

Date of Hearing: April 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

Liz Ortega, Chair

AB 1904 (Gipson) – As Amended March 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Teachers: credentialed educator apprenticeship programs

SUMMARY: Establishes the Credentialed Educator Apprenticeship Act at the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (commission) in partnership with the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS). Specifically, **this bill:**

1) Establishes the Credentialed Educator Apprenticeships Act.

Provisions related to the commission:

2) Requires the commission to partner with the DAS in the dissemination, approval, and monitoring of credentialed educator apprenticeship programs in California, as described in (17)-(21) below.

3) Requires the commission to partner with the DAS to communicate apprenticeship requirements to professional preparation programs, local educational agencies, and other potential sponsors of credentialed educator apprenticeship programs.

4) Requires the commission, when it receives a credentialed educator apprenticeship program application from the DAS, to confirm all of the following:

a) The applicant is, or is partnering with, a professional preparation program and, if applicable, an induction program, accredited by the commission to offer the program or programs with no major or probationary stipulations that it is proposing to offer for credentialed educator apprenticeships.

b) The credentialed educator apprenticeship program includes at least 300 hours of paid on-the-job training that complies with the standards set by the commission before an educator apprentice may serve as an educator of record.

c) The credentialed educator apprenticeship program requires an educator apprentice to earn their baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education before serving as an educator of record.

d) The credentialed educator apprenticeship program includes at least 200 hours of support, mentoring, and supervision per school year that complies with standards set by the commission.

5) Requires, if an educator preparation program or an induction program associated with a commission-approved credentialed educator apprenticeship program fails to maintain accreditation from the commission, the commission to immediately notify the DAS.

- 6) Requires the commission to include data on commission-approved credentialed educator apprenticeship programs on its website and in its relevant annual reports to the Legislature on teacher preparation and accreditation pursuant to the provisions of this bill.
- 7) Authorizes the commission to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the DAS to establish processes and procedures for information sharing, application review, and data collection and reporting.
- 8) Authorizes, notwithstanding any other law, the commission to issue apprenticeship certificates or permits to educator candidates without a credential who are employed by local educational agencies and participating in commission-approved credentialed educator apprenticeship programs, and who have successfully completed a criminal background check as specified for credentialing purposes.
 - a) Authorizes the commission to adopt regulations to implement this provision.

Provisions related to the DAS:

- 9) Requires an applicant for a new credentialed educator apprenticeship program or for the expansion of an existing credentialed educator apprenticeship program into a new geographic or credential area to submit documentation to the Chief of the DAS showing compliance with the requirements of (4) above.
- 10) Requires the DAS, before approving an application for a credentialed educator apprenticeship program, to present the apprenticeship program application to the commission for its review pursuant to (4) above.
- 11) Requires the commission, if it confirms that the requirements of (4) above have been met, to provide written notice of that fact to the chief of the DAS.
- 12) Prohibits, if the commission does not provide written notice pursuant to (11) above, the chief of the DAS from approving the credentialed educator apprenticeship program.
- 13) Requires a credentialed educator apprenticeship program to be administered by a joint apprenticeship committee, or unilateral management or labor apprenticeship committee.
 - a) Requires, where a collective bargaining agreement exists, a program to be jointly sponsored.
 - b) Requires joint apprenticeship committees to be composed of an equal number of employer and employee representatives.
- 14) Authorizes an apprentice pursuant to this bill's provisions to be employed as a classified employee while also separately employed as a classified employee in another position, but prohibits the apprentice from performing the duties of their other classified position during their apprenticeship hours.
- 15) Provides that the requirements in (9)-(14) above are in addition to other requirements that may be imposed by statute or by regulation.

- 16) Provides that the bill's provisions do not apply to existing or future apprenticeship programs in the education field that do not result in a credential issued by the commission, including, but not limited to, permits issued for childcare and development programs, as specified.
- 17) Authorizes the DAS to initiate deregistration proceedings to withdraw state approval of a credentialed educator apprenticeship program if its associated educator preparation program or induction program fails to maintain accreditation from the commission.
- 18) Requires the DAS to partner with the commission in the dissemination, approval, and monitoring of credentialed educator apprenticeship programs in California, as described in (2)-(7) above.
- 19) Authorizes the DAS to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the commission to establish processes and procedures for information sharing, application review, and data collection and reporting.
- 20) Authorizes the chief of the DAS, in consultation with the commission, to issue rules and regulations that govern credentialed educator apprenticeship programs, including the approval and denial of programs, registration of agreements, program administration and procedures, evaluations, working conditions, and minimum standards.
- 21) Requires all rules and regulations adopted pursuant to (20) above to be consistent with (2)-(7) above and the rules and regulations adopted by the commission.
- 22) Makes related findings and declarations.

Definitions:

- 23) Defines "educator of record" to mean an individual with a credential issued by the commission demonstrating at least current enrollment in, and partial completion of, a professional preparation program and who is responsible for the delivery of instruction or services authorized by that credential to a class or caseload of pupils.
- 24) Defines "regionally accredited institution of higher education" to mean any institution of higher education accredited by any of the following accrediting bodies or their successor organizations:
 - a) The Higher Learning Commission.
 - b) The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.
 - c) The Middle States Commission on Higher Education.
 - d) The New England Commission of Higher Education.
 - e) The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.
 - f) The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

- g) The Western Association of Schools and Colleges-Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.
- h) The Western Association of Schools and Colleges-Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities.

