main Activities Timeline

Acronyms:

CAPE = Career and Professional Education Act

CIP = Classification of Instructional Program

CoV = Credentials of Value

CRC = Credentials Review Committee

ESG = Education Strategy Group

FETPIP = Florida Education & Training Placement Information Program

LMEC = Labor Market Estimating Conference

MCL = Master Credentials List

PSE = Programs of Strategic Emphasis

SBE = State Board of Education

SOC = Standard Occupational Classification

Lead Entity	Color
Joint Workgroup	
Department of Education (DOE)	
CareerSource Florida (CSF)	
Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)	
Labor Market Estimating Conference (LMEC)	
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS)	
Board of Governors	

Florida Credentials Review Committee

Meeting and Main Activities Timeline

	CRC Mtg 1	Framework of Quality Workshop 1	CRC Mtg 2	Framework of Quality Workshop 2	CRC Mtg 3	Returned-Value Funding Workshop	CRC Mtg 4
Prior to Meeting	SBE adopted CAPE lists as Master Credentials List (MCL) for 21-22 (08/18/2021)	Labor Market Estimating Conference Meeting 1 (10/06/2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupations requiring HS to Associates analyzed Wage brackets for state, occupation, and region provided Job opening projections provided 	Send CRC feedback survey on middle- to high-level wage thresholds and credential sequencing wage threshold	Labor Market Estimating Conference Meeting 2 (TBD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze occupations at all education levels Analyze supply and demand for each occupation 	Draft Framework of Quality based on CRC feedback	Identify Returned-Value Funding data elements and sources	Apply approved Framework of Quality to currently available credentials in Florida
	CRC Members appointed (08/26/2021)		ESG continues analysis and begins to build a process framework for CRC to use when evaluating credentials	Draft thresholds for evaluating demand and employment outcomes including local demand for Framework of Quality	Draft process for submitting credentials for evaluation and inclusion on MCL		Accept applications and evaluate new credentials for inclusion on MCL
	CRC Charter drafted	ESG drafts criteria for evaluating credentials for sequencing and proposes middle- to high-level wage threshold for Framework of Quality		Initiate employer engagement activities to include CRC members, industry/business groups, and other industry sector constituents			
Meeting Date	Sept. 2021	Oct. 2021	Dec. 2021	Jan./Feb. 2022	Mar./Apr. 2022	Apr. 2022	June 2022
CRC Actions	Approved CRC Charter	LMEC provided overview of occupation analysis and preview of data expected in January	Discuss potential wage thresholds to define middle- to high-level wages	Review labor supply and demand analysis	Consider approval of Framework of Quality	Review elements of Returned-Value Funding formula and data sources	Consider approval of MCL for 2022-2023
	Scheduled Framework of Quality Workshop for CRC members (10/26/2021)	ESG provided status update on Framework of Quality focusing on 2 of 4 factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle- to high-level wages Credential stacking 	Discuss criteria to evaluate for credential sequencing	Review results from employer engagement activities	Consider approval of process for adding credentials to MCL		Submit approved MCL to CSF board for approval, then to SBE
			Review updated timeline for deliverables	Review draft thresholds for evaluating demand and employment outcomes			Consider new Returned-Value Funding formula

November 2021

Note: All dates are subject to change based on the dependencies of each action. Changes will be communicated to this committee in subsequent meetings or earlier.

Florida Credentials Review Committee

Information Items

Florida Credentials Review Committee

Member Proxy Bio

Marcelo Dossantos



Marcelo Dossantos serves as director for talent development and executive director of the Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Leadership Council at FloridaMakes. FloridaMakes is a statewide, industry-led, public-private partnership with the sole mission of strengthening and advancing Florida's economy by improving the productivity and technological performance of its manufacturing sector, with an emphasis on small- and medium-sized firms.

Mr. Dossantos has a lifetime of business development and workforce experience, having most recently served as the vice president of strategic initiatives at CareerSource Research Coast, where he worked collaboratively to create and sponsor seven industry-led apprenticeship programs to help fast-track the growth of Florida's skilled talent pipelines needed to meet market demands.

Mr. Dossantos will serve as a proxy for Credential Review Committee member Kevin Carr, CEO of FloridaMakes, during the Dec. 1, 2021, meeting. The proxy request was approved by Chair Katie Crofoot, as required in the Credential Review Committee Charter, on Nov. 12, 2021.

**Industry Association Representative*

Florida Credentials Review Committee

Member Proxy Bio

Emily Sikes



Emily Sikes will serve as a proxy for Credential Review Committee member Marshall Criser, Chancellor of the State University System of Florida, during the Dec. 1, 2021, meeting. The proxy request was approved by Chair Katie Crofoot, as required in the Credential Review Committee Charter, on Nov. 19, 2021.

Ms. Sikes is the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and Economic Development for the State University System of Florida, Board of Governors. She supports the Board of Governors on various issues such as academic programs, student affairs, workforce alignment, research, strategic planning and serves as a liaison to statewide economic development groups. She joined the Board office in September 2016.

** Proxy for the Chancellor of the State University System*

Florida Credentials Review Committee

Speakers' Bios

Julia Dattolo



Julia Dattolo is the president and CEO of CareerSource Palm Beach County.

Ms. Dattolo is a U.S. Navy veteran, serving as a nurse corps officer for 22 years before retiring. Commissioned an ensign, she was stationed at the National Naval Medical Command in Bethesda Maryland. Her assignments included Branch Clinic MCAS EL Toro, Naval Branch Clinic Iwakuni, Japan, Naval Hospital San Diego, and Naval Hospital Jacksonville. She was a trained member of the Naval Rapid Deployable Medical Force. She obtained her master's degree at UCLA while stationed at El Toro, California. She culminated her Naval career in 2006 as the Commanding Officer of the Naval Hospital Jacksonville Detachment Unit, Naval Operational Support Center in West Palm Beach. As a nurse, she was a critical care clinical nurse specialist, working concurrently in hospitals in the location of her duty stations. Upon retirement, Ms. Dattolo began a new career helping disabled war veterans secure employment as manager of the Veterans Employment Unit at CareerSource Palm Beach County.

Ms. Dattolo sits on the Executive Board of Directors of the Wounded Veterans Relief Fund. She and her husband, Dr. Robert Dattolo, a former Naval commander and flight surgeon, have been married for 30 years and have two children. They reside in Palm Beach Gardens.

Carrie Pasquale



Carrie Pasquale is the director of educational partnerships and strategic initiatives at CareerSource Palm Beach County. She is responsible for strategic relationship building initiatives with business, economic development, government, education and community leaders in support of employment and economic growth in Palm Beach County.

Her work with the Palm Beach Pathways Model is designed to expand the region's talent pipeline in collaboration with employers, educational institutions and chambers of commerce along with business and economic development partners. CareerSource Palm Beach County identifies the most in-demand jobs in the county to meet the needs of employers. Educational institutions and training providers develop curriculum and courses of study that provide career pathways for job seekers to fill these positions. CareerSource Palm Beach County also administers job training grants and educational scholarships, internships, and pre-apprentice and apprenticeship programs that support the Palm Beach Pathways Model.

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Prior to joining CareerSource Palm Beach County in 2019, Ms. Pasquale was director of corporate and continuing education at Palm Beach State College where she was responsible for the strategic leadership and operational management of the Workforce and Continuing Education programs. She joined the college as a program director in 2004 and, prior to that, served as education coordinator with Martin Memorial Health Systems. Ms. Pasquale holds a Master of Science degree in Organizational Leadership from Palm Beach Atlantic University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Service Administration from the University of Central Florida.

Keith Richard, Ph.D.



Keith Richard is the statewide director of career & technical education quality for the Florida Department of Education, Division of Career and Adult Education. Dr. Richard's work focuses on innovating Florida's career and technical programs, better aligning them to industry and ensuring the state's talent meets the demands of future of work.

Dr. Richard directs Florida's annual career and technical education audit to support the aims of Perkins V and the Governor's goal of becoming No. 1 in the country in workforce education by 2030. His work is focused on co-leading Florida's Credentials of Value Workgroup initiative to support the aims of the Reimagining Education and Career Help Act. Additionally, he serves as an agency lead for the implementation of the Education Meets Opportunity Platform.

