

Skills Beyond School: The OECD's Review of Postsecondary CTE in the United States



FALL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
STATE DIRECTORS OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION

OCTOBER 22, 2013
BALTIMORE, MD

Background and Goals

- Jointly sponsored by OVAE and NCES
- Follow-on to *Learning for Jobs*
- Research Approach
 - NCES background report
 - Interviews with key stakeholders and policy experts
 - Case Studies: Florida, Washington, and Maryland
- Goal: To inform reauthorization discussions (Perkins, HEA and WIA) and share with community



**OECD Reviews of Vocational
Education and Training**

A Skills beyond School Review of the United States

Małgorzata Kuczera and Simon Field



Major Findings

The high degree of DECENTRALIZATION and POLICY FRAGMENTATION:

1. Makes the U.S. “system” highly dynamic, responsive, and flexible
2. Transfers too much risk to students and employers, in the form of high costs, unclear quality, and difficult transitions.

The combination of high risk and low accountability generates the threat of underinvestment in skills.

Recommendations

Need to improve the QUALITY, COHERENCE, and TRANSPARENCY in postsecondary CTE:

1. Funding for quality

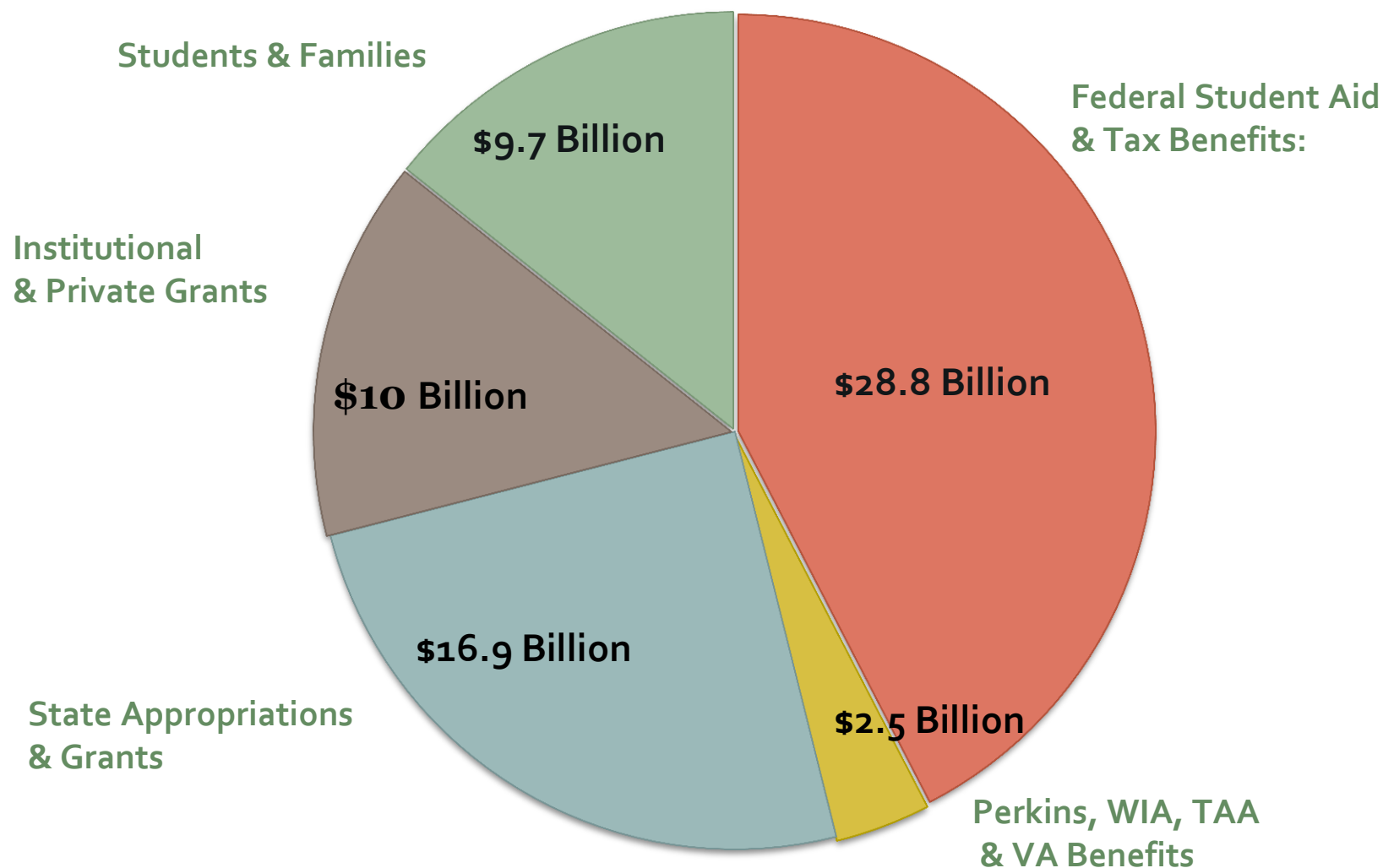
1. Anchoring credentials in the needs of industry

1. Building transitions that work

Table 1.1 The diverse sources of funding for postsecondary CTE

Estimates of funding to postsecondary CTE: 2007-08

(nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/pdf/PostsecVET.pdf)



Rec. 1: Funding for Quality

Strategic Funding: Link institutional eligibility for title IV student aid to consistent and demanding quality standards.

