CORE ELEMENT

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Information is used effectively to promote quality and equity in career pathways.

CASE STUDY:
OHIO

Perkins V Equity Labs

A high-quality career readiness data eco-system should not only collect, analyze and report data but also use the information to promote quality and equity. State leaders should integrate career readiness data into policymaking and decision-making processes to further a statewide career preparation system that is high quality and equitable.
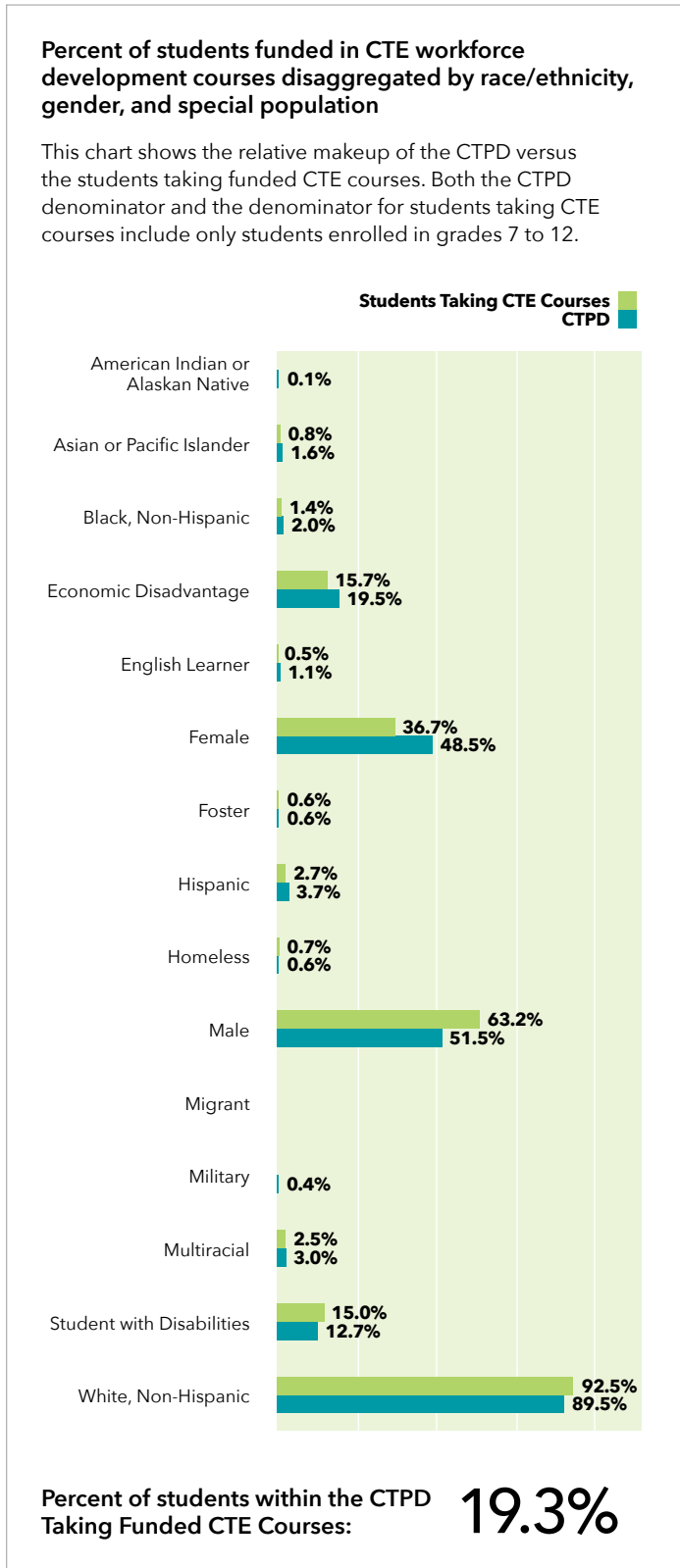
One state using data to promote quality and equity is Ohio. Ohio created data-driven Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) Equity Labs[1] to support Career-Technical Planning Districts (CTPDs) in acknowledging equity gaps in Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, discuss possible root causes and brainstorm solutions.

Ohio's Perkins V Equity Labs

Ohio's Each Child, Our Future strategic plan for K-12 seeks to challenge, prepare and empower each learner for future success.[2] The strategy is rooted in three core principles: equity, partnerships and quality schools. Ohio's CTE programs are critical to this vision and integrate these three principles. One way the Ohio CTE system is demonstrating the principles is through Ohio's Perkins V plan.[3] In the plan, the state has committed to equity and the identification and closure of equity gaps through Equity Labs.

Piloted in 2019 for secondary and postsecondary CTE programs as part of Ohio's Perkins V transition plan, Equity Labs guide key stakeholders through a process of identifying gaps in access to or success in CTE programs, discussing root causes of those gaps, and creating actionable plans to address

FIGURE 1

Example of a data report for a CTPD

Percent of students funded in CTE workforce development courses disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and special population

This chart shows the relative makeup of the CTPD versus the students taking funded CTE courses. Both the CTPD denominator and the denominator for students taking CTE courses include only students enrolled in grades 7 to 12.

