KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FACT SHEET

SPECIAL POPULATIONS IN CTE

WHAT ARE THE SPECIAL POPULATIONS IN CTE?

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, more commonly known as Perkins V, Identifies the following as Special Populations:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults
- Individuals preparing for nontraditional fields
- Single parents, including single pregnant women
- Out-of-workforce individuals
- English learners
- Homeless individuals
- Youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system
- Youth with a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is on active duty

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES – All Special Pops

- Learn and use culturally responsive teaching and leadership skills, such as connecting students' cultural background to instruction and valuing cultural diversity as an asset in the learning environment.
- Incorporate student voices into equity audits and development of institutional policies and programs.
- Implement professional development that builds educator capacity to understand how sex, race, class, language, ethnicity, and ability differences are perceived and treated in the institution and influenced by implicit bias and micro-messaging.
- Review special populations participation data in CTE Pathways at least annually. Develop and implement strategies for special populations showing low participation numbers.
- Hold Targeted Recruitment events to recruit members of special populations into your CTE Pathways.
- Use Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) as a way for students to build social capital and networks in which they feel welcome and supported.
- Ensure that students who are members of special populations participate in work-based learning, supported employment, and apprenticeships leading to economically self- sufficient employment.

- Use role models/mentoring to reinforce student identity and self-efficacy.
- Partner with community-based organizations that support each special population group. Give community-based organization and support agencies the opportunity to conduct outreach and provide services on campus so that they are easily accessible and friendly.

Individuals with Disabilities

- Ensure that all physical spaces are accessible, including transportation, parking, reach, curbs, floor resistance, table heights, turn space, door width, and location.
- Include special education staff when reviewing special populations participation data and special populations achievement data. Work to ensure that special educators are familiar with all CTE Pathways available.
- Implement Universal Design for Learning and differentiated instruction with all students in all classrooms.
- Use paraprofessionals and other special education service providers to support students with disabilities' learning both in and out of the classroom. Pay attention to schedules: are paraprofessionals available during CTE classes? Do special education or other services conflict with CTE classes?
- Request and implement approved accommodations when students with disabilities are taking industry-based certification or licensure exams.
- Increase Individualized Education Program (IEP) effectiveness by including all individuals who support a student, including career and technical education (CTE) teachers. Train CTE teachers on how to understand a student's IEP, provide appropriate accommodations, raise expectations, and decrease bias.
- Create opportunities and ways that parents and students with disabilities can advocate for themselves and challenge low expectations, such as secure reporting or peer advocates.
- Build relationships with companies that have successfully employed students with disabilities and ask them to support your outreach to new employers.

Resources

- NTACT:C | National Technical Assistance Center on Transition
- Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation: Pre-ETS Employment Services - Rehabilitation Services
- Families Together, Inc. Pre-Employment Transition Services - Families Together, Inc.
- KANSASWORKS
- Office of Registered Apprenticeship | KANSASWORKS
- NAPE – National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity Perkins V: Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act | National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
- ADVANCE CTE: Engaging Representatives of Learners with Special Population Status through Perkins V - Advance CTE

Individuals from Economically Disadvantaged Families, Including Low-Income Youth and Adults

- Develop relationships with students and their families that promote trust, maintain privacy, and build cooperation as a crucial step before introducing content.
- Provide free books, materials, tools, uniforms, and other resources necessary for success in a CTE program. Pay dues, activity fees, and other costs for students who are low-income to participate in CTSOs.
- Provide transportation, transportation vouchers, bus passes, or mileage reimbursement. Ensure that transportation is available at the right time and in the right location so that students are safe.
- Ensure that students have access to healthy food and nutrition by providing meals at school and all family events. Locate local food bank distribution sites for families on campus.
- Offer affordable or free licensed childcare on-site in coordination with the times and locations of all programs.
- Have students manage a free-access, business clothes closet for interviews or work. Seek donations from school staff and community.

Resources

- National Center for Children in Poverty: NCCP
- NAPE – National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity Perkins V: Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act | National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
- ADVANCE CTE: Engaging Representatives of Learners with Special Population Status through Perkins V - Advance CTE
- Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF): Kansas Department for Children and Families - Home
- Kansas Commerce: Workforce

Individuals Preparing for Nontraditional Fields

- Expose students to nontraditional career options early (elementary grades) to broaden their horizons about what careers are available to them.
- Offer informal, low-risk, hands-on, skill-development experiences for students to try skills in a nontraditional program, especially for girls who need to develop skills before expressing interest. These activities can include a brown-bag lunch, after-school workshop, makerspace experience, or summer camp.
- Review curriculum and guidance policies and practices for bias. Include relevant examples, projects, instructional materials, texts, websites, language, and images regardless of sex, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, age, or national origin.
- Implement equitable cooperative learning strategies that ensure rotation of responsibilities to all group members. Manage grouping configurations to eliminate

tokenism or stereotyping.
- Ensure that safety equipment, safety clothing, uniforms, and tools are available in small to large sizes to accommodate a person of any stature.
- Create informal support groups in which students can share their experiences and build community with other students pursuing a nontraditional career.
- Enroll nontraditional students in cohorts—three or more in the same section—to encourage peer support and cohort engagement.
- Enforce civil rights and sexual harassment policies and practices—ignoring is the same as condoning. Ensure that students are aware of reporting procedures and that their privacy will be protected.
- Make it personal. Personally invite students who are underrepresented to enroll in your program so that they feel welcome.

