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Information

Professional Services Committee

Report on the Pilot SB 2042 Preparation to Teach English Learners Study

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents information from the pilot SB 2042 Preparation to Teach English Learners study conducted in June 2007 and suggests potential next steps for further investigation.

Recommended Action: For information only

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Strategic Plan Goal: 1

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

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation and performance of professional educators and for the accreditation of credential programs.

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Introduction

This agenda item presents a report on a pilot study to determine the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities of graduates of SB 2042 teacher preparation programs, as well as induction program completers, with respect to the teaching of English learners in the general education classroom. The item also raises related questions and issues for further investigation.

Background

The SB 2042 credentialing reform required all teacher preparation programs to embed within coursework and field experiences the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by all multiple and single subject teachers in California public schools to work effectively with English learner students. The SB 2042 reform also created a two-tiered credentialing system, in which the initial credential earned is at the preliminary level, and beginning teachers must successfully complete a series of further experiences within the induction phase during which they deepen their knowledge, skills and abilities in order to earn the clear credential. This two-tiered system was intentionally designed so that the teachers' level of knowledge regarding effective instruction of English learners in the general education classroom would grow and develop between the time of obtaining the preliminary credential and subsequently earning the clear credential. Teacher Preparation Program Standard 13 is the primary standard in which these competencies are described for preliminary multiple and single subject candidates, and Professional Teacher Induction Program Standard 19 is the primary standard in which these competencies are described for professional clear credential candidates.

A rigorous review of each teacher preparation program's response to Standard 13 was undertaken by a qualified review panel of experts in the field of English learner education. The review of responses to Standard 19 was accomplished during the regular induction program review and approval process. Most of these reviews took place from 2002 through 2004. Programs receiving approval were expected to implement and maintain over time the instructional program, fieldwork, and other components relating to learning the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to effectively instruct English learner students in the general education classroom as described in their response to these standards.

Five years have passed since the earliest programs were approved during 2002 and preparation to teach English learners was embedded within the overall teacher preparation program sequence. It is appropriate to look at the questions of how successful this strategy has been, and of whether graduates of SB 2042 teacher preparation and SB 2042 teacher induction programs are sufficiently prepared in the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to effectively instruct English learner students.

Study Questions to be Considered

To begin to help answer the question of the effectiveness of the SB 2042 two-tiered approach to helping credential candidates and beginning teachers acquire and develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to effectively instruct English learners in the general education classroom, the following study questions were identified:

I) The knowledge, skills and abilities needed by teachers of English learners

- a) What are the knowledge, skills and abilities needed by teachers of English learners in the general education classroom?
- b) What levels of competency with respect to this body of knowledge, skills and abilities should we expect of beginning teachers?
- c) What levels of competency with respect to this body of knowledge, skills and abilities should we expect of experienced teachers?

II) Effective systems of professional development for teachers of English learners

- a) What are the most effective delivery systems to assure that preservice teachers, beginning teachers and experienced teachers meet these expectations?
- b) How do we assure that the teachers have acquired the expected knowledge, skills and abilities regardless of the professional development delivery system?
- c) How do we assure that the knowledge, skills and abilities we expect of teachers are actually translated into appropriate instruction for English learners in the classroom?

Description of the Pilot Study

Given the limited resources and time available for its completion, the pilot study focused primarily on the questions relating to Part I above, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by teachers of English learners in the general education classroom. For purposes of the pilot study, the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by teachers of English learners were defined as those identified in the content specifications for the California Teacher of English Learners (CTEL) examination. The level of competency needed was identified as that required to earn a passing score on the CTEL examination. It was hypothesized that due to more advanced training and classroom experiences, the scores of the induction program participants would be higher than those of the preliminary credential candidates, particularly with respect to Subtest III (Culture and Inclusion).

