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Information

Professional Services Committee

Authorization to Teach English Learners

Executive Summary: This item provides a summary of issues raised by stakeholders at a meeting held on February 21, 2008 on the topic of addressing the needs of teachers of English Learners as it relates to certification. Further, it presents for consideration a concept discussed by the stakeholders to establish a new single subject credential.

Recommended Action: For information only

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Administrator, Professional Services Division

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 for the accreditation of credential programs.

April 2008

Authorization to Teach English Learners

Introduction

California is home to a large population of K-12 English learners (EL). Currently, 25% (1.6 million) of all K-12 students are English learners, with about 40% of this total concentrated in just 20 school districts. Eighty-five percent of English learners speak Spanish as their primary language. Of all EL students, 61% are in elementary grades, 20% are in middle grades, and 19% are in high school. These students continue to experience a significant learning gap compared to their English speaking peers.

The issue of how best to prepare teachers to address the needs of English learners in the regular education classroom is complex. This agenda item presents a discussion of ideas and potential options relating to the preparation and credentialing of teacher candidates to teach English learners, including input from the field, based on a stakeholder meeting held on February 21, 2008.

Background

Preparation of teacher candidates to teach English learners in the regular education classroom has historically been addressed in several ways. Prior to 1994, teachers could earn an LDS (Language Development Specialist) authorization. This authorization was an option, rather than a state requirement for teachers, although districts could require this authorization for employment purposes. Starting in 1994, the CLAD and BCLAD examinations as well as CLAD program coursework offered teacher candidates two routes to obtaining an authorization to teach English learners. Obtaining this authorization, however, was still optional unless mandated by a school district as an employment requirement. Teachers who were already credentialed could complete the coursework program or pass the CLAD examination in order to earn a CLAD certificate, or they could pass the BCLAD examination to earn a bilingual credential. There was also an integrated route for candidates that consisted of completing a CLAD or BCLAD emphasis teacher preparation program. Finally, SB 395 and SB 1969 provided a staff development route for already-credentialed teachers to earn an EL authorization but this authorization was limited to Specially Designated Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) only.

In large measure due to the fact that the numbers of English learners in California's public schools had increased significantly, teacher credentialing reform under SB 2042 in 1998 and AB 1059 in 2001 addressed this issue more systemically for new teachers. As a result of these policy measures, all multiple and single subject teacher candidates are now required to earn an authorization to teach English learners as part of the qualifications for a basic California teaching credential. Since the preparation to teach EL was embedded within the regular teacher preparation program coursework, teacher candidates no longer earned a separate CLAD authorization, but instead their basic multiple or single subject teaching credential automatically included the EL authorization. This requirement was extended to include the special education

credentials in 2006. The CLAD certificate, however, remains available for already-credentialed teachers who needed to earn an EL authorization.

In the years since SB 2042 has been implemented, the achievement gap between English learners and non-English learners has continued to be problematic, especially as academic requirements have strengthened in the interim. In addition, the complexity of the EL population has also increased, with more students of different languages, different educational needs, and different socioeconomic standing that are enrolling in California public schools.

The question has arisen as to how successful the SB 2042 model of embedding preparation to teach English learners in the regular education classroom has been. Last year, the Commission noted its interest in gathering additional information and data that could allow for a better understanding of the efficacy of this approach. The Commission authorized a limited study in this area using the CTEL examination as the control; however, since that study did not yield definitive results, the question still remains. Issues of how beginning teachers are helped to grow and develop in their understanding and competence to teach English learners are critical to this discussion. Further, the degree of EL expertise and staff development available in the local school districts to support both beginning and veteran teachers is also critical.

Stakeholder Meeting of February 21, 2008

I. Meeting goal and purpose

To explore these and related issues, and to obtain input from the field, a stakeholder meeting was held on February 21, 2008. Key stakeholders in the field of English learner instruction were invited to attend and asked to identify an official representative to express the stakeholder's official point of view on the issues. The list of attendees is provided as Appendix A. In advance of the meeting, attendees were provided several documents to review. The list of these documents is provided as Appendix B.

The purpose of the meeting was to examine how well the current credentialing structure for preparation to teach English learners works for beginning and veteran teachers, especially secondary level teachers, and their English learner students.

