
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2206
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Urgency: No
Consultant: Ian Johnson

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Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Teacher credentialing: community college baccalaureate degrees: designated subjects career technical education teaching credential.

SUMMARY

This bill prohibits California Community Colleges (CCCs) from serving as teacher preparation institutions for purposes of recommending candidates for teaching credentials, while establishing a limited pilot program authorizing certain CCCs with existing baccalaureate degree programs to offer Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC)-approved preparation programs for Designated Subjects Career Technical Education (CTE) credentials. The bill also clarifies how baccalaureate degrees earned through CCC baccalaureate degree programs satisfy credentialing requirements.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the CTC and authorizes the commission to establish standards for the issuance and renewal of credentials, certificates, and permits.
- 2) Requires applicants for most teaching credentials to possess a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education and complete an approved professional preparation program.
- 3) Authorizes CTC to approve regionally accredited institutions of higher education to recommend candidates for teaching credentials if the institution's preparation program meets commission standards.
- 4) Establishes the CCC Baccalaureate Degree Program and authorizes the Board of Governors, in consultation with California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC), to approve up to 30 CCC baccalaureate degree programs annually, provided the programs do not duplicate existing CSU or UC degree programs.
- 5) Establishes the Designated Subjects CTE credential and generally requires candidates to demonstrate specified industry experience or a combination of industry experience and education.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Excludes CCC Districts from the definition of an “institution of higher education” for purposes of specified credentialing statutes.
- 2) Prohibits the CTC from approving community colleges as teacher preparation institutions under the general authority applicable to regionally accredited institutions of higher education.
- 3) Establishes the CCC Designated Subjects CTE Credential Pilot Program.
- 4) Authorizes, from January 1, 2027, through January 1, 2033, the CTC to approve certain community colleges to offer preparation programs for Designated Subjects CTE credentials and recommend candidates for those credentials.
- 5) Limits pilot participation to community colleges that offered a baccalaureate degree prior to January 1, 2026, pursuant to the CCC baccalaureate degree program.
- 6) Requires credential preparation programs offered under the pilot to align with the community college’s approved baccalaureate degree major.
- 7) Requires the CTC to apply the same standards used for approval of credential preparation programs offered by other institutions of higher education.
- 8) Requires the CTC to conduct an interim evaluation of the pilot and report specified findings to the Legislature and Governor by January 1, 2032.
- 9) Prohibits a community college or community college district from offering an integrated teacher preparation program that allows candidates to complete professional preparation concurrently with subject matter preparation while earning a bachelor’s degree.
- 10) Specifies that a baccalaureate degree earned from a community college satisfies credentialing degree requirements only if it includes coursework demonstrating proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills.
- 11) Makes related and conforming changes throughout the Teacher Credentialing Act.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “AB 2206 is a measured approach to expanding teacher preparation programs to the California Community Colleges by allowing colleges with pre-existing baccalaureate degree programs to offer a corresponding career technical education degree. This will allow the community college an opportunity to demonstrate they are able to offer quality post-baccalaureate degree programs and to assist in addressing a critical workforce

shortage. Community colleges are meant to serve their community, and this measure expands their opportunity to meet an unmet workforce need by offering career educational teacher preparation programs.”

2) ***A teacher credentialing bill with significant higher education implications.***

Although this bill amends the teacher credentialing law, the central policy question raised by the bill is broader. The policy question posed by this bill is whether CCCs should be permitted to serve as teacher preparation institutions, and if so, under what circumstances. That question involves the long-standing division of responsibilities among the state’s public higher education segments.

California’s Master Plan for Higher Education, as reflected in the Donahoe Higher Education Act, assigns distinct missions to the state’s public higher education segments. The CCCs have historically focused on lower-division instruction, transfer preparation, remedial education, and CTE. The CSU has primary responsibility for undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master’s degree, including teacher education. The UC provides undergraduate and graduate instruction and serves as the state’s primary research institution. While the Legislature has periodically authorized exceptions to these traditional roles, those exceptions have generally been explicit, limited, and accompanied by guardrails intended to avoid unnecessary duplication among the segments.

