



## Orientation to apprenticeship overview

*Note: This is one in a series of CSBA Construction Management Task Force documents regarding orientation to apprenticeship. Please refer to “orientation to apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs fact sheet” and “Board considerations for orientation to apprenticeship.”*

### Introduction

Orientation to apprenticeships provide basic, introductory training on a particular subject area or offer an overview of several related trades such as construction, health or business. In some areas, orientations to apprenticeship may overlap with internships. Typically, these courses outline the qualifications necessary to enter the specified trade. High school orientation to apprenticeships may be linked to course offerings during the regular school day and may include the career technical education standards. The programs may also serve community college students or adults. Typically, at the completion of the program, trainers and program partners may offer career-entry advice and placement to students.

The term pre-apprenticeship is often used to describe an articulated and integrated program that: 1) provides information to students regarding apprenticeship programs; 2) improves reading, writing, and math skills necessary to qualify for an apprenticeship program; and/or 3) offers classroom instructional job training which guides a student to a registered apprenticeable occupation. It should be noted, however, that some trades use the term pre-apprenticeship as a classification of worker. In order to avoid confusion, this policy brief uses orientation to apprenticeship rather than pre-apprenticeship when referencing a secondary level educational program.<sup>1</sup>

Orientation to apprenticeships helps provide opportunities for students and adults to become aware of academic and career options in a structured paid or unpaid work setting. Programs may vary in their duration, depth, breadth and program partners including school districts, regional occupational centers and programs, community colleges, universities, private businesses, nonprofit agencies and both union and non-union programs/organizations.

One potential benefit of the programs is that students come to a better understanding of how the academic concepts they learn in school are related to their work experiences in orientation to apprenticeships.

### Approaches to delivering pre-apprenticeship programs in California school districts

- School district provides pre-apprenticeship programs to high school students
- School district provides pre-apprenticeship programs to adult students
- School district provides pre-apprenticeship programs through ROCPs
- School district partners with community colleges to offer pre-apprenticeship programs

Many districts and counties have implemented other activities to promote communication and strengthen articulation, such as:

- In 1998, San Diego USD began planning for the Construction Tech Academy. The formation of the Academy was instigated by both the school district and construction industry leaders (union and non-union) focused on training students for construction-related careers. Primarily through the work of an advisory committee, all parties collaborated and reached consensus to provide highly engaging options for students. Industry leaders offer internships to students, co-teach courses and guest lecture at the site. A full-time employer outreach specialist (funded primarily by private donations) is able to connect students with opportunities beyond the high school campus. Due to ongoing discussions and relationship building, school staff have been able to articulate high school credits with local community colleges. The principal, Glenn Hillegas, credits much of their initial success to several outside factors including significant cash and in-kind contributions

<sup>1</sup> Orientation to Apprenticeship: A Guide for Educators. California Apprenticeship Council and California Division of Apprenticeship Standards. January 2001. <http://www.dir.ca.gov/CAC/CACPublications.html>



from private donors and local industries. One unique element of the Academy is the firmly established linkage with a registered apprenticeship program; a program with policy level opportunities for successful high school graduates to receive special consideration upon enrollment in a registered apprenticeship program. Construction Tech Academy is a charter school.

- Over the last several years community members, school board members and district staff have joined in collaboration to create the Construction Tech Academy housed within Kennedy High School in West Contra Costa Unified School District. To guide the implementation of this new academy, the district established an advisory committee composed of industry professionals and the supporters listed above. The academy has culled funding from the Irvine Foundation, California Partnership Academies and the Quality Education Investment Act in addition to industry support in the form of volunteers, field trip opportunities and guest speakers. The school board, middle school and high school staff have heavily recruited students for the program, which resulted in over 100 applicants for the 2006-07 school year. Although the program has grown significantly in enrollment and course offerings each year, the Assistant Principal in charge of the program, Latoya Williams expressed an ongoing need to find excellent teachers with industry experience and a desire to work with high school students.

Governing boards and superintendents considering expanding access to orientation to apprenticeship programs should be aware of the general governance models or approaches to delivering these programs. These approaches are currently being employed in various parts of the state, and have proven successful in providing access to orientation to apprenticeships. Frequently these models are utilized in combination with one another – that is, a district will rely on multiple approaches in order to expand the availability of programs to students. Often these approaches rely on multiple (or “blended”) funding sources, and involve different types of partnerships, ideally to draw upon the strengths of all participants.

The purpose in describing these models is to provide district leaders with a better context for understanding how local districts can play a meaningful role in the planning and provision of quality orientation to apprenticeships. Building on this context, boards and superintendents should consider which approach or combination of approaches meet their local needs. From a school district perspective, current service models include:

### **1. The school district administers and provides orientation to apprenticeships directly at a site (or sites) to high school students.**

To include only high school students in orientation to apprenticeships, the school district or county office of education may provide course offerings during

the regular school day or summer school classes. Classroom instruction must be blended with on-the-job training. Depending on the amount of material to be covered, classes may last for one or more semesters. Ideally, courses will meet one or more of the new career technical education standards. Credentialed teachers must be the primary instructors; however, classes may benefit tremendously from the inclusion of experts as guest speakers, demonstrators and resources.

### **2. The school district administers and provides opportunities to apprenticeships directly at a site (or sites) to adult students.**

To teach adults from the community, a district may offer classes through its adult education program. Classes are offered for a nominal fee to participants. Depending on demand, classes may be offered in the morning or evening on weekdays, or on weekends. Vocational programs may include job placement assistance for positions with the school district or other local businesses. In order to provide high-quality classes and to reach a large pool of participants, school districts may wish to partner with local government agencies such as the Department of Human Assistance, Veterans’ Administrations and city and county governments.