The pilot study focused on two populations:

- preliminary credential candidates who were completing an SB 2042 multiple or single subject teacher preparation program in Spring 2007
- beginning teachers who were completing the second year of a two-year SB 2042 induction program in Spring 2007

The pilot study methodology involved recruiting a random sample from each of the populations identified above and having them (1) respond to background questions about their preparation to teach English learners, and (2) take and complete all three sections of the CTEL examination at the regularly scheduled June 2007 CTEL test administration. The three sections of the CTEL examination are:

- CTEL 1: Language and Language Development
- CTEL 2: Assessment and Instruction
- CTEL 3: Culture and Inclusion

The background questions asked of all study participants were as follows:

- How satisfied are you with your preparation to teach English learners?
- How confident do you feel about your ability to teach English learners?
- What areas in particular do you feel best prepared with respect to teaching English learners?
- What areas in particular do you feel least prepared with respect to teaching English learners?

Responses to the background questions were submitted separately to the Commission by the participants; the examination registration forms were sent to the Commission's examinations contractor for the CTEL examination, NCS Pearson. Some study participants provided background information and also took the test; some provided background information but did not show up to take the test; some provided background information, showed up to take the test but did not complete one or more sections of the test; and some provided background information and took the complete test but their handwritten signatures are not legible and thus it was not possible to associate their written comments on the background questions with their scores.

The study intended to recruit a minimum of 100 participants from each of the two study populations. However, due to the short time available to recruit and register candidates for the June 2007 CTEL administration, and due to the number of candidates who registered but failed to either attend the examination session or to complete all three sections of the CTEL examination even though they did attend the examination session, the final numbers of participants were considerably less than intended. A total of sixty-six (66) SB 2042 preliminary credential candidate volunteers and twenty-two (22) beginning teacher volunteers from induction programs ultimately completed the study.

Limitations of the Pilot Study and Its Data

It is important to keep in mind the following significant study limitations when considering the results of the pilot study:

- The sample size of 66 beginning teachers and 22 induction candidates is too small to be able to make any valid conclusions about study outcomes
- The sample was made up of volunteers only, and was not scientifically selected. The sample may or may not be representative of the two target population groups
- The study participants, unlike typical exam takers, did not have advance preparation for taking the CTEL examination
- The study focused only on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of credential candidates and of beginning teachers; no information was obtained with respect to the implementation issues identified above concerning effective systems of professional development for teachers of English learners (including issues relating to the fidelity of program implementation over time)

- The results of this pilot study are not generalizable to any other context or for any other purpose

As a result of these limitations, the data provided below are not significant in and of themselves, and serve only to suggest additional areas of investigation and study.

Summary of Pilot Study Results for SB 2042 Preliminary Credential Candidates

Overall SB 2042 CTEL examination study results are summarized in Appendix A. A total of 66 preliminary credential candidates completed all three sections of the CTEL examination at the June 2007 regular examination administration. Of these candidates, 13, or approximately 20%, passed all three sections. Of the three separate CTEL subtests, approximately 55% of these candidates passed Subtest I; 44% passed Subtest II; and 38% passed Subtest III. The initial passing rate for the CTEL examination for the 2,164 candidates who took and passed all three sections of the test for the first time in 2005-06 is 56.7%. It is important to note, however, that this is a different group and type of candidates from those in SB 2042 programs. Teachers who take the CTEL examination are typically pre-SB 2042 credential holders or other credential holders who did not have this training as part of their teacher preparation program, or who may be from out of state.

When responding to the background questions, the group of study participants indicated they were, in general, medium to highly satisfied with the preparation they received to teach English learners and were similarly confident in their ability to teach English learners. The areas in which they felt particularly prepared, as well as those areas in which they felt the least prepared, are indicated in the data table provided as an attachment to this agenda item on the Commission's website. These data are interesting, but show no clear pattern. In some instances, participants who indicated they were confident in certain areas did not pass the examination, and conversely, participants who indicated they did not feel confident in their ability to teach English learners passed all three sections of the examination.

