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Early Insights from the Golden State Pathways Program

Technical Appendix

CONTENTS

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Appendix A. Data and Methods

Our research consists of four main activities described below.

Literature review. The literature review on pathways reforms in California provided an understanding of the initiatives that have led the state to GSPP and what makes the work in GSPP promising. It also helped to inform and identify policy opportunities for strengthening the program, which could include alignment with other initiatives. The strategy used to conduct the literature review included conducting a landscape analysis from the years 1999 to 2023 to gain insight and understand the historical evolution, challenges, and opportunities in implementing large-scale college and career readiness reform like the GSPP in high schools across the state. Databases reviewed included UC Library Search, Google Scholar, ERIC, and Education Source Premiere. Key search terms included "Career and Technical Education, "Career education programs (history, overview, background, evolution),"Career readiness", "College readiness", "CTE Pathways", "Barriers to education", "Linked Learning", "Golden State Pathways", "California Career Pathways Trust", "Work-Based Learning", "Student Support", "Pathway completion rates", "high school career pathways, "Strong Workforce Program", "California's pathway movement", "STEM career pathways".

Descriptive Analysis. Second, using the publicly available GSPP grant award as of February 2025 together with school district data, we aimed to understand which districts, student groups, districts, and regions were awarded a grant from this major state investment. The specific variables used for this analysis included: local education agency, allocation total, share of enrollment, share of grant allocation, per pupil allocations, implementation grantees, race/ethnicity, student group variables like English Learners, homeless youth, foster youth, low-income student etc. Recent publicly available datasets from the California Department of Education including GSPP Allocation data (February 2025), Enrollment Data (2023-24), California Student Aid Commission data (2022-23), Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate data (2023-24), College and Career Indicator data (2022-23), and College Going Rate (2021-22), were utilized in this study. Our sample includes 1,913,982 9th to 12th graders from the 2023-2024 academic year. A recent version of statistical analysis tool, STATA 18, was used to clean, prepare, merge, and analyze data. Excel and Datawrapper visualization tools were used to complement analysis and to create charts and graphs used in the report.

GSPP Application Analysis. Third, an in-depth analysis of the GSPP grant awards using large language models further explored who applied and received GSPP funds and how they are planning to operationalize GSPP, including how they will build on efforts to expand dual enrollment, which students they will prioritize, how they are structuring academic and non-academic supports, and how they address issues of equity.

Overview of GSPP Grant Application Analysis

To gain insight into how Local Education Agencies (LEAs) planned to implement the Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP), PPIC requested and received GSPP grant application materials from the California Department of Education (CDE). These files were then sent to PPIC's consultant in their original format—including variations in file formatting, separation, and naming—for in-depth analysis using large language models (LLMs). The analysis focused on two sets of information from the GSPP grant proposals: Appendix D (Application Form), which provided descriptive and mostly categorical information on the grantees; and Appendix E (Application Narrative), which contained detailed, free-form prose describing proposed grant activities.

The analysis involved ingesting textual information from more than 600 PDFs thereby breaking the content into manageable pieces, and analyzing it using a series of LLMs. This process included text extraction using vision

models, transcription, and reformatting of tables into a format more suitable for LLM ingestion. After processing the files, the consultant was able to extract both quantitative and qualitative data and answer pertinent questions posed by researchers. The primary benefits of using LLM tools for this analysis were the consistency and efficiency of textual interpretation. To ensure the validity of the results, the consultant adopted a strategy of running each model five times and comparing the outputs. Overall, the consistency of the results was found to be very good.

Findings from Appendix D: Application Forms

An analysis of the grant application proposals revealed that 362 out of 403 proposals were funded through GSPP. The results in this section are based on application materials from 97 percent of LEAs awarded GSPP grants (i.e., self-reports). Applications not included in this analysis had formatting or other defects making data unusable.

A breakdown of grantees by geographical location reveals that the majority (71 percent) were from either urban or suburban areas. The distribution across sectors was relatively even: 25 percent in education, 23 percent in computer science, 37 percent in health, and 37 percent in STEM. More than half of grantees proposed programs in multiple sectors; for example, 52 percent planned to implement pathways in two or more sectors.

The GSPP Act prioritized funding for LEAs classified as "high-priority local education agencies"—those with higher-than-average rates of dropout, suspension, expulsion, child homelessness, foster youth, justice-involved youth, students not completing the full A–G course requirement, lower-than-average graduation rates, or at least 50 percent unduplicated students. To determine whether grantees met this criterion, we analyzed self-identification data reported by each LEA. Half of the grantees indicated a low A–G completion rate, while 31 percent reported higher-than-average rates of child homelessness, foster youth, or justice-involved youth. Fewer than one-third reported high suspension/expulsion (29 percent) or dropout rates (28 percent). Nearly 90 percent of grantees indicated meeting two or more high-priority criteria (88 percent), while 12 percent met only one.

Additionally, approximately 4,993 entities—including institutions of higher education, local and regional employers, and other community stakeholders—planned to collaborate with LEAs to implement college and career pathways.

Findings from Appendix E: Application Narratives

This portion of the analysis required a different set of tools to interpret the free-form prose of the grant proposals. A semi-structured set of 43 questions, co-developed with PPIC, guided the analysis of each implementation grantee application. Most questions were Boolean (yes/no), designed to assess whether the proposal text provided evidence of specific elements. For example, one set of questions asked whether the applications mentioned college credit, dual enrollment, work-based learning, apprenticeship, etc.

Based on this analysis, dual enrollment emerged as the most cited college acceleration strategy. Almost all grantees planned to use dual enrollment to help students meet the GSPP objective of providing students with at least 12 postsecondary credits. While 78 percent indicated they already had a dual enrollment program, 74 percent of applicants planned to maintain an existing College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) program at their school site. Additionally, 34 percent planned to establish a CCAP program, and 88 percent intended to expand it using GSPP funds.

Some grantees also plan to adopt other college acceleration strategies: 35 percent mentioned Advanced Placement (AP), and 3 percent mentioned International Baccalaureate (IB) programs.

