

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 845
Author: Pérez (D), et al.
Amended: 8/19/26
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 4/9/25

AYES: Pérez, Ochoa Bogh, Cabaldon, Choi, Cortese, Gonzalez, Laird

SENATE LABOR, PUB. EMP. & RET. COMMITTEE: 5-0, 4/30/25

AYES: Smallwood-Cuevas, Strickland, Cortese, Durazo, Laird

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

SENATE FLOOR: 39-0, 5/27/25

AYES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NO VOTE RECORDED: Reyes

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 8/24/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Pupil instruction: career technical education, career education, work-based learning, work experience education, and apprenticeships.

SOURCE: California Workforce Association
NextGen California

DIGEST: This bill makes various changes to the state's framework for career technical education (CTE), work-based learning, and youth apprenticeships, including: (1) establishing definitions and common requirements for work-based learning activities; (2) expanding the authority of local educational agencies (LEAs) and state special schools to offer work-based learning through work

experience education (WEE), CTE, early college credit, and other existing programs; (3) allowing pupils beginning in grade 10 to receive credit for WEE; (4) clarifying workers' compensation, liability, and student protections for work-based learning activities; and (5) establishing requirements for school-based youth apprenticeship programs registered with the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS).

Assembly Amendments recast this bill to focus on expanding and integrating work-based learning activities across existing education and workforce programs. The amendments delete the provisions relating to the periodic update of career technical education (CTE) model curriculum standards and frameworks, statewide data collection on work-based learning, changes to specified CTE course sequences and articulation requirements, and state-level coordination and policymaking for school-based youth apprenticeship programs. In their place, the amendments authorize work-based learning activities within a broader range of existing programs. The amendments also expand specified WEE and work-based learning authorities to state special schools, clarify the use of work-based learning within cooperative CTE programs and community classrooms, and revise the requirements for approval of certain preapprenticeship programs.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Requires the Department of Education (CDE) to coordinate the development of model curriculum standards for required courses of study for grades 7 to 12, including CTE courses, and to seek the advice of classroom teachers, school administrators, parents, postsecondary educators, and representatives of business and industry in developing these standards. (Education Code (EC) § 51226)
- 2) Requires CDE, upon adoption of the model curriculum standards for grades 7 to 12, to develop a curriculum framework that offers a blueprint for implementing CTE and to work in consultation and coordination with an advisory group that includes CTE teachers, administrators, business and industry representatives, labor organizations, and others. (EC § 51226.1)
- 3) Authorizes the governing board of a school district maintaining a high school to establish work-based learning or WEE programs to provide pupils with instruction in skills, attitudes, and understanding necessary for success in employment; and to approve and supervise such placements, arrange for

appropriate credit, and provide or require liability insurance. (EC § 51760 et seq.)

- 4) Authorizes work-based learning opportunities to be delivered by partnership academies, regional occupational centers and programs (ROCPs), and LEAs, including WEE, community classrooms, cooperative CTE programs, and job shadowing. (EC § 51760.3)
- 5) Requires school district governing boards to grant credit to pupils in grade 11 or higher for completion of a WEE program that meets certain criteria, including alignment with CTE model curriculum standards. (EC § 51760.3)
- 6) Authorizes the governing board of a high school district, an ROCP established by joint powers agreement, or a county superintendent of schools operating an ROCP to establish cooperative CTE programs or community classrooms as part of a CTE course. (EC § 52372)
- 7) Requires CDE to adopt rules and regulations for cooperative CTE programs and community classrooms offered through ROCPs operated by joint powers agreements or county offices. (EC § 52372)
- 8) Requires school districts that choose to expend supplemental CTE grant funds or accept other funds for CTE purposes to provide a series of programs offering sequences of courses that lead to specific competencies, and to develop articulation plans with community colleges to extend course sequences through grades 13 and 14. (EC § 52376)
- 9) Establishes the DAS within the Department of Industrial Relations to oversee apprenticeship programs, and requires the Chief of the Division to perform various functions to promote the welfare of apprentices. (Labor Code § 3070 et seq.)

