

Date of Hearing: June 17, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Darshana R. Patel, Chair

SB 845 (Pérez) – As Amended June 8, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 39-0

SUBJECT: Pupil instruction: career technical education, career education, and apprenticeships

SUMMARY: Expands the scope and definitions of work-based learning activities and youth apprenticeships within the Work Experience Education (WEE) program; authorizes local educational agencies (LEAs) to purchase workers' compensation insurance for students participating in specified work-based learning activities; authorizes LEAs to offer and award credit for work-based learning activities beginning in grade 10; requires high school-based youth apprenticeships within the WEE program to include specified elements; requires LEAs to develop a plan and implement career technical education (CTE) courses and programs meeting specified requirements; authorizes funding provided for specified CTE, WorkAbility, and dual enrollment programs to be used for work-based learning activities. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Authorizes K-12 students enrolled in a community college as part of a dual enrollment programs to participate in, and receive credit for, work-based learning activities offered as a component of the community college course.
- 2) Authorizes a student body organization to operate a school-based enterprise program as part of a CTE or academic program of study when the program is supervised, structured, and guided as a work-based learning activity, as defined.
- 3) Requires a school-based enterprise program to be conducted under the supervision of a certificated employee and governed by the policies of the governing board or body of the local educational agency (LEA).
- 4) Defines a number of terms:
 - a) "Apprenticeship program" means a comprehensive plan containing, among other things, apprenticeship program standards, committee rules and regulations, and related and supplemental instruction outlines and policy statements for the effective administration of the apprenticeable occupations;
 - b) "Apprenticeship program sponsor" means a joint apprenticeship committee, a unilateral labor or management committee, or an individual employer program;
 - c) "Apprenticeship program standards" means a written document containing all the terms and conditions for the qualification, recruitment, selection, employment and training, working conditions, wages, employee benefits, and other compensation for apprentices, as required by the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS);
 - d) "Early college credit" means college credit earned by a pupil through participation in courses and programs, including, but not limited to, dual enrollment, dual credit, and advanced placement (AP) courses and programs, before graduating from high school;

- e) “Internship” means a supervised, structured, and guided work-based learning activity training that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time that is connected to a school-based program or course, involves supervision of both school and workplace employees, provides career experience and educational benefits to the intern, and is limited to the timeframe during which the work-based learning activity provides the intern with beneficial learning, and is more than 25 hours in one semester, intersession, or summer school session;
- f) “Job shadowing experience” means a visit to a workplace for the purpose of career exploration for no less than three hours and no more than 25 hours in one semester, intersession, or summer school session;
- g) “Local educational agency (LEA)” means a school district, county office of education (COE), charter school, or education joint powers authority (JPA);
- h) “Mentorship” means a supervised, structured and guided work-based learning activity involving formal interactions between a youth participant and an adult mentor that is established under the supervision and policies of the governing board or body of the LEA, includes activities where the mentor offers career guidance to the mentee, and may include workplace mentoring where the local program matches a youth participant with an employer or employee of a company;
- i) “Preapprenticeship program” means a preapprenticeship program registered with the DAS;
- j) “Related and supplemental instruction” as an organized and systematic form of instruction designed to provide the apprentice with knowledge, including the theoretical and technical subjects related and supplemental to the skills involved;
- k) “School-based enterprise program” means a supervised, structured, and guided work-based learning activity involving a pupil-led entrepreneurial program that is part of a CTE or academic program of study, that integrates current industry standards, and that involves the development and operation of a revenue-generating business, regardless of profit or loss;
- l) “Work-based learning” means sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in simulated environments at an educational institution that fosters in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field that are aligned to curriculum and instruction;
- m) “Work Experience Education (WEE)” means a course of study that combines an on-the-job component with classroom instruction. WEE may be established by the governing board or body of an LEA, as specified;
- n) “Youth apprentice” means a registered apprentice who meets all of the following:
 - i) Is at least 16 years of age;

