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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

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**Bill No:** AB 2979 **Hearing Date:** June 27, 2018  
**Author:** Burke  
**Version:** May 2, 2018  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Brandon Darnell

**Subject:** High school diplomas: State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion.

## SUMMARY

This bill establishes State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of knowledge and proficiency in fields of study within one of the 15 industry sectors described in the California Career Technical Education Model Curriculum Standards.

## BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the State Seal of Biliteracy (SSB), which provides recognition to high school students who have demonstrated proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. (Education Code § 51460)
- 2) Requires each school district, county office of education, or direct-funded charter school that confers the SSB to maintain appropriate records in order to identify students who have met the established criteria for the award and to affix the SSB insignia to the diploma or transcript of each qualifying student. (EC § 51464)
- 3) Requires high school graduates to meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for the SSB:
  - a) Complete all English language arts requirements for graduation with an overall grade point average of 2.0 or above in those classes.
  - b) Pass the California Standards Test in English language arts administered in grade 11 at the proficient level or above.
  - c) Demonstrate proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English, through one of four methods. (EC § 51461)
- 4) Establishes the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma (GSSMD), which provides recognition to public high school graduates who have demonstrated mastery of high school curriculum in six designated subject areas, four of which must be mathematics, English language arts, science, and United States history. Eligibility requirements for the GSSMD include a combination of course grades,

results from assessments produced by private providers or local education agencies (LEAs), and/or qualifying Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment of California Standards test scores for use by LEAs to award the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma (GSSMD) to graduating students. (EC § 51450 et seq.)

- 5) This bill establishes a State Seal of Civic Engagement, to be affixed to the diploma of qualifying high school graduates, based on a demonstration of excellence in civics education and participation in community service or extracurricular activities (EC§ 51471)
- 6) Authorizes the California Career Technical Education (CTE) Incentive Grant Program as a state education, economic, and workforce development initiative with the goal of providing pupils in kindergarten through 12th grade with the knowledge and skills necessary to transition to employment and postsecondary education. (EC § 53070)

## ANALYSIS

This bill establishes State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of knowledge and proficiency in fields of study within one of the 15 industry sectors described in the California CTE Model Curriculum Standards. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to award the State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion.
- 2) Specifies that school district participation in the State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion program is voluntary.
- 3) Specifies the following purposes for the State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion:
  - a) To encourage pupils to study career technical education.
  - b) To encourage school districts to provide high-quality career technical education pathways leading to industry-recognized certification or licenses.
  - c) To certify and recognize high achievement within career technical education pathways.
  - d) To provide pupils with a tool to demonstrate occupational competency to employers.
  - e) To provide postsecondary educational institutions with a method to recognize and give academic credit to applicants seeking admission.
  - f) To prepare pupils with career-ready skills.
  - g) To engage pupils in career exploration at an early age.

- 4) Specifies that the State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion certifies that a graduating high school student has attained a high level of proficiency in a career technical education pathway and meets all of the following criteria:
  - a) Attained a 3.0-grade point average or higher on a 4.0 scale for a sequence of career technical education courses taken in high school.
  - b) Has either of the following:
    - i) An industry recognized career technical education credential or certificate.
    - ii) A grade of B or higher in a college-level career technical education course taken through concurrent enrollment.
  - c) Participation in an extracurricular activity relating to the career technical education pathway in which he or she is enrolled in, including, but not limited to, any of the following extracurricular activities:
    - i) Active participation in a state recognized career technical student organization that meets regularly and either participates in or organizes events relating to the career technical education pathway or related industry sector.
    - ii) Participation in career-technical-education-based competitions.
    - iii) Internships with organizations or employers who work in the career technical education field or fields in which the pupil is enrolled.
    - iv) Participation in the research of an industry-related topic either done independently or in coordination with an industry professional.
- 5) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to do both of the following:
  - a) Prepare and deliver to participating school districts an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the diploma or transcript of the pupil indicating that the pupil has been awarded a State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion by the SPI.
  - b) Provide other information he or she deems necessary for school districts to successfully participate in the program.
- 6) Requires a school district that participates in the State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion program to do both of the following:
  - a) Maintain appropriate records in order to identify pupils who have earned a State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion.