This bill:

- 1) Authorizes a pupil concurrently enrolled in specified community college courses to participate in work-based learning activities, subject to specified requirements.
- 2) Authorizes a student body organization to operate a student-led enterprise program, subject to specified requirements.
- 3) Expands and revises provisions governing work-based learning and WEE by:

- a) Extending specified authorities currently provided to school districts maintaining high schools to county offices of education, charter schools, and state special schools;
 - b) Defining “work-based learning” and “work experience education” for these purposes;
 - c) Authorizing work-based learning activities to be delivered by state special schools, in addition to existing authorized entities;
 - d) Authorizing work-based learning activities to include on-the-job training in specified youth apprenticeship programs, internships, and mentorships; and
 - e) Authorizing work-based learning activities to be offered through WEE courses, community classrooms, cooperative CTE programs, early college credit courses, and other specified settings.
- 4) Expands provisions governing credit for WEE by:
- a) Extending requirements currently applicable to school districts to county offices of education, charter schools, and state special schools; and
 - b) Requiring pupils beginning in grade 10 to be eligible to receive credit for completing a WEE program, rather than limiting that requirement to pupils in grade 11 or higher.
- 5) Authorizes cooperative CTE programs and community classrooms operated by high school districts, joint powers regional occupational centers or programs (ROC/Ps), or county-operated ROC/Ps to include work-based learning activities, as specified.
- 6) Authorizes funding for the state agricultural CTE program to support agricultural CTE programs that provide work-based learning activities, as specified.
- 7) Authorizes Golden State Pathways Program grants to be awarded to pathway programs that provide work-based learning activities, as specified.
- 8) Authorizes California Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program funds to be awarded to pathway programs and work-based learning activities, as specified.
- 9) Authorizes funding for California Partnership Academies to support academies that provide work-based learning activities, as specified.

- 10) Authorizes transition and employment preparation services provided through Project Workability to include work-based learning activities, as specified.
- 11) Authorizes a College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) partnership agreement between a community college district and a school district, county office of education, or charter school to include work-based learning activities, as specified.
- 12) Authorizes community college internship training programs and apprenticeship partnerships established in collaboration with DAS to include work-based learning activities, as specified.
- 13) Authorizes Strong Workforce Program funds to support CTE programs that provide work-based learning activities, as specified.
- 14) Revises requirements for approval of preapprenticeship programs by authorizing a program seeking approval from DAS to demonstrate that its preapprenticeship training activities are conducted with approval from a local building and construction trades council to use the multicraft core curriculum, as an alternative to providing documentation that the activities are conducted in partnership with a DAS-approved apprenticeship program.

Comments

- 1) *Need for the bill.* According to the author, “California’s education and workforce frameworks are leaving many students behind, especially low-income, Black, Latino and English Learner youth who enroll in college at lower rates and face barriers to completing a four-year degree. While 62% of high school graduates enroll in college within a year, only 34% of Californians hold at least a bachelor’s degree. At the same time, 30% of future jobs will require training beyond high school, but less than a four-year degree. Our career education system is not meeting the needs of students and workforce demands. California voters recognize this gap, as highlighted in a recent survey where three-quarters of voters believe it is very or extremely important for K-12 schools to provide career-connected learning and develop partnerships with colleges and employers.”
- 2) *The current state of CTE and work-based learning in California.* California has significantly expanded support for CTE and work-based learning over the last decade, both through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and through nearly \$500 million in ongoing state categorical programs. The two largest are the CTE Incentive Grant (CTEIG) and the K–12 Strong Workforce Program,

which together provide \$450 million annually to support CTE programs. These programs are layered on top of LCFF funding, which already includes an adjustment to the high school base rate intended to reflect the higher costs associated with CTE.

Despite this investment, participation and outcomes remain uneven. According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, approximately 70% of graduating high school students take at least one CTE course, but only 18% complete a full CTE pathway. In 2023-24, 45% of high school graduates were deemed "prepared" on the College and Career Indicator (CCI), with substantially lower rates among students with disabilities, foster youth, homeless students, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The state's CTE and work-based learning landscape is also spread across numerous programs with different funding streams, eligibility requirements, and administering entities. This bill addresses one piece of that fragmentation by establishing common terminology for work-based learning and expressly incorporating these activities into a number of existing education and workforce programs.