The data also reveal that 81 percent of grantees already offer some form of work-based learning, with 84 percent offering internships and 35 percent offering apprenticeships. However, only 10 percent and 2 percent offered paid internships and apprenticeships, respectively.

An analysis of the pathways being implemented revealed that 95 percent in high-skill occupations, 94 percent were in high-demand sectors, and 73 percent in high-wage occupations. Overall, 87 percent of the LEAs indicated that they plan to implement pathways in either high-skill, high-demand, or high-wage occupations.

In terms of student support, 79 percent of grantees already provided support services, and 85 percent planned to introduce new services for students. Additionally, 75 percent indicated they would provide support services exclusively for GSPP students.

These descriptive findings provided PPIC researchers with valuable insights into how grantees planned to incorporate the objectives outlined in the GSPP Framework into their proposals and implementation strategies. This allowed researchers to better understand how LEAs were preparing to meet specific policy goals and support students in achieving their postsecondary aspirations—whether college or career.

Qualitative Analysis. Last, district data and grant applications were used to identify GSPP districts offering diverse pathways and serving students of varying academic and demographic compositions. This included diversity in regions, pathways offered, college preparation and college going rates, race/ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Interviews with 16 district and school leaders overseeing college and career readiness initiatives at 15 districts helped identify opportunities and challenges to help further inform and improve policy and practice. Table A1 provides a descriptive overview of GSPP interview sites. The final interview sample was relatively representative across A-G completion, enrollment of low-income students, college-going rate, prior experience in implementing pathways program among other dimensions. Importantly, it included representation from all regions of the state. Sites interviewed represented 7 percent of all GSPP implementation grantees and received $38,956,236 million.

TABLE A1

Description of GSPP grantees, by grant type and interview status

	All Districts	No GSPP Grant	GSPP Implementation Grantee	GSPP Implementation Interview
Student Characteristics				
Female	47%	46%	48%	48%
Male	50%	49%	52%	52%
Asian	10%	9%	9%	11%
Filipino	3%	2%	3%	3%
Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	1%
Black	5%	4%	6%	9%
Latino	57%	54%	60%	57%
Native American	1%	1%	0.4%	0.4%
White	21%	23%	17%	14%
Other	5%	5%	4%	5%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	72%	68%	74%	42%
English Learner	12%	10%	13%	14%

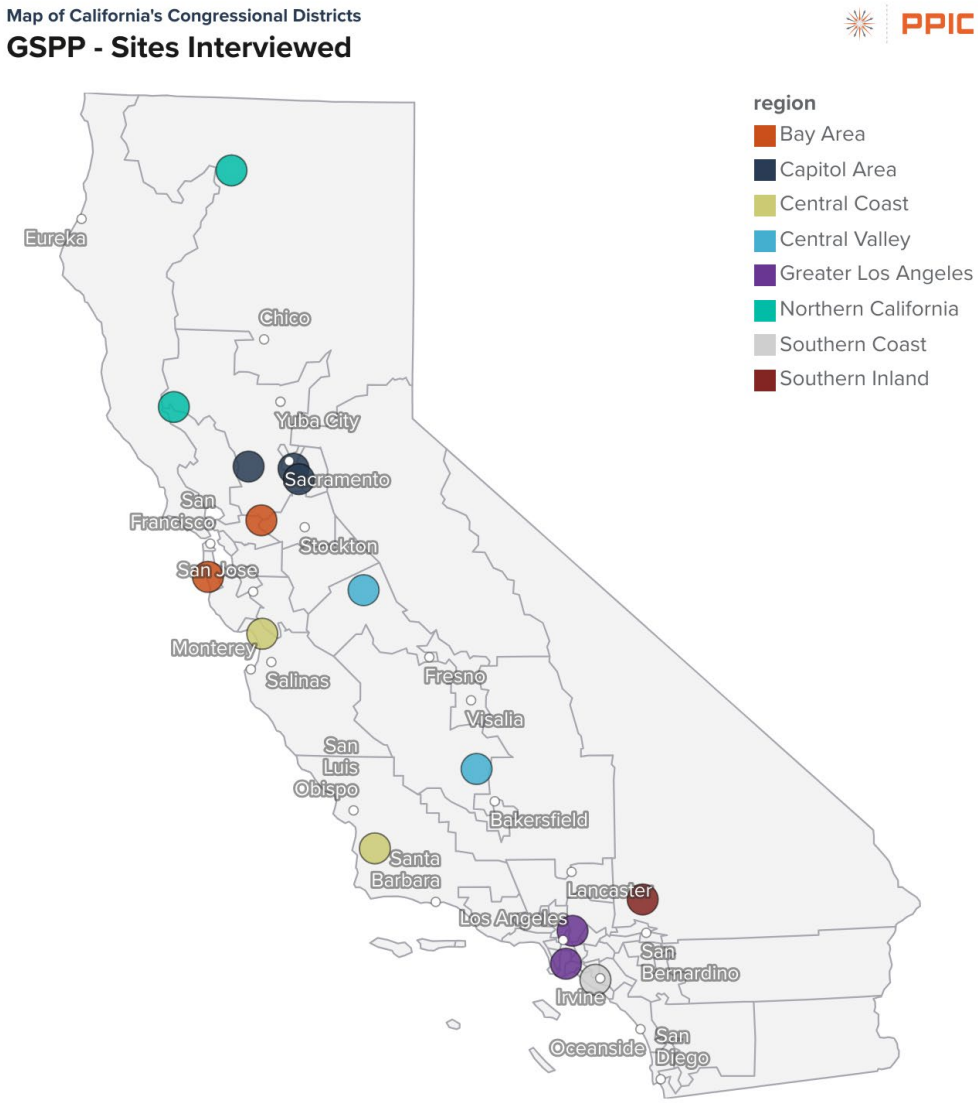
	All Districts	No GSPP Grant	GSPP Implementation Grantee	GSPP Implementation Interview
Dropout Rate	9%	8%	7%	9%
Homeless	3%	3%	3%	6%
Foster youth	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%
Low Income	61%	56%	67%	65%
HS Academic				
Seal of Biliteracy	15%	13%	15%	12%
HS Graduation Rate	86%	88%	89%	87%
A-G Completion Rate	52%	50%	54%	47%
CCI CTE Prepared	23%	20%	26%	32%
FAFSA Completion Rate	69%	67%	71%	70%
College and Career Index	44%	44%	45%	41%
College Enrollment				
Enroll in College	62%	66%	63%	64%
Enroll in UC	8%	8%	8%	6%
Enroll in CSU	12%	12%	14%	13%
Enroll in CCC	33%	35%	33%	38%
Enroll In-state private	3%	3%	3%	3%
Enroll Out of state	7%	8%	6%	5%
Region				
Bay Area	15%	17%	10%	6%
Capitol Area	11%	15%	7%	32%
Central Coast	6%	8%	4%	14%
Central Valley	12%	10%	15%	12%
Greater Los Angeles	23%	20%	26%	25%
Northern California	2%	2%	2%	1%
Southern Coast	17%	13%	20%	2%
Southern Inland	14%	14%	15%	8%
Total Grant Funding Received	$425,594,634	-	$376,128,060	$38,956,236
Total Number of Districts	1019	779	156	15
Total Number of Charter Schools	1,283	1,199	56	-
Total Number of RCOPs	74	66	8	-
Total HS Student Enrollment	1,913,982	888,682	882,011	107,461