This bill should be analyzed in that context. On one hand, it reaffirms that CCCs are not generally authorized to operate teacher preparation programs. On the other hand, it creates a narrow pilot allowing certain CCCs to prepare candidates for Designated Subjects CTE credentials. The bill therefore both reinforces an existing boundary and creates a limited exception to that boundary.

3) ***History of CCC baccalaureate authority and the emergence of this issue.***

Community colleges were not historically authorized to award baccalaureate degrees. SB 850 (Block, Chapter 747, Statutes of 2014) created a limited pilot program allowing up to 15 community college districts to offer one baccalaureate degree each in workforce-oriented fields, provided those programs did not duplicate baccalaureate programs offered by CSU or UC. AB 927 (Medina, Chapter 565, Statutes of 2021) subsequently made the CCC baccalaureate degree authority permanent and authorized the Board of Governors to approve additional programs, subject to consultation with CSU, UC, and independent institutions and continued limitations on duplication.

According to the author, AB 320 (Medina, Chapter 663, Statutes of 2021) was intended to address a related credentialing issue: ensuring that baccalaureate degrees earned through CCC baccalaureate programs could satisfy the degree requirements applicable to teacher credential candidates. However, the author contends that AB 320 inadvertently amended the teacher credentialing law in a way that went beyond recognizing CCC baccalaureate degrees and instead allowed CCCs themselves to be treated as regionally accredited institutions of higher education for purposes of seeking CTC approval as teacher preparation providers.

The issue became concrete when Santa Monica College reportedly began the CTC institutional approval process with the goal of offering a teacher preparation program connected to its baccalaureate degree in Interaction Design. According to background materials provided by the author, Santa Monica College also expressed interest in using that initial approval to pursue broader educator preparation pathways, including early childhood education and potentially multiple subject credential preparation. The author views these developments as evidence that existing law may allow CCCs to enter the teacher preparation space through a statutory pathway that was not intended when AB 320 was enacted.

This bill responds by clarifying that CCCs are not institutions of higher education for purposes of the general teacher preparation approval statute, prohibiting the CTC from approving CCCs as teacher preparation institutions outside the bill's express authorization, and prohibiting CCCs from offering integrated baccalaureate/teacher preparation programs.

- 4) ***Restoring legislative control over segment expansion.*** One way to understand this bill is that it does not necessarily answer the question of whether CCCs are capable of preparing teachers. Rather, it answers the question of who should decide whether CCCs may do so. The author's position appears to be that any expansion of CCC authority into teacher preparation should occur only through explicit legislative authorization, not through an unintended interaction between credentialing statutes and the relatively new CCC baccalaureate degree authority.

This approach is consistent with how the Legislature has historically treated major deviations from segment roles. CCC baccalaureate degrees were authorized first through a limited pilot and then through permanent statutory authority. CSU doctoral degrees have similarly been authorized through specific legislation. In each instance, the Legislature made an affirmative policy decision to allow a segment to expand beyond its traditional mission, and attached conditions to preserve the basic structure of California's higher education system.

Viewed through that lens, the clarification portion of AB 2206 may be seen as an effort to preserve the Legislature's role in deciding whether and how CCCs should enter teacher preparation. Without the bill, CCCs that offer baccalaureate degrees may argue that they are already eligible to seek CTC approval to offer any type of teacher preparation program. With the bill, CCC participation in teacher preparation would be limited to the specific pilot authorized by the Legislature.

- 5) ***The pilot creates a narrow exception for CTE teacher preparation.*** While the bill generally closes the door to CCC teacher preparation programs, it simultaneously opens a narrow one for Designated Subjects CTE credentials. This reflects the unique nature of CTE credentials and the workforce mission of the CCCs.

Designated Subjects CTE credentials differ from multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist credentials. They are designed for individuals teaching

career technical, trade, or vocational courses and are grounded heavily in industry experience. Existing requirements for the preliminary Designated Subjects CTE credential do not require a baccalaureate degree. Instead, candidates generally demonstrate recent and successful work experience in the industry sector named on the credential.

