

Introduced by Senators Lara and SteinbergFebruary 21, 2013

An act to add Chapter 16.5 (commencing with Section 11550) to Part 7 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education Code, relating to pupil instruction.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 524, as introduced, Lara. Pupil instruction: Pathways Curriculum Task Force.

Existing law establishes a system of public elementary and secondary schools in this state, and authorizes local educational agencies throughout the state to operate schools and provide instruction to pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive (K-12). Existing law also establishes a system of postsecondary education in the state that consists of 4 segments: the University of California, the California State University, the California Community Colleges, and independent institutions of higher education.

This bill would express the intent of the Legislature to develop a voluntary K-12 curriculum to educate pupils and their families about college and career opportunities. The bill would require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to appoint, and provide staff for, a 12-member Pathways Curriculum Task Force. The bill would specify the qualifications and duties of the members of the task force. The bill would require the task force to establish specified learning goals for pupils at elementary, middle, and high school levels and help pupils to achieve these goals. The bill would require the task force to develop a pathways curriculum which, among other things, would provide materials, resources, and information for K-12 pupils and their families

to gain a comprehensive understanding of available opportunities in postsecondary institutions.

The bill would express the intent of the Legislature that local educational agencies consider adopting all or parts of the career and college pathways curriculum, but would specify that adoption of the curriculum would not be mandatory and that local educational agencies may decline to participate.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (1) California makes a major investment in three
4 world-renowned systems of higher education: the University of
5 California, the California State University, and the California
6 Community Colleges. In addition, California is home to prestigious
7 independent universities and a significant number of vocational
8 and specialized private institutions. Yet many pupils complete
9 their senior year of high school with little understanding of these
10 institutions, poor knowledge of financial aid programs, and few
11 tools for making wise postsecondary choices. Pupils from
12 disadvantaged backgrounds, pupils who would be the first in their
13 families to go to college, and pupils with poor academic records
14 are often the least informed.

15 (2) The lack of information about postsecondary opportunity
16 erodes the effectiveness of California's investment in higher
17 education, and exacerbates attempts to provide skilled workers for
18 California's economy. According to the Public Policy Institute of
19 California, California will need one million more college graduates
20 by 2025 than current trends will produce. California's evolving
21 economy will also need significantly more skilled workers with
22 associate degrees and career certificates. California cannot afford
23 to let pupils reach adulthood uninformed of the institutions and
24 programs available to help them become productive members of
25 society.

26 (3) The Legislature recently broadened the Academic
27 Performance Index (API) to include indicators of college and career
28 preparedness, in addition to state test scores. To assist schools

1 improve these new benchmarks, some classroom attention to
2 college eligibility requirements and the value of postsecondary
3 education and training could be helpful to schools and local school
4 districts.

5 (4) Pathway guidance is too often left to chance. The
6 development of opportunities for school districts to incorporate
7 such guidance into their programs is an appropriate school
8 responsibility. Effective pathway instructional programs can be
9 an efficient and effective way to complement the important work
10 of school counselors.

11 (5) Postsecondary education and training has become
12 increasingly expensive in both public and private institutions;
13 student and family debt burden has grown dramatically in recent
14 years. It is in the state's interest to ensure that students and families
15 understand the serious nature of student indebtedness, receive
16 information on maximizing access to grant and work opportunities
17 to reduce indebtedness, and are provided with alternatives and
18 strategies to avoid excessive debt.

19 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to develop a K-12
20 curriculum to educate pupils and their families about the rich array
21 of college and career opportunities available and how appropriate
22 K-12 course taking and academic proficiency can ensure that
23 students can meet their college and career goals. It is also the intent
24 of the Legislature that such a pathway curriculum will educate
25 students and their families about the cost of postsecondary
26 education and the best ways to pay for it.

27 SEC. 2. Chapter 16.5 (commencing with Section 11550) is
28 added to Part 7 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education Code, to
29 read:

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31 CHAPTER 16.5. PATHWAYS CURRICULUM TASK FORCE

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33 11550. (a) (1) The Superintendent shall appoint and staff a
34 Pathways Curriculum Task Force to develop a voluntary curriculum
35 for kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, that will provide
36 pupils and their families with a basic understanding of
37 postsecondary institutions, options, programs, and opportunities
38 in California. The task force shall consist of 12 members, including
39 all of the following:

40 (A) Four persons representing postsecondary education.