- ii) Is enrolled full-time in high school in grade 10, 11, or 12, or is enrolled in an adult education program; and
 - iii) Is participating in a registered apprenticeship program with the DAS.
- o) “Youth apprenticeship program” means an apprenticeship program registered with the DAS that fulfills all registered apprenticeship requirements and serves youth between 16 and 24 years of age at the time of enrollment and that also meets all of the following:
- i) Offers related and supplemental instruction through CTE, WEE, early college credit, or other academic courses, whenever possible;
 - ii) Complies with labor laws for minors;
 - iii) Offers flexible work hours to allow for pupils to participate in on-the-job training while they are enrolled in high school; and
 - iv) Allows for part-time employment and extended completion time to accommodate student apprentices.
- 5) Authorizes LEAs, offering high school, rather than only school districts, to offer WEE programs, and expands the WEE program to include work-based learning activities occurring in CTE, early college credit, or other academic courses, in addition to WEE programs.
- 6) Authorizes LEAs to purchase workers’ compensation insurance, in addition to the current authorization to purchase liability insurance, for pupils enrolled in WEE courses, and extends these authorizations for pupils involved in registered apprenticeships and preapprenticeships; also authorizes the employers to purchase insurance and pass along all or a portion of the costs to the LEA, at the discretion of the governing board or body.
- 7) Specifies that work-based learning activities offered by LEAs, state special schools, partnership academies, and regional occupational programs or centers (ROCPs) may include but not be limited to, on-the-job training in school-based registered apprenticeships, internships, mentorships, and job shadowing experiences, which may be offered through WEE courses, community classrooms, cooperative CTE programs, CTE courses, early college credit courses, and other academic courses.
- 8) Notwithstanding any other law, requires that all pupils participating in work-based learning activities be afforded the same statutory and regulatory safeguards as pupils in WEE programs.
- 9) Requires that guidelines developed by regional and local business organizations, in conjunction with school districts and community colleges, for the establishment of work-based learning activities align regional coordinating efforts with an emphasis on strengthening employer engagement and identifying critical skills for the workplace and expanding work-based learning activities in partnership with community colleges and local workforce development boards.

- 10) Requires the governing board of a school district offering a WEE program to allow pupils in grade 10 to receive credit for satisfactorily completing a WEE program, in addition to the current requirement to provide credit to students only in grades 11 and 12.
- 11) Expands the requirements for the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to adopt standards for WEE plans required to be adopted by LEAs to include a requirement that LEAs document and maintain records of work-based learning activities occurring in all WEE programs, to include CTE, early college credit, and academic courses; and require the plans to include, among other items, youth apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs, CTE courses or other academic courses offering work-based learning activities, pupil demographic and enrollment data, and work permits issued to pupils.
- 12) Specifies that all employment laws or rules applicable to minors are applicable to pupils participating in youth apprenticeship programs or other work-based learning activities.
- 13) Authorizes WEE programs to include employment in registered apprenticeships selected or approved as having educational value for the pupils employed and coordinated by school employees and requires WEE programs involving preapprenticeship to be consistent with specified provisions of the Labor Code.
- 14) Expands the authority of a school district to provide WEE programs in areas outside of the school district within the state or in a contiguous state to include youth apprenticeship programs.
- 15) Authorizes the governing board or body providing work-based learning activities and a WEE program to provide for employment of pupils in part-time jobs and to pay wages for a pupil's employment with a public or private employer, to provide liability and workers compensation insurance, but prohibits payments being made to or for private employers with the exception of apprenticeship program sponsors offering direct services and supports to school-based youth apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs.
- 16) Prohibits a pupil or their parent or guardian from having to pay a charge or fee for the pupil's participation in a preapprenticeship or youth apprenticeship program.
- 17) Expands the authority of an LEA or ROCP to be considered employers of pupils to those participating in work-based learning activities, including those associated with a school-based youth apprenticeship program, WEE, CTE, early college credit, and other academic courses.
- 18) Requires when a work-based learning activity is under the supervision of an ROCP operated by two or more school districts, the school district of residence of the pupil receiving the training is responsible for the supervision of the pupil.
- 19) Notwithstanding any other law, requires a youth apprenticeship program that begins in high school to allow student apprentices to complete a percentage of their program before graduation from high school.
- 20) Requires all registered high school-based youth apprenticeship programs to meet the following:

- a) Submit copies of approved apprenticeship standards and implementation plans to the California Department of Education (CDE);
 - b) Allow student apprentices who complete a percentage of their hours before high school graduation to complete a full apprenticeship under the supervision of the approved LEA or the apprenticeship program sponsor, or to transfer to an adjacent apprenticeship program in another region of the state;
 - c) Offer related and supplemental instruction, provided the courses: address the required competencies, are approved by the apprenticeship program sponsor, employer, and the DAS; and are offered as part of a CTE, WEE, early college credit, or other academic course.
 - d) Award student apprentices credit for graduation for paid on-the-job training, provided the training occurs as part of a WEE program, and is offered in conjunction with related and supplemental instruction.
 - e) Authorizes a student apprentice to complete on-the-job training with a private employer or registered apprenticeship program sponsor during the schoolday as part of a WEE course and receive course credit toward graduation.
 - f) Authorizes the LEA to serve as the employer of record if the student apprentice is receiving credit toward graduation for the on-the-job training and related and supplemental instruction as part of a WEE, CTE, or academic course.
- 21) Authorizes school districts and ROCs offering cooperative CTE programs or community classrooms to include work-based learning activities, including, but not limited to, internships, mentorships, job shadowing experiences, preapprenticeship programs, registered apprenticeship programs, and youth apprenticeship opportunities.
- 22) Requires a school district offering high school expending local control funding formula (LCFF) and CTE funds for CTE programs and work-based learning activities to review district policies on CTE curriculum and graduation requirements, and to develop and implement a CTE program that meets at least all of the following:
- a) Offers a sequence of at least two courses leading to specific competencies that will enable pupils to attain entry-level employment in business or industry upon graduation from high school, and includes plans for articulation of CTE courses with the community colleges for grades 13 and 14;
 - b) Obtains access to assessments of local, regional, and statewide workforce needs;
 - c) Provides counseling and guidance services to pupils in grades 6 to 12 to assist in meeting graduation requirements and to make informed career preparation choices;
 - d) Involves business and industry in cooperative projects with schools to provide work-based learning activities, including internships, mentorships, job shadowing experiences, student-led enterprise programs, preapprenticeship programs, registered apprenticeship programs, and youth apprenticeship opportunities;