The goals of the meeting were to:

- a) examine data available on the structure of teacher credentialing and the progress of English learners in California's public schools in order to provide a framework for discussion;
- b) discuss whether the current teacher preparation programs and induction programs in the area of teaching English learners are sufficient for beginning teachers to effectively meet the achievement goals of their English learner secondary students from the perspective of participants;
- c) discuss whether the current staff development in the areas of teaching English learners is sufficient for experienced teachers at the secondary level to meet the achievement needs of their students;
- d) examine whether revisions to current preparation and/or additional pathways in the area of English learner instruction are needed in the area of preparation to teach English learners at the secondary level for beginning and/or for experienced teachers; and

- e) gather views from the field on this subject that will serve to inform the Commission on future policy development in this area.

II. General discussion themes

Based on these overall meeting goals and purposes, a wide-ranging discussion ensued at the meeting. Several themes emerged from the discussion. Many of these themes are critically important to meeting the needs of English Learners, but are not within the purview of the Commission. These themes include: 1) the need for high quality EL student achievement data; 2) the need for better administrator training and support for EL issues; and 3) the need for more and better staff development for all teachers, including beginning and veteran teachers and, in particular, the lack of sufficient high quality mentor teachers and/or support providers in the area of EL to support all teachers.

However, other themes discussed by stakeholders at the February 21, 2008 meeting are not only relevant to the topic but are also within the purview of the Commission's statutory responsibilities and could be the focus of future Commission efforts. These themes are summarized below:

1. Need to determine how well-prepared teacher candidates are for teaching EL

Participants cited a variety of anecdotal evidence concerning whether both teacher candidates and beginning teachers are better trained or less well trained under SB 2042 with respect to their knowledge, skills and abilities relating to teaching English learners. Participants discussed evidence to support both sides of this question. However, most, if not all, participants supported the idea that the standards that govern SB 2042 teacher preparation programs and induction programs need to be reviewed to make sure that the standards were up to date and sufficient to prepare teacher candidates and beginning teachers in the area of EL. Work on revising teacher preparation standards has begun with the SB 2042 standards revision effort that has been presented to the Commission at previous Commission meetings.

2. Need for advanced level knowledge and training in areas not currently covered within CTEL

Participants felt that the new CTEL standards and programs are of high quality and appropriate for entry level beginning teachers of EL. However, participants also identified some important additional areas for advanced level training such as training in linguistics, academic literacy needs of beginning and intermediate English learners, and on the differential effects of various primary languages on the learning of English. This advanced level content is not presently part of the requirements for an existing credential.

To begin to address this, participants considered the concept of a new single subject credential in the area of teaching English as a new language. Because this possibility is a concept which generated significant discussion and notable support by participants, although not necessarily consensus at this time, staff will discuss this possibility more fully in the next section.

III. Discussion of a potential single subject credential in the area of teaching English as a new language

Stakeholders at the meeting were in general consensus about the following:

- Beginning teachers have only a basic level of knowledge, skills and abilities relating to teaching English learners in the regular education classroom and need more intensive development and support in order to promote EL achievement.
- A lack of sufficient expertise relating to the teaching of EL across districts in the state results in a lack of experienced, trained support providers and mentors to effectively help beginning teachers grow and develop in the area of teaching EL.
- Insufficient high quality staff development is available in the area of teaching EL across districts in the state.
- Insufficient high quality data are available about EL achievement outcomes for classroom teachers to use for instructional improvement.

In discussing the above issues, stakeholders began to consider the possibility of a new credential that could possibly address some of these EL related issues. In the view of these stakeholders, a separate credential in the teaching of English as a new language could potentially meet all of these different staff development needs by providing districts and/or schools with a cadre of highly trained English learner staff development providers, EL program directors, and other EL instructional support personnel. These same individuals could also provide models of effective classroom instruction to those EL students most in need of improvement. One stakeholder group in particular, the California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CATESOL), has already submitted a proposal to the Commission requesting that the Commission develop a credential in teaching English as a new language as a single subject credential.