The Florida Report

AN EXAMINATION OF PATHWAYS MATTER IN FLORIDA

LOWELL MATTHEWS, JR.
DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS, EXCELINED



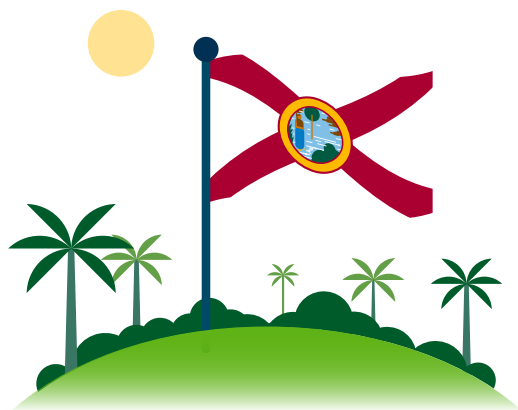
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ABOUT EXCELINED

Launched by former Florida Governor Jeb Bush in 2008, the Foundation for Excellence in Education (ExcelinEd) supports state leaders in transforming education to unlock lifelong opportunity and success for each and every child. From policy development to implementation, ExcelinEd advances student-centered solutions that close learning gaps, empower families with opportunity, strengthen pathways to college and careers, bridge the digital divide and reimagine learning. Learn more at www.ExcelinEd.org.

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FOREWORD

The pace of change in the 21st century seems to be constantly accelerating. Each innovation promises significant improvement in our lives yet can also challenge our familiar way of life. This contrast is on full display in our global economy. Businesses have embraced new technologies to improve production and lower costs to deliver faster and better experiences for consumers. These same businesses then find they often lack workers with the skills they need to scale these efforts. The gap in what employers need and want—and what our education systems deliver—is often called the “skills gap.” It is a persistent problem that states need to solve to grow their economies to their fullest potential.

Surveys of businesses, employees and even college students reinforce the extent of the skills gap. A great many current and future participants in the workforce lack the skills they need to succeed. States need to do a better job of preparing these individuals for future success, and it starts with education.

Fortunately, states are beginning to align their career and technical education system offerings to current business needs. However, in many states that work is very preliminary or consists of a series of one-off policies that move the needle slightly but fail to tackle the full ecosystem—comprised of K-12, postsecondary, workforce strategies, policies, programs, supports and data—that will transform the education to workforce pipeline. This ecosystem is discussed in ExcelinEd’s Pathways Matter (www.PathwaysMatter.org). It is through the Pathways Matter lens that we look at Florida’s efforts to address the skills gap.

As a Floridian, I am proud of the work the state began in 2007 with the Career and Professional Education Act (CAPE). This legislation began the process of forging a tighter nexus between business and education, responding to the state’s critical workforce needs and preparing students for future success. It helped establish rigorous and relevant career-themed courses that lead to industry credentials and that also articulate into postsecondary credit or coursework. The CAPE Act resulted in Florida’s students leading the nation in earning higher-quality industry credentials. While CAPE was an important first step in better alignment between business and education, it was never intended to be a “mission accomplished” milestone.

In 2021, Florida enacted one of the most significant and comprehensive set of reforms for its education to workforce systems. If implemented well, it will further boost Florida as a national leader in student-centered education. This report recognizes the important progress Florida made this year, highlights the implementation challenges that lie ahead and recommends future actions to strengthen and support the education to workforce ecosystem that we call Pathways Matter.

I encourage you read this report to discover how your state can learn from Florida’s efforts. For Floridians, learn how you can help make Florida a leader in preparing our fellow residents to succeed in the future workforce.

As always, ExcelinEd stands ready to help.

Patricia Levesque

Patricia Levesque
Chief Executive Officer
Foundation for Excellence in Education

Pathways Matter and Florida

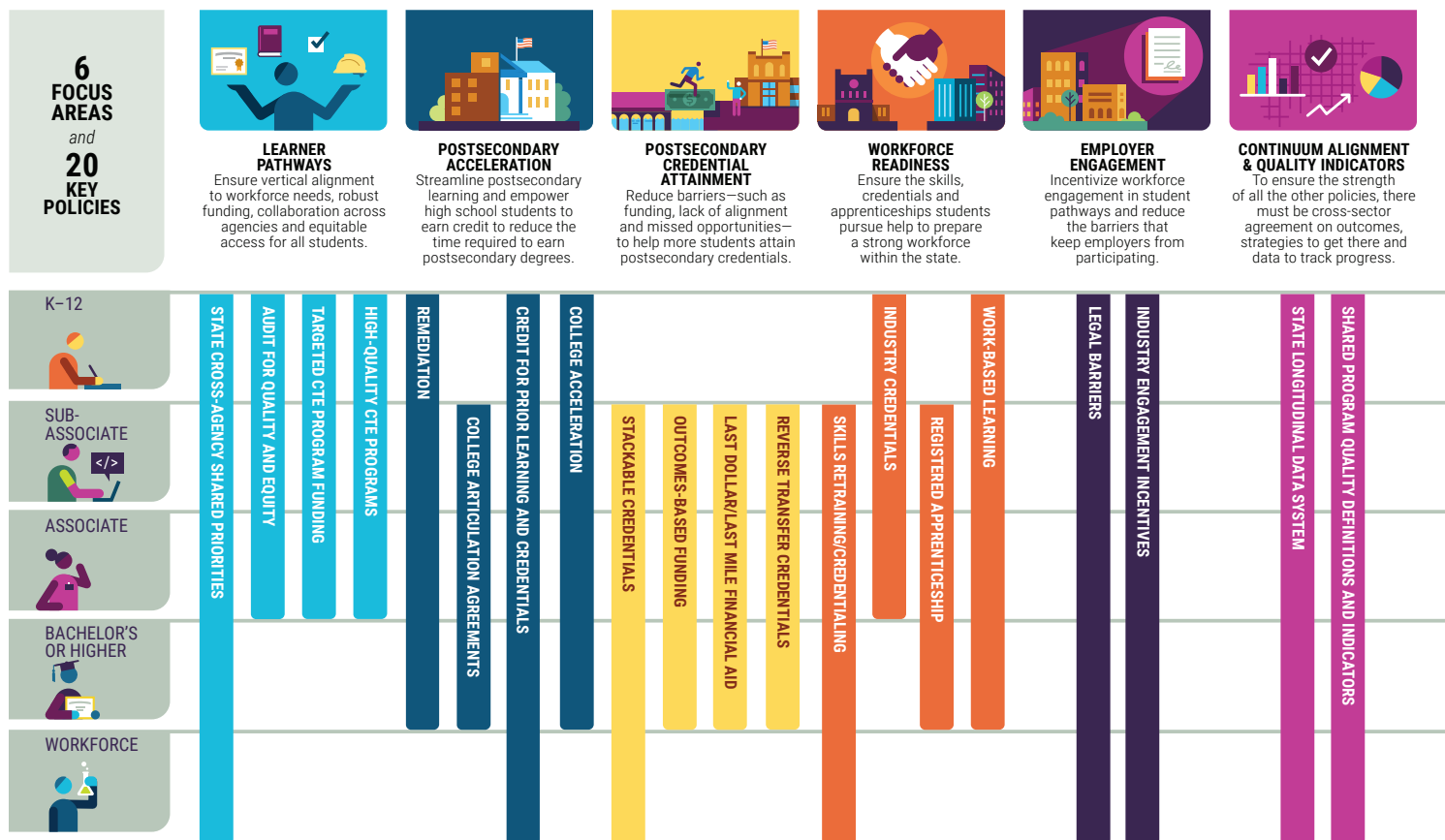
WHAT IS PATHWAYS MATTER AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

States have traditionally approached the education to workforce pipeline by tackling individual silos, such as creating or expanding new K-12 programs without examining how the programs are aligned with industry demand or vertically linked to postsecondary programs. This has led to a Balkanized resource allocation process where institutions compete against each other rather than work with each other for resources and supports to build student and worker success.

In many states, agencies use different data to determine employer demand to identify and support workforce programs, leading to one agency highlighting critical workforce needs completely at odds with another agency or supporting programs linked to occupations below a living wage. This can have lasting effects on all learners if in-demand and living wage determinations

THE PATHWAYS MATTER ECOSYSTEM

Pathways Matter uses six focus areas with 20 policies that complement and reinforce each other to transform the education to workforce system.



vary across student and worker populations. States need to break the cycle of focusing on individual institutions and programs and examine how these efforts can be integrated and build off one another. Pathways Matter breaks that cycle.