EXISTING LAW: Note: *this analysis only considers the Labor Code provisions. Please see the Assembly Education Committee's analysis for the Education Code provisions.*

- 1) Provides for apprenticeship programs within the DAS within the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), sponsored by specific entities and employers, and requires the Chief of the DAS to perform various functions with respect to apprenticeship programs and the welfare of apprentices. Labor Code § 3070 et seq.
- 2) Establishes the Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship to provide advice and guidance to the Administrator of Apprenticeship and the Chief of the DAS on apprenticeship programs, and agreements that are not within the jurisdiction of the California Apprenticeship Council and on the development and administration of standards governing preapprenticeship, certification, and on-the-job training and retraining programs outside the building and construction trades and firefighters. Labor Code § 3071.5.
- 3) Requires the DAS to evaluate apprenticeship programs to ensure standards compliance, proper supervision, required classroom instruction is provided, work processes in the standards are covered, graduates have completed program requirements, and funds were properly obtained and appropriately expended. Labor Code § 3073.1.
- 4) Provides that an apprenticeship program may be administered by a joint apprenticeship committee, unilateral management or labor apprenticeship committee, or an individual employer; that programs may be approved by the Chief of the DAS in any trade or area of the state; and that, where a collective bargaining agreement exists, requires a program to be jointly sponsored, as specified. Labor Code § 3075(a).
- 5) Establishes that it is the public policy of this state to encourage the utilization of apprenticeship as a form of on-the-job training, when training is cost-effective in developing skills needed to perform public services; requires state and local public agencies to make a diligent effort to establish apprenticeship programs for apprenticeable occupations in their respective workforces; in furtherance of this policy, requires public agencies to take into consideration, a) the extent to which a continuous supply of trained personnel is readily available to public agencies to meet their skills requirements in the various occupations which are determined to be apprenticeable, and (b) the application of established programs in the private sector, where appropriate; and provides that public sector apprenticeship programs should be fully compatible with affirmative action goals for the participation of minorities and women in apprenticeship programs. Labor Code § 3075.1.
- 6) Requires apprenticeship program sponsors to establish selection procedures and make them available to applicants and the Chief of the DAS, as specified. Labor Code § 3076.3.

- 7) Defines the term “apprentice” to mean a person at least 16 years of age who has entered into an apprentice agreement with an employer or program sponsor and requires the term of apprenticeship for each apprenticeable occupation to be approved by the Chief of the DAS. Labor Code § 3077.
- 8) Provides that the term of apprenticeship may be measured either through the completion of the industry standard for hours of on-the-job learning and related and supplemental instruction, attainment of competency, or a hybrid blend of the time-based and competency-based approaches, as specified, but that programs in the building and construction trades and for firefighters shall use the time-based approach. Labor Code § 3078.5.
- 9) Requires apprentice agreements to be approved by the local joint apprenticeship committee or the parties to a collective bargaining agreement, or by the administrator where there is no collective bargaining agreement or joint committee, and be signed by the employer, or his or her agent, or by a program sponsor, as specified, and by the apprentice, as specified. Labor Code § 3079.
- 10) Allows, in certain circumstances, an apprentice agreement to be signed by an association of employers or an organization of employees instead of by an individual employer, as specified. Labor Code § 3080.
- 11) Provides that neither existing law nor approved apprentice agreements can operate to invalidate any apprenticeship provision in any collective bargaining agreement between employers and employees setting up higher apprenticeship standards. Labor Code § 3086.
- 12) Provides that acceptance of an application for entrance into an apprenticeship training program shall not be predicated on the payment of any fee, but that reasonable costs for expense incurred may be charged after an applicant has been accepted into the program. Labor Code § 3091.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: Apprenticeship is a system of training in a trade or profession that combines both classroom study and on-the-job training. The DAS within the DIR administers California apprenticeship law and establishes apprenticeship standards for wages, hours, working conditions and the specific skills required for state certification. It promotes apprenticeship training, consults with program sponsors, and monitors programs to ensure high standards for on-the-job training and supplemental classroom instruction. Although “traditional” apprenticeship programs are in the building and construction trades, registered apprenticeship programs now exist in a wide variety of industries, including healthcare, technology, advanced manufacturing, public service and more.

Governor Newsom has set a goal for the state to serve 500,000 apprentices by 2029. The number of apprentices in California has increased dramatically in recent years, in part due to new and increased funding by the State of California. This includes Apprenticeship Innovation Funding to scale and expand apprenticeship programs in nontraditional industries, the California Opportunity Youth Apprenticeship grant program to increase opportunities for at-risk youth in the state, and the Equal Representation in Construction Apprenticeships grant program to

provide funding to help women and other underserved populations enter the building and construction trades.