- e) Provides access to employment placement services to help graduating pupils obtain employment;
 - f) Includes a system of data collection to report annually to the governing board on the success or failure of each CTE program according to specified metrics;
 - g) Ensures pupils have access to CTE pathways that align with regional and statewide workforce priorities and registered apprenticeship programs; and
 - h) Ensures teachers of CTE courses have been issued the appropriate CTE or single subject teaching credential.
- 23) Authorizes the CDE to adopt any policies, rules, and regulations necessary to maintain the educational purpose and character of CTE and school-based registered apprenticeship programs.
- 24) Authorizes funding provided for agriculture CTE to provide work-based learning activities, including, but not limited to, supervised occupational experiences and internships.
- 25) Authorizes grants to be awarded under the Golden State Pathways Program to pathway programs that provide work-based learning activities, including, but not limited to, career-connected learning opportunities, internships, mentorships, preapprenticeship programs, registered apprenticeship programs, and youth apprenticeship opportunities.
- 26) Authorizes funding provided for partnership academies to support those academies that provide work-based learning opportunities, including but not limited to, internships, mentorships, preapprenticeship programs, registered apprenticeship programs, and youth apprenticeship opportunities.
- 27) Authorizes transition and employment preparation services provided pursuant to a WorkAbility program to include work-based learning activities, including but not limited to, career-connected learning opportunities, job shadowing experiences, internships, mentorships, and preapprenticeship programs designed to prepare pupils with disabilities for competitive integrated employment, postsecondary education, or vocational training; and requires that all such activities comply with applicable labor laws for minors and workers with disabilities; and to be consistent with the pupil's individualized education program (IEP).
- 28) Authorizes a College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) partnership agreement to include work-based learning activities when they are integrated into CTE or other academic coursework and provide career experience and educational benefits to participating pupils. These components must identify the supervising certificated employee or coordinator for the work-based learning activities and specify how the activities connect to course learning objectives.
- 29) Authorizes funding provided for the K-12 component of the Strong Workforce Program (SWP) to be used to support CTE programs that provide work-based learning activities, including, but not limited to, apprenticeship-aligned career pathways, internships, mentorships, preapprenticeship programs, registered apprenticeship programs, and youth apprenticeship opportunities.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Authorizes the governing board of a school district maintaining a high school to establish WEE programs by submitting a district plan to the CDE in order to provide students 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. (Education Code (EC) 51760 et seq.)
- 2) Requires the governing board of a school district to grant credit, not to exceed 10 credits in any one semester, to a student satisfactorily completing a WEE program who is at least 16 years of age and is enrolled in grade 11 or 12, or at least 14 years old under specified conditions, including if it is prescribed in their IEP, and requires all students to participate in at least one instructional period per week with a certificated employee, among other requirements. (EC 51760.3)
- 3) Defines “work-based learning” as an educational approach or instructional methodology that uses the workplace or real work to provide students with the knowledge and skills that will help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities. When feasible, work-based learning should be an integral part of a more comprehensive program that integrates academic courses and CTE. (EC 51760.1)
- 4) Specifies that high-quality work-based learning may include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a) Emphasis on learning in the workplace;
 - b) Exposure to a wide range of career areas and worksites in order to help youth make informed choices about education, training options, and career pursuits;
 - c) Thoughtful placement of pupils into opportunities that are evaluated for their safety, qualified supervision, and learning opportunities;
 - d) Appropriate sequencing of experiences based upon the pupil’s age and maturity, ranging from site visits and tours, job shadowing, unpaid and paid internships, and paid work experience;
 - e) Explicit aim to supplement, or systematically reinforce, classroom instruction in technical courses, academic courses, or both;
 - f) Systematic attention to the development of 21st century skills, such as communication, problem solving, teamwork, project planning, and critical thinking;
 - g) A trained mentor who structures the learning at the worksite;
 - h) Coordination between the classroom teacher and the workplace mentor or supervisor;
 - i) Built-in regular assessment and feedback;
 - j) Involvement of youth in choosing and structuring the experience; and