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education – 2024 Enrollment data, 2024 Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate data, 2023 College and Career Indicator data, 2023 College going rate data, 2023 California Student Aid Commission data, and GSPP Allocation data, February 2025

NOTES: Total number of Districts data was sourced from CDE website. Total number of Charter Schools data was sourced from CDE website. Total number of RCOPS data was sourced from CDE website. GSPP Implementation grantees may have received Planning grants or Consortium grants. No GSPP Grant refers to LEAs that did not receive any GSPP grant. Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate data used for Seal of Biliteracy, HS Graduation Rate, and A-G Completion Rate.

FIGURE A1

Map of GSPP Interview Sites



Appendix B. Tables and Figures

TABLE B1

GSPP Allocation Data

GSPP Grants	Grants	LEAs
Implementation Grants	374	220
Consortium Grants	20	20
Planning Grants	149	132

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education – GSPP Allocation data, February 2025.

NOTE: Regional Technical Assistance Committees (RTACs) received some funding but have been included in this table as they do not directly relate to the implementation phase of the GSPP program. Additional Funds may also be made available under Planning Grants for LEAs who intend to introduce new pathways.

TABLE B2

GSPP Total Funding Allocation by Grant Types

GSPP Grants	Total Allocation	% Allocation
Implementation Grants	$376,128,060	88%
Consortium Grants	$19,416,717	5%
Planning Grants	$30,049,857	7%
Total	$425,594,634	100%

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education – GSPP Allocation data – February 2025.

TABLE B3

High school student enrollments statewide, among Implementation Grantees and Non GSPP recipients

	Statewide	Implementation Grantees	Estimated Participants	Non GSPP
Student Enrolled	1,913,982	882,011	532,181	1,031,971

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education – GSPP Application Materials, (Appendix D1) and Enrollment Data, 2023

NOTE: Estimated Participants were calculated based on the estimated number of students who will be enrolled in each pathway. This figure is currently an estimate as we do not have the actual student participants in the implementation phase of the program.

For the purposes of supporting Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in the application and implementation of the program Regional Technical Assistance Centers (RTACs) were instituted to provide technical assistance for potential applicants and grant recipients.

The GSPP Regions used in the report were adapted from the categorization used in demarcating RTACs.

TABLE B4

GSPP Regions

Regions	Counties Served	RTACs
Bay Area	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Sonoma	Napa County Office of Education
Capitol Area	Alpine, Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Sierra, Solano, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba	Wheatland Union High School District
Central Coast	Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura	San Luis Obispo County Office of Education
Central Valley	Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Tuolumne	Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office
Greater Los Angeles	Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education
Northern California	Butte, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity	Humboldt County Office of Education
Southern Coast	Imperial, Orange, and San Diego	San Diego County Office of Education
Southern Inland	Inyo, Mono, Riverside, and San Bernardino	San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools

SOURCE: California Department of Education – GSPP webpage.

TABLE B5

Distribution of Implementation Grants Allocation and Counts of Grants by Regions

Region	Allocation Total	% Allocation Total	Counts of Grants	% Grants
Central Coast	$12,038,060	3%	28	7%
Northern California	$23,556,092	6%	29	8%
Capitol Area	$30,486,513	8%	27	7%
Southern Inland	$42,378,915	11%	44	12%
Central Valley	$43,778,647	12%	75	20%
Bay Area	$44,024,761	12%	57	15%
Southern Coast	$62,070,925	17%	34	9%
Greater Los Angeles	$117,794,147	31%	80	21%

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education - GSPP Allocation data, February 2025

TABLE B6

Distribution of GSPP Implementation Grants

Region	Share of Statewide Enrollment	Share of GSPP Allocation
Northern California	2%	6%
Central Coast	6%	3%
Capitol Area	12%	8%
Bay Area	15%	12%
Central Valley	12%	12%
Southern Inland	14%	11%
Southern Coast	17%	17%
Greater Los Angeles	23%	31%

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education - GSPP Allocation data, February 2025

TABLE B7

Per Pupil Allocation by Region

Region	Allocation Total	Estimated participants	Per Pupil Allocation
Central Coast	$12,038,060	6982	$1,724
Northern California	$23,556,092	12761	$1,846
Capitol Area	$30,486,513	18637	$1,636
Southern Inland	$42,378,915	39206	$1,081
Central Valley	$43,778,647	28319	$1,546
Bay Area	$44,024,761	39843	$1,105
Southern Coast	$62,070,925	242167	$256
Greater Los Angeles	$117,794,147	144266	$817

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education – GSPP Allocation data, February 2025 and Enrollment data, 2024.