- b) Affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma or transcript of each pupil who earns a State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion.
- 7) Prohibits a fee from being charged to a student to receive a State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion.
- 8) Prohibits the provisions above from becoming operative unless the State Board of Education, in a public meeting, makes a declaration of all of the following:
- a) All California pupils have reasonably equal opportunity to engage in the coursework and other requirements that would be necessary to earn the State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion.
  - b) The State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion would confer value to the pupil through recognition by postsecondary educational institutions or employers.
  - c) The State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion would be earned through recognized excellence or outstanding achievement in the field of study.
  - d) The State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion would not be based primarily on achievement which is already recognized through other means, such as grades, assessment results, other measures of academic achievement, or industry certifications.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “AB 2979 creates the State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion to be affixed to the diploma or transcript of a graduate that meets the requirements to be eligible for the Seal.

The purpose of the State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion is to encourage students to study CTE, to encourage school district to provide high-quality CTE pathways leading to industry-recognized certification or licenses, to certify and recognize high achievement within CTE pathways, to prepare students with career-ready skills, and to engage students in career exploration at an early age.”

- 2) ***Career Technical Education (CTE) investments by the state.*** As noted by the author, the state has made significant investments in CTE in recent years. In 2013, AB 86 was signed into law creating the California Career Pathways Trust and was funded in the budget with \$250 million for the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to award regional and local implementation grants.

The Agricultural CTE Incentive program provides local educational agencies with funds to improve the quality of their agricultural vocational education programs. The goal is to maintain a high-quality, comprehensive agricultural vocational program in California's public school system to ensure a constant source of employable, trained, and skilled individuals.

In 2015, the Career Technical Education (CTE) Incentive Grant Program was established by AB 104 as a part of the California State Budget Act. This is a competitive grant program administered by the California Department of Education to provide support for career technical education in grades K-12, and provides \$400 million in 2015-16, \$300 million in 2016-17, and \$200 million in 2017-18 for this program.

- 2) **Author's amendments.** The author would like to amend the bill to revise the criteria by which a student would become eligible for the seal, including counseling requirements, and provide more flexibility to the State Board of Education to require additional criteria. **Staff recommends that the bill be amended** to reflect the author's intent, as shown below:

- Delete the current contents of Section 51492 and replace it with the following language:

*"The State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion certifies that a graduating high school pupil has attained a high level of proficiency in a career technical education pathway and meets three of the six following criteria:*

*(a) Attained a 2.5 grade point average or higher on a 4.0 scale for a sequence of career technical education courses taken in high school.*

*(b) Earned an industry recognized career technical education credential or certificate.*

*(c) Provided proof of enrollment in a postsecondary apprenticeship, certificate, credential, or degree program*

*(d) Participated in a state recognized career technical student organization that meets regularly and either participates in or organizes events relating to the career technical education pathway or related industry sector at a sectional, regional, state, or national level*

*(e) Participated in career-technical-education-based competitions at a sectional, regional, state, or national level.*

*(f) Participated in an internship provided by local employers or organizations that advance students' career readiness skills."*

- Replace subdivision (c) of Section 51494 with the following language:

*"Provide student support staff and programs to ensure equitable student access and success in completing seal requirements and evaluating postsecondary options including, but not limited to counselors, tutoring programs, and other staff that meet student needs."*

- Authorize the State Board of Education or prescribe additional requirements for the seal.

- 3) **How many Career Technical Education (CTE) courses are offered in California?** Data from the California Department of Education (CDE) on schools, courses, and A-G approval rates, during the 2016-17 school year, are shown on the table below. These data show that the most commonly offered subjects were Information and Communication Technologies, and Arts, Media, and Entertainment.

<b>2016-17 Subject</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Courses</b>	<b>A-G Approved</b>
Agriculture and Natural Resources	586	4,803	1,975
Arts, Media, and Entertainment	1,252	8,825	5,696
Building and Construction Trades	590	2,347	138
Business and Finance	845	3,760	540
Education, Child Development, and Family Services	871	5,106	784
Energy and Utilities	174	414	157
Engineering and Architecture	740	3,049	1,712
Fashion and Interior Design	283	700	117
Health Science and Medical Technology	846	4,759	1,743
Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation	862	4,064	631
Information and Communication Technologies	1,306	6,447	1,576
Manufacturing and Product Development	585	1,928	258
Marketing, Sales, and Service	507	1,660	410
Public Services	618	2,276	508
Transportation	551	2,360	158
Work Experience	529	2,044	17

This bill proposes to recognize CTE pathway completion. A CTE pathway is a sequence of CTE courses in an industry sector. There does not appear to be statewide data regarding the number of students who complete a CTE pathway.