#### **Opportunities for apprenticeships and project stabilization agreements**

If a school district is considering or formulating a project labor agreement (PSA), it may wish to consider incorporating terms with labor unions to include hiring certain percentages of graduates of district orientation to apprenticeships, local workers, minorities and women.

Whether teaching students or adults, the district is responsible for operating all aspects of the orientation to apprenticeship, including facilities, curriculum, funding, human resources and oversight. A blend of program funding is typically used to cover all of the costs.

### **3. The school district provides orientation to apprenticeships through regional occupational centers and programs.**

ROCPs originated in 1967 to provide opportunities for specialized job training on a regional basis through a well-established series of programs at school and community sites. The purpose of the ROCP is to provide high school students 16 years of age and older, and adult students, with valuable career and technical education so students can 1) enter the workforce with skills and competencies to be successful; 2) pursue advanced training in higher

educational institutions; or 3) upgrade existing skills and knowledge. Counseling, community based training and basic skills reinforcement are additional benefits of the program. Currently, seventy-three ROCPs in California serve over 375,000 high school students and 143,000 adults annually. Students receive training at a variety of venues from regular classrooms to actual business and industry facilities, such as automotive dealerships and hospitals. In most ROCPs, courses are offered during the regular school day throughout the school year, in the late afternoon and evening and sometimes during the summer months. High school students frequently spend part of the school day in a traditional academic program and the other part focusing on a vocation – either in a program offered in their high school, a regional center or industry site. More than 300 different ROCP career technical education courses are offered in areas such as information technology, agriculture, business, culinary arts, healthcare, construction and auto technology.

ROCPs operate under three different organizational structures: 1) joint power agreements comprised of two or more school districts (25 ROCPs); 2) county board of education (43 ROCPs); and 3) single districts (6 ROCPs). ROCPs are primarily state funded using the ADA model and in 2004-05 the state's ROCPs received \$364 million in state funds.

In most cases, the ROCP governing board includes member(s) of school districts participating in the ROCP. This position allows for ongoing collaboration and dialogue between local districts and the ROCP.

#### **4. School districts partner with local community colleges to provide orientation to apprenticeships for high school students transitioning to community college.**

In this model, the orientation to apprenticeship follows a series of consecutive courses that may begin in high school and continue into community college. Courses are offered on either high school or community college campuses and are often taught by community college instructors. Due to the long duration and depth of these offerings, many may begin as pre-apprenticeship programs and continue to a full apprenticeship, vocational certificate or associates degree.

There are active and consistent efforts by school districts and community colleges to collaborate, and there is a mutual commitment to ensure successful articulation. This collaboration might take the form of frequent, formalized communications between the district and community college, sharing of curriculum and resources, sharing of professional development opportunities, and other efforts. In this model, a formal contractual relationship may exist between the district and the local community college or may not be needed.

Some of the advantages of this model include a high degree of flexibility to accommodate students, and – for districts that lack facilities space or funding – an opportunity to become more actively engaged in orientation to apprenticeship without incurring many new expenses.

## Questions for local governing boards

Many districts that have already had success expanding access to quality orientation to apprenticeships have utilized aspects from more than one of the above models. Each of the potential models has certain strengths and implications for school districts and communities relative to quality assurance, funding, facilities, curriculum, workforce, accountability and other areas.

It is important for school board members to recognize that school districts and county offices of education, while playing important roles, do not necessarily need to create or operate their own, new orientation to apprenticeships at each of their sites in order to effectively expand offerings. Other options or combinations of options exist.

Some key governance considerations for districts seeking to expand access to quality orientation to apprenticeships are:

- Should the district run programs independently or in partnership with another educational agency?
- Should the district work in collaboration with other public education agencies or trades and not directly run programs?
- Would a combination of these approaches be feasible?
- Who has the local expertise and experience to help ensure program quality?
- What funding mechanisms shall be used to fund the program?

## Further Information

For additional information, please refer to the CSBA Construction Management Task Force documents, "Orientation to apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs fact sheet" and "Board considerations for orientation to apprenticeships."



## Resources

*Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998.* An overview of the federal act can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/CTE/legis.html>.

*The Evolution of Career and Technical Education in California.* This July 2005 Ed Source study outlines the history of career and technical education and current funding opportunities. The brief may be found at <http://www.edsource.org/pdf/ca-reertech05.pdf>.

*Governance Matters: The School Board Guide to Reinvigorating High Schools* produced by CSBA's High School Task Force and the Policy Analysis Department, addresses areas around reform for school board members and superintendents with a focus on effective governance and student achievement. See [http://www.csba.org/pa/hs\\_reform\\_06.pdf](http://www.csba.org/pa/hs_reform_06.pdf)

*Link Students' Out-of-School Learning Experiences to Classroom Learning* from Vishner's 1999 "Key High School Reform Strategies" is a collection of examples of out-of-school learning with corresponding research.

*Orientation to Apprenticeship: A Guide for Educators.* The California Apprenticeship Council and California Division of Apprenticeship Standards collaborated in January 2001 to produce this guide to introduce educators to career opportunities for students in apprenticeable occupations. See <http://www.dir.ca.gov/DAS/apprenticeship.pdf>

*We Build Local Worker Program* an overview of the Los Angeles Unified School District's program that offers local residents training in construction fields. A complete program overview can be found at <http://www.laschools.org>.

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The California School Boards Association's Construction Management Task Force provides districts with policy briefs and fact sheets on construction related issues. District staff and Governing Boards should use this information as a resource when making local decisions. These documents are provided for informational purposes only and are not a substitute for legal advice from school districts legal counsel. Districts should obtain independent legal advice and review when necessary.

If you have any questions, please contact CSBA Policy Services at (800) 266-3382 or via e-mail [policy@csba.org](mailto:policy@csba.org)

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