1 (B) Four persons representing elementary and secondary
2 education.

3 (C) Two public members.

4 (D) One person representing nonprofit organizations whose
5 missions are focused on increased participation in postsecondary
6 education.

7 (E) One person with expertise in career preparation or
8 apprenticeship.

9 (2) The Superintendent is encouraged to include persons with
10 specific knowledge and background in college admissions, financial
11 aid, postsecondary opportunities, and development of a curriculum
12 for kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive.

13 (b) The task force shall establish learning goals for pupils at
14 elementary, middle, and high school levels and shall develop
15 curriculum to help pupils achieve those goals. The task force shall,
16 at a minimum, address all of the following topics:

17 (1) The variety of college, university, and technical education
18 in California.

19 (2) The importance of postsecondary education and training.

20 (3) Ways to finance postsecondary education and training, and
21 attention to cost-benefit analysis.

22 (4) The A-G course sequence required for admission to the
23 University of California, postsecondary admission requirements,
24 and the community college transfer process.

25 (c) The task force shall solicit and consider input from a broad
26 range of interested persons, agencies, and organizations, including,
27 but not necessarily limited to, the Student Aid Commission, the
28 Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education, specialists in
29 elementary and secondary curriculum, experts in federal and state
30 financial aid and college admissions, and civil rights and nonprofit
31 organizations whose missions are related to career preparation and
32 college access, business, labor, parents, and pupils.

33 (d) The task force shall appoint a subgroup to consult with
34 specialists in high school economics curriculum to develop a unit
35 on postsecondary education.

36 (e) The pathways curriculum developed pursuant to this chapter
37 shall accomplish all of the following:

38 (1) Be as concise and clear as possible so as to easily integrate
39 with other curriculum objectives, while still helping pupils gain a
40 comprehensive understanding of postsecondary opportunity.

1 (2) Include complementary materials for family and guardians
2 to learn what steps in elementary, middle, and high school they
3 may take to assist their pupils reach college and career goals, as
4 well as suggested questions to ask of school officials.

5 (3) Provide a cumulative resource for pupils and their families
6 who come to California from other states and other countries and
7 enter the California elementary and secondary education system
8 at various grade levels.

9 (4) Provide pathway curriculum materials as well as suggestions
10 for college and work site field trips, guest speakers, and other
11 innovative means of inspiring and informing pupils and their
12 families about college and career pathways.

13 (5) Provide information on the availability of, and access to,
14 the most current information on postsecondary opportunities,
15 including, but not necessarily limited to, federal and state Internet
16 Web sites devoted to postsecondary educational opportunity and
17 how best to navigate those sites.

18 (f) The task force shall develop the pathways curriculum within
19 one year of its first convening, and shall accomplish all of the
20 following:

21 (1) Transmit the pathways curriculum to the Legislature, the
22 state board, the Regents of the University of California, the
23 Trustees of the California State University, the Board of Governors
24 of the California Community Colleges, the Student Aid
25 Commission, and the Instructional Quality Commission for a
26 three-month review and comment period.

27 (2) Consider comments and make changes as deemed
28 appropriate.

29 (3) Transmit the curriculum to the department, where it shall
30 be available for district and school use and where it shall be
31 maintained. The Superintendent shall assume leadership
32 responsibilities for dissemination of the curriculum to school
33 districts, professional educational organizations, and civic
34 organizations throughout the state.

35 (g) The task force shall recommend, and the department shall
36 determine and implement, an annual process by which the pathways
37 curriculum shall remain current in the rapidly changing and
38 complex environment of postsecondary educational opportunity.
39 The Chancellor of the California State University and the
40 Chancellor of the California Community Colleges shall, and the

1 President of the University of California is requested to, provide
2 cooperation and support to the department in this regard.

3 (h) The department shall work with the Instructional Quality
4 Commission and appropriate framework committees to integrate
5 the pathways curriculum into each subject matter curriculum
6 framework as it is revised or updated.

7 (i) Schools and districts may utilize and deliver this curriculum
8 in a manner that best suits local needs and resources.

9 SEC. 3. It is the intent of the Legislature that local educational
10 agencies consider adopting all or parts of the career and college
11 pathways curriculum. However, adoption is not mandatory, and
12 local educational agencies may decline to participate.