Accreditation: Shift focus to:

- program-level student outcomes
- enforcing regulations on unfair and deceptive marketing practices on the part of providers.
- aspects of quality specific to CTE - industry demand for specific credentials, inclusion of high quality work-based learning in the program, etc.

Outcomes Data: Improve the collection of data linking program and labor market outcomes.

Growth in Non-Degree Credentials

- Certificates have grown from 6 percent of postsecondary awards in 1980 to 22 percent of awards today.
- Most are awarded at 2-year colleges.
- Over 1 million certificates were awarded in 2010; up from 300,000 in 1994.⁵
- Certifications are also growing rapidly: “between 2000 and 2003, the number of people seeking a certification nearly tripled” (77).

Rec 2: Anchoring Credentials in Needs of Industry

- On a voluntary basis, establish quality standards for certifications based on industry support and quality in the assessment.
- Building on recent initiatives, establish systematic arrangements to monitor certificates and certifications in the US workforce.

On-Ramps and Off-Ramps

The US excels in:

- Providing second chance opportunities for adults and disconnected youth
- Creating connections between CTE and academic pathways

But decentralization/fragmentation inhibit transition:

- Two thirds of postsecondary students transfer at least once during a 6-year period
- 40% are enrolled in noncredit.
- Most are working or have work experience.
- Nearly half will be placed in at least one remedial course

Rec 3: Building Better Transitions

Enhance CTE and workplace learning at high school.

Support and scale use of **prior learning assessment** for adults.

Develop effective articulation frameworks by:

- Building articulation requirements into accreditation process
- Using industry recognized standards to increase portability
- Ensuring students have sufficient guidance to understand transition opportunities.
- Developing more crosswalks between apprenticeships, military training, and other postsecondary institutions

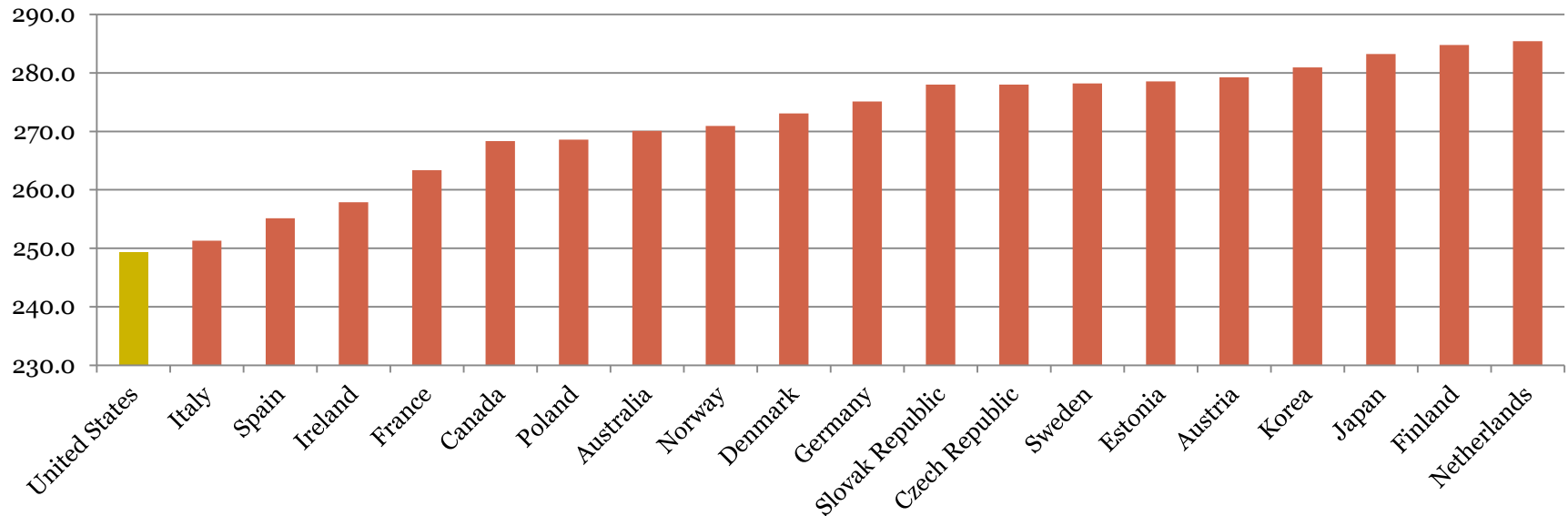
Strengthen workplace training and career guidance.