Note: Per Pupil Allocation calculation was calculated from dividing Allocation Total by enrollment by region. The share of enrollment refers to the percentage of students in GSPP grantees in the region.

TABLE B8

Distribution of Pathways by CDE Classification

Industry Sector	Count of Pathways	%
Fashion and Interior Design	3	0%
Other	9	1%
Marketing Sales and Service	16	1%
Public Services	19	1%
Manufacturing and Product Development	31	2%
Business and Finance	33	2%
Transportation	35	3%
Building and Construction Trades	37	3%
Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation	38	3%
Energy, Environment, and Utilities	73	5%
Agriculture and Natural Resources	102	8%
Engineering and Architecture	115	9%
Arts, Media, and Entertainment	128	10%
Education, Child Development, and Family Services	164	12%
Information and Communication Technologies	209	16%
Health Science and Medical Technology	333	25%

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education - GSPP Allocation data, February 2025

NOTE: The number of pathways under GSPP are categorized using the CDE Industry Sector classification.

TABLE B9

Distribution of Pathways under the Implementation Grants by Region

Regions	Count of Pathways	Share of Pathways
Central Coast	45	3%
Northern California	98	7%
Capitol Area	100	7%
Bay Area	134	10%
Southern Inland	151	11%
Central Valley	152	11%
Southern Coast	285	21%
Greater Los Angeles	380	28%

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education - GSPP Allocation data, February 2025

TABLE B10

STEM Categorization based on CDE Industry Sector Classification

STEM Classification	Pathways Counts	%
Engineering and Architecture	115	9%
Energy, Environment, and Utilities	73	5%
Agriculture and Natural Resources	102	8%
Manufacturing and Product Development	31	2%
Total	321	24%

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education - GSPP Allocation data, February 2025

TABLE B11

GSPP Priority Industries

CDE Sector	Pathways Counts	%
Health Science and Medical Technology	326	25%
STEM/Climate Resilience (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)	321	24%
Computer Science (Information and Communication Technologies)	209	16%
Education, Child Development, and Family Services	164	12%
	1020	77%

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education - GSPP Allocation data, February 2025

TABLE B12

Regional Variation in GSPP Implementation Grantee Pathways

Industry Sectors/Pathways	Total	Bay Area	Capitol Area	Central Coast	Central Valley	Greater Los Angeles	Northern California	Southern Coast	Southern Inland
Proportion of 9th – 12th Graders		**15%**	12%	**6%**	12%	**23%**	2%	**17%**	**14%**
Health Science and Medical Technology	333	**31**	13	**11**	27	**91**	21	**94**	**45**
Information and Communication Technologies	209	23	14	9	31	61	9	42	20
Education, Child Development, and Family Services	164	13	15	6	**37**	19	**22**	27	25
Arts, Media, and Entertainment	128	13	2	1	5	81	2	15	9
Engineering and Architecture	115	13	4	2	6	35	5	36	14
Agriculture and Natural Resources	102	6	**24**	7	32	11	13	1	8
Energy, Environment, and Utilities	73	10		1	2	3	1	52	4
Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation	38	6	12	1	1	10	1	1	6
Building and Construction Trades	37	7			4	12	9	1	4
Transportation	35		6	3	1	15		5	5
Business and Finance	33	2	1	1	1	22	1	3	2
Manufacturing and Product Development	31	3	2	2	4	8	7	2	3
Public Services	19	3	2		1	5	1	3	4
Marketing Sales and Service	16	3	3			5	1	3	1
Other	9	1	2	1			5		
Fashion and Interior Design	3					2			1
Total	1345	134	100	45	152	380	98	285	151

SOURCE: Authors' calculation using California Department of Education - GSPP Allocation data, February 2025

Appendix C. Summary of Career Pathway and College Readiness Initiatives in California

California has a long history of supporting initiatives intended to develop or bolster career pathways. Motivated by the need to equip the state's youth with the knowledge and skills to sustain a thriving economy and society, significant federal, state, local and philanthropic investments have been made in support of career technical education (CTE).[1] These efforts were backed by research indicating that participation in CTE was associated with positive academic and labor market outcomes, including high school graduation, college enrollment, earnings (see Lindsay et al. 2024 for a research synthesis). In the class of 2022, about 25% of California high school students enrolled in some form of CTE to gain knowledge and skills in a particular career or occupation (Boochever, et al. 2025).

Historically, a perception that high school students were either on an academic or vocational track resulted in CTE being siloed from college readiness. Indeed, between the 1970s and 1990s, pathways focused on providing vocational education to students who were going directly into the labor force and not attending college. For nearly two decades, however, the recognition that most high-demand, high-mobility career opportunities will require some form of postsecondary education has spurred the growth of CTE pathways that integrate college preparatory course work. These efforts were supported by the 2006 reauthorization of the federal Perkins legislation, which replaced the term "vocational" with "career and technical" education, eliminating a prohibition on funding for students entering careers that required a bachelor's degree or higher (Stern 2010; Visher and Stern 2015).[2]

In California, there has been considerable momentum to integrate college and career pathways over the last four decades (see Table C1 below). The California Partnership Academies (CPA) program, established in 1984, pioneered the integration of career technical education (CTE) into high school learning by creating small, career-themed academies that combine academic rigor, technical training, and work-based learning. Building on this foundation, the California CTE Model Curriculum Standards, first introduced in 2005, established a comprehensive framework of 58 career pathways across 15 industry sectors. This framework continues to guide the design of various pathway programs.

Supported by the Irvine Foundation, in 2008 the Concurrent Courses Initiative sought to increase college access by integrating dual enrollment into career pathways serving underrepresented high school students. A year later, the Irvine Foundation launched the Linked Learning Initiative as a pathway approach that integrates rigorous academics, career technical education, work-based learning, and student supports. In 2014, the state initiatives further expanded on this approach, including the California Career Pathways Trust (CCPT), a $500 million investment that funded regional consortia to improve the alignment and collaboration aimed at improving the transition to college and careers, with a focus on K-14 career pathways. As part of the state's sustained investment in CTE, the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG) program was launched in 2015 and receives $300 million in ongoing annual funding. CTEIG supports the expansion of high-quality, industry-aligned programs in grades 7–12. Complementing this, the K–12 Strong Workforce Program, implemented in 2018,

[1] CTE is often categorized into 16 clusters that include agriculture, food, and natural resources; architecture and construction; arts, audiovisual technology, and communications; business management and administration; education and training; finance; government and public administration; health sciences; hospitality and tourism; human services; information technology; law, public safety, corrections, and security; manufacturing; marketing; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and transportation, distribution, and logistics (Lindsay et al. 2024).

