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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. Existing law also allows CDE to establish rules and regulations for work-based learning and work experience education.

In 2023, Governor Newsom signed Executive Order N-11-23 which directed state education, workforce development, and economic development leaders to develop a Master Plan on Career Education.¹ This master plan is an effort to create opportunities for hands-on learning and life skills to strengthen career pathways for students.

In 2024, the CYAC made several policy recommendations to promote the expansion of youth apprenticeship, including: systems alignment between local educational agencies and employers, removal of barriers to industry involvement, regular program guidance from industry and labor, and a new youth apprenticeship model.²

Problem

While approximately 30 percent of California youth obtain a four-year degree, others face systemic barriers that make higher education unattainable,

making career education an important pathway.³ Despite its significance, California's career education system is not sufficiently robust to meet this need, leaving many youth to navigate challenging transitions from education to employment. This pattern perpetuates racial and generational wealth gaps and highlights the need for more inclusive and equitable employment opportunities. Emphasizing the urgent need to strengthen our career technical education programs is the reality that the current system falls short in addressing the state's declining population of trade-based workers. This issue is further intensified by the growing number of retiring workers, the increasing demand to address the state's housing shortage, and the ongoing shift towards a green economy.

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 those provided by CYAC.

Specifically, this bill will:

1. Establish various definitions- such as but not limited to:
 - a. Work-based learning
 - b. Youth apprenticeship program
 - c. Student apprentice
2. Require career technical education model curriculum standards and frameworks to be reviewed and updated every five years.

¹ 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 Report of the California Youth Apprenticeship Committee (June 2024), https://www.dir.ca.gov/DAS/DAS_MeetingAgenda/2024/June/2024-6-Report-CAYC.pdf

³ ¹ Debbie Reed et al., An Effectiveness Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Registered Apprenticeship in 10 States (Oakland: Mathematica Policy Research, 2012), <https://bit.ly/2Alvg6b>; Graduates of Registered Apprenticeship programs earn an estimated \$301,533 more than their peers over their careers, including wages and benefits.

3. Require employer engagement and regional collaboration in delivering work-based learning activities.
4. Require cross agency collaboration in developing guidelines and resources to assist in the implementation of youth apprenticeship courses across local jurisdictions.
5. Allow, at the local educational agency's discretion, students to receive credit for completion of a work experience course in connection to a youth apprenticeship.
6. Specify that supervisors of youth apprentices are required to undergo the standard background check process.
7. Require school-based work-based learning activities to connect to a course for student safety and data reporting purposes.
8. Allow local educational agencies to support implementation of school-based youth apprenticeship by providing insurance and other direct costs.
9. Allow for flexible implementation of youth apprenticeship in high schools.
10. Allow the California Department of Education (CDE) to collect aggregate data on work-based learning efforts to better inform the Cradle-to-Career data system.

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