Resources

- Non-Traditional Pathways List: Kansas Career Guidance Handbook 2025-2026
- Conduct a Targeted Recruitment Event: ConductingTargetRecruitEvent4092009.pdf
- Non-traditional careers list and free posters: Nontraditional Careers in CTE and STEM - Engineer Inclusion
- ADVANCE CTE: Strategies to Increase the Concentration of Students in Nontraditional Occupations - Advance CTE
- NAPE: Make the Future™ Connecting Girls to Manufacturing | National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
- NAPE: Microsoft Word - Startling Statements Access & Opportunity - V3 7-16-2018.docx
- USDOL: Equal Pay and Pay Transparency | U.S. Department of Labor

Single Parents, Including Single Pregnant Women

- Do not isolate teen parents in separate programs where access to CTE is not available. Access to CTE programs that lead to employment in an occupation with family- sustaining wages is critical.
- Allow attendance flexibility and alternative course completion options, especially for teen parents who may be struggling to manage parenting responsibilities.
- Provide transportation for the teen parent's child to childcare and the student to school, ideally in the same location.
- Provide parenting/child development classes for teen parents to develop coping skills and stay in school.
- Offer affordable or free licensed childcare on-site in coordination with the times and locations of all programs.
- Offer courses in many ways—asynchronous online, synchronous online, face-to-face, hybrid—at different times of the day and in different locations to accommodate single parenting responsibilities and schedules.

- Ensure that faculty are accessible by holding unusual office hours, being available online, and communicating in a timely manner via email.
- Conduct family-friendly outreach activities and incorporate family into student events.
- Conduct single parent support groups and/or study groups to build a community of support and social networks.
- Help single parents develop skills to balance work/family/school/life and build financial literacy by integrating these skills into the curriculum and supplementing with workshops, online training, and newsletter content.

Resources

- ADVANCE CTE: Engaging Representatives of Learners with Special Population Status through Perkins V - Advance CTE
- NAPE: Perkins V: Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act | National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

Out-of-Workforce Individuals

- Coordinate services with your local KansasWorks Workforce Center, Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation and other local services that may be available in your area.
- Help students identify transferable skills to connect instructional relevance and build opportunity in a high-demand nontraditional career field that supports economic self-sufficiency and offers good benefits.
- Provide support services such as childcare, transportation, and financial aid for books, tuition, materials, and tools.
- Organize support groups and study groups that build community and social capital. Provide transportation, childcare, and food to encourage participation.
- Provide career planning services such as resume writing, goal setting, interview skills, stress management, job-shadowing, and work-based learning.
- Identify employment-based training such as work-study, subsidized employment, and apprenticeships that provide wages while attending school.
- Utilize flexible learning approaches including online learning, alternative scheduling in the evening and on weekends, and independent learning.
- Offer short-term programs with stackable certifications, credentials, or licensures that have value in the workplace.

Resources

- KANSASWORKS: Job Search - KANSASWORKS
- Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation: Employment Services - Rehabilitation Services
- ADVANCE CTE: Out-of-Workforce Special Pops
- NAPE:
- DOL: ETA | U.S. Department of Labor

English Learners

- Engage families and community in supporting English learners' engagement in CTE and CTSOs.
- Provide interpreters for students and their families.
- Use the gradual release of responsibility model or scaffolded instruction to build student English proficiency.
- Support English learners with scannable technology if students have smart phones, such as, word walls, scannable vocabulary lists, and audio directions. Use technology to facilitate language translation such as visual dictionaries and translation apps.
- Facilitate collaboration between CTE and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers.
- Connect content learning to language acquisition. Position English learners as competent classroom community members by sharing ideas in pairs, using cooperative learning strategies, and engaging in classroom discussion.
- Provide instructional materials in multiple languages or implement a flipped classroom with prep materials in the English learner's language.
- Use instructional practices that support English learners' understanding, such as providing hands-on demonstrations, visual clues to reinforce spoken or written words, and graphic organizers; increasing wait time when asking questions; allowing students to seek clarification; encouraging English learners' participation in social and academic discussions; and focusing on content of student's response and not on pronunciation or grammatical errors.
- Create student cohorts or learning communities in which students can learn from each other and help older students who have been out of school for a long time and are not familiar with how to navigate the institution.

