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November 30, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Recommendations for *California's Master Plan for Career Education* (Executive Order N-11-23)

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and our more than 17,000 education leaders statewide, we are responding to your [Executive Order N-11-23](#) with recommendations related to the forthcoming *Master Plan for Career Education*. Our members are particularly keen to engage with you and the respective state agencies to strengthen career pathways and prioritize hands-on learning and real-life skills. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Streamline current grant programs and funding streams
2. Link adult education and other concurrent state initiatives regarding workforce development
3. Address career and technical education (CTE) teacher staffing and credentialing issues
4. Prioritize at-promise students

These four recommendations would strengthen California's career education and CTE offerings, as well as increase coordination among state agencies and partners.

1. STREAMLINE CURRENT GRANT PROGRAMS AND FUNDING STREAMS

Local education agencies (LEAs) are currently operating CTE programs within a bifurcated system that operates with unique eligibility and reporting requirements that involve multiple state agencies and partners. Our members have lamented that the administrative strain and unique requirements with the two separate systems under the K12 Strong Workforce Program and the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant have created unnecessary work at the local level and shifts focus away from the core function of delivering high-quality CTE programs. Multiple systems also cause inequities for smaller districts who do not have personnel to run both grants, and creates inequities in monetary distribution where particular LEAs may access millions of dollars while others receive zero. The funding formula, cost of living adjustment, and match amounts for existing state CTE programs also need to be recalibrated to ensure funds are maximized at the local level. Committing to a multi-year, unified process from the state that eliminates the need to "blend and braid" multiple funding opportunities will ensure that efforts at the local level are focused on thoughtful, strategic implementation and student success. Lastly, in revising the system, we advise against competitive structures for LEAs and regions and data metrics/outcomes that do not put students first. (For example, some students want courses that lead to immediate, entry level employment, but a program may push students to take higher level courses in order to complete a program.) To be truly *student centered* in all aspects, we must have multiple on-ramps to showcase student success and ensure that all partners are seeking to maximize the students' exposure and realization of all workforce opportunities.

2. LINK ADULT EDUCATION AND OTHER CONCURRENT STATE INITIATIVES REGARDING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

As highlighted under recommendation #1, CTE programming and funding is governed in a bifurcated system. The new *California Master Plan for Career Education* is an exciting opportunity to link all statewide efforts that can maximize workforce development. The role of adult education pathway programs as a conduit to student success cannot be overstated. These programs are critical to ensuring rich programmatic opportunities and workforce exposure for at-promise youth (16-24 year-olds), and they routinely help highly skilled immigrants gain the necessary licenses needed to begin working in California. The state should consider the recommendations highlighted in the Legislative Analyst's Office [Redesigning California's Adult Education Funding Model](#) report, especially those addressing the bifurcated system, while considering holistic system change.

Coordination and alignment should also be sought with other state initiatives that involve apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, internships, dual enrollment, and transitional kindergarten (TK) rollout. Support and efforts need to also prioritize improved linkages between employers, TK-12 schools, adult education programs, higher education, and families.

3. ADDRESS CTE TEACHER STAFFING AND CREDENTIALING ISSUES

Attracting CTE teachers, who often make a higher income in their respective industries, will continue to be an issue without innovative incentive opportunities and partnerships. An aspiring CTE teacher can gain a preliminary credential with the appropriate amount of industry hours and experience, but to clear their credential, the candidate needs to satisfy a number of other credentialing requirements. The state should examine incentives, flexibility, and the role industry can play in supporting those very CTE educators who train the next round of students ready to enter the workforce.

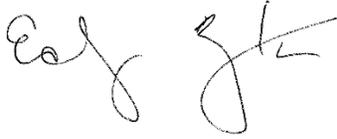
As cited in the Commission on Teacher Credentialing's (CTC) [Report to the Legislature on Credentialing Related to Educators Assignment Monitoring Pursuant to Assembly Bill 1219](#), there are a number of misassignment issues related to CTE credential holders. For example, a CTE teacher can be the instructor on record for their given pathway, but are barred from teaching Home Room, Student Government, Leadership, and Study Hall. School leaders need flexibility to properly staff their schools and the inability to offer a full FTE position and allow the CTE teacher to teach these courses add to staffing challenges. The state could also incentivize CTE teachers to pursue a single subject credential, since they could need additional support to pursue any added coursework or examinations related to meeting subject matter requirements for an additional authorization. Credentialing hurdles and potential equivalencies need to be fully examined and unpacked.

4. PRIORITIZE AT-PROMISE STUDENTS

At-promise students who may experience incarceration, probation, unstable housing, academic credit deficits and other challenges are often transient, yet would benefit greatly from CTE pathways. Many of these students can't participate in a full sequence pathway, nor meet completion requirements so they may not have exposure to rich CTE courses, pathways, and dual enrollment opportunities. As the state reframes the system, consideration should be given to at-promise youth, particularly those who are attending county-operated court and community schools, and how funding and programs can be bolstered to meet their unique needs. Lastly, it is important that funding requirements do not keep LEAs from accessing funds that are already allocated.

While the overhaul and reframing of workforce education might be daunting, we are heartened by your call to action and interagency involvement. We are eager to work with you and all respective state agencies to streamline efforts, prioritize students, and maximize students' career exploration and pathways that will help them uncover their potential. For any questions relating to this letter, please contact Serette Kaminski, Legislative Advocate at skaminski@acsa.org.

Sincerely,



Edgar Zazueta, Ed.D.
Executive Director

CC: Members, California State Senate and California State Assembly
Ben Chida, Chief Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
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