

APPRENTICESHIP

Ideas on Apprenticeship Glen Sparks: Working with Local Education Agencies to Develop the Pipeline

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It's been great to see numbers of registered apprentices continue to rise in California, but there is still significant work to do in order to reach the Governor's goal of having 500,000 apprentices over the next decade. Is it really doable? It might be if we see apprenticeship committees and the educational community work together on that target.

Committees need to remember that educational agencies, particularly K-12 districts, directly serve the pipeline for the future. An active local education agency can make a world of difference when it comes to recruitment and promotion. It's crucial in early development to let children know there's nothing that's not within their reach. Children need more career oriented conversations based on their passion and self-interest. In turn, educational agencies need to make building trades and apprenticeship information directly available to students in the form of field trips, career fairs and guidance counseling.

Expanding pre-apprenticeship opportunities and developing youth apprenticeship programs will be more critical than ever. In the case of youth apprenticeships, education can bring it to a whole new level. This takes working closely with the California Department of Education by incentivizing districts to develop youth apprenticeship programs. Designing an "a-g" high school youth apprenticeship course would be a good start.

Finally, good governance is always a combination of compliance and regulation, coupled with common sense and sometimes just getting out of the way. Streamlining processes without sacrificing quality takes time but helps the field build programs, not stifle them.

There are many great ideas being explored to achieve the goal of 500,000 apprenticeships over the next decade. Working more closely with educational partners,

coupled with appropriate support from the state, the apprenticeship community can make great strides in achieving this outcome.

Glen has been a full time educator for over 35 years and also teaches part-time at UC Berkeley. Glen is the educational advisor for the CA Fire Fighter Joint Apprenticeship Executive Committee, and works as the LEA for District Council 16 and the Northern CA Cement Masons.