Pathways Matter establishes the first comprehensive learner-centered education to workforce continuum for state policy. Beginning in K-12 and extending through postsecondary and employment, Pathways Matter seeks to change state fragmented efforts to transform the education to workforce pipeline into a policy continuum.

WHY FLORIDA?

Florida provides an interesting inflection point for Pathways Matter. The state merits a deeper examination for its bold history in transforming the education to workforce pipeline and a leadership team committed to implementing the transformation.

FLORIDA'S LEGACY OF PRIORITIZING EDUCATION TO WORKFORCE PATHWAYS FLORIDA CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (CAPE) ACT

Florida has always been a bold leader in transformational, educational reform. The state began to transform CTE beginning in 2007 with the Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act. The act required, for the first time, that career and technical education (CTE) programs in middle and high schools were designed with input from employers and industry to ensure that students were learning and earning rigorous and relevant knowledge, skills and credentials aligned to industry need.

The CAPE Act created a performance-funded incentive that allowed schools to generate additional funding when a student earned a qualifying industry certification. The industry certification had to be nationally recognized to allow portability across state lines, independently certified by a third-party to ensure quality and had to address a critical statewide or local economic need using state labor market information to ensure that the program and credential were needed by employers.¹

Simultaneously, the Florida College System was directed to create articulation agreements for qualifying industry certifications to create vertical linkages between K-12 CTE programs and postsecondary programs that allowed students to earn college credit.² Together these components secured a more responsive education system to workforce demand and gave students access to programs that would better prepare them for higher-skill, in-demand and middle- or high-wage occupations.

The CAPE Act succeeded in what it attempted to do. Before COVID-19, more than 106,000 students earned a qualifying industry certification in 2018-19.³ However, it also highlighted the challenges of a narrow focus. While the law required partnerships with higher education, businesses or other appropriate partners from the local community to provide work-based learning opportunities, such as internships, externships and on-the-job training, the act didn't ensure that those work-based learning opportunities were high quality. Moreover, the act did not address other types of CTE programs, such as apprenticeships.

GOVERNOR DESANTIS' GOAL TO MAKE FLORIDA NO. 1 IN WORKFORCE AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION BY 2030

Fast forward to 2019. Newly elected Governor Ron DeSantis announced his intention to make Florida No. 1 in workforce and technical education training programs by 2030, a ranking achieved by the number of people aged 25 to 64 with a postsecondary credential.⁴ He issued an executive order that required the Florida Department of Education to conduct a review of CTE programs at the K-12 and postsecondary level to ensure that these programs are aligned with market demand. The order also called for other initiatives and investments to expand access to and attainment of postsecondary credentials.⁵

Florida provides an interesting inflection point for Pathways Matter. The state merits a deeper examination for its bold history in transforming the education to workforce pipeline and a leadership team committed to implementing the transformation.

2021 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

In 2021, under the leadership of Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chris Sprowls, Florida passed landmark legislation to significantly overhaul many aspects of its education to workforce systems,⁶ including legislation to address dual enrollment⁷ and incentives for postsecondary credential attainment.⁸ In addition to the legislation, Florida has committed to investing almost \$200 million to support implementation of and updates to its policies and programs.⁹

Significant actions to date have focused on more centralized state governance structures, improved data metrics and reporting, credentialing of learners across education levels and greater return on investment for postsecondary programs.

FLORIDA'S FOCUS AREAS

Notably, Florida's legislative actions addressed *all six* focus areas outlined in the Pathways Matter framework, with particular emphasis on the following:

LEARNER PATHWAYS

- Creation of an office to coordinate education and workforce agencies, oversee the workforce development system, advise the governor, facilitate data sharing and determine quality of workforce-related programs based on participant outcome measures.
- Re-creation of the Labor Market Estimating Conference to identify real-time, labor supply/demand and the identification of middle- and high-wage occupations prioritized by level of statewide or regional shortage, with all state agencies using the conference's data going forward.



COLLEGE ACCELERATION

- Significant expansion of dual credit by allowing all students access to summer dual enrollment beginning in 2022 and adding private school and home school students to public school students eligible for funded dual enrollment beginning in fall 2021.
- Authority for schools and higher education institutions to use multiple methods to qualify students for dual enrollment in lieu of the college placement test.



POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

- \$35 million for the Open Door Grant Program to help Florida residents who are unemployed, underemployed or furloughed to enroll and complete a sub-associate credential linked to high-demand occupations.
- \$25 million for a Buy-One, Get-One Free (BOGO) policy that allows students in certain upper-level STEM courses to get a free upper-level STEM course for each upper-level STEM course they take.
- Money Back Guarantee that refunds tuition to students in select Florida College System (FCS) programs linked to middle- or high-wage jobs when students are unable to find employment in their field within six months following program completion.



CONTINUUM ALIGNMENT & QUALITY INDICATORS

- Creation of a Master Credentials List to identify credentials of value in the state, to be used for CAPE incentive funding, and to direct workforce education and training funds by CareerSource Florida.
- Massive overhaul of the state's workforce information system to include a public data dashboard on credential attainment and wages by workforce-related programs and providers.



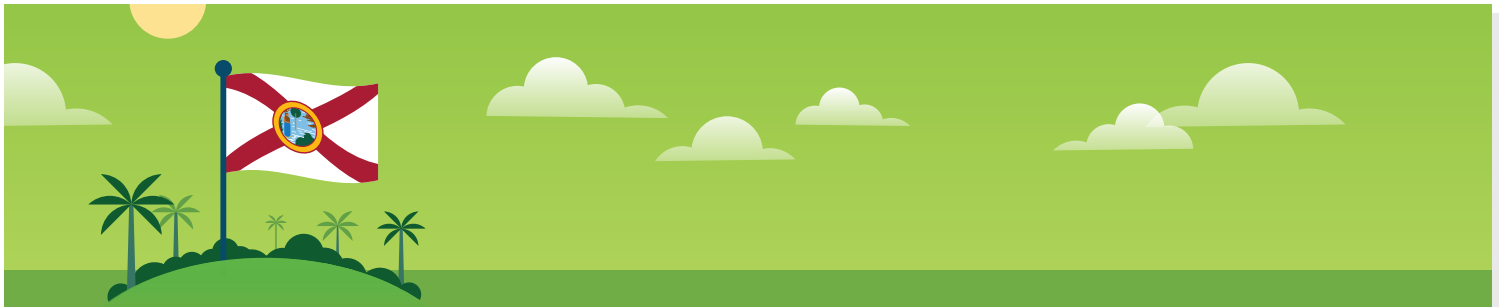
FLORIDA'S CURRENT POLICY LANDSCAPE

Florida made significant progress in 2021 addressing the full ecosystem of Pathways Matter.

Florida is a national leader in data collection, postsecondary acceleration and industry credential attainment. With the 2021 legislative session, Florida made significant strides in creating a more unified, high-quality workforce system through more coordinated oversight by the REACH Office and uniformity in data collection, analysis, use and sharing. This will help the state identify, support and promote high-quality workforce-related programs.

However, significant implementation challenges lie ahead to ensure that real opportunities for learner success will flourish. For example, Florida could do a better job in identifying and supporting high-quality work-based learning opportunities, strengthening employer engagement and ensuring access to high-quality pathways for underserved learners.

States need to break the cycle of focusing on individual institutions and programs and examine how these efforts can be integrated and build off one another. Pathways Matter breaks that cycle, establishing the first comprehensive learner-centered education to workforce continuum for state policy.



FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on ExcelinEd’s analysis of Florida’s policy and programs, the table below shows the findings and recommendations for how Florida can continue its efforts to develop and support high-quality learner pathways.

PATHWAYS MATTER FOCUS AREA

LEARNER PATHWAYS



FINDINGS ON FLORIDA’S STATUS

- Strong audit of CTE programs for quality
- Potential for strengthened cross-agency coordination

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN

- Focus on ensuring access to high-quality pathways for underserved learners, quality work-based learning opportunities and vertical linkages to postsecondary programs through employment
- Provide dedicated state funding for high-quality CTE programs, which lead to higher- skill, in-demand and middle- to high-wage occupations

POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION



- Strong leader in offering--and students succeeding in--college acceleration

- Support early college high school programs, particularly programs that focus on underserved students

POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT



- Recent enactments provide the foundation to support students earning credentials
- Outcome-based funding at the postsecondary level

- Fund and evaluate the most recent program creations and enhancements, especially the Last Mile Scholarship Program and the state’s reverse transfer policy
- Adopt a comprehensive state policy on stackable credentials from K-12 to postsecondary to professional credentials

WORKFORCE READINESS



- Apprenticeships, CAPE academies and student acquisition of industry credentials remain a strength and focus of the state

- Focus on quality, defining it and ensuring it, in work-based learning opportunities

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT



- Long-term strategy in securing and maintaining employer engagement in CTE programs is missing

- Investigate incentives to engage and maintain engagement of employers in CTE programs

CONTINUUM ALIGNMENT & QUALITY INDICATORS



- Very strong longitudinal data system
- Recent enactments to define and measure quality in CTE pathways await implementation

- Implementation awaits, with particular importance on delivering the data in an actionable way for policymakers and a user-friendly interface with the public to help inform CTE pathway decision making

Analysis of Florida Policy Landscape

LEARNER PATHWAYS

Ensure vertical alignment to workforce needs, robust funding, collaboration across agencies and equitable access for all students.

