

## **Another View: Teacher standards not being lowered**

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Well-prepared teachers are critical to student success, and California's Commission on Teacher Credentialing sets some of the highest standards for teachers in the country. A recent op-ed in The Sacramento Bee by a group representing physical education teachers ("Teacher credentialing change is a step backward," Aug. 6) claimed that the commission is lowering its standards. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The group said that the commission had dropped its requirements for California teachers to hold a bachelor's degree and complete preparation. This is incorrect. Standards for teachers have not been reduced, and in fact have been intensified over the last year – especially for teaching the new Common Core State Standards and for teaching English learners effectively.

The commission did vote to provide an authorization within the physical education credential for ROTC teachers. Those who pass a basic skills test and a test of PE knowledge and complete 135 hours of teacher preparation can earn this authorization. If they are to teach English learners, they must also meet the requirements for an English learner authorization. Under the new authorization, these individuals can still teach only ROTC courses. They cannot teach regular PE classes. However, they will have a stronger knowledge base in physical education, which will help them serve their students.

Some of these instructors do not hold a bachelor's degree, but they have relevant job experience that California has long recognized in lieu of a degree for ROTC instructors and other specific groups of teachers, like those from industry who teach in Career Technical Education programs.

For many years, local school boards have had the right to decide whether or not to offer ROTC courses and whether or not to allow those courses to count for PE credit (along with other options that many students choose, such as marching band, cheerleading or sports). Recognizing a PE specialization for ROTC teachers does not alter this local authority in any way. Those who achieve the new specialization will be better prepared to teach their ROTC courses by meeting a higher standard of subject matter competence.

Linda Darling Hammond is chairwoman of the state Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

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