Teacher supply issues in California:

According to a 2025 report by the Learning Policy Institute, “Like many states, California faces persistent teacher shortages, and school districts find it difficult to fill vacancies with fully credentialed teachers, especially in math, science, special education, and bilingual education. To address shortages, districts often hire underprepared, inexperienced, and substitute teachers, increase class sizes, and cut course offerings altogether. Students of color and those from low-income backgrounds bear the brunt of these consequences, as teacher shortages are most severe in schools serving more of these students. For example...fewer than half of new math teachers in schools serving the greatest concentrations of high-need students are fully qualified for their positions, as compared to 70% in lowest-need schools.

Teacher production has declined for many years. In 2022, half as many new teachers graduated through a California-based traditional teacher preparation program (TPP) as in 2004, the peak year. As a result, substandard credentials and permits—issued to teachers who haven’t yet earned full teacher certification—have increased, tripling between 2013 and 2023.”¹

Teacher apprenticeship as a solution to teacher shortages and related efforts in California:

There are currently some teacher apprenticeship programs operating in California. However, existing law doesn’t have a formal framework for credentialed educator apprenticeships, which would allow programs to tap into state and federal apprenticeship funding.

In early 2023, the Labor & Workforce Development Agency commenced a multi-stakeholder initiative convening leaders in the education, labor and policy spaces to design, launch and scale Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) in teaching across California. Funded with philanthropic support, this working group of stakeholders will develop a roadmap for implementing and scaling RAPs in teaching for the state.

In this effort, California joined at least 30 other states that committed to launching registered teacher apprenticeship programs at the encouragement of the federal government under the Biden Administration. In July 2023, the Biden Administration’s Labor Department developed new national guidelines and standards for registered apprenticeship programs for K-12 teachers and provided funding to develop and expand programs.

Beyond apprenticeship, California has invested in several initiatives to recruit, prepare and retain diverse teachers, including:

- The Golden State Teacher Grant Program, which provides grants of up to \$20,000 to cover the cost of attendance for students enrolled in professional preparation programs including teaching, counseling, social work and psychology.

¹ Learning Policy Institute. (2025). Tackling Teacher Shortages: What We Know About California’s Teacher Workforce Investments [Fact sheet]. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/ca-teacher-shortages-workforce-factsheet>

- The Teacher Residency Grant Program, which aims to launch new and expand existing teacher residency programs that integrate coursework and a yearlong placement in a classroom under the guidance of a mentor teacher. For more information on the Teacher Residency Grant Program, please see the Assembly Education Committee’s analysis of this bill.
- The Student Teacher Stipend Program, which provides a \$10,000 stipend to eligible student teachers who complete a minimum of 500 hours of student teaching.

Author’s Statements:

According to the author, “AB 1904 aims to address the ongoing teacher shortage by establishing the California Teacher Residency Apprenticeship Program, a pathway that will help schools recruit and train teachers directly from the communities they serve. This alternative approach will be especially impactful in high-need schools serving low-income families, many of which are in Assembly District 65.

One of the primary barriers preventing aspiring teachers from entering the profession is the high cost of obtaining a teaching credential. AB 1904 would help alleviate these financial barriers by allowing prospective teachers to earn while they learn through paid, on-the-job training and mentorship from experienced educators.

Additionally, the bill would align California’s existing teacher residency programs with a federal and state apprenticeship framework, enabling participating programs to leverage both federal and state funding. This approach would expand resources available to train and support future educators while strengthening long-term teacher pipelines for California’s schools.”

The author adds that, per HR 39 (Gipson, 2021), “This bill advances equity for underserved and marginalized communities by addressing two well-documented barriers to entering the teaching profession: the high cost of credential preparation and insufficient mentorship and support during preparation and the early years of teaching. The data also show that these barriers disproportionately impact potential educators of color and potential educators from low-income families.

This bill also seeks to increase the number of teachers in the profession, thereby reducing the number of teacher vacancies, which disproportionately impact schools and districts with higher percentages of students from low-income families, English learners, and youth in foster care.”

Arguments in Support

Children Now, sponsor of this measure, states that “this approach would provide an effective compensation and recruitment strategy, to facilitate preparing candidates with a stronger foundation early in their career path. The credentialed teacher apprenticeship program can assist in recruiting a more diverse pool of candidates and be a new pathway that would strengthen the preparation process of these new educators, provide a financial incentive to enter the profession, and offer high-quality, ongoing professional learning for candidates to help ensure they are supported, can be effective, and persist in the profession.”

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

Prior and Related Legislation

AB 291 (Gipson) of 2025 was substantially similar to this bill. Held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 694 (Gipson) of 2024 would have authorized the establishment of a Teacher Residency Apprenticeship Program to address shortages in the educator workforce, expand the pipeline into the teaching profession, and grow a diverse, local pathway into teaching. Held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Children Now (Sponsor)
Alliance for Children's Rights
California Association for Bilingual Education
California Charter Schools Association
California Teachers Association
CFT– a Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO
Edtrust-west
Edvoice
Greater Sacramento Urban League
San Mateo County Office of Education
San Mateo County School Boards Association
Western Governors University

Opposition

None on File

Analysis Prepared by: Erin Hickey / L. & E. /