K-12	SUB-ASSOCIATE	ASSOCIATE	BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER	WORKFORCE
HIGH-QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS				
TARGETED CTE PROGRAM FUNDING				
AUDIT FOR QUALITY AND EQUITY				
STATE CROSS-AGENCY SHARED PRIORITIES				

Comprehensive education to workforce pathways are built upon high-quality programs and related supports that are accessible to all learners. High-quality pathways prepare learners for success in higher-skill, in-demand, and middle- and high-wage occupations with rigorous learning experiences that seamlessly align across education and workforce development systems.



Florida's Learner Pathways are a work in progress. The state has made dramatic improvements in 2021 with the passage of workforce legislation that creates greater coordination of efforts and shared priorities and metrics across agencies. The legislation builds on the CTE audit that Florida is conducting to evaluate alignment and value in program offerings. These efforts will remain a challenge, though, without additional funding for high-value CTE programs.

Florida's Learner Pathways are a work in progress. The state has made dramatic improvements in 2021 with the passage of workforce legislation that creates greater coordination of efforts and shared priorities and metrics across agencies.

AUDIT FOR QUALITY AND ENSURING ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY PATHWAYS FOR UNDERSERVED LEARNERS

Florida's efforts to improve its K-12 and postsecondary CTE programs is a promising work in progress. The Florida Department of Education is conducting a review of CTE programs at the K-12 and postsecondary levels for alignment to high-growth, high-demand, and middle- and high-wage employment opportunities. The CTE audit makes Florida only one of a handful of states that require regular, systemic evaluations of CTE programs' alignment and performance. The first CTE audit revealed that nearly one-third of examined CTE programs failed to meet state-defined market-demand and program quality indicator benchmarks.¹⁰ These programs were then further reviewed at the local level.



be reviewed in a future audit.¹¹ While the department is still working through the operational complexities of the audit, the audit is already providing the department with information on program alignment and quality.

While not a component of the CTE audit, the 2021 legislation created a workforce development metrics dashboard that will measure the effects of workforce-related programs, including program and participant outcomes with respect to credential attainment, training completion and wages. This dashboard would also provide demographic breakdowns of the data.

Approximately 400 programs were not reviewed due to the schools or colleges failing to provide sufficient evidence to the department to verify program quality benchmark compliance, although the department indicates these programs will

FINDINGS

Florida's CTE audit will help make the state a leader in ensuring CTE program and pathway quality as well as alignment to employer need. To achieve its goal of becoming first in the nation in workforce and technical education, Florida needs to understand where the state's CTE programs currently stand. Florida's audit and the actions the state will take based on the review will help make that goal a reality. Florida could improve its subsequent reviews by incorporating greater transparency, ensuring access to high-quality pathways for underserved learners, and examining additional pathway components, such as work-based learning opportunities and postsecondary transitions.

1. Florida is currently missing transparency in its CTE audit that would enable students and learners to make an informed choice on navigating career pathway options and programs.
2. To date, the CTE audit is missing an examination of access to high-quality pathways for underserved learners. For example, the state would benefit from knowing the type of programs that are offered to all students.
3. The CTE audit is missing a review of work-based learning options and an examination of whether school district programs are vertically linked to postsecondary programs in its CTE pathways. Currently, there is no mechanism for capturing this data.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN

The CTE audit could be strengthened in several ways:

1. Florida should publicly disclose the results of the audit to students and learners so that these individuals can make an informed choice on whether the program or offerings would best meet their needs. The recent workforce legislation, with its requirement of a public-facing dashboard of CTE program outcomes, may help here.
2. The CTE audit should be expanded to include an examination of equitable access, i.e., which programs are offered to whom and demographic participation and success.
3. The CTE audit should be expanded to include a review and report on work-based learning options and vertical linkages tied to each CTE program offering and the student participation and performance in each area.

As the CTE audit process continues to evolve, Florida has an opportunity to provide stakeholders at all levels with a clearer picture of how well CTE programs are working and for whom.

high school student, even though these programs may cost more. Contrast Florida's approach with Texas, where the state provides tiered funding for CTE programs based on linkages to higher wage and demand occupations and postsecondary education.

As a result of these funding decisions, school districts tend to focus on credential attainment rather than credential attainment **and** CTE pathway completion, often with students earning one credential to generate the CAPE funding. For example, roughly 89% of Florida's students who earn a qualifying industry credential earn only one credential.¹² And Florida may not be effectively supporting CTE programs that do not have embedded industry credentials, whether they are in emerging industries or lack a formalized, industry certification-level credential.

Postsecondary CTE programs would also benefit from additional state dedicated funding to support and grow high-value programs.

STATES LEADING: TEXAS TIERING OF CTE PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Texas has conducted a review of its CTE programs of study and categorized the programs into three tiers for state funding purposes. The state identified occupations and related programs of study by using three key metrics—occupational median growth rate of 17%, median annual salary of \$35,339 and a minimum 500 annual occupational openings using Texas data. CTE programs will now receive funding per student based on whether the program is an approved program of study (1.1 FTE), level 1 or 2 approved CTE program of study (1.28 FTE) or level 3 or 4 approved CTE program of study (1.47). In this way, Texas is better ensuring that more valuable CTE programs receive greater funding on a per-student basis.

TARGETED CTE PROGRAM FUNDING

Florida would benefit from an increase in targeted CTE program funding at the secondary and postsecondary levels.



Florida's CAPE Act made Florida one of the first states to provide dedicated CTE funding to school districts through a performance-based incentive. Students earning qualifying industry credentials generate the incentive funding for K-12 schools, school district postsecondary technical institutions and Florida College System institutions. These funds are tied to industry credentials in which the state has identified as addressing a critical statewide or local economic need or linking to an emerging occupation.

Additionally, Florida allocates federal Perkins and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding, as well as additional state funding for school district technical centers. However, for K-12 CTE programs, the state does not provide additional state dedicated funding to support these programs. Essentially, students in these programs generate the same state funding as a traditional

FINDING

Florida does not provide dedicated state funding to CTE programs on a per-student basis above what is typically funded for a traditional high school student. While the CAPE Act successfully provides incentive funding tied to industry certifications earned, too many students earn only one credential, and too few students are completing pathways tied to higher-skill, in-demand and middle- or high-wage employment opportunities.

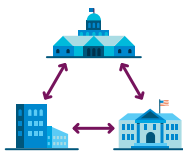
OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Florida should provide dedicated state funding to CTE programs tied to higher-skill, in-demand and middle- or high-wage employment opportunities to increase the number of students completing high-value CTE pathways.

Florida's CTE programs would benefit from performance-based funding for student acquisition of valuable industry credentials **and** dedicated financial support to start and grow high-quality career pathways for students. This targeted CTE program funding should be focused on programs that are aligned to higher-skill, in-demand and middle- or high-wage employment opportunities.

CROSS-AGENCY SHARED PRIORITIES

The 2021 Florida Legislature enacted legislation that significantly addressed an area of weakness—cross-agency shared priorities in the state—through three specific actions. First, the legislation created the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) within the Governor's office. The REACH Office will facilitate coordination among entities responsible for state's workforce development system, including CareerSource Florida, the Department of Economic Opportunity, the Department of Education, the Department of Children and Families, local workforce development boards and One-stop centers. The REACH Office director was appointed in early July 2021.



Second, the legislature standardized the labor market information that state agencies must use, ensuring that workforce-related programs will use the same data in determining labor demand and labor market value. Going forward, state agencies must use the Labor Market Estimating Conference conclusions regarding labor supply by education level, labor demand by occupation, ranking of critical areas of concern and identification of high-skill and middle- and high-wage occupations. The first meeting of the conference was held at the end of September 2021.