The CATESOL proposal provided the following rationale:

- All teachers, and especially secondary teachers, need better training and support to address the instructional and achievement needs of EL students, and this support is not currently available within teacher preparation programs, induction programs, and/or from existing staff.
- Current teachers are overwhelmed with the language needs of EL students, as well as with the wide cultural variety of the students they teach, and lack support from mentors/coaches with advanced training in EL.
- There is a need for teachers with a base credential and advanced training in EL; advanced training is currently not provided for in the credential structure.
- Teachers need more information and practice in the “how” rather than in the “what” relating to effective EL instruction.
- Teachers could benefit from “best practices” modeling based on advanced knowledge and training in the area of EL.
- Having specialists in the area of EL could benefit all teachers as well as administrators.

A major point of discussion was whether a single subject credential in English as a new language was actually needed. Participants spoke to both sides of this question, with some suggesting that California follow other states that have such a credential. They argued that California needs a mechanism such as this for allowing teachers to gain advanced training and be able to use that training in critical ways such as providing staff development, program direction, and mentoring/coaching/modeling, and that California needs additional ways to promote EL achievement through advanced teacher training and competency.

Some participants thought that if there were to be such a credential it should be a basic credential, while others supported the idea of either an advanced level credential (third tier), or a

supplementary authorization to a basic credential. Some participants also questioned that if there were to be such a credential, current credential holders with either an SB 2042 EL authorization, a CLAD or a BCLAD authorization might be viewed as less prepared than those who would hold this new credential.

Participants also questioned what additional authorization, if any, a new credential might provide beyond that already provided by the SB 2042, CLAD and BCLAD English learner authorizations. Proponents suggested that the new credential might provide authorization as a staff developer, support provider/coach/mentor, and K-12 EL program director. In this instance, the credential would be viewed as a third tier credential or a supplementary authorization rather than a basic credential.

Participants also identified other related issues needing further discussion

- ensuring that any proposed new credential not duplicate the authorization of existing credentials;
- the effect of a new single subject credential on employment issues;
- whether there is a demand for employment of individuals with the credential; and
- the possible need to develop both a program and examination route for the credential, which would require the Commission to undertake an examination development effort.

IV. Next Steps

Staff requests direction from the Commission as to whether further steps should be taken to pursue the concept of establishing a new single subject credential in the area of English as a new language. Should the Commission direct staff to pursue this possibility, staff would return with an agenda item at a future Commission meeting for consideration and additional discussion.

APPENDIX A

ATTENDEES AT THE FEBRUARY 21, 2008 STAKEHOLDER MEETING

NAME OF REPRESENTATIVE	ORGANIZATION
Rosie Arenas	California Association for Bilingual Ed.
Leolyn Boyer	LA County Office of Education
Misao Brown	California Teachers Association
Zumara Cline	CSU Chancellor's Office
Ludo Deschuytter	Los Angeles Unified School District
Marta Diaz, CABA	Individual representation
Sara Fields	CATESOL
Jeff Frost, CATESOL	Individual representation
Susan Heredia	California School Boards Association
Paula Jacobs	CA Department of Education
Tara Kini	Public Advocates
Gail Kirby	St. Mary's College/AICCU
Ann Lippincott	University of California
Jane Robb	California Teachers Association
Susan Westbrook	California Federation of Teachers
Charles Zartman, CSU Chico	Individual representation

CTC Staff Attending

Larry Birch
Rhonda Brown
Teri Clark
Phyllis Jacobson
Dale Janssen
Margaret Olebe

APPENDIX B

REFERENCE MATERIALS PROVIDED TO STAKEHOLDER MEETING PARTICIPANTS

State of the State address – Jack O’Connell

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr08/yr08rel10.asp>

CELDT Results

http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/CELDT/CelDdt03_State.asp?cYear=2006-07&cChoice=CelDdt1&RptNumber=01&cTestNumber=2

http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/CELDT/CELDT03_State.asp?cTestNumber=2&RptNumber=21&cYear=2006-07&cChoice=CelDdt1

http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/CELDT/CELDT03_State.asp?cTestNumber=2&RptNumber=20&cYear=2006-07&cChoice=CelDdt1

CTEL Program Standards

CTEL Examination Content Specifications

Report to the Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Education Finance: English Learners and Economic Impact Aid. Report from the Legislative Analyst’s Office, April 10, 2007

English Language Standards for California Public Schools, CDE

Chart of current English Learner Credential Authorizations (staff-developed document)