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Information

Professional Services Committee

Update on the Activities of the Special Education Advisory Panel

Executive Summary: This report provides information about the activities that have occurred since December 2006 to modify the requirements for Education Specialist credentials, including (a) implementation procedures to add an English learner authorization to the current Education Specialist Credential, b) eliminating credential redundancy and c) establishing and convening a Special Education Work Group to review the structure and requirements for the Special Education credentials.

Recommended Action: For information only.

Presenter: Dr. Michael McKibbin, Administrator,
Professional Services Division

Goal 1:

Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators.

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation of professional educators.
- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the performance of credential candidates.

Update on the Activities of the Special Education Advisory Panel

Introduction

This agenda item provides information about the activities that have occurred since the Commission authorized staff to begin the process of reviewing and modifying requirements for the Education Specialist credential. These activities include amending Education Specialist programs to include an English learner credential authorization, conducting 14 Special Education forums around the state to receive information on the components that should be modified in Education Specialist credential programs, and appointing and convening a Special Education Work Group to make recommendations for modifications in the structure and requirements for special education credentials.

Background

At the May 31-June 1, 2006 Commission meeting, Commissioners approved four measures to review and modify the current Special Education credential structure and requested periodic updates of the activities of the Work Group. The measures were as follows.

1. To require all Education Specialist teacher preparation programs to embed English learner (EL) content in their programs and to respond to the appropriate English learner-related Preliminary and Professional Level teacher preparation standards.
2. To hold voluntary stakeholder meetings to begin the review the structure of the Education Specialist Credential including professional level credential and subject matter preparation issues. Staff was also directed to address the redundancy of requirements for the Clear Credential by those candidates who have completed the Preliminary Level I Education Specialist and/or the Preliminary Multiple or Single Subject Credential.
3. To convene a work group of interested stakeholders to determine whether the current structure for special education credentials continues to be the most appropriate to meet the needs of California's schools and students.
4. To conduct a review of the activities of other states in offering special education credentials, review federal requirements, and to conduct a web-based job analysis of the responsibilities and requirements education specialist credential holders.

In July 2006, the Commission was notified that the Governor's budget included funds to support the Commission's efforts to examine and revise the structure and requirements of the Education Specialist Credential. A total of \$200,000 was allocated from Title II funds to support the EL amendment review process, the field meetings, and the Workgroup deliberations.

In October 2006, Senate Bill 1209 (Chap. 517, Stats. 2006) amended Education Code Section 44265.1, and states that, “by December 1, 2007, the commission shall report to the Legislature and the Governor on the current existing process and requirements for obtaining a specialist credential in special education and recommend modifications to enhance and expedite these procedures.”

At the November-December 2006, Commission meeting, Commission staff presented the first update on the activities that had been accomplished including the progress on English learner amendments and the themes that emerged in the stakeholder meetings. The remainder of this agenda item will describe the activities that have occurred since that report.

Discussion

English Learner Authorization for Education Specialist Programs

To date, 62 EL amendment proposals have been initially read, and 31 are approved. Twelve have been resubmitted with additional information and are being examined by peer reviewers. Nineteen program reviews have been returned to their teacher preparation program sponsors with a request for further information. Staff will send these program amendments to reviewers as soon as each resubmission with additional clarifying information is submitted.

Stakeholder Meetings

Staff conducted fourteen meetings throughout the state. Approximately 215 stakeholders attended the field meetings. In addition more than 200 educators attended professional association meetings and offered their suggestions about restructuring Education Specialist credentials and ways that duplicative experiences could be reduced. The information from these meetings was summarized and presented to the Special Education Work Group.

Redundancy of Credential Requirements

In June staff sent a program advisory to the field regarding the redundancy of requirements for the Clear Credential by those candidates who have completed the Preliminary Level I Education Specialist and/or the Preliminary Multiple or Single Subject Credential. This letter was sent to Deans and Directors of Teacher Preparation programs, Directors of Fifth Year of Study Programs, Directors of Education Specialist Programs and Directors of BTSA/Induction Programs. This advisory offers guidance to programs on developing Induction plans, granting equivalency for prior coursework, and developing non-university and advanced level coursework for Level II Education Specialist Credentials.

Selection and Convening of the Work Group

Staff solicited nominees for the Special Education Work Group and selected the membership according to Commission guidelines. Twenty-five persons were selected from more than one hundred persons who submitted their applications. In addition five persons were selected to represent professional organizations. Three liaisons were appointed to assure connections to other state agencies. A list of those appointed to the Work Group may be found in Appendix A.

The first meeting of the Work Group was in February. Monthly meetings are scheduled through October. The Work Group spent the first few meetings in the “information collection phase,” including learning the history of Special Education credentials in California, discussing other states’ efforts regarding Special Education credentials, and coordinating efforts of other California state level workgroups such as the Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism and the Superintendent of Public Instruction’s Autism Advisory Committee. The Work Group also began discussions related to the four themes that emerged from the stakeholders meetings:

- Structure of the Education Specialist Credential
- Transitions and Professional Level Instruction
- Subject Matter Requirements
- Revisions in the Credential Program Curriculum

The Work Group has been assisted by the National Center for Special Education Personnel and Related Service Providers (Personnel Center). Dr. Phoebe Gillespie presented a review of the trends and activities of other states for the Work Group at the April meeting and has assisted in leading and synthesizing the discussions.

