

Date of Hearing: April 27, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
AB 2044 (O'Donnell) – As Amended April 18, 2022

SUBJECT: Graduation requirements: career technical education

SUMMARY: Extends for five years, until July 1, 2027, the sunset on the option for students to fulfill a state high school graduation requirement by successfully completing a CTE course. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Extends for five years, until July 1, 2027, the sunset on the option for students to fulfill a high school graduation requirement by successfully completing a CTE course.
- 2) States that, notwithstanding any other law, if a student completed a CTE course between July 1, 2022, and January 1, 2023, that course shall be deemed to have fulfilled the graduation requirement.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Specifies requirements for graduation from high school, including three courses in English; two courses in mathematics; two courses in science; three courses in social studies; one course in visual or performing arts (VAPA), world languages, or CTE; and two courses in physical education.
- 2) Sunsets the option to fulfill a graduation requirement with a course in CTE on July 1, 2022.
- 3) Defines “a course in career technical education” as a course in a district-operated CTE program that is aligned to the CTE model curriculum standards and framework adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE), including courses through a regional occupational center or program operated by a county superintendent of schools or pursuant to a joint powers agreement.
- 4) Requires the governing board of a school district or county office of education (COE) that elects to allow a CTE course to satisfy a graduation requirement, before offering that alternative to students, to notify parents, teachers, students, and the public at a regularly scheduled meeting of all of the following:
 - a) The intent to offer CTE courses to fulfill a graduation requirement; and
 - b) The impact that offering career technical education courses will have on the availability of courses that meet the eligibility requirements for admission to the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC), and whether the CTE courses to be offered are approved to satisfy those eligibility requirements.
- 5) States that, if a pupil completed a career technical education course before the inoperative date of the section authorizing completion of a CTE course to fulfill a graduation requirement, that course shall be deemed to fulfill that requirement.

FISCAL EFFECT: This bill has been keyed a possible state-mandated local program by the Office of Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. The author's office states, "Under current law, students have the option of taking a CTE course to fulfill the existing high school graduation. However, this option will sunset on July 1, 2022, leaving students unable to use completion of a CTE course to fulfill a state graduation requirement. Research shows that students who complete both an academic and a career technical education sequence of courses in high school have a higher likelihood of being enrolled in postsecondary education and being employed in professional, managerial, or skilled jobs."

Defining Career Technical Education. CTE is a program of study that involves a multiyear sequence of courses that integrates core academic knowledge with technical and occupational knowledge to provide students with a pathway to postsecondary education and careers. CTE programs in California are organized into 15 industry sectors, covering 58 pathways that identify the knowledge and skills students need. Partnerships are usually developed between high schools, businesses, and postsecondary schools, providing pathways to employment and associate, Bachelor's and advanced degrees. CTE prepares students for the world of work by introducing them to workplace competencies, and makes academic content accessible to students by providing it in a hands-on context. Along the way, students develop career-relevant, real-world 21st Century skills.

Increasing number of CTE courses offered, more approved as "A-G" courses. According to the CDE, there has been a marked increase in the number of CTE courses offered in recent years. In the 2012-13 school year there were 46,513 courses offered, of which 6,859 were approved as meeting the admissions requirements of the UC and the CSU, known as the "A-G" requirements. In the 2018-19 school year 57,236 courses were offered, of which 25,269 were A-G approved courses. The largest number of courses offered in the 2018-19 school year were in the areas of Arts, Media, and Entertainment category, followed by Business and Finance, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation.

Improved outcomes for CTE students. A wide body of research indicates that involvement in CTE coursework provides improved academic outcomes and other benefits to students with findings, such as the following:

- Students with greater exposure to CTE are more likely to graduate from high school, enroll in a two-year college, be employed, and earn higher wages;
- The average high school graduation rate for students concentrating in CTE programs is 93%, compared to an average national graduation rate of 80%;
- Students taking more CTE classes are just as likely to pursue a four-year degree as their peers;
- 91% of high school graduates who earned 2-3 CTE credits enrolled in college;

- CTE provides the greatest boost to students who need it most – boys and students from low-income families; and
- 80% of students taking a college preparatory academic curriculum with rigorous CTE met college and career readiness goals, compared to only 63% of students taking the same academic core who did not experience rigorous CTE.

Importance of CTE to California's economy. Career Tech points to benefits to California's economy through CTE programs in our K-12 schools:

- Middle-skill jobs account for 50% of California's labor market, but only 40% of workers in the state possess the required skills, leading to a skills gap which CTE can address; and
- If California increased the number of individuals with certificates or associate degrees by 10 percentage points, the state would have an increase in median per capita income by \$1,462, there would be 67,000 fewer individuals unemployed, and 267,000 fewer individuals living in poverty.

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 College and Career Readiness Index displayed on each LEA's dashboard includes data on the number of students completing a CTE pathway. CDE notes that over 90% of districts report that CTE is now included in their LCAPs.

Prior legislation. SB 1123 (Leyva), Chapter 53, Statutes of 2016, extended for five years, until July 1, 2022, the sunset on the option for students to fulfill a high school graduation requirement by successfully completing a CTE course.

AB 1330 (Furutani), Chapter 621, Statutes of 2011, established the option for students to fulfill a high school graduation requirement by successfully completing a CTE course.

SB 253 (Wyland) of the 2009- 2010 Session would have added the option for students to fulfill the VAPA high school graduation requirement by successfully completing a CTE course. SB 253 was held on the Assembly Floor.

AB 2446 (Furutani) of the 2009-2010 Session would have added the option for students to fulfill the VAPA high school graduation requirement by successfully completing a CTE course. This bill was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger, who stated:

Improving and expanding Career Technical Education (CTE) opportunities has been among my highest priorities. While I am supportive of the author's intent to give CTE a prominent place in high school graduation priorities, the final version of this bill omitted my Administration's proposed amendments that were intended to limit the new costs to school districts. Therefore, I am concerned that this bill could be construed to impose higher costs without a fund source, which could also be interpreted as a state reimbursable mandate. Given that school budgets are very constrained due to the recession, adding new costs at this time is not advisable.

AB 554 (Furutani) of the 2009-2010 Session would have increased the number of courses required for high school graduation from 13 to 14 and offered students a choice between a VAPA course, foreign language, or a CTE to fulfill the additional course requirement. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SB 672 (Torlakson) of the 2007-2008 Session would have required high schools participating in the California Enhanced Instructional Time Program, as specified, to adopt a graduation policy requiring students to complete two CTE courses. This bill was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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