Resources

- ADVANCE CTE: ERIC - ED621289 - Improving Equity and Access to Quality CTE Programs for English Learners. Making Good on the Promise, Advance CTE: State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work, 2022-Jun
- ADVANCE CTE: Support ELs in CTE programs - ACTE Online
- ADVANCE CTE: Perkins Briefs: English Learners
- Colorin Colorado: A Guide for Engaging ELL Families: Twenty Strategies for School Leaders | Colorín Colorado
- Houston ISD: Tips for Supporting English Learners In CTE.pdf
- NAPE: Strategies for Special Population Success: Practical Tips and Tools for Educators – a free resource | National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
- Continental: How to Use Technology to Help ELLs Achieve Language Mastery | Continental Educational Publisher

McKinney-Vento (Homeless) Students

- Have a process to identify students experiencing homelessness, including training and professional development opportunities for staff so they can identify and meet these students' needs.
- Provide enriched supplemental instruction, tutoring, credit recovery, partial credit, partial coursework, independent study, transfer transcripts, and online learning options for students experiencing homelessness to keep up or catch up with their learning.
- Provide access to free meals, shower and laundry facilities, a secure place to store personal belongings, quiet place to study, free school supplies, and access to technology and the internet.
- Coordinate school and community resources that provide trauma-informed wraparound services such as transportation, referrals to health care, shelters, housing, and employment.
- Access financial support for dues, activity fees, and transportation resources through the MVHAA for students experiencing homelessness for extracurricular activities and participation in CTSOs. (McKinney-Vento classified students are automatically waived all fees.)
- Students experiencing homelessness may be chronically absent. Pair at-risk students with mentors who encourage them to attend school every day and provide accountability through attendance monitoring and follow-up with students and parents/guardians when students miss school to determine the cause of the absence and how that barrier can be overcome.

Resources

- NCHE: McKinney-Vento – National Center for Homeless Education
- Federal TRIO Programs in your area: TRIO Map Viewer
- ADVANCE CTE: Perkins Briefs: Homeless
- NAPE: Homeless Students: Resources | National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
- ALL4Ed: Recognizing and Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness | All4Ed

Youth Who Are In, or Have Aged Out of the Foster Care System

- Be familiar with the requirements of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 as it relates to education.
- Learn about your students in foster care. They may have experienced abuse,
- neglect, and multiple placements, so safety is their number one priority—not school. Build a relationship of trust with them and their foster family.
- Be flexible with homework, due dates, and testing, and stay in touch with foster parents to know when a student will have a birth parent or biological family member visitation because these times will create emotional unrest.
- Be an advocate and role model for your students in foster care.
- Ensure access to school-based programs such as Gifted Ed, Special Ed, AP courses, CTE, athletics, band, theater arts, and other programs.

- Connect students with federal TRIO programs at your local community college.
- Assist students transitioning out of foster-care with College Scholarship applications at www.collegescholarships.org/scholarships/foster.htm
- Provide tutoring, counseling, mentoring, cultural enrichment, work-study, and financial literacy training.

Resources

- Federal TRIO Programs in your area: TRIO Map Viewer
- NAPE: Download Our Strategies for Special Population Success Resource | National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
- ADVANCE CTE: Foster Youth - Special Pops

Youth with a Parent Who is a Member of the Armed Forces and is on Active Duty

- Understand the unique needs of a child with a parent in the military on active duty during deployment. Promptly refer a student for counseling who continues to show signs of stress, inability to function in school, or has high levels of emotional response after a family member deploys.
- Create support groups for children of military families.
- Retain classroom routines and maintain predictable, structured class schedules.
- Reinforce safety and security by protecting students from exposure to frightening situations and reminders of their parents' deployment. Maintain objectivity by responding to events in a calm and caring manner.
- Help students with free access, online tutoring and homework help at military.tutor.com.
- Use competency checklists that students can share with their next school to ensure their continued learning in a similar CTE program, if their family moves due to deployment or reassignment.
- Be familiar with the education support services available from the military branch your student's parent(s) serve. Know the local point of contact. The Veteran's Administration's Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents and survivors of certain Veterans.

Resources

- DOD Free Online Tutoring: Military Families Eligible for DoD Tutoring Program
- MISA: Promising Practices
- ADVANCE CTE: Armed Forces Special Pops
- NAPE: Strategies for Special Population Success: Practical Tips and Tools for Educators – a free resource | National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

For more information, contact:

Andy Ewing
Education Program Consultant
Career, Standards and Assessments Services
(785) 296-3860
andy.ewing@ksde.gov

Hannah Miller
Attorney
Special Education and Title Services
(785) 296-6518
hannah.miller@ksde.gov

CAN

Kansas State Department of Education
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212

www.ksde.gov

The Kansas State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, KSDE, Landon State Office Building, 900 S.W. Jackson, Suite 102, Topeka, KS 66612, (785) 296-3201.