

Date of Hearing: April 9, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Al Muratsuchi, Chair

AB 291 (Gipson) – As Amended March 24, 2025

[Note: This bill is double referred to the Assembly Labor & Employment Committee and will be heard by that Committee as it relates to issues under its jurisdiction.]

SUBJECT: Teachers: credentialed educator apprenticeship programs

SUMMARY: Establishes the Credentialed Educator Apprenticeship Act at the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) in partnership with the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS). Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the Credentialed Educator Apprenticeship Act at the CTC in partnership with the DAS.
- 2) Requires, when the CTC receives a credentialed educator apprenticeship program application from the DAS, the CTC to confirm all of the following:
 - a) The applicant is, or is partnering with a professional preparation program and, if applicable, an induction program, accredited by the CTC to offer the program or programs with no major or probationary stipulations that it is proposing to offer for credentialed educator apprenticeships;
 - b) The credentialed educator apprenticeship program includes at least 300 hours of paid on-the-job training that complies with the standards set by the CTC before an educator apprentice may serve as an educator of record;
 - c) The credentialed educator apprenticeship program requires an educator apprentice to earn their baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education (IHE) before serving as an educator of record; and
 - d) The credentialed educator apprenticeship program includes at least 200 hours of support, mentoring, and supervision per school year that complies with standards set by the CTC.
- 3) Requires, if an educator preparation program or an induction program associated with an approved credentialed educator apprenticeship program fails to maintain accreditation from the CTC, the CTC to immediately notify the DAS.
- 4) States that these requirements do not apply to existing or future apprenticeship programs in the education field that do not result in a credential issued by the CTC.
- 5) Authorizes the CTC to issue apprenticeship credentials to educator candidates without a credential who are enrolled in professional preparation programs associated with approved credentialed educator apprenticeship programs, and who have successfully completed a criminal background check for credentialing purposes.
- 6) 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 the DAS:

- a) The applicant is, or is partnering with, an educator professional preparation program and, if applicable, an induction program accredited by the 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 the CTC;
 - c) The proposed credentialed educator apprenticeship program requires educator apprentices to earn their baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education (IHE) before serving as educators of record; and
 - d) The proposed credentialed educator apprenticeship program provides mentorship to apprentices throughout their apprenticeship, as required.
- 7) Requires, before approving an application for a credentialed educator apprenticeship program, the DAS to present the apprenticeship program application to the CTC for its review. Requires that when the CTC confirms that the requirements have been met, it shall provide written notice of that fact to the chief. Requires if the CTC does not provide written notice, the DAS shall not approve the credentialed educator apprenticeship program.
 - 8) Authorizes the 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 the CTC.
 - 9) Requires the DAS to partner with the CTC in the dissemination, approval, and monitoring of credentialed educator apprenticeship programs in California. Authorizes the DAS to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the CTC to establish processes and procedures for information sharing, application review, and data collection and reporting.
 - 10) Authorizes the DAS, in consultation with the 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.
 - 11) Makes findings and declarations regarding educator preparation programs and the value of educator apprenticeships.

EXISTING LAW establishes the Teacher Residency Grant Program, funded until June 30, 2026, to provide funding to programs that partner with one or more teacher preparation programs accredited by the CTC, in which a prospective teacher teaches at least one-half time alongside a teacher of record, who is designated as the experienced mentor teacher, for at least one full school year while engaging in initial preparation coursework as follows:

- 1) Requires grants allocated to be up to \$20,000 per teacher candidate in the residency program of the jurisdiction of the grant recipient, matched by that grant recipient on a dollar-for-dollar

basis. Requires grant program funding to be used for, but is not limited to, any of the following: teacher preparation costs, stipends for mentor teachers, stipends for teacher candidates, and mentoring and beginning teacher induction costs following initial preparation. (Education Code (EC) 44415)

2) Requires grant recipients to do all of the following:

- a) Ensure that candidates are prepared to earn a preliminary teaching credential that will authorize the candidate to teach special education, bilingual education, science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) upon completion of the program.
- b) Ensure that candidates are provided instruction in all of the following:
 - i) Teaching the content area or areas in which the teacher will become certified to teach;
 - ii) Planning, curriculum development, and assessment;
 - iii) Learning and child development;
 - iv) Management of the classroom environment;
 - v) Use of culturally responsive practices, supports for language development, and supports for serving pupils with disabilities; and
 - vi) Professional responsibilities, including interaction with families and colleagues.
- c) Prepare candidates to teach at the same grant recipient in which they will work and learn the instructional initiatives and curriculum of the grant recipient.
- d) Group teacher candidates in cohorts to facilitate professional collaboration among residents, and place candidates in teaching schools or professional development programs that are organized to support a high-quality teacher learning experience in a supportive work environment. (EC 44415)

3) Requires, when selecting grant recipients, the CTC to do both of the following:

- a) Require applicants to demonstrate a need for special education, bilingual education, STEM teachers and to propose to establish a new or expand an existing teacher residency program in a school within the jurisdiction of the sponsoring grant applicant; and
- b) Give priority consideration to grant applicants with one or more schools that exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:
 - i) A school where 50% or more of the enrolled pupils are eligible for free and reduced-price meals;
 - ii) A school where at least 5% of the teachers are misassigned, as determined by the CTC, or working on a short-term staffing permit, a provisional intern permit, or a waiver;

- iii) A school that is located in either a rural location or a densely populated region; or
 - iv) A school with a cumulative voluntary teacher attrition rate that exceeded 20% over the three preceding school years. (EC 44415)
- 4) Requires a candidate in a teacher residency program to agree in writing to either (1) work as an education specialist serving a caseload of pupils who receive special education services in a special education setting or (2) be placed in a bilingual education or STEM assignment, in a school within the grant recipient that sponsored the candidate for a period of at least four school years beginning with the school year that begins after the candidate successfully completes the initial year of preparation and obtains a preliminary teaching credential. A candidate who fails to earn a preliminary credential or complete the period of the placement is required to reimburse the sponsoring grant recipient the amount of grant funding invested in the candidate's residency training. Requires the amount to be reimbursed to be adjusted proportionately to reflect the service provided, if the candidate taught for at least one year but less than four years at the sponsoring grant recipient. Requires a candidate to have five school years to complete the four-school-year teaching commitment. (EC 44415)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, "One of the many barriers to attaining a teacher credential is the costs related to obtaining a degree while trying to sustain oneself without an income during student teaching. With this bill, I believe that creating teacher residency apprenticeship programs can help alleviate one of the many barriers to becoming a credentialed teacher and help districts develop high qualified and experienced educators from their own community. We also need to provide as many tools as possible to help districts fill their vacancies. AB 291 is intended to assist with the aforementioned hurdles."

What does this bill do? This bill establishes the Credentialed Educator Apprenticeship Act and enacts requirements for educator apprenticeship programs to meet before they are approved by the State. The intent of this bill is to merge California's existing teacher residency grant program with an approved federal and state apprenticeship program, thereby accessing both federal and state funding designated for apprenticeships. The long-term goal of merging these programs is promising, based on the success in other states.

Teacher residency grant program. For the purposes of the Teacher Residency Grant Programs, a teacher residency program is defined as an LEA-based partnership between an LEA and an IHE with a CTC-approved preliminary teacher preparation program, and in which a prospective teacher teaches at least half time alongside a teacher of record, who is designated as the experienced mentor teacher, for at least one full school year while engaging in initial preparation coursework. Grantees may receive up to \$20,000 per participating teacher resident each year.

The Teacher Residency Grant Programs were initially authorized in the 2018-19 Budget Act to support the development, implementation, and expansion of teacher residency programs, with a total of \$75 million for competitive grants. The program requires LEAs to work in partnership

with IHEs with CTC-approved programs to offer a teacher residency pathway to earn a teaching credential in special education, STEM, or bilingual education through 2023.

The 2021-22 Budget Act provided \$350 million through the 2025-26 fiscal year for Teacher Residency Programs including Capacity, Expansion, and Implementation grants for “designated shortage fields” including special education, bilingual education, computer science, STEM, transitional kindergarten, or kindergarten, and any other fields identified by the CTC based on an annual analysis of hiring and vacancy data, and/or for recruiting, developing support systems for, providing outreach and communication strategies to, and retaining a diverse teacher workforce that reflects the LEA community’s diversity.

Of the \$350 million, \$25 million is set aside for Teacher Residency Capacity Grants. Grant awards may be up to \$250,000 for eligible LEAs, which is an increase of \$200,000 per grant award from the 2018-19 fiscal year. Teacher Residency Capacity Grants are intended to support a collaborative partnership between eligible LEAs with one or more CTC-approved teacher preparation programs offered by a regionally accredited IHE to expand, strengthen, improve access to, or create a teacher residency program. The remaining \$325 million is set aside for Teacher Residency Expansion and/or Implementation grants.

According to the Assembly Budget Committee, for Year One of the Teacher Residency Grant Programs, LEAs reported a total of 309 teacher residents in the thirty-one programs that began a Teacher Residency Program between July 2019 and June 2020.

Registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs). Registered apprenticeship programs are approved through the U.S. Department of Labor and the California Department of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS). Teacher apprenticeship programs must meet the requirements of the U.S. Department of Labor, DAS, and teacher preparation program requirements established by the CTC. Below is an outline of the requirements for each:

DAS requirements for RAPs:

- On the job training:
 - 2,000 hours of working/learning on-the-job (time-based); and
 - 1,000 hours of on-the-job training (competency-based)
- Related Supplemental instruction (RSI); and
 - 144 hours of classroom-based RSI (equivalent of 3 lecture courses in a college context).
- Paid employee with progressive wage:
 - Progressive wage scale with at least one step increase over time; and
 - Ideally, with benefits

Commission on Teacher Credentialing requirements for teacher credentialing:

- Earn a bachelor’s degree;
- Complete CTC-accredited teacher preparation program;
- Complete 600 hours of clinical practice;
- Demonstrate subject basic skills proficiency (through one of several methods);

- Demonstrate subject matter competence through a major, coursework, or subject area exam (CSET);
- Complete a course on the principles of the U.S. Constitution;
- Earn a recommendation from a CTC-accredited teacher preparation program; and
- Be fingerprinted and pass a background check.

