

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 542 (Celeste Rodriguez)

As Amended June 23, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Authorizes school districts operating continuation high schools or continuation education classes to offer youth workforce development programs on one or two weekdays per week, provided students are enrolled in at least 15 hours of class attendance per week.

Senate Amendments

Add a co-author.

COMMENTS

Key provisions of the bill. AB 542 would authorize continuation high schools to reconfigure their schedule to allow students to access workforce opportunities for one to two days per week, while still accessing the required 15 hours of classroom instruction on the remaining days of the week in order to authorize schools to receive average daily attendance funding (ADA) and afford students the opportunity to gain workforce skills.

What is a continuation high school? According to the California Department of Education (CDE), continuation education "is a high school diploma program designed to meet the needs of students who have not graduated from high school, are not exempt from compulsory school attendance, and deemed at risk of not completing their schooling."

According to the Author

"Continuation schools play a key role in the success of students as they provide a more flexible and supportive environment. For example, students may have familial obligations, be employed, have different learning styles or other needs, and are behind on credits needed for graduation. These schools serve diverse student populations across the state and provide additional support that a traditional high school cannot provide.

AB 542 aims to allow students the flexibility to pursue workforce development programs, which will expand employment opportunities. By amending current law, a governing board of a school district will be able to augment the five day instruction schedule while maintaining the state-required instruction time at continuation schools. This flexibility supports various employment pathways for students after graduation as well as economic growth in communities and across the state."

Arguments in Support

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the sponsor of the measure writes, "Students attending continuation schools are disproportionately likely to experience challenges to their success, including working to support their families, being pregnant, parenting, or facing disciplinary or justice-related issues. For many of these students, the opportunity to acquire skills that will lead to steady employment is a strong motivator to remain in school and achieve their diploma. Los Angeles Unified works with a variety of workforce partners to provide students with multiple pathways to reliable, union-connected job opportunities.

Under existing law, students in continuation school must attend classes for a minimum of fifteen hours a week. Continuation schools are required to operate 175 days a year, a schedule that compels students to attend classes five days a week, for a minimum of three hours a day. AB 542 would allow students to attend classes for fewer than five days a week, while maintaining fifteen hours of instruction. This will give students greater flexibility to have work experience education opportunities without having to arrange transportation from school to a worksite, and opens opportunities that are offered in the morning or as part of an eight-hour day.

Workforce experience education, including youth workforce development programs, is supervised by the local education agency with guidelines to ensure an enriching and safe experience for the student that is aligned with their academic and career goals. As such, these hours will count towards average daily attendance and the required days of instruction, while still maintaining required hours of instruction on other days of the week. By providing students with greater opportunities to gain valuable workforce experience, AB 542 supports the goals of the newly released Master Plan for Career Technical Education and the promotion of an education system that supports multiple pathways to student success."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee: "This bill could result in Proposition 98 General Fund costs in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars each year for school districts to establish attendance and participation tracking procedures for continuation high schools that elect to offer youth workforce development programs. There are about 430 continuation high schools in the state serving about 48,800 students."

VOTES:

ASM EDUCATION: 9-0-0

YES: Muratsuchi, Hoover, Addis, Alvarez, Bonta, Castillo, Garcia, Lowenthal, Patel

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Sanchez, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0-0

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

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