Third, the legislature created a Credentials Review Committee tasked with developing a Master Credentials List that will be used to identify credentials of value in the state. The Master Credentials List will be used in incentive funding for industry certifications (CAPE), prioritizing incumbent training program funds, determining the credentials a WIOA-eligible training provider may offer and directing the use of workforce education and training funds by CareerSource Florida. In short, beginning in 2022-23, the Master Credentials List will be uniformly used by the state to identify and support learner pathway development. The Credentials Review Committee was appointed in mid-August 2021 and had its first meeting at the beginning of September 2021.

Criteria for the development of the Master Credentials List will focus on labor market information as identified by the Labor Market Estimating Conference for all credentials with sub-associate degree credentials additionally needing to show linkages to middle- and high-wage employment opportunities. The labor market information data and credentials list reinforce shared priorities across the state.

The state is fortunate that the Department of Education had embarked on a similar exercise before the legislation had been filed to identify credentials of value (at the associate in science degree and below levels) through a working group of education and workforce leaders. This is difficult work, and the department is working through issues of credential stackability, wage and demand determinations, creation of a crosswalk between CTE programs and occupations, and the exploration of credential value beyond wages.

Finally, the state has set an ambitious goal of increasing the percentage of working-age Floridians with a high-value postsecondary credential or training experience to 60% by 2030. According to a recent report, almost 53% of Florida residents, aged 25-64, have a "workforce relevant" certificate or degree.¹³

FINDINGS

1. While the state should be applauded for its efforts to synergize activities across state agencies in furtherance of the workforce mission of the state's CTE programs, there remain several implementation challenges.
2. Florida's enactment of workforce legislation in 2021 provides a much-needed overhaul of the system to ensure that state agencies and other entities are working together to support learner pathways. The legislation sets a short timeline for implementation. To meet that goal, the state has set an ambitious implementation timeline, particularly with the adoption of the Master Credentials List (initial adoption in January 2022 with full adoption in February 2022). The labor supply/demand data and identification of middle-to high-wage occupations will occur at the end of September at the earliest (Labor Market Estimating Conference).

This leaves the Credentials Review Committee roughly four months to identify, review and approve thousands of credentials for inclusion on the Master Credentials List, including many credentials (baccalaureate degree and above) that are not in the scope of the Department of Education's credentials of value workgroup. Given the challenges the department is currently facing in its review, this appears to be a difficult timeline to meet.

3. Under the 2021 legislation, the identification of postsecondary credentials that are degrees for inclusion on the Master Credentials List do not incorporate criteria relating to middle and high wages. While the department's credentials of value workgroup is using wage considerations for determinations of value for associate in science degree and below credentials, this work is not final.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN

1. The state may need to consider extending the legislative deadlines for implementation of the Master Credentials List for baccalaureate degrees and above to ensure fidelity of implementation. While this was likely to be an iterative process, the identification of credentials of value at the baccalaureate level and above will not have the benefit of the Department of Education's prior review.
2. Florida should statutorily include wages (linkages to middle- and high-wage occupations) as a factor in its identification of degrees for inclusion in the Master Credentials List.

POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION

Streamline postsecondary learning and empower high school students to earn credit to reduce the time required to earn postsecondary degrees.

Florida is very strong in offering postsecondary acceleration opportunities for students and learners. Like most states, Florida would be well served to collect and analyze data from its policies to see if they are working as intended. With respect to college acceleration, Florida needs a greater focus on ensuring access to high-quality pathways for underserved learners, especially with respect to early college high school programs.



COLLEGE ACCELERATION

Florida has long been a leader in developing and implementing postsecondary acceleration policies. This includes offering a portfolio of college acceleration options for K-12 students, including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge AICE, dual enrollment and industry certifications. Florida has partnered with the College Board to focus on low-performing middle and high schools to help prepare all students for postsecondary success. This Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement seeks to better identify traditionally underserved students capable of college-level, advanced courses and for professional development for teachers and school leaders in these schools to expand advance course taking and success.



Florida also provides financial and accountability incentives to schools tied to students earning passing scores on acceleration options. For example, AP, IB and Cambridge AICE generate almost \$700 extra per passing student for the 2021-22 school year.¹⁴ Students earning a qualifying industry certification can generate between \$437 and \$4,373 extra per student to their school, depending on the industry certification.¹⁵

Florida's focus on college acceleration has led to some fantastic results. Some of Florida's accomplishments in college acceleration include ranking 2nd in

K-12	SUB-ASSOCIATE	ASSOCIATE	BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER	WORKFORCE
COLLEGE ACCELERATION				
CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING AND EARNED CREDENTIALS				
COLLEGE ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS				
REMEDiation				

FINDING

Florida needs to focus on expanding access to high-quality, early college high school programs, particularly for underserved students.

While some states have focused their early college high school programs on serving underrepresented students, such as through financial incentives tied to underserved student success in these programs, Florida's early college high school programs do not. Although Florida surveys early college high school programs for information on enrollment, dual credits earned and associate degrees or industry certifications earned, Florida does not routinely collect data on early college high school programs at the system level. And these surveys do not include demographic enrollment and performance data for all students enrolled in these programs.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN

1. Florida should require participation and performance reporting on the access to high-quality, early college high school programs for underserved students.
2. Florida should add a financial incentive tied to underserved students earning an associate degree in an early college high school program.

the country in AP performance (3 or higher on AP exam) for the Class of 2020 high school graduating cohort, while ranking 1st in the states in AP participation for that cohort.¹⁶ Roughly 34% of Florida's 2020 graduating cohort earned a qualifying score (3 or higher on AP exam) at some point in their high school years.¹⁷

From the 2012 to 2017 high school graduating cohorts, the percent of students participating in one or more acceleration options in Florida increased from 64% to 73%.¹⁸ These options include AP, IB, Cambridge AICE, dual enrollment and industry certification programs. Meanwhile, for the same set of students, 59% in 2017 passed one or more acceleration options, up from 49% in 2012.¹⁹

STATES LEADING: TEXAS PERFORMANCE FUNDING FOR HIGH SCHOOLS AND EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS

Texas provides an Early College High School designation for schools that educate historically underserved students, provide dual credit at cost to students, increase college readiness, offer accelerated courses and provide academic and social support services to help students succeed. Schools can use the designation to market their programs to parents and students.

While the designation doesn't come with funding, Texas does provide outcomes-based funding for students the state determines are prepared for college, career and the military. Legislation passed in 2019 would reward districts for students enrolling in postsecondary institutions, completing a credential or enlisting in the military. The amount of funding is tiered: \$5,000 per student for economically disadvantaged students; \$3,000 per student for non-economically disadvantaged students; and an additional \$2,000 per student for students with disabilities who meet the specified college, career and military readiness outcomes. Successful early college high schools will be able to use this funding to grow and serve more underserved students.

POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Reduce barriers—such as funding, lack of alignment and missed opportunities—to help more students attain postsecondary credentials.

A postsecondary credential, signifying educational attainment beyond a high school diploma, is increasingly a prerequisite for success in the 21st-century economy. Almost 53% of working aged Floridians possessed a postsecondary degree or shorter-term credential beyond a high school diploma—a figure that is slightly higher than the national average.²⁰



While this is encouraging, the state still has nearly three million adults who have attended or enrolled in college but lack a related degree.²¹ More concerning are the 28.6% of adult Floridians who possess only a high school diploma.²² To help more learners attain the credentials they will need to find success in career and in life, state policymakers must intentionally structure the postsecondary education and credentialing systems, meeting learners where they are and providing the necessary support to help them navigate education to workforce pathways.

FLORIDA'S POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Florida has implemented several initiatives to increase postsecondary credential attainment. Florida's initiatives are recent, such as a statewide reverse transfer policy (2019)²³ and a Last Mile Scholarship (2019).²⁴ The 2021 legislative session added several strategic programs, including fee waivers designed to encourage students to take upper-level courses in programs of strategic emphasis in the State University System and the Open Door Grant Program.