Funding for RAPs. The two largest sources of funding for RAPs are the US Apprenticeship Building America Grants and the State Apprenticeship Innovation Funding (AIF).

The federal US Apprenticeship Building America Grants provide funding for apprenticeship programs. The grant application requires the Governor or another chief elected official to provide a commitment letter demonstrating the state's commitment to this grant effort. In early 2022, the US Department of Labor announced the Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) Grant Program, with an allocation of \$113 million, including up to \$50 million to support partnerships and pre-apprenticeship activities to increase enrollment in Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

The AIF is a new funding source in California as of 2022, for new and innovative apprenticeship programs, defined as apprenticeships associated with the Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeships (IACA). The AIF aims to support IACA apprenticeship program sponsors in sustaining and scaling their programs and training apprentices. The state has allocated \$175 million over 3 years to support ongoing costs of these programs and classroom training, with \$55 million specifically allocated to Fiscal Year 2022-2023. The third round of applications for Fiscal Year 2024-25 opened February 18, 2025, and will close on April 17, 2025, with \$52 million remaining available. Butte COE and San Joaquin COE participated in the first two rounds of this funding. The intent of the funding is to support both new and existing IACA Apprenticeship programs in growing and scaling to meet the needs of more employers and creating more earn-and-learn pathways for job seekers. AIF funding provides both support to run apprenticeship programs and funding to train apprentices. The program provides \$3,500 per active apprentice per year, and a \$1,000 completion bonus. Further, the program provides \$8.83 per training hour per apprentice to cover training costs for an Interagency Advisory Committee.

Additionally, once registered by the US Department of Labor or a state apprenticeship agency, state and local workforce boards can use Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I funds to support these programs.

What are other states doing? The state of Tennessee has developed an innovative approach to address teacher shortages. Tennessee developed a teacher residency apprenticeship program that was the first in the nation to be approved as a registered apprenticeship by the U.S. Department of Labor in 2022. Tennessee's Teacher Apprenticeship Program aligns best practices from the initial Tennessee's Grow Your Own programs with the funding and rigors of national apprenticeship standards. This model was designed to address the financial, recruitment, and preparation challenges school districts experience when recruiting candidates to become educators, particularly educators of color. In Tennessee, the state leverages both state and federal workforce dollars that preserve locally designed programs while also meeting a national apprenticeship standard.

In Tennessee, an LEA partners with an IHE to provide a 3-year tuition free path for high school students and district teacher aides to earn elementary and special education credentials. The

district programs were given waivers to hire paid fellows to teach while completing their degrees, partnering with teacher unions to cover textbooks, and placing residents in Title I schools to leverage title funds for staff and program support. The teacher apprentices begin work at community college, earn an associate's degree, and then transfer to state university to complete a bachelor's degree and earn teaching credential. Simultaneously, residents earn salary/benefits working as an educator assistant under guidance of a mentor teacher.

New York has established the Classroom Academy residency model, which is a state RAP. This program places graduate-level candidates pursuing initial New York state certification in a 2 year full-time, paid classroom placement with a matched expert teacher. Participants earn a \$22,000 yearly stipend while completing coursework and working in a partner school district under guidance of a mentor teacher. Candidates are given \$5,000 in tuition assistance for State University New York (SUNY) candidates.

Arguments in support. Children Now states, "To address the [teacher shortage] as well as the lack of diversity in the field, AB 291 would establish conditions for a credentialed educator apprenticeship program that would maintain high-quality and accountability in the following ways:

- Provides an opportunity for LEAs, alongside labor and community partners, to leverage state and federal funding, to break down barriers such as recruitment and retention of teaching candidates who would be compensated for on the job preparation and mentored throughout the program.
- Offers the opportunity for LEAs, institutions of higher education, and their consortiums of labor associations and community partners to address key shortages and growth areas, such as special education, early childhood education, bilingual education, and school counseling.
- Requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) to partner in the dissemination, approval and monitoring of the credentialed educator apprenticeship programs. The CTC and DAS will work in partnership to establish processes that ensure strong accountability and reporting requirements that these programs be high-quality, provide supportive working conditions, and meet compensation requirements with high-support mentorship for every apprentice."

Recommended committee Amendments. Staff recommends the bill be amended to:

- 1) Require 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 to the Chief of the DAS showing a labor management agreement, unless the exclusive representative waives its right to representation, pursuant to Labor Code 3075.
- 2) Prohibit a teacher apprentice from performing the duties of any other classified position other than an apprentice, during the apprenticeship hours.
- 3) Authorize the CTC to issue a certificate or permit to an educator apprentice, instead of a credential.

Related legislation. AB 694 (Gibson) of the 2023-24 Session 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.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

Californians Together
Children Now

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Chelsea Kelley / ED. / (916) 319-2087