- 3) *Implementing pieces of the state's evolving vision for career education.* In recent years, two major statewide efforts have examined how California could better connect education and workforce systems. The Governor's Master Plan on Career Education calls for expanding work-based learning and earn-and-learn opportunities, improving coordination across education and workforce programs, and making career pathways easier for students to navigate. Separately, the California Youth Apprenticeship Committee (CYAC), established by the Legislature in 2022, developed recommendations for expanding youth apprenticeship, including a "Career Apprenticeship Bridge" model intended to allow young people to begin career preparation in high school and continue into postsecondary education and employment.

The bill that passed the Senate included several state-level mechanisms intended to advance these efforts, including regular updates to CTE standards, an interagency workgroup on youth apprenticeship, and statewide work-based learning data collection. Those provisions were removed in the Assembly. The bill instead takes a more program-specific approach by establishing common work-based learning terminology and expressly authorizing work-based learning activities within existing programs such as CTEIG, K-12 Strong Workforce, Golden State Pathways, Partnership Academies, Project Workability, CCAP, and agricultural CTE. The bill therefore implements a narrower piece of the state's broader career education agenda, largely by

making work-based learning easier to incorporate within programs that already exist.

- 4) *Building work-based learning into existing programs rather than creating another one.* California's career education system has developed through numerous programs created at different times and for different purposes. As noted above, these include CTEIG and K-12 Strong Workforce, as well as more targeted programs such as Partnership Academies, Project Workability, agricultural CTE, Golden State Pathways, and CCAP. Work-based learning may already occur within some of these programs, but the statutory treatment of these activities is not uniform.

Rather than establishing a new statewide work-based learning program, this bill amends many of these existing programs to expressly authorize work-based learning activities within them. This approach may provide greater clarity and flexibility for schools seeking to combine classroom instruction with workplace experiences without creating another categorical program or funding stream. At the same time, because these programs retain their separate purposes, eligibility requirements, and funding structures, the bill does not resolve the broader fragmentation of California's CTE system.

- 5) *Work-based learning extends beyond traditional CTE programs.* One notable feature of the Assembly amendments is that the bill does not limit work-based learning to traditional CTE programs. It authorizes concurrently enrolled high school pupils to participate in work-based learning through community college coursework, allows CCAP partnerships to include work-based learning, authorizes student body organizations to operate student-led enterprise programs, and expressly incorporates work-based learning into Project Workability for students with disabilities. These provisions reflect a broader conception of career-connected learning in which workplace exposure and experience can complement CTE pathways, college coursework, transition services, and other educational programs.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 1) One-time costs of \$450,000 and \$400,000 ongoing annually (CA Apprenticeship Council Training Fund) for DAS to expand establish and oversee the youth apprenticeship program.

- 2) Minor Proposition 98 General Fund costs to K-12 LEAs and California Community Colleges (CCCs), collectively statewide, to participate in the expanded youth apprenticeship and CTE framework. The bill authorizes the use of various existing CTE funding pathways to support its implementation, such as Golden State Pathways, CTE Incentive Grant, Agriculture CTE funding, and Partnership Academies.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/24/26)

California Workforce Association (co-source)
NextGen California (co-source)
Alameda County Office of Education
Alameda County Workforce Development Board
Apprenticeships for America
CareerWise
County of Humboldt
County of Kern
CWUSA
DIAG USA Foundation
Early Care & Education Pathways to Success
Food Smart Strategies
Foothill Workforce Development Board
Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board
Golden Sierra Job Training Agency
Goodwill Southern California
Harbor Freight Tools
Humboldt County Workforce Development Board
Imperial County Workforce Development Board
Kern County Employer's Training Resource
Kern/Inyo/Mono Workforce Development
Launch Apprenticeship Network
Long Beach Workforce Innovation Network
Merced Workforce Development Board
Monterey County Workforce Development Board
Mother Lode Job Training
Mother Lode Workforce Development Board
North Central Counties Consortium
Oakland Workforce Development Board
Para Los Ninos
Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship
Pleasanton Unified School District

Propel America
Richmond Workforce Development Board
Riverside County Workforce Development Board
Rx RS Foundation
Santa Barbara County Workforce Development Board
Society for Human Resource Management
South Bay Workforce Investment Board
Southeast Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board
The Anaheim Workforce Development Board
Unite-LA
Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County
Worknet Merced County

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/24/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 8/24/26

AYES: 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, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, 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

NO VOTE RECORDED: McKinnor

Prepared by: Ian Johnson / ED. / (916) 651-4105
8/24/26 18:15:39

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