Because CCCs already provide workforce education and now offer baccalaureate degrees in applied fields such as respiratory care, dental hygiene, biomanufacturing, public safety, automotive technology, and industrial automation, the author argues that CCCs may be particularly well positioned to prepare CTE teachers in areas aligned with those programs. The bill therefore authorizes a time-limited pilot under which certain CCCs may seek CTC approval to offer programs of personalized preparation for Designated Subjects CTE credentials.

The pilot is tightly constrained. It is limited to CCCs that offered a baccalaureate degree prior to January 1, 2026. The credential program must align with the CCC's approved baccalaureate degree major. The CTC must apply the same approval standards that apply to preparation programs offered by other institutions. The pilot sunsets, and the CTC must report to the Legislature and Governor on participation, cost, completion, credential issuance, retention, and workforce demand.

- 6) ***Is the pilot designed to test CCC capacity or prevent mission creep?*** The design of the pilot raises an important policy question. If the purpose of the pilot is primarily to test whether CCCs can help address CTE teacher shortages, the Committee may wish to consider whether the pilot is too narrow to generate meaningful participation. The CCC Chancellor's Office has indicated that it supports the concept of the CTE pilot but is concerned that limiting each participating CCC to a credential program aligned with its existing baccalaureate degree may substantially limit participation. From that perspective, a college with strong regional employer relationships or programmatic expertise in a CTE sector might be prevented from offering a CTE credential preparation program solely because it does not offer a baccalaureate degree in that same sector.

If, however, the purpose of the pilot is to create a narrow exception while preventing broader mission expansion, the alignment requirement makes more sense. It ensures that CCCs may prepare teachers only in fields where the Legislature has already authorized the college to offer upper-division coursework and where the college has demonstrated some level of subject-matter capacity. In that sense, the alignment requirement functions less as a workforce expansion tool and more as a guardrail against broader entry into teacher preparation.

The author may wish to clarify the principal objective of the pilot. If the goal is to produce more CTE teachers, a broader pilot may be warranted. If the goal is to cautiously test CCC participation while preserving segment boundaries, the current limitations may be appropriate.

- 7) ***Faculty qualifications and program quality.*** The bill also raises questions regarding the faculty qualifications necessary to teach teacher preparation

coursework. Faculty teaching at CSU and UC generally hold doctoral degrees, while CCC faculty teaching upper-division coursework may meet minimum qualifications through a master's degree, a related master's degree with a bachelor's degree in the discipline, or in some fields a bachelor's degree combined with professional experience. Because Designated Subjects CTE credentials are themselves grounded in industry expertise and do not require a baccalaureate degree, CCC faculty qualifications may be appropriate for this limited pilot.

However, the same conclusion may not apply to broader teacher preparation programs leading to multiple subject, single subject, or education specialist credentials. Those programs include a wider range of pedagogical, clinical, and subject-matter preparation requirements and are currently offered by institutions with long-standing educator preparation infrastructure. This distinction supports the bill's approach of allowing CCC participation only in the more limited CTE credential context, while prohibiting broader integrated or postbaccalaureate teacher preparation programs absent future legislative authorization.

- 8) ***Different stakeholders seem to view the bill through different lenses.*** The author frames this bill as a correction to an unintended statutory loophole and a measured pilot for CTE teacher preparation. From that perspective, the bill preserves the original intent of AB 320, prevents unapproved expansion of CCC authority, and allows a limited experiment in an area connected to the CCC workforce mission.

Community college stakeholders, however, may view the bill differently. From their perspective, the Legislature authorized CCC baccalaureate degrees, existing law currently appears to allow CCCs to seek CTC approval, and the bill would now remove or narrow authority that community colleges believe they already possess. They may also argue that, if the state is serious about addressing CTE teacher shortages, the pilot should give CCCs enough flexibility to participate meaningfully across the 15 CTE industry sectors.

These competing views illustrate the broader policy tension underlying the bill, as it is not simply about whether a particular credential pathway should exist. It is about whether the Legislature should preserve existing boundaries between higher education segments, authorize a limited exception for CTE teacher preparation, or allow the CCC role in educator preparation to evolve more broadly as CCC baccalaureate authority expands.

SUPPORT

Association of California School Administrators

OPPOSITION

None received

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