
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	SB 1222	Hearing Date:	April 8, 2026
Author:	Choi		
Version:	February 19, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Ian Johnson		

Subject: Career Technical Education Technical Assistance and Equity Pilot Program Act.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes a three-year pilot program to provide technical assistance to county offices of education (COEs) aimed at improving the equity and effectiveness of career technical education (CTE) pathways. The bill requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to designate a lead COE and two pilot regions, and appropriates \$4 million from the General Fund to support the development of CTE models, tools, and regional capacity-building efforts.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program (CTEIG) to support high-quality CTE programs in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, through ongoing state funding, in partnership with local educational agencies (LEAs) and regional consortia.
- 2) Establishes the K-12 Strong Workforce Program (SWP) to expand high-quality CTE in K-12 schools through regional planning and funding aligned with California's Community College (CCC) SWP.
- 3) Establishes the Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP) to promote college and career readiness by funding partnerships between K-12 schools and community colleges that integrate academic coursework with college credit and workforce preparation.
- 4) Creates the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) as the state's primary workforce policy board, responsible for developing, implementing, and overseeing California's workforce development strategy.
- 5) Creates the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) to provide leadership and technical assistance to the state's 116 community colleges and administer programs that enhance access to higher education and vocational training.

- 6) Establishes the California Education Interagency Council within the Government Operations Agency to serve as a statewide forum for coordinating education and workforce policy across K-12 education, higher education, and labor and workforce development systems. The council is tasked with aligning education pathways with workforce demand, improving access to CTE and college-to-career pathways, and developing recommendations to the Legislature and Governor regarding CTE, workforce alignment, and student transitions across systems.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the CTE Technical Assistance and Equity Pilot Program as a 3-year pilot program to provide technical assistance in CTE with a focus on improving access and outcomes for historically underserved student populations.
- 2) Requires the SPI to designate, within 6 months of the bill's effective date, a COE to serve as the lead agency and two pilot regions to receive intensive technical assistance.
- 3) Appropriates \$4 million from the General Fund for the 2026-27 fiscal year and provides that funding for the pilot is subject to the annual Budget Act appropriations, to be allocated to the lead agency.
- 4) Requires the lead agency to:
 - a) Develop and disseminate exemplary models for inclusive CTE pathways, particularly for students with disabilities, English learners, and other historically underserved populations.
 - b) Develop frameworks and toolkits to support industry education partnerships and scalable career pathway models.
 - c) Provide technical assistance, capacity building, and coordination support to COEs within the designated pilot regions.
 - d) Prioritize support to COEs serving high proportions of underserved students or demonstrating significant equity gaps in CTE access and outcomes.
 - e) Develop and maintain a public-facing website to share resources, tools, and promising practices.
 - f) Submit annual reports to the SPI, Governor, and Legislature, and to provide a comprehensive evaluation report prior to the conclusion of the pilot.
 - g) Begin providing services by the start of the fiscal year following designation.

- 5) Encourages COEs within the pilot regions to participate and requires participating COEs to designate staff to coordinate CTE technical assistance within their jurisdiction.
- 6) Requires school districts and charter schools that elect to receive technical assistance to participate in data collection and reporting, share promising practices, and commit to implementing recommendations and improvement strategies.
- 7) Repeals the program on January 1, 2032.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Improving and expanding Career Technical Education (CTE) has been a priority for the California State Legislature, as CTE continues to lead students into meaningful high-wage, high demand jobs. However, many local education agencies lack the resources and capacity to create and implement CTE programs that serve all student populations.

SB 1222 would create a lead agency that would administer a three-year pilot program to provide technical assistance to local education agencies within two pilot regions designated by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. This bill would assist schools that are struggling with developing and implementing CTE programs.”

- 2) ***Master Plan for Career Education and the role of coordination.*** The recently released *California Master Plan for Career Education* identifies a central challenge facing the state’s career education system: despite significant investments across K-12 education, higher education, and workforce training, programs remain fragmented across multiple agencies, funding streams, and regional initiatives. As a result, efforts often operate in parallel, requiring separate planning processes and placing the burden on educators and students to navigate a complex system.

In response, the plan calls for a more coordinated, statewide approach to career education, including the establishment of a state-level coordinating entity and stronger regional coordination structures to better align existing efforts. These recommendations are reflected in recent legislation establishing the California Education Interagency Council, which is intended to serve as a central forum for aligning education and workforce systems.

In this context, this bill proposes a new technical assistance pilot to improve equity and outcomes in CTE. The Committee may wish to consider how this pilot would align with the state’s broader effort to move toward a more coordinated system, including whether its goals could be achieved through existing or emerging coordination structures.

- 3) ***Existing technical assistance infrastructure and system fragmentation.*** California currently supports a wide range of technical assistance efforts intended to strengthen CTE pathways and workforce alignment. These include, among others, the K-12 component of the SWP, which provides regional technical assistance to support pathway development and employer engagement; the GSPP, which includes dedicated technical assistance providers to support grantees; and additional statewide initiatives such as the California CTE Leadership Project and Perkins-funded support structures. Collectively, these efforts support LEAs in areas such as pathway design, industry partnerships, work-based learning, and data reporting.

The sponsors of this bill note that many of these efforts are tied to specific funding streams or program requirements, which may limit their ability to support broader, cross-program planning. From this perspective, this bill is intended to provide a more flexible and cohesive source of technical assistance to support COEs in coordinating CTE efforts across multiple initiatives, with a focus on improving equity.

At the same time, given the number of existing technical assistance providers, the Committee may wish to consider how the proposed pilot would complement and build upon these efforts.