- k) Clear and measurable learning outcomes. (EC 51760.1)
- 5) Authorizes work-based learning opportunities to be delivered by partnership academies, ROCPs, and LEAs, including WEE, community classrooms, cooperative CTE programs, and job shadowing. (EC 51760.1)
- 6) Authorizes the governing board of a high school district, an ROCP established by a JPA or a county superintendent of schools operating an ROCP to establish cooperative CTE programs or community classrooms as part of a CTE course. Defines “cooperative CTE programs” as cooperative agreements between schools and employers to provide students with paid on-the-job experiences, as well as CTE instruction contributing to the student’s education and employability, and defines “community classrooms” as instructional methodologies which are part of a CTE course, and which may utilize the facilities and equipment of a public agency or private business to provide students the opportunity to expand competencies developed in a CTE in unpaid on-the-job experiences. (EC 52372 and 52372.1)
- 7) Establishes Project Workability to serve secondary students with disabilities, among others, to provide transition work-based experiences and transition classroom-based work exploration, including preemployment skills training, vocational training, and placement in unsubsidized employment, among other services. (EC 56471)
- 8) Requires the minimum schoolday in a high school to be 240 minutes, other than for specified exceptions, including, but not limited to, early college or middle college high schools, ROCPs, and WEE programs. (EC 46141)
- 9) Requires junior high and high school students to attend classes for at least 1,200 minutes during each 5 schooldays; authorizes school district with an early college or middle college high school to offer at least 900 minutes during any 5 schooldays; and authorizes students to attend school for less than the total number of days school is in session as long as the student attends the required number of minutes to accommodate CTE and ROCP courses or other alternative class schedules. (EC 46160)
- 10) Limits the number of hours a minor may be employed for and prohibits this time from being during school hours. Authorizes the allowable hours to be extended and to occur during school hours for a student who is employed pursuant to a school-supervised and school-administered work experience and career exploration program. (EC 49116)
- 11) Establishes the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG) Program as a competitive grant program to support CTE courses and pathways and requires applicants, among other factors, to provide a coherent sequence of CTE courses that lead to a career pathway or attain employment or industry certification upon graduation from high school and that offer the opportunity for participants to prepare for postsecondary enrollment and to earn postsecondary credits through (AP) courses, International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, and dual enrollment opportunities. Grantees must also provide students with quality career exploration, guidance, and a continuum of work-based learning opportunities aligned with academic coursework, which may include paid internships. (EC 53071)

- 12) Establishes Agricultural CTE and requires, if the school district chooses to offer agricultural CTE, the curriculum to include organized classes in the study of agricultural science and technology, a student-supervised occupational experience program in agriculture, and a program of leadership, organization, and personal development. (EC 52454)
- 13) Authorizes the K-12 component of the Strong Workforce Program (SWP) to create, support, or expand high-quality CTE programs at the K-12 level that are aligned with the workforce development efforts occurring through the SWP. (EC 88827)
- 14) Establishes the California Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP) to provide LEAs with the resources to promote pathways in high-wage, high-skill, high-growth areas, including technology, health care, education, and climate-related fields that, among other things, allow students to advance seamlessly from high school to college and career and provide the workforce needed for economic growth. (EC 53020)
- 15) Establishes the California Partnership Academies and requires the SPI to prioritize proposals for new partnership academies based upon a school district's enrollment of the following pupil groups: unduplicated pupils; pupils from groups historically underrepresented in CTE or Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs or professions; and at-risk pupils. Authorizes the SPI to also prioritize new partnership academies for school districts located in a rural area or an economically disadvantaged area. (EC 54694)
- 16) Federal law, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, reauthorizes the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins), provides federal support for CTE programs, and focuses on improving the academic and technical achievement of CTE students, strengthening the connections between secondary and postsecondary education, and improving accountability.
- 17) Defines, for purposes of community college apprenticeship programs, the following:
 - a) "Apprenticeship program standards" means the written document containing, among other things, all the terms and conditions for the qualification, recruitment, selection, employment and training, working conditions, wages, employee benefits, and other compensation for apprentices and all other provisions and statements, including attachments, as required by the Labor Code and the California Code of Regulations, which, when approved by the Chief of the DAS of the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) constitute registration of these standards and authority to conduct that program of apprenticeship in this state;
 - b) "Apprenticeship training program" means a comprehensive plan containing, among other things, apprenticeship program standards, program regulations, related and supplemental instruction course outlines, and policy statements for the effective administration of that apprenticeship training program;
 - c) "Internship training program" means a planned series of educational training activities, paid or unpaid, in a specific or general occupational field; and

