
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair

2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: SB 1123
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Urgency: No
Consultant: Lynn Lorber
Hearing Date: March 30, 2016
Fiscal: No

Subject: Pupil instruction: high school graduation requirements

SUMMARY

This bill extends the sunset on the option for students to fulfill a high school graduation requirement by successfully completing a career technical education course for an additional five years.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires a pupil to pass both the English language arts and mathematics portions of the California High School Exit Exam and complete the following courses as a condition of graduating from high school:
 - a) Three years of English.
 - b) Two years of mathematics, one year of which must be Algebra I.
 - c) Two years of science, including biological and physical sciences.
 - d) Three years of social studies, including United States history and geography; world history, culture, and geography; one semester of American government and civics, and one semester of economics.
 - e) One year of visual or performing arts, foreign language, or *until July 1, 2017, career technical education*.
 - f) Two years of physical education. (Education Code § 60851, § 51225.3, and § 51224.5)
- 2) Authorizes school districts to impose additional coursework requirements as a condition of graduation from high school. (EC § 51225.3)
- 3) Defines “a course in career technical education” as a course in a district-operated career technical education program that is aligned to the career technical model curriculum standards and framework adopted by the State Board of Education,

including courses through a regional occupational center or program operated by a county superintendent of schools or pursuant to a joint powers agreement. (EC § 51225.3)

- 4) Provides that a school or school district that currently does not offer career technical education courses are not required to start new career technical education programs. (EC § 51225.3)
- 5) Requires the governing board of a school district or county office of education that elects to allow a career technical education 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 the all of the following:
 - a) The intent to offer career technical education courses to fulfill a graduation requirement.
 - 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 and the University of California, and whether the career technical education courses to be offered are approved to satisfy those eligibility requirements.
 - c) The distinction, if any, between the high school graduation requirements of the school district or county office of education, and the eligibility requirements for admission to the California State University or the University of California. (EC § 51225.3)

ANALYSIS

This bill extends the sunset on the option for students to fulfill a high school graduation requirement by successfully completing a career technical education course, from July 1, 2017, to July 1, 2022.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “A 2006 study entitled ‘The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts’ found that students who were not interested or engaged in their coursework accounted for 47% of high school dropouts. Under current law, students have the option of taking a career technical education course to fulfill the existing high school graduation requirement to complete a course in visual or performing arts or foreign language. However, this option will expire on July 1, 2017 and negatively impact a student’s ability to participate in career technical education based courses at school. This alternative gives students another choice in their education in order to help them stay engaged during high school. 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.”

- 2) **Arts, foreign language, or career technical education.** Successful completion of a course in visual or performing arts (VAPA) or foreign language has been a long standing high school graduation requirement. In 2011, legislation was passed to authorize successful completion of a course in career technical education as an alternative to VAPA or foreign language, beginning with the 2012-13 school year.
- 3) **Career technical education model curriculum standards.** The career technical education model curriculum standards were initially adopted in 2005. The model curriculum standards were then updated for alignment with the common core standards and Next Generation Science Standards, and were subsequently adopted by the State Board of Education in 2013. The career technical education standards are organized into California’s 15 high-employing industry sectors, and are designed to assist schools in developing curriculum and measuring student achievement. Existing law requires a career technical education course, for purposes of high school graduation requirements, to be aligned to the career technical education model curriculum standards.
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/sf/ctemcstandards.asp>
- 4) **Pending report.** Existing law requires the California Department of Education to submit a comprehensive report to the Legislature, by July 1, 2017, on the addition of career technical education courses to satisfy a graduation requirement, including but not limited to the following information:
 - a) A comparison of the student enrollment in career technical education courses, foreign language courses, and visual and performing arts (VAPA) courses for the 2005-06 to 2011-12 school years to the student enrollment in career technical education courses, foreign language courses, and VAPA courses for the 2012-13 to 2016-17 school years.
 - b) The reasons that students give for choosing to enroll in a career technical education course to satisfy a graduation requirement, as reported by school districts.
 - c) The type and number of career technical education courses that were conducted for the 2005-06 to 2011-12 school years compared to the type and number of career technical education courses that were conducted for the 2012-13 to 2016-17 school years.
 - d) The number of career technical education courses that satisfied the subject matter requirements for admission to the University of California or the California State University.
 - e) The extent to which the career technical education courses chosen by students are aligned with the California Career Technical Education

Standards, and prepare students for employment, advanced training, and postsecondary education.

- f) The number of career technical education courses that also satisfy the VAPA requirement, and the number of career technical education courses that also satisfy the foreign language requirement.
- g) Annual student dropout and graduation rates for the 2011-12 to 2014-15 school years.

The pending report should provide the information necessary to determine how the career technical education graduation option was utilized, how it affected enrollment in visual and performing arts (VAPA) courses, how it affected eligibility for the California State University and the University of California, and ultimately if this option should continue. This bill extends the sunset on the career technical education graduation requirement option to allow time for the report to be completed and contemplated prior to either extending this option indefinitely or eliminating it completely.

- 5) **Fiscal impact.** This bill is flagged as being non-fiscal, as schools are not required to offer career technical education courses for the purpose of meeting a high school graduation requirement.
- 6) **Related legislation.** AB 1689 (Low) among other things, requires students to complete at least one course with a service learning component as a condition of graduation from high school, beginning with the 2021-22 school year. AB 1689 is scheduled to be heard by the Assembly Education Committee on April 6.
- 7) **Prior legislation.** SB 253 (Wyland, 2010) added the option for students to fulfill the VAPA high school graduation requirement by successfully completing a career technical education course. SB 253 died on the Assembly Floor, as it was never heard on Assembly Third Reading.

AB 2446 (Furutani, 2010) added the option for students to fulfill the VAPA high school graduation requirement by successfully completing a career technical education course. AB 2446 was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger, whose veto message read:

Improving and expanding Career Technical Education opportunities has been among my highest priorities. While I am supportive of the author's intent to give career technical education 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, 2009) 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 career technical education to fulfill the additional course requirement. AB 554 was held on the Assembly Appropriations Committee's suspense file.

SB 672 (Torlakson, 2008) required high schools participating in the California Enhanced Instructional Time Program, as specified, to adopt a graduation policy requiring students to complete two career technical education courses.

SUPPORT

Association of California School Administrators
California Business Education Association
California Federation of Teachers

OPPOSITION

None received.

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