

# BUILDING A HIGH-QUALITY CAREER EDUCATION SYSTEM

## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

For over a century, as a part of comprehensive high schools and postsecondary institutions, career education has provided students with necessary academic and technical skills for employment. Rapid changes in technology, globalization, shifting demographics, and increased education accountability have provided the impetus for rethinking the design and delivery of career education.

Over the past several years, the NCE staff at the Nebraska Department of Education has engaged numerous stakeholders from across the state representing K-12, postsecondary, business and industry, and workforce and economic development partners to develop a conceptual framework for creating Nebraska Career Education for the 21st Century. This framework, including a vision, mission statement, and guiding principles set the stage for the work being completed. The State Plan for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 provides support to implement this framework for Nebraska Career Education.

## VISION

Nebraska Career Education provides world-class programs that engage students in high-quality, rigorous, and relevant education, enhanced with partnerships with business and industry, workforce and economic development that allows students to turn their passion, talent and ability into successful careers and fulfilling lives.

## MISSION

The mission of Career Education in Nebraska is to prepare all individuals to:

- Learn through career exploration and technical skill development while meeting academic standards,
- Earn as productive citizens in a global society, and
- Live as a contributing member of their community

## BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe Nebraska Career Education provides students with:

- knowledge, attitudes and skills to live and work as productive individuals who are successful in their work, family and community
- educational experiences for personal and professional growth
- opportunities to apply academic knowledge and skills
- the career application of academic skills
- preparation to meet the challenges of a fast-changing society
- meaningful experiences through partnerships in the business community
- contextual learning, work-based learning and workplace skill development delivered through a relevant, rigorous curriculum
- personal development through student-led leadership
- learning environments conducive to authentic assessment

## DELIVERY

Nebraska Career Education is delivered through a variety of programs of study in the Nebraska Career Model.



## GOALS FOR NEBRASKA CAREER EDUCATION LEARNERS

All learners should have access to quality career education programs of study.

All learners should achieve high academic standards, occupational and employability skills so they are prepared for employment and post-high school education.

All learners should have access to quality career management information.

All learners should be able to make smooth transitions through the education system into the workplace to attain economic self-sufficiency and become contributing members of their family and community.

## NEBRASKA CAREER EDUCATION—CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Nebraska Department of Education’s mission is to prepare all Nebraskans for learning, earning and living. Nebraska Career Education assists to accomplish this same mission. To increase student achievement and prepare students for life-long success, NCE recommends a career development process that begins in the elementary grades and continues throughout the lifespan. The stages of the career development process include career: *awareness, exploration, preparation, and application* culminating in life-long *career management*.

To teach career development, the NCE Model recommends implementation of curriculum, includes up-to-date career information, personal learning plans and expanded learning activities. Career development is for all students, is based on standards, and should be developmentally appropriate.

Career development is to be delivered through the coordinated efforts of professional educators of Career and Technical Education (CTE), school counseling programs and all academic content throughout the school.

**Curriculum:** Nebraska Career education recommends the career development process be intentionally taught. Curriculum, materials, resources and time to learn for K-12 students and parents, postsecondary students, and adults are needed. A variety of materials have been developed with the NCE model. A full semester course of career exploration, ENGAGE, is available online at: <https://www.education.ne.gov/cared/Engage.html>

Additional resources are available at: [www.education.ne.gov/nce/CareerClustersResources.html](http://www.education.ne.gov/nce/CareerClustersResources.html) and more included on: [www.NebraskaCareerConnections.org](http://www.NebraskaCareerConnections.org).

**Career Information:** [NebraskaCareerConnections.org](http://NebraskaCareerConnections.org) provides up-to-date career information that connects curriculum to the real world. Relevant career information supports and enhances the entire career development process. In Nebraska, it is important to have career information that aligns with the Nebraska Career Education Model. NebraskaCareerConnections is a web-based career information system with current resources, the capacity to store electronic PLPs, resumes, interest/skill assessments and more. A considerable advantage is 24-hour availability to students, parents, educators and of course any adults for their career management.

**Expanded learning:** Expanded learning opportunities bring relevance and real-world context to the curriculum. It is highly recommended that expanded learning becomes a regular part of the school’s curriculum for all students. Examples of expanded learning opportunities are recommended throughout NCE career development and listed on Sample Personal Learning Plans for students to follow as a guide at: [www.education.ne.gov/nce/CareerClustersResources.html](http://www.education.ne.gov/nce/CareerClustersResources.html)

**Personal Learning Plans:** Personal Learning Plans provide for college and career planning, and for personalizing education for each student. It documents the planning process. A multitude of decisions and information are considered before a PLP can be developed or updated in a meaningful way to become a useful tool to guide students and lifelong learners.

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## PERSONAL LEARNING PLANS-MIDDLE SCHOOL CAREER EXPLORATION

- Develop initial PLP using informed decision making and understanding consequences of choices
- Select career clusters of interests and strengths
- Explore a variety of postsecondary options and corresponding entrance requirements
- Register for coursework using the PLP
- Plan expanded learning and extracurricular opportunities and record on PLP

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## PERSONAL LEARNING PLANS- GRADE 9-10 CAREER PREPARATION

- Update PLP with any changes desired or needed while understanding consequences of choices
- Prioritize selected clusters based on interests/strengths
- Consider postsecondary majors
- Identify preference of postsecondary option
- Register for high school coursework using PLP
- Use PLP to record and plan school activities, expanded learning and/or part-time employment

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## PERSONAL LEARNING PLANS- GRADE 11 THROUGH POSTSECONDARY CAREER APPLICATION

- Update or revise PLP
- Choose career cluster focus
- Prioritize program of study for high school into postsecondary major
- Determine and apply for postsecondary education
- Register for coursework using PLP
- Use PLP to plan expanded learning, internships and/or employment
- Continue to plan for earning and learning of knowledge/skills for life-long career management

## **GUIDING ASSUMPTIONS – THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE PLAN FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

Perkins IV maintains much of the program improvement emphasis of Perkins III but requires Nebraska Career Education to focus on new areas. The following guiding assumptions are instrumental in moving Perkins IV forward.

- Federal Perkins IV funding for Nebraska Career Education (NCE) is NOT an entitlement at either the state or local level.
- The use of Perkins IV funds must be focused on school improvement and increased student achievement outcomes and NOT on regular maintenance of career education. Perkins IV is very clear that these funds are not to be used to supplant local effort.
- NCE and core academic courses must be integrated in a comprehensive way emphasizing the academic content of career education courses.
- NCE must include comprehensive career guidance as an integral component at all levels of education.
- The skills needed for success in postsecondary education and for success in a career are closely related.
- NCE must be strategically placed within the broader vision, mission and goals for education within the state of Nebraska.
- NCE must be aligned with Nebraska’s workforce needs and economic development priorities.