- d) “Preapprenticeship program” means a structured plan of training and studies based on industry standards that is designed to prepare individuals with the skills and competencies needed to enter an apprenticeship training program that has been approved. (EC 79144)
- 18) Establishes the DAS within the DIR to oversee apprenticeship programs, and requires the Chief of the Division to perform various functions to promote the welfare of apprentices. (Labor Code (LAB) 3070 et seq.)
- 19) Requires the Chief of the DAS to convene a committee to develop recommendations to the DAS on the expansion of youth apprenticeships in California. Requires the committee to include representatives from youth, youth serving organizations, labor, employers of youth, K-12 schools, community colleges, and the public workforce system. Requires the committee to provide a report with a set of recommendations by July 1, 2024. (LAB 3121)
- 20) Establishes the Youth Apprenticeship Grant Program, subject to an appropriation, to be administered by the DAS, to award grants to eligible applicants to fund existing apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs or to develop new programs. Specifies that services are to be delivered principally through community-based organizations to target populations, including individuals from 16 to 24 years of age who are at risk of, or who are disconnected from the education system or employment, unhoused, in the child welfare, juvenile justice, or criminal legal systems, living in concentrated poverty, or are facing barriers to labor market participation. (LAB 3122)
- 21) Defines “youth apprentice” as an apprentice between the ages of 16 and 24 years and youth preapprentice” as a preapprentice between the ages of 16 and 24 years. (LAB 3073.5)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: *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.”

SB 845 expands access to career-connected learning across the state by strengthening hands-on learning opportunities, removing barriers to industry participation, and connecting students with high-demand careers – all efforts that are guided by the Career Education Master Plan and the recommendations of the California Youth Apprenticeship Committee (CYAC). Doing so will provide a strong foundation for preparing students for career success, which is essential for building a more inclusive economy.”

This bill defines numerous terms and conditions relating to work-based learning and apprenticeships within the WEE program, a specific program that must be adopted by a

governing board or body and which permits students to attend school for 180 minutes per day rather than the 240 minutes required for regular high school programs; authorizes schools to provide workers compensation insurance and wages, for part-time employment in some cases, to students participating in work-based learning activities; and clarifies that work-based learning activities are allowable uses of funds in specified CTE programs, including but not limited to K-12 SWP, GSPP, CTEIG, and partnership academies. ***The Committee may wish to consider the following:***

- As a result of the placement of the bill language, the definitions and conditions outlined in the bill only apply to apprenticeships, internships, and work-based learning activities that take place within the Work Experience Education (WEE) program; and
- Under the WEE program statutes and regulations, schools may provide participating students with a 180-minute school day rather than the standard 240-minute school day, by including references to the other programs within the WEE statute, it could suggest that all of these other work-based learning options would also be subject to the shorter minimum day.

May Revise Budget proposal includes actions related to work-based learning. The Governor's May Revise also includes proposals related to work-based learning, including the following:

- Adds dual enrollment programs and work-based learning within WEE programs to those programs subject to a minimum school day of 180 minutes rather than the traditional 240-minute day;
- Adds registered youth apprenticeship programs, internships, field placements, and capstone field experiences as work-based learning opportunities within the WEE program for students; and
- Defines the following terms for courses approved for WEE programs:
 - “Internship” as a structured, supervised work-based learning experience, under the supervision of a certificated teacher that integrates practical job experience with related classroom instruction and may be paid or unpaid;
 - “Field placement” as a structured, supervised learning experience under the supervision of a certificated teacher in a clinic or service setting in which a student applies academic or technical knowledge through direct or simulated activities, including but not limited to, clinical placements, service-learning placements, and civic learning placements; and
 - “Capstone field experience” as a structured, supervised placement or project under the supervision of a certificated teacher, culminating a course of study or career pathway, in which a student applies skills and knowledge in a real-world or simulated professional setting.

The final budget language has not been adopted as of the date this bill is being heard in the Assembly Education Committee. However, *the Committee may wish to consider* that these definitions as proposed in the budget are either not included in this bill or are in conflict with those in the bill.

Focus on CTE in California has grown. With dramatic changes in industry and workforce demands, as well as renewed focus on supporting students’ “career readiness,” policymakers, business leaders, and educators have in recent years enacted numerous reforms to increase student access to CTE courses. There are several different state programs that support CTE opportunities, including ROCs, CTEIG, Golden State Pathways, K-12 SWP, Career Pathways Trust, and Partnership Academies. The Legislature has also supported CTE as an option to meet state graduation requirements.

While CTE opportunities have expanded, access and outcomes remain uneven. According to a 2023 report by Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), only 19% of high school graduates complete a full CTE pathway. The share of students statewide deemed “prepared” on the College and Career Indicator (CCI) on the California School Dashboard was 51.7% for 2025. Students with disabilities, foster youth, and homeless youth are far less likely to be deemed college and career ready.

State Master Plan for Career Education. California Executive Order N-11-23, signed by Governor Newsom in August 2023, launched the Master Plan for Career Education. This directive aimed to integrate and align the state's education, workforce, and economic development programs to prepare students and adults for high-paying careers with or without a traditional four-year college degree.