The Adult Skills Survey (PIAAC): Opportunities for Postsecondary CTE?

- Major findings reinforce need for high quality, postsecondary CTE
- Failed transitions into postsecondary appear to be a major source of US weakness
- US postsecondary graduates hold up well.
- 36 million adults lack basic skills and need contextualized, postsecondary CTE.
- Younger Americans are not more skilled than those retiring.

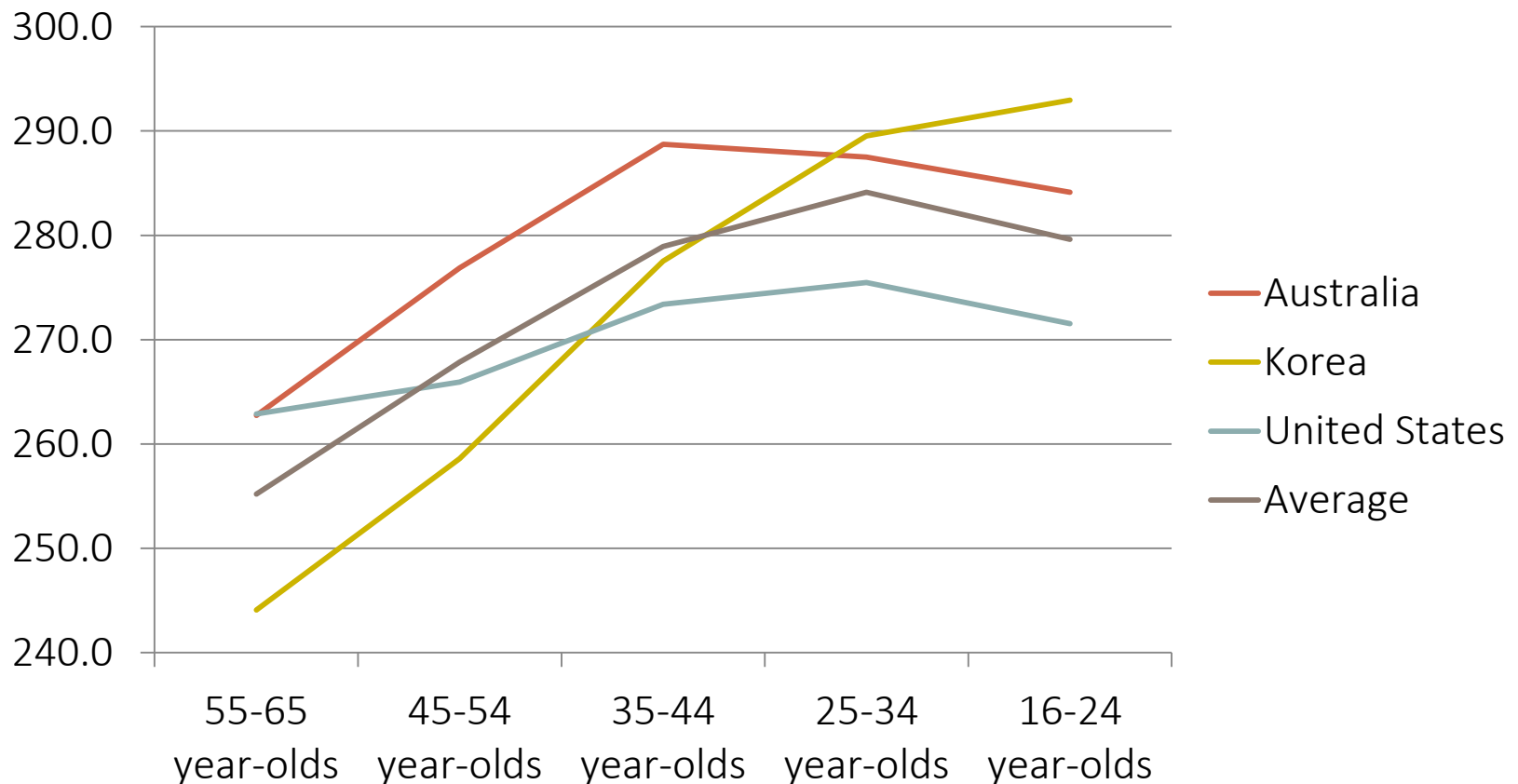
Final Thoughts: Postsecondary CTE and PIAAC

Young Adult (16-24) Math Scores



Final Thoughts: Postsecondary CTE and PIAAC

Intergenerational Trends Reading Scores: Minimal Improvement for Young US Adults



Thank You!

Mary Alice McCarthy
Senior Policy Analyst
New America Foundation

Maryalice.mccarthy@newamerica.org