
2B

Action

Legislative Committee

Analyses of Bills

Executive Summary: Staff will present analyses of educator preparation or licensing bills introduced by Legislators. The analyses will summarize current law, describe the bill's provisions, estimate its costs and recommend amendments, if applicable.

Recommended Action: Staff will recommend a position in each bill analysis submitted for the Commission's consideration.

Presenter: Mary Armstrong, Director, Office of Governmental Relations

Strategic Plan Goal: 2

Support policy development related to educator preparation, conduct and professional growth

- ◆ Inform key legislators and policy makers on issues and ideas relevant to the Commission's scope of action

August 2008

Bill Analysis

Bill Number:	AB 131
Author:	Assembly Member Jim Beall
Sponsor:	The Author
Subject of Bill:	Authorization to Teach Three and Four-Year-Olds with Autism
Date Introduced:	January 12, 2007
Date Last Amended:	June 19, 2008
Status in Leg. Process:	Passed in the Senate. Returned to Assembly due to revised content
Recommended Position:	Support
Date of Analysis:	July 10, 2008
Analyst:	Marilyn Errett

Analysis of Bill Provisions

AB 131, first introduced in January of 2007, was amended to its current content on June 10, 2008 with technical amendments following on June 19, 2008. AB 131 would provide a new temporary option for local educational agencies and schools to assign teachers to serve three and four-year-olds with autism if the teacher holds a credential authorizing the instruction of students with autism in K-12 and adult classroom settings. The teachers authorized through this option, in addition to holding the credential must meet one of the following competence criteria:

- Has provided full-time instruction for at least one year prior to September 1, 2007, in a special education program that serves pupils who are three and four years of age with autism pursuant to their individualized education programs and received from the local educational agency or school a favorable evaluation or recommendation to teach pupils with autism.

Or

- Has completed at least three semester units of coursework in the subject of special education, early childhood education at a regionally accredited institution of higher education.

The measure would become inoperative on August 31, 2011, and, as of January 1, 2012, would be repealed unless a later enacted statute, that becomes operative on or before January 1, 2012, deletes or extends the dates on which it becomes inoperative and is repealed.

AB 131 is an urgency measure that would go into effect immediately upon the Governor's signature.

Summary of Current Law

California Education Code §44265 authorizes the Commission to set standards for and to issue specialist credentials in areas of special education and to establish the requirements for these credentials in regulation.

California Education Code §44265.1 requires the Commission to report to the Legislature by December 1, 2007, "...on the current existing process and requirements for obtaining a specialist credential in special education and recommend modifications to enhance and expedite these procedures." This work has been completed and the Commission is moving forward with the recommendations.

AB 2302 (Bass)¹ was signed by the Governor on June 30, 2008. AB 2302 is similar in content to AB 131 in that it provides a temporary assignment option for services to students with autism. It differs from AB 131 in that it allows teachers who hold an Education Specialist Credential: Mild/Moderate to serve students with autism if they have one year of experience or if they have completed a three semester unit course in the area of autism.²

Commission Activity

In December, 2007, the Commission adopted and forwarded to the Legislature recommendations from the Commission's Special Education Workgroup for updating and modifying Education Specialist Credentials as noted in the "Summary of Current Law" section of the agenda item. Recommendations included the need to address the increase of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in California public schools. The Commission currently issues an Education Specialist Credential: Early Childhood Special Education and also an Early Childhood Special Education Certificate for teachers who already hold an Education Specialist Credential in another specialization area. Both of these documents authorize service to children from birth to pre-kindergarten. The authorization includes service to children who have been diagnosed with ASD. Standards for these authorizations are currently being revised by the Commission's Special Education Workgroup and recommendations will be brought to the Commission at a future meeting.

Fiscal Impact

None

¹ Chap. 41, Stats. 2008

² The Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate credential does not currently authorize service to students with autism.

Relevant Commission Legislative Policies

Policy 4: The Commission supports the maintenance of a thoughtful, cohesive approach to the preparation of credential candidates and opposes legislation that would tend to fragment or undermine the cohesiveness of the preparation of credential candidates.

