



# THE GOLDEN SLATE

The official newsletter of the California  
Agricultural Teachers' Association

## Sacramento Scene: Education Bills, Political Developments, and Tuition Changes

*By Matt Patton, CATA Executive Director*

This year's legislative session started on December 5, 2022, and concluded on September 14, 2023. California was one of only 17 democratically controlled trifectas at the start of 2023. The Democratic Party held majorities in the state Senate and state Assembly as well as having a Democratic Governor. The California Senate has 40 members, 32 of which are Democrats. The State Assembly has a total membership of 80, with 62 of those being Democrats ([Ballotpedia, 2023](#)).

### **The following is a list of education bills passed during the 2023 legislative session.**

**AB 531** – This bill exempts a workplace that partners with a local educational agency (LEA) to provide student work experience from the requirement of a valid criminal background check for all employees. For a student to conduct a work experience project, the following criteria must be met:

- One adult in the pupil's workplace during the pupil's work hours who is responsible for the student's safety must have a valid criminal records summary.
- A LEA staff representative must make a site visit at least once every three weeks.
- The LEA must have a signed parent or guardian consent form on file.
- If a student works with a parent or guardian, a signed consent form must be on file.

**SB 447** – With the bill's successful passage and subsequent approval by the Governor, Section 11139.8 of the Government Code is repealed. Section 11139.8 restricted the travel of state employees to numerous states perceived as discriminatory.

**SB 88** – This bill is an amendment to the California ED Code relating to pupil transportation. This bill outlines and expands the requirements of all drivers of pupils employed by a local

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educational agency. Once drivers exceed 40 hours of drive time annually, they are subject to the same regulations as school bus drivers.

SB 760 – An act to amend the Education Code, relating to school facilities. This bill requires local K-12 educational agencies, County Offices of Education, and charter schools to provide at least one all-gender restroom for pupil use on each school site by July 1, 2026. The Governor approved this bill on September 23, 2023.

### **Here are some recent political developments that could impact agricultural education in California.**

Governor Newsom published an Executive Order (N-11-23) this month that he coined a “Master Plan for Career Education.” The plan calls for:

- Updating academic transcripts to accurately reflect skill and competency-based learning;
- Mapping skill clusters to specific job sectors; and
- Enabling all Californians to navigate career education options through a single, integrated online tool.

The true intent and objective of this Executive Order are still being interpreted, and CATA will closely follow the rollout of any programs associated with this document.

The California State University system has recently made the decision to implement a 6% annual tuition increase for the next five years. The first increase will occur next fall, and by the end of the five-year period, Cal State tuition fees will be nearly \$2,000 higher than the current rates.

