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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND RETIREMENT**  
**Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, Chair**  
**2025 - 2026 Regular**

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**Bill No:** AB 1904 **Hearing Date:** June 24, 2026  
**Author:** Gipson  
**Version:** March 9, 2026  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Jazmin Marroquin

**SUBJECT:** Teachers: credentialed educator apprenticeship programs

**KEY ISSUE**

This bill establishes the Credentialed Educator Apprenticeships Act, which requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) to disseminate, approve, and monitor credentialed educator apprenticeship programs in California.

**ANALYSIS**

**Existing law:**

- 1) Establishes the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) within the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) to oversee apprenticeship programs and requires the Chief of the Division (Chief) to perform various functions to promote the welfare of apprentices. (Labor Code §3070 et seq.)
- 2) Creates, within DAS, the Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (IACA), which provides advice and guidance to the Administrator of Apprenticeship and Chief 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 DAS to evaluate apprenticeship programs to ensure compliance with specified standards, including that all on-the-job training is properly supervised, that classroom instruction is provided, and that funds were properly obtained and expended. (Labor Code §3073.1)
- 4) Authorizes a joint apprenticeship committee, unilateral management or labor apprenticeship committee, or an individual employer to administer an apprenticeship program. The Chief may approve programs in any trade in the state or in a city or trade area, whenever the apprentice training needs justify the establishment. Where a collective bargaining agreement exists, a program shall be jointly sponsored unless either party to the agreement waives its right to representation in writing. (Labor Code §3075(a))
- 5) Defines “apprentice” to mean a person at least 16 years of age who has entered into a written agreement, or apprentice agreement, with an employer or program sponsor. The Chief shall approve the term of apprenticeship for each apprenticeable occupation, as specified. (Labor Code §3077)

- 6) 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)
- 7) Requires the local joint apprenticeship committee or the parties to a collective bargaining agreement, or the administrator where there is no collective bargaining agreement or joint committee to approve apprentice agreements. Every apprentice agreement shall be signed by the employer, or his or her agent, or by a program sponsor, as specified, and by the apprentice. (Labor Code §3079)
- 8) 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)
- 9) Provides that acceptance of an application for entrance into an apprenticeship 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)
- 10) Specifies that it is the public policy of this state to encourage the utilization of apprenticeship as a form of on-the-job training, when such training is cost-effective in developing skills needed to perform public services. State and local public agencies shall make a diligent effort to establish apprenticeship programs for apprenticeable occupations in their respective work forces. In furtherance of this policy, public agencies shall take into consideration (a) the extent to which a continuous supply of trained personnel is readily available to public agencies to meet their skill requirements in the various occupations which are determined to be apprenticeable, and (b) the application of established programs in the private sector, where appropriate. 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)
- 11) Establishes the Teacher Residency Grant Program to support teacher candidates through one-year residencies in high-need areas, including special education, bilingual education, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). (Education Code §44415)

**This bill:**

- 1) Establishes the Credentialed Educator Apprenticeships Act in the Education Code.
- 2) Defines the following:
  - a) “Division” means DAS.
  - b) “Educator of record” means an individual with a credential issued by the CTC 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.

- c) “Regionally accredited institution of higher education” means any institution of higher education accredited by any of the following accrediting bodies or their successor organizations:
  - i) The Higher Learning Commission.
  - ii) The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.
  - iii) The Middle States Commission on Higher Education.
  - iv) The New England Commission of Higher Education.
  - v) The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.
  - vi) The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.
  - vii) The Western Association of Schools and Colleges-Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.
  - viii) The Western Association of Schools and Colleges-Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities.
- 3) Requires CTC to partner with DAS in the dissemination, approval, and monitoring of credentialed educator apprenticeship programs in California, as specified.
  - a) Requires CTC to partner with DAS to communicate apprenticeship requirements to professional preparation programs, local educational agencies, and other potential sponsors of credentialed educator apprenticeship programs.
  - b) Requires CTC to confirm all the following when they receive a credentialed educator apprenticeship program application from DAS:
    - i) The applicant is, or is partnering with, a professional preparation program and, if applicable, an induction program, accredited by CTC to offer the program or programs with no major or probationary stipulations that it is proposing to offer for credentialed educator apprenticeships.
    - ii) The credentialed educator apprenticeship program includes at least 300 hours of paid on-the-job training that complies with the standards set by CTC before an educator apprentice may serve as an educator of record.
    - iii) 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.
    - iv) The credentialed educator apprenticeship program includes at least 200 hours of support, mentoring, and supervision per school year that complies with standards set by CTC.
  - c) Requires CTC to immediately notify DAS if an educator preparation program or an induction program associated with a commission-approved credentialed educator apprenticeship program fails to maintain accreditation from CTC.
  - d) Requires CTC to include data on CTC-approved credentialed educator apprenticeship programs on its internet website and in its relevant annual reports to the Legislature on teacher preparation and accreditation pursuant to this chapter.
  - e) Authorizes CTC to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with DAS to establish processes and procedures for information sharing, application review, and data collection and reporting.