[2] Prior to this change, federal funding defined vocational education as preparation for careers "other than careers requiring a baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degree" thereby prohibiting use of Perkins funds to prepare students for careers that require a bachelor's degree or higher (Visher and Stern 2015).

provides $150 million annually to strengthen alignment between high school CTE programs and community college pathways, emphasizing regional labor market needs.

More recently, California has introduced cross-sector initiatives to streamline education-to-career pipelines. The Regional K-16 Education Collaboratives, funded with $250 million in one-time state funding beginning in 2021, bring together K–12, higher education, and employers to create coordinated regional pathways in high-demand sectors like health care, education, and technology. In 2022, the Governor established compacts with the California State University (CSU), the University of California (UC), and the California Community Colleges (CCC) intended to support pathways into high-demand careers, including education, healthcare, technology, and climate related fields. The state has also invested millions to help boost the number of high school graduates who complete the CSU and UC college preparatory course requirements through the A-G Completion Improvement Grant and UC Scout. In the last decade, efforts to scale dual enrollment have included the adoption of Assembly Bill 288 which established the College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) program, a structured dual enrollment program that aims to expand access to dual enrollment to students who are not on a college path or underrepresented in higher education. In the last decade, the state has also invested millions to support dual enrollment, including career focused dual enrollment, through grant initiatives in support of the expansion of College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP), the Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP), and Middle College High School and Early College High Schools.

The Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP), established in 2022 with $500 million state funding, seeks to explicitly incorporate multiple components of past pathway reforms—including college and career readiness, college acceleration, work-based learning, and integrated supports—while also layering in multi-year state funding and a focus on "high priority local education agencies."[3] Although some past state programs have had a specific focus on advancing either college or college, GSPP plans to incorporate both integrating components that could help preparedness in both college and career after high school.

Efforts to implement effective college and career pathways programs like GSPP in high school are of critical importance, especially now. In 2022, the state set a 70 percent postsecondary attainment goal in an effort to ensure the state has the workforce needed to support a thriving economy. A year later, the Governor signed an executive order that called for developing the Master Plan for Career Education as an effort to align and integrate the programs and investments the state had made in support of a stronger workforce. In 2025, the California Master Plan for Career Education was released and among other things, it called for providing universal access to career pathways for all high school students and indicates the importance of dual enrollment in helping the state meet its postsecondary and workforce development goals.

[3] "High priority local education agencies" are defined as having 50 percent or more unduplicated pupils, higher than state average dropout rate, higher than state average rates of suspension and expulsion, higher than state average rates of child homelessness, foster youth, or justice-involved youth, and a lower than state average rate of pupils completing all of the A–G courses. For more details see California *Education Code* 53020–53025.

TABLE C1

Overview of Key Career Pathway and College Readiness Initiatives in California

Program	Year Implemented	Purpose	Target Audience	Goals	Focus Areas	Funding
California Partnership Academies	1984	Integrate academic and career technical education within a career-focused small learning community	High school students (grades 10-12)	Improve student achievement and postsecondary outcomes	Career-themed education, business partnerships	$21 million annually
California CTE Model Curriculum	2005	Develop and adopt CTE standards that integrate career technical and academic education	Grades 7-12 students	Prepare students to be career and college ready	58 career pathways organized around 15 industry sectors	Not relevant
Concurrent Courses Initiative*	2008	Provide dual enrollment opportunities for underrepresented and low-income students	High school students	Increase high school graduation rates and postsecondary enrollment	Dual enrollment, career-focused programs	$4.75 million
Linked Learning Initiative*	2009	Provide high-quality academics in concert with career-technical education and work-based learning opportunities, access to early college credit, and integrated student supports	High school students	Improve students' academic outcomes in high school, as well as college and career readiness	High-quality career pathways aligned with rigorous academics	$100+ million
California Career Pathways Trust (CCPT)	2014	Build connections between businesses, schools, and community colleges for career pathways	K-14 students (high school and community college)	Create career pathways in high-need sectors	High-need, high-wage, high-growth sectors	$500 million
College and Career Guidance Initiative	2014	Provide tools and resources for college and career planning	K-12 students, educators, parents/guardians	Facilitate seamless transitions from K-12 to college and career	College and career planning, digital platform	No specific funding amount
Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG)	2015	Enhance career technical education programs	K-12 students	Prepare students for careers and further education	Career technical education	$300 million annually
College and Career Access Pathways Grant	2016	Establish dual enrollment partnerships between LEAs and community colleges	High school students	Increase access to college courses while in high school	Dual enrollment	$100 million
K-12 Strong Workforce Program (K12 SWP)	2018	Develop and expand high-quality CTE programs and pathways	K-12 students	Prepare students for in-demand careers	Career technical education	$150 million annually
K-16 Collaboratives	2021	Create streamlined pathways from high school to postsecondary education and into the workforce	High school and postsecondary students	Address social and economic inequities, support economic recovery	Healthcare, education, business management, engineering, computing	$250 million
A-G Completion Improvement Grant	2021	Increase completion of A-G course requirements for university eligibility	High school students	Increase university admissions eligibility	Academic course completion	$547.5 million
California's Universal FAFSA Policy	2021	Ensure all high school seniors complete the FAFSA or CADAA	High school seniors	Increase access to financial aid and college enrollment	Financial aid applications	No new upfront funding[4]

[4] LEAs were instructed to leverage existing funds to implement California's financial aid application completion requirement. Financial aid application completion expenses are acceptable and valid use of Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) supplemental and concentration funding. Also, according to the statutory provisions, LEAs may be reimbursed by the state for financial aid application completion expenses. LEAs must submit a "Test Claim" to begin the reimbursement process; learn more here: brochure.pdf (ca.gov).