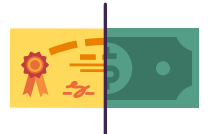
The fee waivers, known as the buy one, get one free waiver, give upper-level state university students a free course for each course the student is enrolled in if the courses are in the State University System's programs of strategic emphasis.²⁵ This could be a strong incentive for students to enroll in and contin-

K-12	SUB-ASSOCIATE	ASSOCIATE	BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER	WORKFORCE
	REVERSE TRANSFER CREDENTIALS			
	LAST DOLLAR/LAST MILE FINANCIAL AID			
	OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING			
	STACKABLE CREDENTIALS			

ue in programs the state has identified as meeting the economic and workforce needs of the state. Similarly, the Open Door Grant Program seeks to help Florida residents who are unemployed, underemployed or furloughed obtain postsecondary credentials needed in the state by reimbursing postsecondary institutions for part of the costs of the students enrolling in aligned programs.²⁶

OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING

Florida has been a leader in performance-based funding at the postsecondary level. Florida's most recent performance-based funding allocation to the State University System began in 2014-15.²⁷ The 2020-21 model has 10 metrics, including job placement of graduates (or continuing education) and the median average wages of graduates one year after graduation as well as traditional metrics such as graduation rates, degrees awarded, retention, etc.



The model includes an institutional amount of funding subject to loss and a state enhancement of \$265 million (2020-21) as a reward for meeting or improving the institutional scores on the metrics. In 2020, no institution lost money because of the performance-based funding model. And 10 of the 12 institutions improved their scores on job placement and median wages of graduates.

Florida has been a leader in performance-based funding at the postsecondary level.

The state also has performance-based funding at the Florida College System. The Legislature appropriated \$15 million (FY 2021-22) for the 2 + 2 Student Success Incentive and \$10 million (FY 2021-22) for the Work Florida Student Success Incentive.²⁸ The 2 + 2 Student Success Incentive is allocated to support student success in enrolling in associate degree programs, earning associate degrees and transferring to baccalaureate programs. The model has 4 metrics, which include the number of students passing certain gateway English and math courses, student persistence, on-time graduation and transfers to a bachelor's degree program.²⁹

The Work Florida Student Success Incentive is allocated to support alignment of career education programs with workforce demands and high-paying job opportunities. It has 2 metrics: on-time completion and a job placement metric.³⁰ The job placement metric counts the number of graduates continuing their education or employed within one year of graduation with wages equal to or higher than the high-wage entry level threshold for the workforce region. It also includes graduates who completed programs linked to occupations on the statewide or regional occupation list at any wage level within one year of graduation.³¹

Additionally, Florida provides \$14 million and \$6.5 million annually to the Florida College System and school district technical centers, respectively, for students earning qualifying industry certifications as part of the postsecondary industry certification funding list under the CAPE Act.³² In 2021, the legislature revised the industry certification funding incentive to include job placement and wages above minimum wage for 2022-23. The newly created Credentials Review Committee will create the new funding formula for the industry certification incentive.

Lastly, Florida created the Money Back Guarantee Program, modeled after the Texas State Technical College System (TSTC), which will require a Florida College System institution or school district technical center to refund a student's tuition if the student is unable to find a job in their field within six months following successful completion of an eligible workforce education program.³³ Beginning in 2022-23, each institution and technical center must identify at least three of those programs that prepare individuals to enter in-demand, middle- to high-wage occupations that will be subject to the guarantee. If the identified programs do not directly prepare individuals to enter an in-demand, middle- to high-wage occupation, the institution must refund the cost of tuition to the individual.

STACKABLE CREDENTIALS

Stackable Credentials are important to learners because they progressively build on each other along an individual's career pathway. These credentials can form the on- and off-ramps for learners as they receive training and reenter the job market to advance their careers.



Florida should be credited for its 2+2 model system of articulation, which seeks to ensure seamless learner transitions from one public institution to another within the state's wider system of postsecondary education.³⁴ Additionally, the state has an innovative, statewide, industry certification articulation agreement that confers college credit toward associate degree programs at the Florida College System.³⁵

Florida should be credited for its 2+2 model system of articulation, which seeks to ensure seamless learner transitions from one public institution to another within the state's wider system of postsecondary education.

FINDINGS

1. Florida has adopted a Last Mile Scholarship Program to assist learners who were close to completing their credential to return to a postsecondary institution for completion. However, this program has not been funded by the legislature, relying on state agencies and institutions to provide the required funding out of existing resources. This could endanger the long-term security of the program.
2. Florida has adopted a reverse transfer state policy; however, the policy is too new to evaluate its effectiveness.
3. Florida's recent enactment of the Money Back Guarantee could show promise based on results of a similar policy adopted in Texas.
4. Florida does not have a comprehensive state policy on supporting stackable credentials.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN

1. Florida should develop a comprehensive state policy on stackable credentials from K-12 to postsecondary to professional credentials.
2. The state should provide state funding for the Last Mile Scholarship Program to encourage learners to reenter postsecondary education and complete their credentials.



WORKFORCE READINESS

Ensure the skills, credentials and apprenticeships students pursue are helping to prepare a strong workforce within the state.

Effective state systems of education and training, to the greatest extent possible, must prepare learners for what comes next, whether that is further education or a career. The policies identified within the Workforce Readiness policy area aim to provide learners with valuable, real-world world experiences that help learners improve their employability and earnings potential.



Florida has pursued several Workforce Readiness policies to ensure a greater number of its learners are equipped with the skills, knowledge and experiences necessary for success in the workforce. Some of the individual efforts that Florida has sought to pursue in this space include standardizing expectations around work-based learning (WBL) opportunities. The 2021 legislation will make formal regulatory guidance on WBL for the first time, as it directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules establishing uniform minimum standards for student eligibility, employer responsibilities and requirements for institutions that offer work-based learning opportunities.

In contrast, the state has established a much clearer policy vision for registered apprenticeship programs via rulemaking and statute.

Florida has also sought to help more adult learners access skills training opportunities to reskill and upskill existing workers and maintain the state's economic competitiveness.

Finally, the state has sought to promote greater learner attainment of industry credentials primarily via the CAPE Act.

K-12	SUB-ASSOCIATE	ASSOCIATE	BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER	WORKFORCE
WORK-BASED LEARNING				
	REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP			
INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS				
	SKILLS RETRAINING/CREDENTIALING			

WORK-BASED LEARNING (WBL)

Florida's approach to WBL focuses primarily on compliance with state and federal law and supporting "capstone" WBL courses. There is not yet a comprehensive framework to ensure that progressive, high-quality WBL experiences are integrated into each learner's pathway.



Florida offers various capstone-level WBL courses (e.g., internship or cooperative education experiences), primarily at the high school level. Statute requires WBL courses to be provided through a career academy or career course partnership as authorized and envisioned by the CAPE Act.³⁶

Florida did include WBL in its Perkins V plan as the law requires.³⁷ To help districts and postsecondary institutions meet this requirement, FLDOE developed an "Experiential Learning Framework" to help local programs and stakeholders understand the state's WBL expectations to successfully implement this program requirement.³⁸ This framework provides high-level descriptions of various types of WBL and distinguishes between activities that can "count" as WBL and those that do not.

FINDINGS

Florida currently does not yet have a comprehensive WBL framework to ensure quality work-based learning. Until passage of the recent workforce legislation in 2021, the state has mostly relied on local stakeholders and partners to define, create and support WBL opportunities for students, an approach that may lead to inequitable offerings across schools and districts.

1. The Florida Department of Education is not required to collect/analyze data to identify or promote high-quality work-based learning opportunities that are being offered through CTE programs—or to whom these opportunities are being provided. Therefore, it is unclear whether all students have equitable access to high-quality work-based learning opportunities. While the 2021 legislation requires WBL to be offered in an "equal and fair manner," the department does not currently have the data infrastructure to collect data on WBL to ensure quality or access to high-quality work-based learning options for underserved learners.
2. In its Perkins plan, the state is considering developing a data system to help recruit and coordinate employer participation in WBL.³⁹ However, this data system still does not exist.
3. While the Perkins plan framework for WBL provides a framework for what qualifies as WBL, it does not go further to help local programs provide these opportunities for more learners, nor does it articulate standards or expectations for what constitutes a high-quality experience within the confines of these eligible activities.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN:

1. Florida's recent passage of legislation to better define work-based learning opportunities, along with the associated rulemaking from the State Board of Education to create uniform expectations, is a good first step in developing a framework for WBL. However, Florida must take great care in its development of a work-based learning definition that quality is emphasized over minimum compliance with law, including whether all students have access to high-quality WBL.
2. Florida's ongoing CTE audit should capture data that demonstrates where quality WBL is being offered and the type of students that are participating in it to ensure quality and equitable access. This data is currently not being collected.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Florida maintains a robust system of registered apprenticeships throughout the state.



