



PRESS RELEASE
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Commission Adopts English Learner Authorization Revisions

SACRAMENTO – At its September 30, 2010 meeting, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing adopted eight recommendations proposed by its English Learner Advisory Panel. Once implemented, these changes will revise and update teacher and administrator preparation standards to reflect current research and issues in the field including emphasis on instruction in “academic language” and “academic literacy”. Other changes include the development of a focused English Language Development (ELD) teaching credential to improve instruction for English learners at the secondary level.

“This has been thoughtfully vetted. The Panel did a terrific job. What is motivating all of this is that we all want to strengthen what we are doing in this state for our English learners. We all feel a sense of urgency around this,” said Commissioner Shane Martin.

The recommendations were supported by diverse education groups including the California Association for Bilingual Education, California Teachers Association, California Federation of Teachers, Central Valley Education Coalition, California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators and Californians Together. All of these groups indicated that when fully implemented, the recommendations will significantly improve the ability of our K-12 teachers to address the needs of California’s English language learners.

Speaking on behalf of the Central Valley Education Coalition, representative Jeff Frost said that the recommendation concerning the creation of an English language credential was essential. “Making sure that single subject teachers are able to get the academic English along with the content has been the biggest struggle that we’ve had. This has been the biggest difficulty with those students not succeeding.”

The academic, social and economic status of English learners (EL) are critical factors in California’s overall student achievement outcomes and preparation of citizens. The issue of EL achievement affects every grade level, every content area, and virtually every teacher in the state. English learners make up 25% of the K-12 student population.

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Despite being identified by the common term of “English learner,” these students vary widely in their prior academic knowledge, their backgrounds, the length of time they have been in the United States as well as in California, and their ability levels in both English and their primary language. Each of these factors affects their instructional needs and the determination of the instructional approach to best meet those needs. Similarly, programs serving these students will need to vary depending on the needs of the particular English learners being served.

At its August 2010 meeting, the Commission discussed whether to continue allowing elementary credentials to authorize both Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) and English Language Development (ELD). The Commission decided that the authorization for both should continue; however, the ELD component of the elementary credential should be strengthened.

There have historically been two major instructional approaches addressed within teacher preparation programs to prepare candidates for working with English learner students to help them access core curriculum in English. These are *SDAIE*, or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, and *ELD*, or English Language Development (i.e., learning English as a language new to the student). *SDAIE* is a teaching approach that takes into account an English learner’s language, prior background knowledge, and cultural experiences. *ELD* refers to the organized and systematic teaching of English as a language new to the English learner student.

Further information on the Advisory Panel’s recommendations can be accessed at:
<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2010-09/2010-09-2E.pdf>

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