- f) Specifies that this section does 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 pursuant to Section 8301.
- 4) Authorizes CTC, notwithstanding any other law, to issue apprenticeship certificates or permits to educator candidates without a credential who are employed by local educational agencies and participating in CTC-approved credentialed educator apprenticeship programs, and who have successfully completed a criminal background check conducted, as specified, for credentialing purposes.
- a) Authorizes CTC to adopt regulations to implement this section.
- 5) 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 showing all of the following to the Chief of DAS:
- a) The applicant is, or is partnering with, an educator professional preparation program and, if applicable, an induction program, accredited by CTC to offer the program or programs with no major or probationary stipulations that it is proposing to offer educator apprentices.
  - b) The proposed credentialed educator apprenticeship program includes at least 300 hours of paid on-the-job training before the educator apprentices may serve as educators of record, in compliance with standards set by CTC and as specified.
  - c) The proposed credentialed educator apprenticeship program requires educator apprentices to earn their baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education before serving as educators of record.
  - d) The proposed credentialed educator apprenticeship program provides mentorship to apprentices throughout their apprenticeship, as specified.
- 6) Requires DAS, before approving an application for a credentialed educator apprenticeship program, to present the apprenticeship program application to CTC for its review, as specified.
- a) If CTC confirms that the requirements of Section 44377 of the Education Code have been met, it shall provide written notice of that fact to the Chief.
  - b) If CTC does not provide written notice, as specified, the Chief shall not approve the credentialed educator apprenticeship program.
- 7) Provides that a credentialed educator apprenticeship program will be administered by a joint apprenticeship committee, or unilateral management or labor apprenticeship committee, as specified. Where a collective bargaining agreement exists, a program shall be jointly sponsored. Joint apprenticeship committees shall be composed of an equal number of employer and employee representatives.

- 8) Specifies that an apprentice pursuant to this section may be employed as a classified employee while also separately employed as a classified employee in another position, but the apprentice shall not perform the duties of their other classified position during their apprenticeship hours.
  - a) Defines the following:
    - i) “Commission” means the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.
    - ii) “Educator of record” means 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.
    - iii) “Regionally accredited institution of higher education” means any institution of higher education accredited by any of the following accrediting bodies or their successor organizations:
      - (1) The Higher Learning Commission.
      - (2) The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.
      - (3) The Middle States Commission on Higher Education.
      - (4) The New England Commission of Higher Education.
      - (5) The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.
      - (6) The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.
      - (7) The Western Association of Schools and Colleges-Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.
      - (8) The Western Association of Schools and Colleges-Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities.
  - b) Specifies the requirements are in addition to other requirements that may be imposed by statute or by regulation.
  - c) Specifies this section does not apply to existing or future apprenticeship programs in the education field that do not result in a credential issued by the commission, as specified.
- 9) Authorizes 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 CTC.
- 10) Requires DAS to partner with CTC in the dissemination, approval, and monitoring of credentialed educator apprenticeship programs in California, as specified.
- 11) Authorizes DAS to enter into a memorandum of understanding with CTC to establish processes and procedures for information sharing, application review, and data collection and reporting.
- 12) Authorizes the Chief, in consultation with CTC, 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.

- 13) Specifies that all rules and regulations, as specified, must be consistent with Section 44377 of the Education Code and the rules and regulations adopted by CTC.

## COMMENTS

### 1. Background:

#### Apprenticeships

DAS administers the state's apprenticeship laws and enforces apprenticeship standards for wages, hours, working conditions and the specific skills required for state certification as a journey person in an apprenticeable occupation. In general, apprenticeship programs provide instruction that combines a formal course of in-class instruction with practical "on-the-job" training.

Under DAS, the California Apprenticeship Council (CAC) establishes standards for minimum wages, maximum hours, and working conditions for apprenticeship agreements in the building and construction trades and for firefighter occupations. The Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (IACA) establishes similar standards apprentice agreements in all industries *other* than the building and construction trades and firefighter occupations, such as in healthcare, technology, advanced manufacturing, education, etc.