In 2025, the Governor’s office released the Master Plan for Career Education, noting that the many existing education and training programs are resourced through numerous agencies, have different base funding streams, and offer various specialized grant programs. Although these programs may have similar goals, they often require separate plans, applications, and implementation components. The Master Plan was meant to provide a framework for responding to the challenges facing California’s labor market and educational landscape. Among the recommendations included in the Master Plan, two relate specifically to K-12 schools:

- Strengthening regional coordination, including by expanding opportunities for work-based learning, with a focus on building social capital and creating earn-and-learn opportunities such as paid internships and apprenticeships; and
- Developing career pathways for high school and college students that align with current and future statewide and regional workforce needs; and that provide opportunities to engage in work-based learning, including internships, service learning, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships.

California Youth Apprenticeships. SB 191 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review) Chapter 67, Statutes of 2022, required the DAS to convene a committee to develop recommendations on the expansion of youth apprenticeships in California for in-school and out-of-school youth and established the California Opportunity Youth Apprenticeship (COYA) grant program. In 2024, the CYAC released a detailed set of recommendations to establish a statewide youth apprenticeship system. The report notes, “when young people can alternate between the

workplace and the classroom, school becomes more relevant and purposeful, and access to economic opportunity more tangible. By allowing students the opportunity to apply classroom concepts at the worksite, classroom learning and work performance become mutually reinforcing.”

Key recommendations of the report include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Implement a connected approach to youth apprenticeship, with multi-systems supports for both in-school and out-of-school youth;
- Establish a definition for youth apprenticeship that allows for the flexibility necessary for high school and college-connected implementation;
- Create a “Career Apprenticeship Bridge” model that would begin in high school and continue into college, integrating CTE into the apprenticeship system, with at least 300 hours of paid on-the-job training and 144 hours of related and supplemental instruction/CTE courses;
- Explore how existing school-based programs such as WEE and Workability can facilitate paid on-the-job training and connect all students to youth apprenticeships; and
- Review and align administrative workforce and educational policies and programs to effectively implement youth apprenticeship programs.

As noted above, the report recommends establishing a definition of youth apprenticeship and suggests the following:

- Is registered with the DAS;
- Fulfills all existing registered apprenticeship requirements;
- Serves youth ages 16-24 at the time of enrollment, but not be limited to that age group;
- Offers related and supplemental instruction through advanced CTE courses, dual enrollment courses, or equivalent;
- Complies with labor laws for minors and offers flexible work hours to allow for students to begin on-the-job training while in high school.

In June 2025, the Governor announced that 29 youth apprenticeship programs would receive \$15.4 million in COYA grants to connect opportunity youth with pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs that can lead to employment in high-demand fields.

Work-based learning. Work-based learning integrates academic learning with real-world applications to provide paths to educational and career advancement and build the talent pipeline. According to the CDE, work-based learning measures used for the College and Career Readiness Index (CCI) displayed on the California School Dashboard include pre-apprenticeships, state and

federal job programs, transition work-based experiences, and transition classroom-based work exploration.

The only definition of work-based learning within the Education Code pertains only to the WEE program. Although work-based learning is referenced in numerous other code sections relating to various CTE programs, the definition does not clearly apply in these cases.

The intent of this bill is to ensure consistency in the definitions and conditions of work-based learning and associated terms, including apprenticeships, however the placement of these definitions in the bill means these would only apply within the WEE program. *The Committee may wish to consider* whether these definitions should apply across all relevant courses and programs offering work-based learning without necessarily expanding the authorization to attend a shortened 180-minute school day to other programs offering work-based learning.

Work Experience Education (WEE). According to the CDE, the WEE is a course of study that may be established by the governing board of a school district. The board must submit a Secondary District Plan for WEE to the CDE for approval. The operational plan of the WEE program combines an on-the-job component with related classroom instruction designed to maximize the value of on-the-job paid or unpaid job experiences. Students' success in WEE programs depends on the quality of classroom instruction, effective collaboration between employers and the WEE coordinators, and the degree of involvement of the students and their parents or legal guardians. The purpose of the WEE is to:

- Link the academic core curriculum with the world of work and promote students' school-to-career transitions;
- Help students develop skills, habits, and attitudes conducive to job success and personal growth;
- Assist students in career exploration and forging rewarding relationships with employers; and
- Develop a positive work ethic and acquire or refine work-related skills and job performance in actual work settings.

California regulations outline the requirements of the Secondary District Plan for WEE that LEAs must submit to the CDE, including but not limited to:

- Evidence of the governing board's approval of the WEE plan;
- The course description with the units of instruction per week for each semester offered;
- Assurances by the employer of the following: the training agreement entered into with the student; the objectives to be accomplished at the worksite; adequate equipment, materials, and facilities will be made available to provide learning opportunities; work conditions will not endanger the health, safety, welfare, or morals of the student; adequate adult supervision of the student will be provided at all times; and provision of Workers' Compensation Insurance; and non-discrimination provisions.

