



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **New Science Credential to Ease Teacher Shortage**

SAN DIEGO—The Commission on Teacher Credentialing’s (Commission) approval of a Foundational-Level General Science Credential promises to ease the current shortage of science teachers in California’s middle schools. The Commission approved the new authorization at its August 7-8, 2008 meeting in San Diego.

An analysis of teacher misassignment by the Commission revealed that 20 percent of all science teachers are underprepared to teach science in California classrooms ([Assignment Monitoring of Certificated Employees in California by County Offices of Education 2003-2007. A Report to the Legislature](#) ). Of the 80,000 science courses taught in the public schools in 2006-07, over 43,000 courses were at the foundational level. An individual with a General Science Credential would be prepared to teach these courses, allowing teachers with full science authorizations to teach more advanced courses. The California Department of Education reports over 15,000 individuals were teaching science in 2006-07 and about 8,000 of them were teaching general science courses.

The new General Science Credential authorizes instruction in general, introductory, and integrated science, K-8 grades. Teachers holding the General Science Credential teaching courses within this authorization are also considered “Highly Qualified” for the purpose of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Since 1995, the Single Subject credential for K-12 science (used primarily in middle and high schools) has been divided into four major areas: Biological Science, Chemistry, Geosciences and Physics. Each of these areas has a specific science authorization that an individual may earn. Science teachers can add an authorization that allows an individual to teach introductory science across all four areas, integrated science grades 7-12 and departmentalized classes in the specified area at the high school level.

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In 2003, the Commission developed a highly successful Foundational-Level Mathematics credential that authorizes an individual to teach mathematics courses up through Algebra and Geometry. Prior to the Foundational-Level Math credential, the Commission was awarding approximately 950 single subject credentials in mathematics annually. The Foundational-level Math credential has allowed about 50% more individuals to earn an authorization to teach mathematics in 2006-07.

In California, preparing a teacher involves three separate phases: subject matter preparation, preliminary preparation (such as teaching techniques and working with English learners), and induction into the profession. An individual must meet the prerequisite subject matter requirement prior to student teaching and earning the preliminary teaching credential. For the single subject teaching credentials, there are usually two routes an individual may select between to satisfy the subject matter requirement: completing an approved subject matter program or passing an examination. No matter which route is selected by an individual to satisfy the subject matter requirement, the individual must also complete the preliminary preparation program.

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