Program	Year Implemented	Purpose	Target Audience	Goals	Focus Areas	Funding
Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP)	2022	Promote pathways in high-growth industries. Integrate rigorous academics, CTE, work-based learning and personalized student supports.	High school students, collaboration with higher education and employers	Support pathways in high-wage, high-skill, or high-growth areas. Prepare students for college and career.	Technology, healthcare, education, climate-related fields	$500 million
CA Youth Apprenticeship Grant Program	2024	Increase participation of opportunity youth in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs	Youth (ages 16-24)	Improve employment and earnings outcomes for opportunity youth	Apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships	$31 million

Note: Entries with an asterisk (*) indicate privately funded initiatives. The Concurrent Courses Initiative and Linked Learning were initially funded by the Irvine Foundation.

Appendix D. Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. My name is____ the ____ of the Higher Education Center at PPIC. I am joined today by my colleagues _____.

I see you [**have/have not]** submitted an informed consent form to participate in the research. [CHECK CONSENT FORM SPREADSHEET**]**

- **If they HAVE submitted:** Thank you very much for doing this ahead of our meeting. Before we get started, I'll briefly review a few key points contained in the form and give you a chance to ask questions.
- **If they HAVE NOT submitted:** Because this is a research study, we need you to submit a completed consent form for our records. We'll share the link to the e-consent form on the chat (consent form). We ask that you please submit it before the end of the day. For now, your verbal consent is sufficient. Before we get started, I'll briefly review a few key points contained in the form and give you a chance to ask questions.

We are conducting a research study on the early implementation of the Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP) in school districts and high schools across California. The purpose of this study is to better understand the challenges and opportunities to implement a large-scale college and career readiness reform, like GSPP, and identify policy opportunities for strengthening the program. Your insights will be valuable in understanding the opportunities and challenges associated with GSPP.

Your institution was selected based on publicly available CDE data and information contained in the GSPP grantee list, for example pathway offerings, A-G completion rate, college going rate, share of SED students, etc.

The information we gather today will be used to create a report and is expected for publication by the end of this year. The product of this study may also be used for blogs, OpEds, and presented at state and national conferences.

We want to assure you that nothing you say will be directly attributed to you or your **District/High School**. In the report we will only refer to you by your role (e.g. director of GSPP/CTE, Pathway Coordinator, Executive Administrator).

In the event that our report(s) do use identifying information gathered during our interview, we will share the relevant text with you (or the appropriate administrator) to have it reviewed prior to publication. This interview will take approximately 60 minutes.

Finally, would you be okay with us using audio recording on Zoom? We will be taking notes during the interview, but having the recording is extremely useful to ensure we capture an accurate record of what we talk about today.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background Information (3 min – move to next section ~ 8 mins in)
What is your name and title?

How long have you been at the **District/High School/College/Organization** and in what capacities?

Pathways Motivation

To begin, we'd like to learn more about the history and motivation for offering pathways at **District/High School.** First, we'll ask broad questions about pathways and then ask separate questions specifically about GSPP.

Prior to GSPP, how have you been involved with pathways programs at **District/High School**?

What motivated the **District/High School** to adopt pathways programs prior to GSPP?

Approximately how many pathways were implemented prior to GSPP? To what extent were these geared toward college or career, or both?

How would you characterize the pre-GSPP pathways alignment with A-G requirements? With acceleration strategies (via Dual Enrollment, AP and/or IB)? And with WBL efforts?

GSPP Planning (8 mins – move to next section 20 mins in)

Next, we'd like to learn more about the GSPP at your **District/High School.**

Can you tell us what motivated the **District/High School** to apply for a GSPP grant?

How did **District/High School** select the pathway(s) proposed under GSPP? What informed selection?

To what extent, if at all, does **District/High School** see GSPP pathways as unique and/or different from non-GSPP pathways? How, if at all, might **District/High School** expect different outcomes with GSPP compared to other pathways efforts?

GSPP encourages but does not require alignment with A-G requirements, incorporation of acceleration (via Dual Enrollment, AP and/or IB) and WBL efforts. How, if at all, are any of those models being incorporated into the planning and implementation of GSPP at **District/High School**?

GSPP Implementation Plans

With the next set of questions, we'd like to learn more about **the District/High School** approach to planning and any early implementation work associated with GSPP specifically.

To begin, tell us on a scale of 1-10 (where 10 is the highest/best), how do you rate GSPP implementation at **District/High School** to date? Why did you choose that number?

Now we'd like to learn more about specific elements of GSPP being implemented now.

CTE Coursework

Can you please describe how CTE coursework is currently being integrated into GSPP at **District/High School**? Is it currently required to complete any GSPP pathways?

What informed that decision (to require or not require CTE coursework as part of GSPP)?

A-G (College-Prep) Coursework

Next, how is **District/High School** integrating A-G coursework into GSPP? Is it currently required to complete the pathway?

What informed that decision (to require or not require A-G alignment as part of GSPP)?

College Acceleration

Next, can you please describe how **District/High School** is integrating College Acceleration – or the ability to earn college credit while in high school -- into GSPP?

Which strategies are you currently using and why?

What informed that decision (to require or not require acceleration as part of GSPP)?

One of the GSPP goals is to have students complete at least 12 college credits – is this required to complete GSPP pathways?

Work-Based Learning (WBL)

Can you tell us what types of WBL opportunities are available to students via GSPP at **District/High School**?

Are WBL opportunities paid/unpaid? Which ones?

Do students receive credits and/or credentials for WBL? Please describe.

Which partnerships GSPP is **District/High School** leveraging with industry, businesses and/or other organizations for WBL?

GSPP Students Served

Enrollment

How many **District/High School** students are currently enrolled in GSPP? How does enrollment vary across GSPP pathways?

Recruitment & Placement

Next, we'd like to learn more about how **District/High School** students were recruited and placed into GSPP pathways.

