

**Introduced by Senator Steinberg**February 21, 2007

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An act relating to school curriculum.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 405, as introduced, Steinberg. Schools: curriculum: opportunities for pupils.

Existing law requires school district maintaining any of grades 7 to 12, inclusive, to offer to all otherwise qualified pupils in those grades a course of study fulfilling the requirements and prerequisites for admission to the California public institutions of postsecondary education and to provide a timely opportunity to each of those pupils to enroll within a 4-year period in each course necessary to fulfill those requirements and prerequisites prior to graduation from high school. Each school district maintaining any of grades 7 to 12, inclusive, also is required to offer to all otherwise qualified pupils in those grades a course of study that provides an opportunity for those pupils to attain entry-level employment skills in business or industry upon graduation from high school, and is encouraged to provide all pupils 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 entry.

This bill would express the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to close the opportunity gap for the pupils of California, in part, by enabling pupils to have the opportunity to complete all the courses required for admission to the California State University or the University of California at their own schools; ensuring that the career technical education coursework is sufficiently rigorous to allow meaningful entry into the workforce; increasing the opportunities for

pupils to participate in comprehensive, multiyear programs that integrate college preparatory academics and technical study; and ensuring that schools have the capacity to provide sufficient counseling for pupils and sufficient numbers of teachers prepared to teach the subjects to which they are assigned.

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

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

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

3 (1) The goal of public education for kindergarten and grades 1  
4 to 12, inclusive, is to prepare pupils for productive civic  
5 participation, including sustaining employment, bettering their  
6 communities, and meeting their personal and family needs.

7 (2) In California today, too many public school pupils are denied  
8 future opportunities because their schools do not offer them  
9 rigorous, relevant coursework—with teachers trained in, and  
10 supported to succeed at, imparting the subjects they teach—that  
11 prepares the pupils for the full range of postsecondary educational  
12 options, including two- and four-year college programs and  
13 entering the workforce.

14 (3) In addition to higher wages and salaries, data shows that  
15 increased levels of educational attainment and academic  
16 achievement improve the future abilities of pupils to earn a good  
17 living and sustain a career in other ways. They correlate strongly  
18 with improved worker productivity, less unemployment; greater  
19 benefits; the ability to learn new skills and workplace operations  
20 more rapidly; exposure to, and engagement with, computers; and  
21 a better ability to negotiate the labor market.

22 (4) California public high school graduates, in the aggregate,  
23 are unprepared to meet the demands either of the workforce or of  
24 college entrance. Changes in the labor market suggest that nearly  
25 all of the rapidly growing, well paying jobs and occupations require  
26 postsecondary or continuing education. Moreover, the average  
27 worker in the United States will change his or her occupation four  
28 to six times during his or her lifetime. Therefore, schools must  
29 provide pupils with a broad range of academic and technical skills

1 that require higher order thinking to ensure their long-term success  
2 in the workplace.

3 (5) According to the Career Technical Education Initiative of  
4 Governor Schwarzenegger, many high-tech industries, such as  
5 biotechnology, computer manufacturing, and health care, complain  
6 about a shortage of skilled employees in the workforce. That  
7 shortage persists despite the 42 percent of high school pupils who  
8 enroll in career technical education (CTE) courses beyond the  
9 introductory level.

10 (6) According to State Department of Education data, 55 percent  
11 of California public high schools—serving approximately 900,000  
12 pupils—do not provide a sufficiently rigorous curriculum for pupils  
13 to complete the courses that are minimally required for admission  
14 eligibility to the California State University and the University of  
15 California. In more than one-quarter of the public high schools of  
16 California, more than 20 percent of college preparatory courses  
17 are taught by teachers who are not trained in the subject matter  
18 they teach.

19 (7) Although most California communities feel the effect of the  
20 educational crisis of the state, all communities do not suffer  
21 equally. According to a recent study entitled “Removing the  
22 Roadblocks: Fair College Opportunities For All California  
23 Students,” published by the University of California All Campus  
24 Consortium for Research Diversity and the UCLA Institute for  
25 Democracy, Education and Access, schools with high  
26 concentrations of low-income pupils, pupils of color, and English  
27 language learners report the highest shortages of college  
28 preparatory courses in the state and are more likely to offer college  
29 preparatory courses taught by teachers who are not properly  
30 qualified to teach in the course subject matter. Seventy percent of  
31 schools the enrollment of which is 90 to 100 percent African  
32 American and Latino pupils do not offer enough college  
33 preparatory courses for all pupils to be able to take the courses.  
34 These high schools are almost three times as likely as schools  
35 enrolling a majority of caucasian pupils to misassign significant  
36 percentages of teachers teaching college preparatory courses.

37 (8) According to a March 2006 poll conducted on behalf of the  
38 James Irvine Foundation by Peter D. Hart Research Associates,  
39 Inc., 89 percent of the grade 9 and 10 pupils in California believe  
40 that a school where they could take courses that they need for

1 college, but also have more opportunity to acquire skills and  
2 knowledge relevant to future careers, would be more interesting  
3 to them. In addition, 91 percent of those pupils say they would be  
4 more motivated to work hard and do well if they attended that kind  
5 of a school. California can and should provide that type of  
6 schooling to its pupils. Yet, according to State Department of  
7 Education data, in the 2005–06 school year, only 16.5 percent of  
8 the total number of CTE courses taught in California public high  
9 schools met the minimum eligibility requirements for admission  
10 to the California State University and the University of California.