Summary of Pilot Study Results for SB 2042 Induction Program Candidates

A total of 22 induction program volunteers completed all three sections of the CTEL examination at the June 2007 regular examination administration. Of these candidates, 7, or approximately 32%, passed all three sections. Of the three separate CTEL subtests, approximately 59% of these candidates passed Subtest I; 59% passed Subtest II; and 46% passed Subtest III. These results are tentatively indicative of the hypothesis that the induction program does add to the depth and breadth of the knowledge base and abilities of teachers to work effectively with English learners in the general education classroom.

When responding to the background questions, this group of participants indicated they, like the preliminary credential candidates, were, in general, medium to highly satisfied with the preparation they received to teach English learners and were similarly confident in their ability to teach English learners. The areas in which they felt particularly prepared, as well as those areas in which they felt the least prepared, are indicated in the data table provided as an attachment to this agenda item on the Commission's website. These data show to a greater degree than was the case with the preliminary credential participants that induction program participants were more accurate in their judgments of which areas they were the least prepared in, as indicated by which

sections of the examination they passed or failed. The data from the summary from both the preliminary credential candidates and the induction program candidates suggests that experienced teachers in the study had a better ability to assess their skills in this area with greater accuracy than 2042 Preliminary Credential Candidates.

Potential Hypotheses Suggested by the Findings

Below are several potential hypotheses that might explain these preliminary findings. No single hypothesis in and of itself is likely to be sufficient to explain the results; rather, it is more likely that a combination of factors resulted in the study outcomes. It is not possible to base any conclusions about these hypotheses on the limited data available through this study. The major hypotheses are that:

- The participants may not be representative of the larger pool of credential candidates and/or induction participants
- The participants, whether representative or not of the larger pool of credential candidates, may have been insufficiently prepared with respect to the teaching of English learners.
- The participants may have been insufficiently prepared for the CTEL examination, but might have succeeded to a greater extent had they done some preparation for the examination based on the content specifications
- Programs may not be fully implementing the program inclusive of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for effective instruction of English learners as originally submitted in response to standards
- Candidates may not have paid sufficient attention to the training and/or fieldwork regarding English learners provided by the programs
- Candidates may have had insufficient exposure to English learners in their field experiences and/or classrooms
- The relevant English learner preparation standards may need review and possibly revision

Potential Next Study Steps

- a) **Repeating the same study with a larger number of more broadly representative participants.** A larger, more broadly representative sample of a minimum of 100 participants per target group should repeat the pilot study process by taking the CTEL examination in June 2008.
- b) **Reviewing Standard 13 (teacher preparation) and Standard 19 (induction) to ensure that the standards adequately cover the knowledge, skills, and abilities identified as necessary for effective instruction of English Learners.**
- c) **Reviewing the fidelity of implementation of Standard 13 (teacher preparation) and of Standard 19 (induction) across a more broadly representative sample of programs**

Addressing these potential study steps could allow for confirmation of the very tentative findings of this pilot study. Based on the subsequent study data, further questions and next steps could become clearer in terms of addressing the multiplicity of hypotheses and potential interactions between the factors that may be affecting candidate outcomes in the area of English learner instruction. These steps, however, have significant budgetary implications, as the CTEL examination costs approximately \$256 per candidate to register and take all three sections, and there would also be costs associated with a review of the standards as well as a large sample of

programs to determine the degree to which they were adhering to the approved implementation plan for Standards 13 and 19.

APPENDIX A
Overall SB 2042 CTEL Exam Study Results

Preliminary Teacher Preparation Participants

Professional Teacher Induction Participants

Total Registered	84	Total Registered	31
Total Absent	18	Total Absent	9
Total Examinees	66	Total Examinees	22

**Preliminary Teacher
Preparation Participants**

**Professional Teacher
Induction Participants**

Passed Subtest I (Language & Language Development)	36	54.5%	13	59.1%
Passed Subtest II (Assessment & Instruction)	29	43.9%	13	59.1%
Passed Subtest III (Culture & Inclusion)	25	37.9%	10	45.5%
Passed all 3 Subtests	13	19.7%	7	31.8%