- 4) ***Existing K-12 CTE funding structure.*** California supports K–12 CTE through several major, ongoing state investments, including three of the state’s largest competitive grant programs: the CTEIG Program, the K–12 Strong Workforce Program (K–12 SWP), and the GSPP. Collectively, these programs provide hundreds of millions of dollars annually to support the development, expansion, and alignment of CTE pathways with postsecondary education and workforce needs.
- a) ***The CTEIG Program.*** Established in 2015 as a \$900 million, three-year investment, the CTEIG program was intended to support LEAs in maintaining and expanding high-quality CTE programs during the transition to full implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), which had absorbed prior categorical CTE funding streams. The program, administered by the California Department of Education (CDE), provides competitive grants to LEAs that meet specified requirements, including a 2:1 local match. Ongoing funding for CTEIG was established at \$150 million annually in 2018 and increased to \$300 million annually in 2021.
- b) ***The K-12 SWP.*** Established in 2018 as part of the CCCs SWP, the K-12 SWP supports the development and alignment of K-12 CTE pathways with regional workforce needs. The program is administered by the CCCCO and is currently funded at approximately \$163.5 million annually, including funding for LEA grants, regional K-12 pathway coordinators, and technical assistance providers. Unlike CTEIG, which is administered at the state level, K-12 SWP funding is allocated to eight regional consortia, each of which administers a competitive grant process and determines funding awards based on regional priorities and labor market needs.

- c) **GSPP.** Established in 2022, the GSPP represents a one-time state investment of \$500 million to support the planning and implementation of integrated college and career pathways in high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand sectors. The program is intended to support seamless transitions from high school to postsecondary education and employment, while aligning educational programs with regional workforce needs.

GSPP requires participating LEAs to implement comprehensive pathway models that combine A-G coursework, dual enrollment opportunities, work-based learning, and student support services, and to partner with postsecondary institutions, employers, and regional stakeholders. The program also includes a dedicated technical assistance component, with up to 5% of funds allocated for regional providers to support program design, implementation, continuous improvement, and coordination across related CTE initiatives. Statute further encourages alignment between GSPP and other CTE programs, including CTEIG and K-12 SWP.

- 5) **Defining CTE.** CTE prepares students for the world of work by integrating academic instruction with technical and occupational skills in a hands-on learning environment. CTE programs typically involve a multiyear sequence of courses that provide students with a pathway to postsecondary education and careers.

In California, CTE is organized into 15 industry sectors encompassing 58 pathways, each designed to reflect the knowledge and skills needed for specific occupations. Programs are often developed through partnerships among K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, and employers, and may include opportunities such as dual enrollment and work-based learning.

CTE courses and pathways may be offered in comprehensive high schools, through regional programs operated by COEs or joint powers authorities, or as part of integrated models such as Linked Learning. Community colleges and other postsecondary institutions also offer CTE programs that build on these pathways.

- 6) **Outcomes associated with CTE participation.** Research indicates that participation in CTE coursework is associated with improved academic and workforce outcomes. Studies have found that students with greater exposure to CTE are more likely to graduate from high school, enroll in postsecondary education, and experience positive employment and earnings outcomes.

CTE concentrators have been shown to graduate at higher rates than their peers, and participation in rigorous CTE coursework alongside academic instruction is associated with improved college and career readiness. Research also suggests that CTE participation may have particularly strong benefits for students from low-income backgrounds and other historically underserved groups.

- 7) **College and career readiness is a state priority.** Under the LCFF, LEAs are required to demonstrate how they are preparing students for college and careers as part of their Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs). The California

School Dashboard includes a College and Career Indicator, which incorporates measures such as completion of a CTE pathway to assess student readiness for postsecondary education and employment.

- 8) ***Budget context and prioritization of new investments.*** This bill proposes a new, ongoing state investment to support a technical assistance pilot focused on improving equity and coordination in CTE programs. As such, the proposal would ultimately be considered within the context of the state's overall fiscal condition and the annual budget process.

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) has indicated that the state continues to face ongoing fiscal pressure and multiyear budget challenges, with projected spending growth outpacing revenues in future years. In recent budgets, the Legislature has addressed these pressures through a combination of spending reductions, funding delays, and the use of reserves, reflecting a constrained fiscal environment.

Within this context, decisions regarding the affordability and prioritization of new or expanded state programs are typically addressed through the budget and appropriations process. The role of this Committee is to evaluate the policy merits of the proposal, including how it aligns with existing programs and statewide efforts to coordinate and improve CTE pathways.

- 9) ***Structure of the proposed pilot and selection of the lead agency.*** This bill requires the SPI to designate a single COE as the lead agency to administer the pilot. Legislative intent language and sponsor materials indicate that the Orange County Office of Education is anticipated to serve in this role.

The Committee may wish to consider the implications of structuring a statewide pilot around a single, pre-identified local entity. While COEs vary in their experience and capacity to provide technical assistance, statewide initiatives are typically structured to ensure open and competitive selection processes, as well as broad geographic representation, in order to support equity and statewide applicability.

In addition, the bill combines several distinct elements—a single lead provider, two pilot regions, and voluntary participation by local entities—without clearly specifying whether the intent is to test a scalable statewide model, provide targeted regional support, or evaluate the effectiveness of a particular provider's approach. Clarifying the primary objective of the pilot, as well as the rationale for the selection of the lead agency, may help inform how the program would be evaluated and whether it could be expanded or replicated in other regions of the state.

SUPPORT

Orange County Department of Education (sponsor)
Alameda County Office of Education
California Catholic Conference
California Charter Schools Association

California Opportunity Youth Network
California State Council on Developmental Disabilities
Union Roofing Contractors Association

OPPOSITION

None received

-- END --