Employers that participate in apprenticeship programs have the ability to develop the curriculum and tailor it to their needs. As a result, apprenticeships create a diverse, flexible pool of employees with coveted skills. Decreased workforce turnover and increased employee morale are also associated with apprenticeship programs.

In 2018, then gubernatorial candidate, Gavin Newsom pledged to serve 500,000 apprentices by 2029. In the years since, the number of apprentices has increased dramatically. Initiatives to expand apprentices include the 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 help women and other underserved populations enter the building and construction trades. Currently, DAS supports over 99,173 active registered apprentices.<sup>1</sup>

#### Educator Apprenticeships

In February 2023, the Labor Workforce and Development Agency commenced a multi-stakeholder initiative that convened leaders in the education, labor and policy spaces to design, launch, and scale Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) to train educators across California. The working group was tasked with developing a roadmap for implementing RAPs that builds upon existing educator preparation pathways and investments.

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<sup>1</sup> DAS Registration Dashboard:

[https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/california.apprenticeship/viz/RegistrationDashboard\\_16301055851260/RegistrationDashboard](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/california.apprenticeship/viz/RegistrationDashboard_16301055851260/RegistrationDashboard)

California has invested in several initiatives to recruit, prepare, and retain diverse teachers. The \$500 million Golden State Teacher Grant Program 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. Furthermore, the \$550 million Teacher Residency Grant Program 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.

While in office, the Biden Administration took several steps to expand apprenticeships for educators and invest in teacher preparation programs. In August 2022, the Administration's Departments of Labor and Education issued a Dear Colleague Letter calling on states to establish high quality paid registered apprenticeship programs for teaching, to increase collaboration across workforce and education systems, and to ensure teachers receive a livable and competitive wage. The two departments further collaborated to fund an Educator Registered Apprenticeship Intermediary to provide no-cost technical assistance and support to state education agencies, districts, education preparation programs, teacher unions, and other partners to develop educator apprenticeship programs. Additionally, the federal government awarded over \$200 million to 46 states and territories to develop and scale educator apprenticeship programs. Unfortunately, the Trump Administration defunded the Educator Registered Apprenticeship Intermediary on May 2, 2025, ending the program in the middle of its second year.

[NOTE: See the Senate Education Committee analysis for detailed background on CTC and educator preparation programs.]

## 2. Need for this bill?

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 educator.

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."

## 3. Proponent Arguments:

According to the sponsors, Children Now:

"By creating a paid, work-based entry point into teaching with compensation, mentorship, and coursework aligned from day one, AB 1904 addresses the financial barriers that

California’s current system places in the way of talented individuals who want to teach. This bill represents a critical step toward the stable, diverse educator workforce California’s children deserve.

[AB 1904 would respond to workforce challenges] by creating conditions for a credentialed educator apprenticeship program built on high-quality and accountability. Specifically, it would:

- Empower LEAs, alongside labor and community partners, to leverage state and federal funding to recruit and retain teacher candidates – compensating them for on-the-job preparations and providing mentorship throughout the program.
- Enable LEAs, institutions of higher education, and their consortiums to target key shortage and growth areas, including special education, early childhood education, bilingual education, and school counseling.
- Require [CTC and DAS] to partner in the approval and monitoring of apprenticeship program, with strong accountability, reporting requirements, and supportive working conditions for every apprentice.

This approach offers California a compensation and recruitment strategy that can build a stronger, more diverse pipeline into the profession – supporting candidates to enter, persist, and thrive in this worthy and important profession.”

#### 4. Opponent Arguments:

None received.

#### 5. Prior Legislation:

AB 291 (Gipson, 2025) would have required CTC and DAS to jointly disseminate, approve, and monitor credentialed educator apprenticeship programs in California, as specified. *This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.*

AB 694 (Gipson, 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. *This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.*

### SUPPORT

Children Now (Sponsor)  
 Alliance for Children's Rights  
 Association of California School Administrators  
 California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)  
 California Charter Schools Association  
 California Teachers Association  
 Californians Together  
 CFT – a Union of Educators & Classified Professionals  
 Edtrust-west  
 Edvoice

Greater Sacramento Urban League  
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality  
Legislative Action Committee - San Mateo County School Boards Association  
Los Angeles County Office of Education  
Partnership for Children & Youth  
Public Advocates  
San Mateo County Office of Education (UNREG)  
San Mateo County School Boards Association  
Santa Clara County Office of Education  
Small School Districts Association  
United Administrators of Southern California (UASC)  
Western Governors University

**OPPOSITION**

None received

**-- END --**