

## AB 1414 (Hancock) Career Technical Education Revitalization Act of 2007

### Summary

AB 1414 will reinvigorate CTE in middle and high schools by dedicating a portion of the expected increase in Prop 98 funding to support standards-aligned CTE programs and the hiring of qualified CTE instructors.

### Background

Because of slow growth in the K-12 student population, Proposition 98's share of General Fund has been falling. When the share reaches 40 percent of the General Fund -- the Constitutional minimum -- Test 1 of Proposition 98 will be triggered. According to LAO forecasts, this means that approximately \$2 billion in new K-14 discretionary funds (after growth and COLA have been provided) will be available within the next three years.

The State Board of Education recently approved the nation's most academically rigorous Career Technical Education Standards and Frameworks for middle and high schools. Education Code § 51224 prescribes that school boards provide "separate courses of study to prepare pupils for admission to state colleges and universities, and a course of study for career technical training." Education Code § 51228 encourages districts to provide all students "with a rigorous academic curriculum that integrates academic and career skills, incorporates applied learning in all disciplines and prepares all pupils for high school graduation and career."

Despite the new Standards/Frameworks and these statutory requirements, there are many schools in California that offer few or no CTE courses, even though 84% of students taking a sequence of CTE courses graduate from high school (compared with a statewide graduation rate of less than 70%).

### Problem

There is a crisis in California Career Technical Education. In the past couple of decades, nearly 80% of the CTE delivery system has been lost. Since 1988, California high school enrollment has increased 48% while at the same time enrollment in CTE courses has declined 32%. During the same time period, CTE secondary courses have declined from 38,402 to just 24,141, while the number of CTE teachers has declined from 6,922 to just 4,923 teachers. The once articulated CTE system consisting of *exploratory* courses in middle schools, *foundational* programs at high schools, *capstone* courses at Regional Occupational Programs, and the *high-tech/occupational* instruction at Community Colleges is fundamentally broken. This is largely due to the erosion of exploratory, introductory and foundational CTE programs in grades 7-10.

At the same time the human and physical CTE "pipeline" was being dismantled, California's graduation rate reached unacceptable levels. A March 2006 Gates Foundation longitudinal study of high school dropouts found that 47% of dropouts indicated that they were not interested or engaged in their coursework and 81% said that more opportunities for experiential and real-world learning would have made a difference.

In addition to at-risk youth, high achievers have disengaged, with nearly half of CSU freshmen and a quarter of UC freshmen requiring basic remediation in English and math. Non-contextual learning, rote memory, and regurgitated testing have all contributed to this intellectual and academic disengagement.

### Solution

Public education needs to be more engaging and relevant by enhancing the connection between course work and the aspirations of our youth. Career Technical Education must be part of the solution.

When Test 1 of Prop 98 is triggered, AB 1414 would annually appropriate for four consecutive years 1/8<sup>th</sup> (\$250M) of the anticipated new Prop 98 dollars to reinvigorate and support standards-aligned CTE programs and the hiring of additional CTE instructors in grades 7-10. It would also set aside a small portion for grants to local educational agencies for new and innovative CTE curriculum development. On the fifth year and subsequent years following the Test 1 triggering, this increased CTE funding would become a permanent baseline for CTE financing.

Given the high stakes nature of accountability assessments, schools are feeling compelled to only focus on what is required, measured and funded. By supporting AB 1414, the Legislature would be showing that it seriously values CTE and acknowledges the need for its reinvigoration.

By adequately funding the existing statutory mandate to provide CTE to every student, AB 1414 will help schools establish innovative, course sequenced CTE programs that will provide students with a broad range of curricular options that will prepare them for successful lives, no matter whether their life aspirations lead them directly into the workforce following high school or a range of postsecondary educational/training opportunities.

