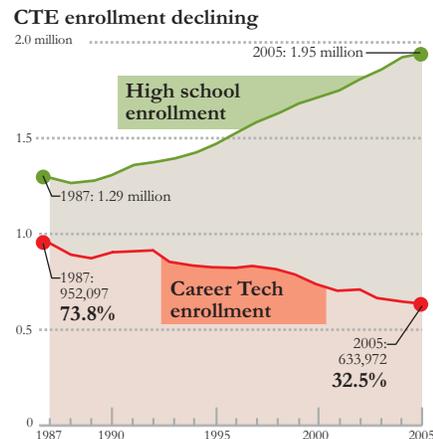


SB 672 (Torlakson, 2007)
Career Technical Education – High School Graduation Requirement

Background: In May of 2006, the State Board of Education approved Career Technical Education (CTE) Standards and Frameworks organized around 15 industry sectors. Additionally, Education Code Section 51224 prescribes that school boards shall provide “separate courses of study to prepare pupils for admission to state colleges and universities, and a course of study for career technical training.” Also, 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 these requirement there are many high schools in California that offer no CTE courses and many offer very few courses and no sequences of courses that offer students a progressive course of study to build a foundation of knowledge and then scaffold technical skills upon that foundation. 84% of students taking a sequence of CTE courses graduate from high school compared with a statewide graduation rate of only 70%.

Problem: There is a crisis in California Career Technical Education. Since 1978, 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 education courses have declined from 38,402 to just 24,141 and the number of CTE teachers has declined from 6922 serving over 952,000 to just 4923 teachers serving less than 634,000 students.



While the human and physical infrastructure for CTE had been dismantled, it has become apparent that California has an unacceptably low graduation rate. A March 2006 Gates Foundation longitudinal study of high school dropouts, sites that 47% of dropout indicated that they were not interested or engaged in their coursework. Nearly 7 in 10 of these dropouts indicated that they believed they could have succeeded if they had been engaged and seen the value of what they were learning. Additionally, 81% said that more opportunities for experiential and real-world learning would have made a difference. The respondents and the Gates foundation recommend making high school more engaging and relevant by enhancing the connection between course work and the world of work. Career Technical Education is an appropriate and effective way to reach this goal.

Solution: SB 672 would add 2 courses in Career Technical Education to the high school graduation requirements. By requiring CTE for high school graduation, the Legislature is showing that it values this type of hands on, applied learning and is harmonizing graduation requirements with the existing requirements that already exist in the Education Code.

By requiring all students to participate in a minimum of 2 CTE courses, we are incenting innovation a the local level to develop course sequences that help students reach the broad range of goals that high school students and their parents will have. The CTE of the 21st Century must be about engaging young people and preparing all students for lifelong learning and not simply preparing “some students” for a lesser goal of entering the world of work immediately after high school.