- 4) **Do diploma seals provide a tangible benefit?** In recent years the Legislature has reviewed three proposals for state diploma seals, in biliteracy, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and civic engagement. In addition, the Golden State Seal Merit (GSSM) diplomas are still issued. Diploma seals can be powerful incentives for students. They can influence students' course taking patterns, assessments taken, and extracurricular choices. All such

choices involve trade-off and opportunity costs. So what is the benefit to students who pursue diploma seals?

It may be instructive to consider the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma in this context. When originally authorized in the 1990's, Governor Wilson argued that this diploma would serve as an ambitious goal that would both shape teaching and inspire students. It was envisioned as California version of the New York's Regent's Diploma, conferring advantages in the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) admission. The state created a series of assessments, called the Golden State Merit Examinations, which were taken by hundreds of thousands of students, who spent time and resources preparing to take the exams. These examinations were eliminated in 2009, and now the GSSMDs are awarded based on grades, Smart Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) scores, and, in some cases, local assessments.

*The committee may wish to consider* the extent to which Career Technical Education (CTE) diploma seals would provide a benefit beyond the credential or certificate that a student might also otherwise obtain by completing a CTE pathway.

- 5) ***Do all students have an equal opportunity to earn diploma seals?*** Two years ago this Committee heard AB 2072 (Chang), which would have established a State Seal of STEM. The author's intent was to recognize outstanding achievement in the fields of STEM. That bill, as initially proposed, would have established criteria for the diploma seal to include scores on Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate examinations in STEM fields, out-of-school STEM activities such as robotics clubs, internships in STEM fields, participation in STEM research, and completion of college level courses in STEM fields.

Evidence from multiple sources has demonstrated serious inequities in the availability of these high quality STEM courses and programs. According to the College Board, for example, "in many cases, schools serving large numbers of traditionally underrepresented minority students do not yet provide Advance Placement course work in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines." With respect to the equal opportunity to participate in out-of-school STEM programs, 2014 study commissioned by the Association of Children's Museums Committee found that "there are still significant challenges to ensuring youth in low socioeconomic communities have equitable access to out-of-school STEM learning opportunities, most of which revolve around issues of finances and funding."

As a result, the opportunity to earn the proposed diploma seal in STEM would have been highly uneven, and would have made many students from low income communities disadvantaged. This contrasts with the State Seal of Biliteracy, which uses criteria which are accessible to the vast majority of students in the state.

This bill requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to make a determination that all California pupils have reasonably equal opportunity to engage in the

coursework and other requirements that would be necessary to earn the State Seal of Career Technical Education (CTE) Pathway Completion. However, *the committee may wish to consider* whether there are factors outside of that requirement that may inhibit all students from earning the State Seal of Career Technical Education Pathway Completion, including awareness of the seal, academic counseling to attain the seal, the availability of appropriate volunteer opportunities, and parental engagement in encouraging students to obtain the seal. Moreover, this bill makes participation in the program optional for each school district, and schools are not required to offer CTE programs.

- 6) ***Proliferation of diploma seals.*** Since 2011 this Committee has reviewed three bills proposing diploma seal, in biliteracy, STEM, and civic engagement. It is likely that this Committee will see similar measures to establish diploma seals in other subjects. *The committee may wish to consider* the policy implications of establishing numerous diploma seal options, including the effect multiple seals would have on students and families, and whether authorizing additional diploma seals could result in diminishing returns on the already limited benefits they might provide.
- 7) ***Previous legislation.*** AB 24 (Eggman, Chapter 24, Statutes of 2018) Establishes a State Seal of Civic Engagement, to be affixed to the diploma of qualifying high school graduates, based on a demonstration of excellence in civics education and participation.

AB 1142 (Medina, Chapter 95, Statutes of 2018) updates the criteria used to determine eligibility for the State Seal of Biliteracy (SSB) to reflect new state assessments in English language development and English language arts, and to authorize the SSB for pupils who seek to qualify through a language that is not characterized by listening, speaking, or reading, or for which there is no written system.

AB 2072 (Chang) of the 2015-16 Session would have established the State Seal of STEM to recognize high school graduates who have attained proficiency in STEM content. AB 2072 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 815 (Brownley), Chapter 618, Statutes of 2011 established the State Seal of Biliteracy to recognize high school graduates who what attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English.

SB 253 (Wyland) of the 2009-10 Session would have authorized school districts and county offices of education to offer pupils a CTE certificate upon meeting specified requirements. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

## SUPPORT

California School Boards Association  
 Los Angeles County Board of Education  
 State Building and Construction Trades Council



Project Lead the Way

**OPPOSITION**

None received

**-- END --**