

# More Calif. high schools blend college, career prep

By Laurel Rosenhall, Sacramento Bee

For years, high schools have prepared some students for college and others for work. Now there's a push at the highest levels of state government to meld the two, so that as students learn job skills, they're also fulfilling course requirements needed to get into college.

You can see the concept at work at Cosumnes Oaks High School in Elk Grove, where a licensed contractor teaches college-prep engineering classes.

"I know I have a lot of students that aren't going to college, but my goal is still to prepare them because ultimately they have to be critical thinkers, whether they're in the workforce or they go to school," said Tim McDougal, a college-educated teacher who owned a contracting business for 12 years.

His approach is part of a trend in California high schools: blending college preparation with career preparation. The goal is to offer more hands-on classes that will engage students turned off by the traditional academic approach, while infusing the college-bound curriculum with more real-world applications.

The number of career-oriented classes that meet admissions requirements at the University of California and California State University has skyrocketed in recent years, from fewer than 300 a decade ago to more than 8,300 today.

Sen. Darrell Steinberg has quietly helped fuel the growth through his role as the Senate's president pro tem.

**Read the whole story**