- Where and when do you recruit prospective GSPP students?
- What factors typically influence a student's choice of pathway?
- What information is used to inform the pathways placement process?
- What process was used to assign students to a pathway?

Addressing Equity

Next, given the emphasis on equity in legislation, we'd like to learn more about how the District/High School is considering this issue.

Are there dedicated efforts aimed at enrolling underserved students such as ELs, students with disabilities, and first-generation college students? Please describe.

How does the **District/High School** determine whether pathways participation is equitable?

What actions, if any, does the **District/High School** take to address underrepresentation or overrepresentation if identified? **

Support Services

We know GSPP is very early in the implementation process, however, we are interested in learning more about challenges students may face as well as the type of student support available to ensure their success. We'd also like to learn more about the support the **District/High School** is receiving to support a successful implementation.

To begin, tell us the top **academic challenge District/High School** sees or anticipates students in the program encountering?

Which support services are most essential to addressing the **academic challenges** at **District/High School** for GSPP students? Who provides this support? How would a student access them? Are they required/optional?

What do you anticipate being the top **non-academic** challenge students in GSPP pathways will encounter at **District/High School**?

What support services are essential to addressing **non-academic challenges** for GSPP students? Who provides that support? How would a student access them? Are they required/optional?

How are students support funded for GSPP pathways at **District/High School**?

What support is the **District/High School currently** receiving to help ensure the successful implementation of GSPP? Who provides this support?

Challenges and Opportunities

As we wrap up, we'd like to learn about the challenges and opportunities associated with implementation of GSPP. Let's begin with the opportunities.

In your opinion, what is the biggest opportunity associated with implementation of GSPP at **District/High School**? **

There are a variety of other local, state, and federal initiatives aimed at supporting college and career readiness. What other programs, policies, or funding sources are **District/High School** leveraging to support GSPP implementation efforts?

What are the biggest challenges **District/High School** has encountered with GSPP implementation so far? How has the **District/High School** addressed that issue going forward?

How did the delay in the announcement and release of the GSPP grant funding shift implementation plans at **District/High School**?

Partnerships

Collaborative partnerships are common among pathway implementation efforts. Who are your key partners? How, if at all, are they supporting GSPP implementation?

Is **District/High School** partnering with parents and families as part of GSPP planning and/or implementation? Tell us about that.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead, what would make GSPP implementation a success for **District/High School**?

What, if any, data might **District/High School** use to confirm success?

Based on what **District/High School** has experienced so far with GSPP, what structures and systems need to be in place to support sustainability?

Conclusion

If you had a magic wand, how would you strengthen GSPP at **District/High School**?

Is there anything else you want to share to help ensure we capture a better understanding of the GSP implementation at **District/High School**?

We'd appreciate the opportunity to learn more about GSPP planning and implementation efforts. Can you recommend any partners we can reach out to?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview.

Appendix E. Summary of GSPP Implementation Plans by Region and County

TABLE E1

Analysis of College Acceleration Strategy, Pathways and Support Services

	Applications	College Acceleration Strategy					Pathways	Support Services		
Region/County	# of Applications	Will expand Integrated program of study	Will use Dual Enrollment (DE)	Will establish CCAP	Will use Advanced Placement (AP)	Will use international baccalaureate (IB)	High Skill/Demand/Wage Pathways	Already provides support services	Will provide support services for only GSPP students	Will provide a new support service
Statewide	368	83	96	34	35	3	87	79	75	85
Bay Area	55	78	95	35	42	0	79	82	76	91
Alameda	26	77	92	42	50	0	64	77	73	85
Contra Costa	4	100	100	25	50	0	83	100	50	100
Marin	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Napa	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
San Francisco	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
San Mateo	9	78	100	33	11	0	100	78	89	100
Santa Clara	6	50	83	0	50	0	78	83	83	83
Sonoma	10	90	100	40	70	0	100	90	80	100
Capitol Area	27	93	100	41	44	0	93	85	89	100
Alpine	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Colusa	1	100	100	100	100	0	100	100	100	100
El Dorado	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nevada	1	100	100	0	0	0	100	100	100	100
Placer	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sacramento	13	100	100	46	46	0	87	92	85	100
San Joaquin	2	50	100	100	100	0	83	100	100	100
Sierra	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Solano	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sutter	2	100	100	50	50	0	100	100	100	100
Yolo	5	100	100	20	60	0	100	40	100	100
Yuba	3	67	100	0	33	0	100	100	67	100
Central Coast	29	72	93	24	21	3	83	83	62	79
Monterey	2	100	100	0	0	0	50	100	100	100
San Benito	2	0	100	50	50	0	83	100	50	100
San Luis Obispo	6	100	100	0	17	0	83	67	33	67
Santa Barbara	4	75	75	25	25	0	75	75	75	75

	Applications		College Acceleration Strategy				Pathways	Support Services		
Santa Cruz	10	60	40	20	10	10	87	90	70	70
Ventura	5	80	100	60	80	0	93	80	60	100
Central Valley	76	91	97	25	16	1	87	93	84	79
Amador	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Calaveras	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fresno	33	91	97	6	3	3	80	97	97	55
Kern	6	83	100	50	0	0	89	100	50	100
Kings	5	100	100	40	60	0	93	80	60	100
Madera	2	100	100	100	100	0	100	100	100	100
Mariposa	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Merced	7	100	86	57	43	0	95	86	100	100
Stanislaus	3	100	100	33	0	0	100	100	67	100
Tulare	19	84	100	21	21	0	89	89	74	95
Tuolumne	1	100	100	100	0	0	100	100	100	100
Greater Los Angeles	75	83	99	32	39	4	93	75	75	79
Los Angeles*	75	83	99	32	48	4	93	75	75	79
Northern California	28	82	100	46	18	0	90	71	71	93
Butte	2	50	100	0	100	0	100	100	100	100
Del Norte	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Glenn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Humboldt	6	83	100	67	50	0	78	83	83	100
Lake	2	100	100	50	0	0	83	100	50	100
Lassen	1	100	100	0	100	0	100	100	100	100
Mendocino	4	100	100	50	25	0	100	50	75	100
Modoc	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Plumas	1	100	100	100	100	0	100	0	100	100
Shasta	1	0	100	0	0	0	100	100	100	100
Siskiyou	3	100	100	33	33	0	89	67	33	67
Tehama	4	100	100	75	0	0	92	50	75	100
Trinity	4	50	100	25	0	0	92	75	50	75
Southern Coast	34	79	85	38	35	9	75	62	65	82
Imperial	3	100	100	33	67	0	78	33	67	100
Orange*	15	80	80	47	33	13	64	53	53	73
San Diego*	16	75	88	31	44	6	83	75	75	88
Southern Inland	44	80	100	45	16	5	93	68	70	93
Inyo	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mono	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	Applications	College Acceleration Strategy					Pathways	Support Services		
Riverside	21	71	100	29	33	10	90	90	90	86
San Bernardino	23	87	100	61	9	0	96	48	52	100