11 (9) As the Superintendent of Public Instruction explained in a  
12 March 2004 editorial published in the Sacramento Bee, “The job  
13 of K–12 education in California must be to ensure that all our  
14 students graduate with the ability to fulfill their potential—whether  
15 that takes them to higher education or directly to their career.  
16 Unfortunately ... too many of our students are not adequately  
17 prepared for either. By raising our expectations for our students,  
18 we can and will begin to change that.”

19 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to  
20 accomplish all of the following:

21 (1) Close the opportunity gap for the public school pupils of  
22 California, assuring that immediately and over time pupils have  
23 full, meaningful opportunities to realize their dreams for their  
24 futures, in the workforce as well as in higher education; encourage  
25 the high schools of California to offer pupils multiple pathways  
26 to lasting success in both their future education and their careers.

27 (2) Provide incentives and sanctions to ensure that every high  
28 school offers a sufficient number of college preparatory courses  
29 to enable every pupil to satisfy college eligibility requirements, in  
30 sequence, at their own school, with adequate counseling to ensure  
31 pupils are advised of the sequence requirements, including before  
32 their grade 9 course schedules are determined.

33 (3) Increase opportunities for the high school pupils of California  
34 to participate in comprehensive, multiyear programs that integrate  
35 college preparatory academics and technical study, organized  
36 around a major industry or career focus, that prepares them for  
37 further, postsecondary education and a career.

38 (4) Promote development of curricula including both academic  
39 and CTE courses that integrates the academic and CTE content  
40 standards of the state to produce clusters and sequences of courses

1 that engage more high school pupils and, through industry related  
2 applications, help them understand the necessity of mastering  
3 higher levels of academic and technical knowledge.

4 (5) Set a standard according to which CTE coursework is  
5 sufficiently rigorous to allow meaningful entry into the workforce  
6 and, at the same time, allowing every pupil an opportunity to satisfy  
7 the minimum coursework requirements, in sequence and in the  
8 school of each pupil, for admission eligibility to the California  
9 State University and the University of California.

10 (6) Modify the Middle and High School Supplemental  
11 Counseling Program (Article 4.5 (commencing with Section 52378)  
12 of Chapter 9 of Part 28 of the Education Code) to ensure that  
13 districts participating in the two hundred million dollar  
14 (\$200,000,000) program provide counselors who advise pupils  
15 regarding course taking options that integrate career preparation  
16 with college eligibility requirements.

17 (7) Ensure the provision of appropriately trained teachers for  
18 all coursework, including career technical and college eligibility  
19 coursework, and build the capacity of CTE teachers to reinforce  
20 and supplement academic knowledge and skills related to their  
21 industry and the capacity of academic teachers to connect their  
22 particular discipline to industry related applications and problems.

23 (8) Build the capacity of districts and schools in the state to  
24 achieve the standards for course rigor and offerings, including, but  
25 not limited to, shifting school schedules to more flexible schedules  
26 that allow for greater course taking options and utilizing new and  
27 existing professional development programs.

28 (9) Provide for external oversight, including public  
29 accountability and school- and pupil-level data, to ensure that  
30 school districts offer rigorous coursework sufficient for workforce  
31 entrance and four-year college eligibility.

32 (10) Shore up existing data systems to fully provide an  
33 integrated, transparent data system that allows parents and legal  
34 guardians, the community, and policymakers to access useful  
35 information about the provision by schools of courses that prepare  
36 pupils for both career and college, as well as the success of schools  
37 in increasing rates of high school completion and the transition of  
38 pupils to postsecondary education and work.

39 (11) Provide incentives, and no disincentives, for school districts  
40 to come into greater compliance with the standards of providing

1 counselors who advise pupils regarding course taking options that  
2 integrate career preparation with college eligibility requirements,  
3 as the districts build capacity to do so.

4 (12) Build academic relevance by increasing the number of CTE  
5 courses that satisfy requirements for classes that prospective  
6 California State University and University of California pupils are  
7 required to complete while in high school, and by encouraging  
8 more attention to authentic, industry-related applications of the  
9 academic knowledge and skills taught in college-preparatory  
10 academic subjects that pupils are required to complete for high  
11 school graduation and to be eligible for admission to the California  
12 State University and the University of California.

13 (13) Codify the intent of the framework for educational offerings  
14 in CTE adopted by the State Board of Education in January 2007.  
15 This framework expressly acknowledges that:

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17 “[T]he building blocks for CTE are, in part, the academic  
18 knowledge gained in core courses such as English and  
19 mathematics, and success in CTE is dependent on students’  
20 increasing skills and knowledge in multiple arenas within the  
21 academic core. For example, veterinary medical courses are  
22 of little use without a detailed understanding of biology,  
23 accounting courses are founded on mathematical knowledge,  
24 and the family and human services pathway professions all  
25 require high-level communication skills initially fostered in  
26 English-language arts courses. It is essential that CTE courses  
27 integrate, support, and reinforce core academics to ensure that  
28 students have these skills for the CTE foundation.”  
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