Students Taking CTE Courses ▮
CTPD ▮

Category	Students Taking CTE Courses	CTPD
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.1%	
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.8%	1.6%
Black, Non-Hispanic	1.4%	2.0%
Economic Disadvantage	15.7%	19.5%
English Learner	0.5%	1.1%
Female	36.7%	48.5%
Foster	0.6%	0.6%
Hispanic	2.7%	3.7%
Homeless	0.7%	0.6%
Male	63.2%	51.5%
Migrant		
Military	0.4%	
Multiracial	2.5%	3.0%
Student with Disabilities	15.0%	12.7%
White, Non-Hispanic	92.5%	89.5%

Percent of students within the CTPD Taking Funded CTE Courses: ## 19.3%

Source: Ohio Department of Education[4]

them. In 2019, for the first round of Equity Labs, each of Ohio's 91 CTPDs — local education agency configurations that consist of a number of school districts and deliver CTE programs — submitted their data to the Ohio Department of Education, which then developed a report with data in three main categories: meaningful access, engagement and enrollment, and student outcomes. The data in the report is disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, migrant status and special population status (see Figure 1). Each CTPD was invited to bring five to 10 internal stakeholders to participate in the Equity Lab to analyze the data, identify the largest and most pressing gap, and conduct a root cause analysis on the identified gap. Lastly, participants developed a SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound) goal to address the gap and a plan to evaluate movement toward improvement.

Overcoming Challenges

Although CTPDs were allowed to bring any stakeholder they wanted — and were encouraged to invite teachers — administrators and program directors made up most of the participants in the first round of Perkins V Equity Labs. Feedback from participants demonstrated a need for local equity support that was specific to each CTPD region. Therefore, the Ohio Department of Education sought strategies to involve instructors and other school-based staff who would add additional perspectives based on firsthand engagement with learners. This led to the development of the Equity Ambassador[5] program, in which one internal stakeholder (teacher, school counselor, etc.) from each CTPD who was passionate about equity in education was invited to register. Equity Ambassadors are provided with equity-related professional development to act as local equity experts for their CTPD. The ambassadors are also invited to take part in future equity labs, increasing the number of school-level participants who will be represented at the second round of Equity Labs in 2021.

Other challenges include encouraging participants to examine and understand the data with open minds and persuading stakeholders that they have more power than they think to address the root causes of equity gaps. For example, some stakeholders felt powerless to change out-of-school conditions for learners living in poverty or dealing with other social factors. The Ohio Department of Education challenged participants to choose one gap from their data report and focus on what was within their control. A district may not be able to solve the underlying causes of poverty, but it can leverage resources and instructional support to help learners experiencing poverty be successful.

Impact of Perkins V Equity Labs

The Ohio Department of Education showed districts how the exercise of analyzing data, identifying root causes, and creating actionable plans to address the identified gaps can be applied to a district's Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA). The CLNA is required by Perkins V and mandates that local districts evaluate their progress toward equitable outcomes for all students. By connecting the Equity Labs to the CLNA, districts can better understand which groups of students are gaining access to CTE programs of study that lead to high-wage, high-skill or in-demand careers; where the gaps exist; and what systems-level changes should be made so every learner can benefit from meaningful, high-quality CTE.

Conclusion

Ohio has made equity in CTE a priority through its Each Child, Our Future strategic plan and is leveraging data to ensure that each learner has access to high-quality CTE programs of study and the support necessary for success. Through the 2019 Perkins V Equity Labs, key stakeholders analyzed enrollment and performance data, identified gaps, and created action plans to address those gaps. Ohio's Equity Ambassador program was created in response to the need for school-based, local equity support. Bringing together local leaders to analyze and reflect on career readiness data and acknowledge the areas that need improvement is critical to ensure that the statewide career preparation system is high quality and equitable for all learners.

NOTES

[1] Ohio Department of Education. (2019). *Ohio Perkins V Equity Lab*. Retrieved from http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Career-Tech/CTE-Performance-Data-and-Accountability/Perkins-Resources/Carl-D-Perkins-V-State-Plan/Carl-D-Perkins-V-State-Plan-Equity-in-Career-Tec/Equity-Lab-Workbook-11-08-19-DRAFT.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US

[2] Ohio Department of Education. (n.d.) *Each Child, Our Future*. Retrieved from http://education.ohio.gov/About/EachChildOurFuture

[3] Ohio Department of Education. (2020). *Ohio Perkins V Plan*. Retrieved from http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Career-Tech/CTE-Performance-Data-and-Accountability/Perkins-Resources/Carl-D-Perkins-V-State-Plan/Perkins_V_State_Plan_FINAL_3_23_2020.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US

[4] Ohio Department of Education. (2019). *Ohio Perkins V Equity Lab*. Retrieved from http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Career-Tech/CTE-Performance-Data-and-Accountability/Perkins-Resources/Carl-D-Perkins-V-State-Plan/Carl-D-Perkins-V-State-Plan-Equity-in-Career-Tec/Equity-Lab-Workbook-11-08-19-DRAFT.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US

[5] Ohio Department of Education. (n.d). *Equity Ambassador FAQ*. Retrieved from http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Career-Tech/CTE-Performance-Data-and-Accountability/Perkins-Resources/Carl-D-Perkins-V-State-Plan/Carl-D-Perkins-V-State-Plan-Equity-in-Career-Tec/Equity-Ambassador-FAQ