The WEE program requires the Work Experience Teacher-Coordinator to conduct the related classroom instruction for each type of WEE offered, as well as to provide for the supervision of students by preparing individual training plans, observing and consulting with students, and making a minimum of two on-site contacts per semester with each work site supervisor to evaluate student performance.

Students enrolled in grades 11 or 12 may be granted credit for successful completion of a WEE program based upon specified conditions, up to 10 credits in any one semester, and a total of 40 semester credits.

Enrollment in WEE programs is relatively small. CalPADS data for the 2025-26 school year identifies the number of WEE programs, courses, and student enrollment statewide:

- 331 LEAs offered WEE programs;
- 678 courses were offered within WEE programs; and
- 18,004 students were enrolled in WEE programs.

For the sake of comparison, there are 428,987 students enrolled in Grade 11 and 430,313 students enrolled in Grade 12 in the current school year. The total number of students enrolled in WEE programs represents approximately 4% of the students enrolled in grades 11 and 12 statewide.

WorkAbility. The WorkAbility model, a transition work-based program, serves students eligible for special education services and utilizes WEE to place students at worksites during the school day to provide students with an understanding of job-seeking and job-keeping skills.

Internships. An internship is a work-based learning activity that allows students to apply classroom learning in a workplace setting and may be paid or unpaid. In order to be considered as a part of the CCI on the California School Dashboard, internships would have to be tied to a course and instructor, as well as an employment or community partner. The instructor and partner work together to ensure student safety and monitor student progress.

College and career readiness is a state priority. Each LEA's local control and accountability plan (LCAP) must demonstrate, among other priorities, how they are ensuring that all students are being prepared to be college and career ready. The CCI displayed on each LEA's dashboard includes data on the number of students completing a CTE pathway, among other measures.

At the May 2026 meeting of the State Board of Education (SBE), the CDE recommended, and the SBE adopted, definitions for high-quality work-based learning and approved high-quality work-based learning as a measure to be added to the CCI to show that a school has prepared a student for college and career:

- Work-Based Learning: Internship
 - 50 hours or more in duration;
 - Sponsored by the LEA;
 - Meets expectations or greater on their Employer Performance Evaluation; and

- Completed as part of a course offered by the LEA.
- Work-Based Learning: Student-led Enterprise: 50 hours or more in duration.
- Work-Based Learning: Simulated Work-Based Learning: 50 hours or more in duration.

Recommended Committee Amendments. Staff recommends that the bill be amended as follows:

- 1) Remove the definitions of work-placed learning and related terms from the WEE article and create a new article so that these terms are not limited solely to the WEE program.
- 2) Add early and middle college and IB to the definition of early college credit.
- 3) Clarify the definition of LEA to include ROCPs operated by COEs or JPAs.
- 4) Clarify that state special schools are authorized to offer work-based learning activities and programs.
- 5) Expand the definition of WEE to reflect CDE's definition.
- 6) Remove references to work-based learning activities as part of an academic program.
- 7) Clarify that the reduced daily minute requirement applicable to the WEE program does not apply to all other work-based learning activities.
- 8) Remove the duplicative requirement that school districts receiving LCFF or CTE funding, as specified, produce a CTE plan and collect and report data.
- 9) Add section on the authorization for the CTEIG program to offer work-based learning activities, consistent with sections for other CTE programs.
- 10) Other technical and clarifying amendments.

Arguments in support. Nextgen California writes, "In California, only about 30% of young people earn a four-year degree, while many others face systemic barriers that delay, disrupt, or completely block their access to higher education. Work-based learning, youth apprenticeships, dual enrollment, and credit for prior learning offer promising, equitable pathways to help students overcome these challenges. However, the design of the state's current career education system is not formulated or positioned to meet our workforce needs. A lack of coordination between government, industry, and educational institutions, along with disjointed curriculum standards, makes the transition from education to employment extremely difficult and very inefficient for both the student and the employer.

AB 845 provides an alternative approach to the current program design. Specifically, the bill provides a framework that will foster collaboration between local education agencies, government, and the private sector industries by incorporating the use of more diverse learning opportunities and real-world work experience into the current system. SB 845 expands access to hands-on training and essential life skills, as well as strengthens career pathways for students who might otherwise struggle to secure stable careers in California's most in-demand industries."

Related legislation. AB 1590 (Ransom) of the 2025-26 Session requires the SPI to determine, in consultation with the executive director of the SBE, a revised allocation formula for the CTEIG that ensures that all funds appropriated for the program in any given fiscal year are fully allocated to program applicants in that fiscal year.