Simultaneously, the staff began working with the California Comprehensive Center (CC) to gather information about the federal implications of the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act), particularly as it relates to subject matter and California Special Education credentials. The CC provided a presentation on NCLB/IDEIA requirements at the April Work Group meeting. The CC has also played a significant role in the development, dissemination, and data collection of a job analysis survey.

The last job analysis survey related to knowledge, skills and abilities of beginning Special Education teachers was done approximately seventeen years ago. The survey is being piloted with the Special Education Credential Workgroup members. Once revisions are made it will be disseminated statewide to both Special Education and general education teachers. The results will be used to inform the Special Education Credential Work Group and to provide the basis for the knowledge, skills and abilities that Education Specialist Credential holders must know and be able to do.

During the May and June Work Group meetings, additional experts have been invited to address specific topics with members of the Work Group, including:

- Speech and language disorders
- Autism
- Moderate/ severe
- BTSA Induction/Level II issues
- Low Incidence disabilities
- Assistive Technology
- Human resources and assignments

The Subgroup meetings are to help insure that the unique needs of specific areas will be addressed by the recommended modifications in the structure and requirements of Education Specialist credentials.

Beginning in April, the Special Education Credential Work Group meetings have been focusing on the “agreements stage.” In this phase of their deliberations, the Work Group is reaching consensus on the areas that need to be changed and formulating their recommendations for suggested improvements. The “agreements” will eventually be used to develop possible policy recommendations that will be forwarded to the Commission. For example, in May the Work Group came to a preliminary agreement on subject matter requirements for the Education Specialist Credential. Their tentative plan is to recommend to the Commission that Special Education subject matter requirements parallel Multiple and Single Subject content assignments and the appropriate assignment would be determined by the subject and grades the candidate is assigned.

The Work Group also tentatively agreed on the basic credential structure for the preliminary and clear education specialist credentials that they plan to recommend. For both credential levels, multiple routes would be available to accommodate the individual needs and goals of credential candidates. Among the options the Work Group may recommend are: an undergraduate major that would include both subject matter content and special education content; a post-baccalaureate course of study similar to the current preliminary credential structure; a concurrent program that would include coursework to obtain an Education Specialist and a Multiple or Single Subject Credential simultaneously; and university and district intern Education Specialist programs. Clear credential options would include one that blends BTSA Induction and advanced specialization coursework. Another option would include advanced coursework including a graduate degree and applied study. In June the Work Group will attempt to come to agreements on service delivery models and the proposed curriculum for Education Specialist programs.

In addition to the ongoing discussions of the Work Group, two public forums will be held August 22 (Southern California) and September 12, 2007 (Sacramento) to allow any issues to be brought forward which have not yet been addressed and which may be relevant to the review of the Special Education credentials and to seek reactions to the proposed modifications in the Education Specialist structure and requirements. On October 3, the Work Group will present its proposed recommendations to the Commission for information and in November for action. Upon approval or modification by the Commission, the recommendations will be forwarded to the Legislature and Governor pursuant to Education Code Section 44265.1.

Appendix A
SPECIAL EDUCATION CREDENTIAL WORKGROUP
APPOINTEES
FEBRUARY 2007

Andrews, Lanna	University of San Francisco
Andrews, Sue	Ventura County Office of Education
Barrett, Janet	Capistrano Unified School District
Best, Sherwood	CSU, Los Angeles
Brown, Geri	San Diego Unified School District
Cepello, Michelle	CSU, Chico
Davidson, Satako	Vallejo Unified School District (retired)
Denman, Kenneth	CARS+
Duckett, Jane	National University
Grandinette, Sharon	Special Education Consultant
Grayson-DeJong, Pat	Los Angeles Unified School District
Jarrett, Sharon	Los Angeles Unified School District
Karge, Belinda	CSU, Fullerton
Kennedy, Virginia	CSU, Northridge
Kirchner, Carl	California Department of Education (retired)
Krapf, David	St. Mary's College
Lewis, Michael	CSU, Sacramento
Maydeck, Daniel	LeRoy Haynes Center
Parker, Margaret	CSU, Dominguez Hills
Raske, Dave	CSU, Sacramento
Sacks, Sharon	California School for the Blind
Schrup, Marie	Sweetwater Union High School District
Smetana, Linda	CSU, East Bay
Staples, Sandra	Lodi Unified School District
Vessey, Ann	Moreno Valley Unified School District

Organizational Representatives

Burness, Maureen	Association of California School Administrators
Johnson, Merrilee	California County Superintendents Educational Services Association
Jones, Dianne	California Teachers Association
Kinley, Kathy	California School Boards Association
Minks, Christine	California Federation of Teacher

Liaisons

Canning, Janet	CA Department of Education, Special Education Division
Hawkins, Angela	Advisory Commission on Special Education
Waite, Athena	Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Commission Staff

Jones Wadsworth, Jan	Professional Services Division
McKibbin, Michael	Professional Services Division
Fesperman, Terri	Credentials, Assignments and Waivers Division