Florida has made significant investments recently in apprenticeship programs, including \$10 million annually for the Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program. The 2021 legislation strengthened the program by revising the priority of grants to include apprenticeship programs that address a critical statewide or regional shortage. This includes expansion of existing programs where the median completion rate and employment rate exceeds similar programs in the region one year after program completion.

Additionally, the legislation required more transparency in the grant program by mandating public reporting of grant recipients and their participant outcomes by program and provider, including retention, completion, employment and starting, exit and post-apprenticeship wages at one and five years after exiting the program. These changes will help the state identify and fund apprenticeship programs that will have greater value to the state and the participants.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: CAREERSOURCE FLORIDA AND LOCKHEED MARTIN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Consider this example of an apprenticeship partnership among employers, the state and postsecondary education: Lockheed Martin and CareerSource Florida have partnered to expand an apprenticeship program that trains individuals to solder circuit cards and wiring harnesses used in aerospace and defense systems.⁴⁰ The apprenticeship program includes 160 classroom hours at Lockheed Martin and an opportunity to earn between 9 and 12 credit hours at the College of Central Florida toward an Associate in Science in Engineering Technology. Currently, 265 apprentices are participating in the program.

BY THE NUMBERS: FLORIDA'S REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS

While the number of learners being served by registered apprenticeships is relatively low (compared to the state's overall population), demand for the skilled workforce these programs help produce is quite high. According to the most recent information provided by FLDOE, in FY 2020 there were:⁴¹



FINDINGS

1. While Florida maintains a robust system of registered apprenticeship programs, the state would benefit from prioritizing funding and other supports to apprenticeship programs that are tied to higher-skill, in-demand and middle- or high-wage employment opportunities with linkages to postsecondary programs and stackable credentials.
2. The state is struggling to connect apprenticeship programs with stackable credentials in postsecondary education. For instance, 56% of registered apprenticeship programs in the state have no partnership with a Florida school district or postsecondary institution.⁴²

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Florida should prioritize apprenticeship programs that are tied to higher-skill, in-demand and middle- or high-wage employment opportunities that provide participants with an opportunity to amplify the apprenticeship credential through articulation into a postsecondary program and a stackable credential.

INDUSTRY CREDENTIALS

Florida is a national leader in creating incentives for and student acquisition of industry certifications in K-12. With the CAPE Industry Certification List, the state has seen significant increases in the number of students earning qualifying industry certifications each year, from 803 statewide in 2007-08 to a pre-COVID 19 peak of 106,291 in 2018-19.⁴³



The CAPE Act Certified Industry Funding List needs further strengthening for alignment to higher-skill, in-demand and middle- or high-wage occupations. Recent research conducted by ExcelinEd through its initiative, Credentials Matter, found that only 24% of the state's certifications were demanded by employers and aligned with occupations paying at least \$15 an hour, while 63% of credentials earned by postsecondary learners were demanded by employers in the state.⁴⁴

The 2021 Florida Legislature has revised the process for identifying industry certifications for inclusion on the CAPE list. The legislation created a new Credentials Review Committee to review and identify a Master Credentials List, thereby standardizing the K-12 and postsecondary credentials determinations to a certain extent. If the credential is a sub-associate degree credential, it must have evidence of labor market demand as determined by the state Labor Market Estimating Conference and earnings outcomes tied to

middle or high wages. There is an exception for when the credential does not meet the wage threshold but is stackable to a credential that does. Degree credentials only need to meet the labor market demand requirement under the statutory requirements.

FINDINGS

1. Florida has made significant progress in creating incentives for students to acquire in-demand industry certifications, and that process is currently being strengthened to include considerations of middle-to-high wages.
2. Business members are a minority on the Credentials Review Committee. The committee is too heavily weighted towards government actors. There is a potential danger that the new list may not sufficiently reflect the employer voice. To be fair, the legislation does require evidence of employer information on present credential use or emerging opportunities. The Master Credentials List would still be approved by the state board of CareerSource Florida, which is business led.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

The state should adopt a formal process by which employers are given an opportunity to vet the Master Credentials List *before* the list is adopted to ensure that the selected credentials are indeed in-demand and used by employers (and not just by one employer or a small group of employers).

SKILLS RETRAINING / CREDENTIALING

As the needs of the economy continue to change, the state's education and workforce systems must respond quickly with high-quality, shorter-term programs to help workers re-skill and upskill.



Florida is using several programs to support employer re-training of workers in the state. Florida has a Quick Response Training (QRT) program, to address short-term or immediate workforce-skill needs of high-value businesses or industries the state is seeking to attract.⁴⁵ Administered by CareerSource Florida, the QRT program provides grant funding to new or expanding businesses in the state for customizable, skills-based instruction and training. Specific targeted industries within Florida are prioritized as part of QRT, which is based in part on the identification of industries that pay wages 125% or higher above state or local wages.^{46 47}

Florida also leverages federal workforce development funds via WIOA to support some of its existing workforce. Through its Incumbent Worker Training grant program, Florida provides grant funding to reimburse employers for part of the qualifying training costs for full-time employees at existing Florida businesses.⁴⁸ The program has distributed more than \$100 million since 1999. For every \$1 invested in training, participating employers have matched \$7.39—a strong sign of the program's popularity and ability to leverage additional resources for worker skills training.⁴⁹

Governor DeSantis has also used \$35 million in recent, federal pandemic relief funds to create a Rapid Credentialing grant program.⁵⁰ This program is intended to help public postsecondary institutions in the state expand capacity to provide more shorter-term, in-demand programs that lead to industry certifications that the state is already prioritizing via the CAPE Act.

The 2021 State Legislature added the Open Door Grant Program, which provides grants to technical centers and Florida College System institutions to cover up to two-thirds of the costs of short-term, high-demand programs for eligible students upon successful completion and award of a credential of value. The state funded

this grant program at \$35 million for 2021-22 using federal Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER) funding. Eligible students are those individuals who are unemployed, underemployed or have been furloughed from their job.

Finally, the legislature allocated \$19.1 million in WIOA to fund Governor DeSantis's "Get There Faster" initiative, which will use competitive grants to local workforce development boards, state colleges and technical centers/colleges to incentivize enrollment and completion of degree and certification programs that demonstrate high value to Florida employers.⁵¹

STATES LEADING: INDIANA'S NEXT LEVEL JOBS PROGRAM

Indiana's Next Level Jobs program includes an Employer Training Grant, which reimburses employers for training costs when they train new or current workers to fill in-demand occupations in advanced manufacturing, agriculture, IT and business services, construction, health, and transportation and logistics. Grants are up to \$5,000 per employee and up to \$50,000 per employer. Indiana has recently expanded the grant amounts through federal funds.⁵²

FINDINGS

1. Florida has recognized the need for skills retraining, with the creation of several new programs funded through one-time federal funds. The state will have to identify recurring state funding to support these efforts going forward.
2. The state's investments in the Quick Response Training and Incumbent Worker Training Program, or similar programs, may be insufficient to meet employer and worker need. In the 2021-22 state budget, the state appropriated \$7.5 million for the QRT program⁵³ and \$2.5 million for the Incumbent Worker Training Program,⁵⁴ likely limiting the potential reach of these programs. Indiana, for example, funds its Employer Training Grant, which provides similar assistance for employers who train workers for in-demand positions within six priority industry sectors, at \$17 million annually. And Indiana is roughly one-third the population size of Florida.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN

1. For several new initiatives, Florida will need to identify state recurring funding for continued support once the federal funds end.
2. Florida should consider increasing the funding for the Quick Response Training and Incumbent Worker Training Program with emphasis on skills retraining for higher-skill, in-demand and middle- or high-wage employment opportunities.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Incentivize workforce engagement in student pathways and reduce the barriers that keep employers from participating.

To be effective, education and workforce preparation programs must be designed with adequate input from the employer community to ensure that participants in the future workforce develop the necessary knowledge and skills valued by employers. Active and strategic employer engagement, among other things, serves two essential purposes:



1. Facilitates ongoing alignment between education systems and the workforce, ensuring that high-quality student pathways and related credentials prepare students for success in higher-skill, in-demand and middle- to high-wage careers and sectors; and
2. Supports the expansion of work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities, increasing access to valuable hands-on learning experiences that contribute directly to skill-building and more direct preparation for careers.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Although Florida has emerged as a national leader on many education and workforce development policy issues, there has been significantly less focus by the state on creating incentives for meaningful industry and employer engagement. While many policies enacted over the years require employer engagement, such as the development of career academies and strategic planning under the CAPE Act or under federal Perkins or WIOA, there are few strategies to encourage Florida's employers to participate and remain engaged, except for the Quick Response Training and Incumbent Worker Training programs.