AB 1694 (Carrillo) of the 2025-26 Session, for purposes of the CTEIG, deletes the prohibition against an applicant being awarded more than the amount determined by the allocation formula; requires that an applicant receiving a grant receive a renewal grant for 3 additional years; and requires, beginning with the 2026–27 fiscal year, that up to 90% of the grants be renewal grants and up to 10% new grants.

SB 638 (Padilla) Chapter 457, Statutes of 2025, establishes the California Education and Workforce Development Coordinating Entity within the Government Operations Agency to serve as the statewide planning and coordinating body for CTE, career pathways, and workforce development. Modifies the CTEIG Program, as specified.

AB 401 (Muratsuchi) of the 2025-26 Session requires CTEIG program recipients to be granted renewal grants for a total of four years, subject to specified conditions, and requires the SPI to designate 90% of the CTEIG funds for renewal grants and 10% for new applicants; adds a cost-of-living adjustment to the CTEIG appropriation; and removes a limitation on grant awards above a specified level. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SB 612 (Valladares) of the 2025-26 Session would require, subject to an appropriation, a one-semester course in CTE as a graduation requirement beginning with students graduating in the 2031-32 school year and require LEAs serving students in grades 9 to 12 to offer at least one course in CTE at all of its high schools.

AB 1929 (McKinnor) Chapter 145, Statutes of 2024, requires that LEAs receiving specified CTE state grants and the California Community College Chancellor's Office disaggregate program and performance accountability outcome data by race and gender.

AB 3131 (McCarty) Chapter 434, Statutes of 2024, requires that LEAs receiving Equity Multiplier funding through the LCFF be given positive consideration for the K-12 SWP, a CTE initiative.

AB 2273 (Holden) of the 2023-24 Session, would have established the California Pilot Paid Internship Program to provide grants to LEAs to establish or expand internship programs within their CTE courses or pathways. The bill required the CDE to contract for an independent evaluation of the grant program and provide a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2028. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 377 (Muratsuchi) of the 2023-24 Session, would have required the consolidation of specified K-12 CTE programs, increased ongoing funding for the CTEIG, administered by the CDE, to \$450 million per year; requires specified CTE staffing at the state and regional level to support local CTE programs and pathways; and deletes authorization for the K-12 SWP administered by the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges (CCCCO). Also, requires the CDE to establish a stakeholder workgroup to consider improvements to the CTEIG program.

SB 191 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review) Chapter 67, Statutes of 2022, updates reporting requirements for the Youth Apprenticeships Grant Program; requires the DAS, subject

to an appropriation, to establish and administer the Apprenticeship Innovation Funding Program to provide grants, reimbursements, or other funding for the support of programs to train apprentices; requires youth apprenticeships to be a priority for the DAS and requires the DAS to convene a committee to develop recommendations on the expansion of youth apprenticeships in California; establishes the Youth Apprenticeship Grant Program.

AB 1923 (Mathis) Chapter 114, Statutes of 2022, requires the SPI to prioritize proposals for new California Partnership Academies based on a school district's enrollment of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, and for school districts located in a rural or economically disadvantaged area.

AB 130 (Committee on Budget) Chapter 44, Statutes of 2021, provides that, for the 2021–22 fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter, \$300 million would be made available to the CDE, upon appropriation for the CTEIG program. Also makes adjustments to program provisions relating to eligibility requirements for grant applicants, and for ensuring compliance with program requirements.

AB 1808 (Committee on Budget) Chapter 32, Statutes of 2018, appropriates in the 2018–19 fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter, \$150 million to the CTEIG program administered through CDE. Also establishes a K–12 component of the SWP to create, support, or expand high-quality CTE programs at the K–12 level aligned with the workforce development efforts and, commencing with the 2018–19 fiscal year, requires the CCCCO to allocate \$150 million for this program to regional CTE consortia.

AB 1743 (O'Donnell) of the 2017-18 Session would have extended funding for the CTEIG Program by providing ongoing funding of \$500 million per year with a 1:1 local match and \$12 million per year for regional K-12 CTE coordinators to provide technical assistance and support to local CTE providers. This bill was held in the Senate Education Committee.

AB 2063 (Gallagher) Chapter 72, Statutes of 2016, establishes an additional option by which a student who is at least 14 years old may participate in WEE, and increases the time a student may participate in job shadowing from 25 to 40 hours per semester if certain conditions are met.

AB 104 (Committee on Budget) Chapter 13, Statutes of 2015, establishes the CTEIG, a competitive grant program administered by the CDE, to provide support for CTE in grades K-12.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Alameda County Office of Education
Bay Area Council
California Catholic Conference
California Workforce Association
County of Kern
Nextgen California
Society of Human Resources Management
Western Electrical Contractors Association

Opposition

None of file

Analysis Prepared by: Debbie Look / ED. / (916) 319-2087