

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 1904 (Gipson and Muratsuchi)
As Amended March 9, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Establishes the Credentialed Educator Apprenticeship Act at the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), in partnership with the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS).

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires, before approving an application for a credentialed educator apprenticeship program, the DAS to present the apprenticeship program application to the CTC for its review. Requires that when the CTC confirms that the requirements have been met, it shall provide written notice of that fact to the chief. Requires if the CTC does not provide written notice, the DAS shall not approve the credentialed educator apprenticeship program.
- 2) Requires, if an educator preparation program or an induction program associated with an approved credentialed educator apprenticeship program fails to maintain accreditation from the CTC, the CTC to immediately notify the DAS.
- 3) States that these requirements do not apply to existing or future apprenticeship programs in the education field that do not result in a credential issued by the CTC.
- 4) Authorizes the CTC to issue apprenticeship certificates or permits to educator candidates who are enrolled in professional preparation programs associated with commission-approved credentialed educator apprenticeship programs, and who have successfully completed a criminal background check for credentialing purposes.
- 5) Requires a credentialed educator apprenticeship program to be administered by a joint apprenticeship committee, or unilateral management or labor apprenticeship committee. Requires that where a collective bargaining agreement exists, a program to be jointly sponsored and composed of an equal number of employer and employee representatives.

COMMENTS

What does this bill do? This bill establishes the Credentialed Educator Apprenticeship Act and enacts requirements for educator apprenticeship programs to meet before they are approved by the State. The intent of this bill is to merge California's existing teacher residency grant program with an approved federal and state apprenticeship program, thereby accessing both federal and state funding designated for apprenticeships. The long-term goal of merging these programs is promising, based on the success in other states.

Teacher residency grant program. For the purposes of the Teacher Residency Grant Programs, a teacher residency program is defined as an LEA-based partnership between an LEA and an Institution of Higher Education (IHE) with a CTC-approved preliminary teacher preparation program, and in which a prospective teacher teaches at least half time alongside a teacher of record, who is designated as the experienced mentor teacher, for at least one full school year while engaging in initial preparation coursework. Grantees may receive up to \$40,000 per participating teacher resident each year.

The Teacher Residency Grant Programs were initially authorized in the 2018-19 Budget Act and the budget trailer bill to support the development, implementation, and expansion of teacher residency programs, with a total of \$75 million for competitive grants. The program requires LEAs to work in partnership with IHEs offering CTC-approved programs to offer a teacher residency pathway to earn a teaching credential in special education, STEM, or bilingual education through 2023.

The 2021-22 Budget Act provided \$350 million through the 2025-26 fiscal year for Teacher Residency Programs including Capacity, Expansion, and Implementation grants for "designated shortage fields" including special education, bilingual education, computer science, STEM, transitional kindergarten, or kindergarten, and any other fields identified by the CTC based on an annual analysis of hiring and vacancy data, and/or for recruiting, developing support systems for, providing outreach and communication strategies to, and retaining a diverse teacher workforce that reflects the LEA community's diversity.

Of the \$350 million, \$25 million is set aside for Teacher Residency Capacity Grants. Grant awards may be up to \$250,000 for eligible LEAs, which is an increase of \$200,000 per grant award from the 2018-19 fiscal year. Teacher Residency Capacity Grants are intended to support a collaborative partnership between eligible LEAs with one or more CTC-approved teacher preparation programs offered by a regionally accredited IHE to expand, strengthen, improve access to, or create a teacher residency program. The remaining \$325 million is set aside for Teacher Residency Expansion and/or Implementation grants.

According to the Assembly Budget Committee, for Year One of the Teacher Residency Grant Programs, LEAs reported a total of 309 teacher residents in the thirty-one programs that began a Teacher Residency Program between July 2019 and June 2020.

The Governor's January 2026 budget proposes a \$250 million augmentation from the General Fund for the Teacher Residency Grant program, to be encumbered until June 30, 2030.

What are other states doing? The state of Tennessee has developed an innovative approach to address teacher shortages. Tennessee developed a teacher residency apprenticeship program that was the first in the nation to be approved as a registered apprenticeship by the U.S. Department of Labor in 2022. Tennessee's Teacher Apprenticeship Program aligns best practices from the initial Tennessee Grow Your Own programs with the funding and rigors of national apprenticeship standards. This model was designed to address the financial, recruitment, and preparation challenges school districts experience when recruiting candidates to become educators, particularly educators of color. In Tennessee, the state leverages both state and federal workforce dollars that preserve locally designed programs while also meeting a national apprenticeship standard.

In Tennessee, an LEA partners with an IHE to provide a three year tuition free path for high school students and district teacher aides to earn elementary and special education credentials. The district programs were given waivers to hire paid fellows to teach while completing their degrees, partnering with teacher unions to cover textbooks, and placing residents in Title I schools to leverage Title funds for staff and program support. The teacher's apprentices begin work at community college, earn an associate's degree, and then transfer to a state university to complete a bachelor's degree and earn a teaching credential. Simultaneously, residents earn salary/benefits working as an educator assistant under the guidance of a mentor teacher.

New York has established the Classroom Academy residency model, which is a state Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). This program places graduate-level candidates pursuing initial New York state certification in a two year full-time, paid classroom placement with a matched expert teacher. Participants earn a \$22,000 yearly stipend while completing coursework and working in a partner school district under guidance of a mentor teacher. Candidates are given \$5,000 in tuition assistance for State University of New York (SUNY) candidates.

According to the Author

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

Arguments in Support

Children Now states, "To address the [teacher shortage] as well as lack of diversity in the field, AB 1904 would establish the conditions for a credentialed educator apprenticeship program that would maintain high-quality and accountability in the following ways:

- Provide an opportunity for LEAs, alongside labor and community partners, to leverage state and federal funding, to break down barriers such as recruitment and retention of teaching candidates who would be compensated for on the job preparation and mentored throughout the program.
- Offer the opportunity for LEAs, institutions of higher education, and their consortiums of labor associations and community partners to address key shortages and growth areas, such as special education, early childhood education, bilingual education, and school counseling.
- Require the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) to partner in the dissemination, approval and monitoring of the credentialed educator apprenticeship programs. The CTC and DAS will work in partnership to establish processes that ensure strong accountability and reporting requirements that these programs be of high-quality, provide supportive working conditions, and meet compensation requirements with high-support mentorship for every apprentice."

Arguments in Opposition

None

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee,

- 1) One-time General Fund costs of \$419,000 and \$413,000 ongoing to the CTC to support three additional staff to carry out the activities associated with establishing and overseeing educator apprenticeship pathways.
- 2) Ongoing General Fund costs of an unknown amount, potentially in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars, to the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) for the DAS to oversee approval and monitoring of credentialed educator apprenticeship programs.

VOTES

ASM EDUCATION: 8-0-0

YES: Patel, Hoover, Alvarez, Bonta, Castillo, Garcia, Lowenthal, Zbur

ASM LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT: 7-0-0

YES: Ortega, Alanis, Chen, Elhawary, Kalra, Lee, Ward

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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