K-12	SUB-ASSOCIATE	ASSOCIATE	BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER	WORKFORCE
INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVES				
LEGAL BARRIERS				

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT:

OHIO INDUSTRY SECTOR GRANT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Ohio is helping to promote industry engagement through the Industry Sector Grant Partnership Program, which competitively awards funding to existing partnerships (Accelerant Grant) and emerging partnerships (Spark Grant). Industry sector partnerships must be led by the business community in partnership with other organizations, such as K-12 schools, colleges/universities and workforce boards, and have a regional or industry-specific focus. Ohio's program was created in 2020 and funded at \$2.5 million per year.⁵⁵

Although Florida has emerged as a national leader on many education and workforce development policy issues, there has been significantly less focus by the state on creating incentives for meaningful industry and employer engagement.

Florida uses discretionary WIOA funding to support sector partnerships. WIOA allows for a portion of Governor's Reserve Funds (which in Florida totals \$23,049,808 for Fiscal Year 2020-21)⁵⁶ to be used to support local areas in the development, convening and implementation of industry or sector partnerships.

Finally, Florida recently enacted an income tax credit for qualified employers who hire student interns from postsecondary programs, at \$2,000 per intern and a maximum of \$10,000 per employer.⁵⁷ The tax credits are funded at \$5 million—\$2.5 million each year for 2021-22 and 2022-23.

FINDING

To date, Florida has not implemented policies that provide meaningful incentives (financial or otherwise) to support and expand meaningful employer engagement. Florida's policy approach to industry engagement incentives centers largely on requirements for employer membership and input on state boards and local plans.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN

Florida needs to go beyond requiring state and local governmental entities to engage with employers and provide some financial or other incentives to spur employer engagement and, just as importantly, encourage employers to remain engaged in pathway development. These incentives would potentially reach more employers if they were less prescriptive in their requirements. For example, the student intern tax incentive is too prescriptive—a qualifying business must have 20 percent of its employees formerly hired as student interns. While this may provide greater cost certainty, it will significantly reduce the number of entities eligible to use the incentive.

LEGAL BARRIERS

Remove or lessen legal barriers such as liability insurance, workers' compensation and worksite age restrictions to provide more learners with work-based learning opportunities.



As part of its Perkins V State Plan, Florida acknowledges that “employers often have many questions regarding legal ramifications, labor laws, safety and other aspects of work-based learning.”⁵⁸ Before the 2021 legislative session, however, Florida had enacted very few strategies to address these questions or policies to remove existing barriers. Additionally, there is currently no publicly available data describing how and which legal barriers (or perceptions of barriers) are limiting employer engagement in WBL.

The 2021 Florida Legislature enacted a measure that would reimburse employers for workers' compensation premiums for students, 18 years old or younger, working under a work-based learning opportunity.⁵⁹ If the work-based learning opportunity is a paid opportunity, the student is covered under the employer's workers' compensation insurance. If unpaid, the school district or Florida College System institution will be considered the employer for workers' compensation purposes. The state appropriated \$2 million for FY 2021-22 to cover the workers' compensation premium reimbursements.⁶⁰ This policy could motivate certain employers to provide work-based learning opportunities (although under Florida law, some smaller employers may not be required to provide workers' compensation coverage, depending on the industry). Further study will be required to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in addressing employer concerns over work-based learning engagement.



As part of its Perkins V State Plan, Florida acknowledges that “employers often have many questions regarding legal ramifications, labor laws, safety and other aspects of work-based learning.”

FINDINGS

1. Florida has not adopted a comprehensive approach to identify and address legal barriers (real or perceived) related to WBL.
2. The state has not reported the barriers (real or perceived) that employers indicate prevent them from engaging in career pathways or providing work-based learning opportunities.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN

1. The state should convene a representative sample of employers across the state to identify specific barriers to employer engagement in career pathways, report on the barriers and identify the steps to mitigate those barriers (which should include a communications strategy to answer employer questions).
2. The state should evaluate and report on the effect of the recent legislation in addressing potential workers' compensation barriers to employer engagement in work-based learning opportunities.

CONTINUUM ALIGNMENT & QUALITY INDICATORS

To ensure the strength of all the other policies, there must be cross-sector agreement on outcomes, strategies to get there and data to track progress.

Florida has recently made significant progress in establishing common metrics and benchmarks for cross-sector shared program quality definitions and indicators. The state has taken the following steps:



- Created a SAIL to 60 goal to have 60% of all working-age individuals to have a postsecondary credential or training experience by 2030.
- Established the foundation for a standardized definition for labor market demand through the Labor Market Estimating Conference.
- Created a common Master Credentials list to inform decisions on incentive funding, identify credentials of value and measure success of workforce-related programs in achieving credentials from the list.
- Established a common intake, case management and training for workforce-related programs to assist individuals and improve efficiency.
- Standardized the criteria for evaluating the success of workforce training providers to include program completion, job placement and earnings of participants.
- Created a process for linking Classifications of Instructional Programs (CIP) to Standard Occupational Classifications (SOC) to allow the state to better understand which programs are leading to which occupations.
- Focused evaluations of the state workforce system and its providers on job placement and linkages to middle- and high-wage jobs.
- Created the foundation for a common definition of work-based learning.

K-12	SUB-ASSOCIATE	ASSOCIATE	BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER	WORKFORCE
SHARED PROGRAM QUALITY DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS				
STATE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM				

FINDING

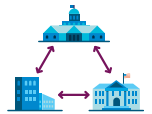
Florida has recently enacted many changes in how the state will define quality across its state workforce system.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Due to the recency of the actions, more study will be needed to ensure that Florida is working toward a shared goal with common benchmarks and metrics. The REACH Office is required to report, beginning on December 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, on the implementation and outcomes of the workforce opportunity portal.

STATE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM

Data is at the heart of the Pathways Matter ecosystem. With good data collection and analysis, a state can properly evaluate the strengths of its workforce system and identify opportunities to improve.



Florida has a strong longitudinal data system that collects powerful data and connects across multiple systems. The 2021 legislative session required the REACH Office to develop a workforce opportunity portal that will provide public access to workforce-related program data to help residents of the state explore career opportunities; identify in-demand jobs with earning potential; identify skills and credentials for those jobs; determine the quality of programs based on employment, wages and other data; and access those programs.

The legislation also required the Department of Education to create a workforce development metrics dashboard that measures the state's investments in workforce development. It will include information on workforce-related programs, such as credential attainment, training completion, degree attainment and participant wages, with a demographic breakdown for each. Finally, the dashboard must "provide performance data on training providers to enable individuals to make informed choices."

The department has been working on a data analytics tool that would accomplish many of the legislation's requirements to help the state make informed decisions about workforce-related program quality. However, the plan does not initially contemplate sharing program workforce program quality data with the public.⁶¹

FINDING

Florida is a national leader in its collection of data through its state longitudinal data system. Despite its successes, the state faces a challenge in communicating the data in a clear, user-friendly way that helps individuals navigate through the availability and quality of the workforce system. It is unclear how the REACH Office or the Department of Education will inform the public of the quality of workforce-related programs and providers.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN

The state must inform the public of the quality of workforce-related programs and providers as soon as possible.

CONCLUSION

Florida is a national leader in data collection, postsecondary acceleration and industry credential attainment. With the 2021 legislative session, Florida has made significant strides in creating a more unified, high-quality workforce system through more coordinated oversight by the REACH Office and uniformity in data collection, analysis, use and sharing to help the state identify, support and promote high-quality workforce-related programs. The success of this effort will rely on quality implementation. Florida could do a better job in identifying and supporting high-quality work-based learning opportunities, expanding employer engagement and supporting access to high-quality pathways for underserved learners.

ExcelinEd will continue to monitor, engage and support implementation efforts of the recent overhaul of the state's education to workforce system. The unwavering goal is to assist Florida in supporting high-quality work-based learning, identifying exemplars of employer engagement from other states and driving access to high-quality pathways for all learners.

ENDNOTES

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31. Id.
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