TABLE E2

Analysis of Program Sustainability and Work-Based Learning

	Applications	Sustainability		Work-Based Learning						
Region/County	# of Applications	Has public funding sources	Has private/ philanthropic funding sources	Has existing Work-Based Learning	Potential for Growth in Work-Based Learning	Has Summer Work-Based Learning	Has Internship	Has Paid Internship	Has Apprenticeship	Has Paid Apprenticeship
Statewide	368	97	52	81	19	26	84	10	35	2
Bay Area	55	95	69	69	31	16	80	8	22	0
Alameda	26	92	77	77	23	7	65	1	15	0
Contra Costa	4	100	75	75	25	2	100	2	75	0
Marin	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Napa	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
San Francisco	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
San Mateo	9	100	72	44	56	1	89	1	22	0
Santa Clara	6	83	58	33	67	5	83	0	17	0
Sonoma	10	100	50	90	10	1	100	4	20	0
Capitol Area	27	100	43	81	19	10	78	1	30	0
Alpine	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Colusa	1	100	50	100	0	0	100	0	100	0
El Dorado	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nevada	1	100	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Placer	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sacramento	13	100	38	85	15	4	77	1	38	0
San Joaquin	2	100	100	100	0	1	100	0	0	0
Sierra	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Solano	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sutter	2	100	25	100	0	1	100	0	0	0
Yolo	5	100	20	40	60	3	60	0	40	0
Yuba	3	100	50	100	0	1	100	0	0	0
Central Coast	29	93	36	83	17	5	86	11	24	0
Monterey	2	100		100	0	2	100	2	0	0
San Benito	2	100	50	50	50	0	100	0	0	0
San Luis Obispo	6	100	25	100	0	0	83	1	17	0
Santa Barbara	4	75	25	50	50	0	50	1	25	0
Santa Cruz	10	90	35	90	10	2	90	7	40	0
Ventura	5	100	70	80	20	1	100	0	20	0

	Applications	Sustainability			Work-Based Learning					
Central Valley	76	99	49	89	11	8	95	5	42	4
Amador	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Calaveras	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fresno	33	97	45	88	12	3	97	3	27	3
Kern	6	100	67	83	17	2	83	0	33	0
Kings	5	100	20	100	0	1	100	1	60	1
Madera	2	100	50	100	0	0	100	0	100	0
Mariposa	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Merced	7	100	50	57	43	0	100	0	57	0
Stanislaus	3	100	50	100	0	0	100	0	100	0
Tulare	19	100	55	100	0	2	95	1	47	0
Tuolumne	1	100	50	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greater Los Angeles	75	99	55	87	13	22	84	3	41	1
Los Angeles*	75	99	55	87	13	22	84	3	41	1
Northern California	28	100	48	86	14	15	68	5	32	0
Butte	2	100	50	100	0	1	0	0	0	0
Del Norte	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Glenn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Humboldt	6	100	25	100	0	4	50	1	0	0
Lake	2	100	75	50	50	1	100	0	0	0
Lassen	1	100	50	100	0	0	100	0	0	0
Mendocino	4	100	75	75	25	1	100	0	75	0
Modoc	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Plumas	1	100	100	100	0	1	100	0	0	0
Shasta	1	100	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Siskiyou	3	100	33	67	33	0	33	0	33	0
Tehama	4	100	13	75	25	3	75	3	50	0
Trinity	4	100	63	100	0	4	100	1	75	0
Southern Coast	34	85	46	59	41	10	76	1	26	0
Imperial	3	100	17	67	33	0	67	0	0	0
Orange*	15	80	47	33	67	3	73	0	40	0
San Diego*	16	88	50	81	19	7	81	1	19	0
Southern Inland	44	100	56	86	14	8	89	4	50	1
Inyo	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mono	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Riverside	21	100	71	90	10	5	90	2	38	1
San Bernardino	23	100	41	83	17	3	87	2	61	0

Source: GSPP Implementation Grantees Application Materials, February 2025

Notes: The tables report the county and regional analysis of GSPP Implementation Grantees' Applications which contains their implementation plans and how they intend to meet the objectives of the program. The counties with * altogether had a total number of 6 LEAs and 13 GSPP application narratives that were not processed by the language model and are excluded from the analysis. Number of Applications is an aggregate number of Implementation plans from LEAs in each county and region. The rest of the variables report the proportion of LEAs disaggregated into county and region with respect to the plans as stated in their Implementation Plans. For example: "Will use Dual Enrollment" and "Will use Advanced Placement" reports the proportion of Implementation grantees who plan to use dual enrollment and Advanced Placement as a college acceleration strategy. "Will establish CCAP" denotes the proportion of Implementation grantees who intend enter the necessary agreements and establish CCAP as part of the GSPP program. "High Skill/Wage/Demand Pathways" reports the proportion of Implementation grantees who intend to implement pathways in high skill, high wage or high demand sectors. "Potential for growth in Work-Based Learning" reports the proportion of Implementation grantees in each county and region who show significant progress in work-based learning and have the potential for further growth. "N/A" refers to counties that do not have LEAs awarded with Implementation grants.

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