

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – SACRAMENTO, CA
FEBRUARY 5-6, 2024**

CALIFORNIA’S MASTER PLAN FOR CAREER EDUCATION

ISSUE: Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-11-23 which requests several state agencies and educational institutions to collaboratively develop a Master Plan on Career Education to integrate and align the myriad programs funded by the State in the area of career education. The Executive Order further requests the agencies participating in the development of the Master Plan to consider how proposed actions address several overarching goals, including:

- Encouraging all students, beginning at the start of high school, to discover and explore well-compensated, lasting careers – including those that do and do not require college degrees.
- Providing students with expansive opportunities to “learn by doing” and be trained in real-life skills, especially via paid earn-and-learn opportunities.
- Providing students with access to career education through systems that reduce burdens of debt and the challenges of navigating confusing bureaucracies.

ACTION: Increasing the employment of Riverside County students in good jobs is a priority for the Monday Morning Group. We respectfully urge group participants charged with creating a State Master Plan for Career Education to streamline current grant programs and funding streams, take actions to address staffing and workforce issues, and reduce barriers to career education pathway completion for students in non-traditional programs, including juvenile court and community school programs.

Specifically, we urge the Master Plan group participants to consider the following recommendations during their deliberations:

- **Simplify and align the programs and funding models for career technical education (CTE):** School districts and County Offices of Education are operating CTE programs within two major state programs with disparate eligibility and reporting requirements: the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program administered by the California Department of Education, and the Strong Workforce Program administered by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. While the Riverside County Office of Education and the 23 school districts in Riverside County have benefited from both grant programs, there is widespread agreement among them that having two separate systems has created unnecessary work at the local level, shifting focus away from the core function of delivering high-quality CTE programs. This also creates challenges for smaller school districts lacking the personnel to operate two separate grant programs; thereby creating inequities in monetary distribution across school districts. We urge the Master Plan participants to develop a streamlined, multi-year single grant application process to reduce administrative challenges and ensure consistency in developing courses and career pathways for students.
- **Prioritize and reduce barriers to CTE pathway completion for the students educated in the juvenile court and community school programs operated by County Offices of Education:** The students enrolled in juvenile court and community schools face significant educational obstacles, including incarceration, expulsion, food insecurity, unstable housing, and mental health challenges. Compared to their peers, these students experience disparities in racial and socio-economic representation, and have a high mobility rate. Due to these factors, the students being served in these programs face barriers that prevent them from taking full advantage of CTE programs. In some instances, they are not physically able to engage in a sequence of courses that leads to the completion of CTE certificates. In other situations, expelled or incarcerated students may have access to CTE courses, but because they are not physically at the location long enough to complete the minimum course requirement of 300 hours, upon return to their school district of residence, they are not eligible to enroll in or continue a course in the school district. We recommend the Master Plan group consider developing alternative pathways to career readiness for the students educated in juvenile court and community schools, including but not limited to certification, internships, and greater flexibility in instructional delivery.
- **Address the workforce crisis in CTE programs:** Local educational agencies face significant challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified CTE teachers, including stringent credentialing requirements and the notable salary disparity between industry and teaching professions, which discourages industry experts from

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transitioning to education. It is important for the Master Plan group to consider more flexible credentialing pathways for industry professionals, potentially recognizing industry experience in salary determination and easing transitions for those moving into education later in life.

BACKGROUND: In 2023, Assembly Member Al Muratsuchi introduced Assembly Bill 377, which would have shifted the funding for the Strong Workforce Program to the Career Technical Incentive Grant Program, and required the California Department of Education to establish a stakeholder workgroup to consider and provide recommendations to maximize CTE opportunities for students, including:

- Methods to simplify the allocation of funding under the program;
- Consideration of the appropriate match requirement;
- Allocating funding specifically for programs in alternative settings, including court schools, community schools, and continuation schools, as well as at middle schools;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of regional technical education programs offered by joint powers authorities or County Offices of Education;
- Identifying ways to support and stabilize funding;
- Providing greater stability of funding by streamlining grant renewals or establishing multi-year contracts; and
- Streamlining reporting requirements for K-12 CTE funding streams.

The bill enjoyed widespread support in both houses of the Legislature but was held in committee once it became known that Governor Newsom would establish the Master Plan effort.

The Alternative Education Community School operated by the Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE) at 10 sites provides a comprehensive instructional program for district-referred students (expelled, SARB, parenting teens) and Probation referred students. The RCOE Community School provides 180 days of instruction and includes a classroom-based program for expelled/district-referred students, independent study, and a program for parenting teens. The RCOE Court School provides a comprehensive instructional program for students in juvenile hall. The Riverside County juvenile system determines Court School enrollment. The RCOE Court School currently operates eight classrooms across three probation facilities.