



Sasha Renée Pérez

REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 25

Senate Bill 845 (Pérez) High School Youth Apprenticeship Act

Summary

SB 845 will implement key components of the Master Plan for Career Education; as well as recommendations provided by the California Youth Apprenticeship Committee (CYAC) in order to expand youth apprenticeship.

Background

Existing law requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to coordinate the development of model curriculum standards, including for career technical education course of study. The law also allows the California Department of Education (CDE) to establish rules and regulations for work-based learning and work experience education.

Additionally, existing law provides funding for career technical education programs, including through programs such as California Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program and the Strong Workforce Program and a K–12 component of the Strong Workforce Program. The goal of these programs is to create, maintain, support, encourage, strengthen, and expand the delivery of career technical education throughout the state.

In 2023, Governor Newsom signed Executive Order N-11-23 directing state leaders in education, workforce development, and economic development to develop a Master Plan on Career Education.¹ This initiative aims to develop opportunities for hands-on learning and life skills, thereby strengthening career pathways for students.

In 2024, the California Youth Apprenticeship Committee (CYAC) made several policy recommendations to promote the expansion of youth apprenticeships, including: aligning systems between local educational agencies and employers, removing barriers to industry involvement, providing regular program guidance from industry and labor, and introducing a new youth apprenticeship model.²

Problem

About three in five Californians enroll in college right after high school, with recent data showing that 62% of the 435,000 students who graduated in spring 2020 enrolled within 12 months. However, enrollment rates vary significantly by income, race, and gender, with low-income, English Learner, Black, and Latino students enrolling at lower rates compared to their peers.³

While many students begin their college journey, approximately 34% of Californians hold at least a bachelor's degree.⁴ Many others face barriers, such as financial challenges, limited resources, and lack of support that prevent them from completing a four-year degree, despite their aspirations. For these students, career education offers an alternative pathway. Around 30% of California's future jobs will require training beyond high school but less than a four-year degree.⁵ Career education provides specialized training for jobs that are essential for upward economic mobility.

However, California's career education system is not sufficiently robust to meet the needs of these students, leaving many to struggle with the

¹ Career Education Executive Order N-11-23 (2023), <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/8.31.23-Career-Education-Executive-Order.pdf>

² The California Youth Apprenticeship Model Report of the California Youth Apprenticeship Committee. 2024. https://www.dir.ca.gov/DAS/DAS_MeetingAgenda/2024/June/2024-6-Report-CAYC.pdf

³ Ugo, Iwunze. "College Access in California." *Public Policy Institute of California*, Dec. 2023, www.ppic.org/publication/college-access-in-california/

⁴ "Geography of Educational Attainment in California." *Public Policy Institute of California*, www.ppic.org/blog/geography-of-educational-attainment-in-california/

⁵ "Higher Education in California: Strengthening Career Education." *Public Policy Institute of California*, www.ppic.org/publication/higher-education-in-california-strengthening-career-education/

transition from education to employment. This pattern perpetuates racial and generational wealth gaps, highlighting the need for more inclusive and equitable opportunities.

Reinforcing this issue, our system fails to address the state's declining population of trade-based workers. This problem will only worsen as more individuals retire, the demand for housing increases, and the transition from fossil fuels to electrification progresses.

Solution

SB 845 addresses the issues highlighted with the existing career education system by implementing aspects of Governor Newsom's Master Plan for Career Education and recommendations made by CYAC. Specifically, this bill will:

1. Establish key definitions, including:
 - a. Work-based learning
 - b. Youth apprenticeship program
 - c. Student apprentice
2. Require employer engagement and regional collaboration in delivering work-based learning.
3. Require cross agency collaboration to develop guidelines and resources for youth apprenticeship across local jurisdictions.
4. Authorizes local educational agencies to grant credit for completion of a work experience course connected to a youth apprenticeship.
5. Allow local educational agencies to support implementation of school-based apprenticeship implementation, including insurance and related direct costs.
6. Allow for flexible implementation of youth apprenticeship in high schools.

Sponsors:

California Workforce Association
NextGen California

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Alameda County Office of Education Apprenticeships for America
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Contact

alondra.cervantes@sen.ca.gov
916-651 -4025