Policy 5: The Commission supports legislation that strengthens or reaffirms initiatives and reforms that it previously has adopted and opposes legislation that would undermine initiatives or reforms that it previously has adopted.

Organizational Positions

Support

Alliance of California Autism Organizations
Applied Behavior Consultants, Inc.
Association of Regional Center Agencies
California Association of Private Special Education Schools
California State PTA

Opposition

None noted at this time.

Reason for Suggested Position

The need to respond to an unprecedented increase in children diagnosed with ASD has been featured in the media and was recently the topic of a Blue Ribbon Legislative Panel chaired by Senator, and President Pro Tempore-elect, Darrel Steinberg (D-Sacramento). According to the Blue Ribbon Legislative Panel Report, ASD affects an estimated one in every 150 children across all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Commission's "Report on the Study of Special Education Certification" noted that in the past five years there has been an 88 percent increase in the need to provide services to students with ASD.

According to the author, current "best practice" approaches to working with autistic children call for early education strategies that begin before kindergarten, making the preschool ages a critical developmental period for children who have been diagnosed with ASD. The supply of teachers authorized to teach early childhood special education has not kept up with the increase in the number of children requiring early childhood special education services for ASD. AB 131 would provide a bridge for teachers already authorized to teach autistic students in grades kindergarten and above by allowing needed time to add the Early Childhood Special Education Certificate. The measure is scheduled to sunset in August of 2011. This window of time may provide what is needed for employers and teachers to begin to address the teacher shortage issue.

For these reasons, staff recommends a **Support** position on AB 131.

Bill Analysis

Note: The Commission took an “Oppose” position on SB 1643 (as amended on May 8, 2008) at its June 5, 2008 meeting. The bill has been substantially amended and staff has summarized and **highlighted** those changes within this analysis.

Bill Number: Senate Bill 1643

Author: Senator Tom Torlakson

Sponsor: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Office of the Secretary of Education

Subject of Bill: Eminence Credentials

Date Introduced: February 22, 2008
Date Last Amended: July 1, 2008

Status in Leg. Process: Assembly Appropriations Committee

Previous Position: Oppose
Recommended Position: Oppose

Date of Analysis: July 2, 2008

Analyst: Anne L. Padilla

Analysis of Bill Provisions

SB 1643 would authorize a county board of education, upon the recommendation of a school district, to authorize a county superintendent to issue an eminence credential to a person who has demonstrated subject matter competence through an examination, college degree or work experience. The subject or service in which the person demonstrates eminence must be one that the governing board wishes to have taught in the district’s schools.

The decision to issue an eminence credential would be required to be based on a recommendation from the governing board of the school district, a statement of employment and verification of the eminence qualifications of the individual, as specified.

The bill defines an “eminent individual” as a person who is recognized as eminent beyond the boundaries of his or her community, has demonstrably advanced his or her field and has been acknowledged by his or her peers beyond the norm for others in the specific endeavor.

Verification of eminence qualifications is required to include personal and professional recommendations and documentation of achievement.

The county board of education would be required to provide public notice regarding the issuing of eminence credentials and would be authorized to charge a fee not to exceed the cost incurred for processing eminence credential applications.

The eminence credential would authorize teaching in the public schools of the issuing county in the subject or subject area and at the level approved by the county superintendent of schools. The credential would be issued initially for a three-year period and renewed for a two-year period upon recommendation of the sponsoring school district and acceptance by the county office of education.

The holder of an eminence credential would be eligible to apply to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) for a clear eminence teaching credential upon completion of the two-year renewal period and a written statement of support from the school district governing board adopted at a public meeting.

As amended on June 17 and July 1, 2008:

Amendments to SB 1643 added the following provisions to the bill:

1. Requires that all county eminence credential holders also obtain and hold for the duration of their service on the county document, a certificate of clearance, issued by the Commission, in order that these credential holders undergo the same character and fitness check that all other teachers receive.
2. Caps the number of county issued eminence credentials to one per county. Additional credentials may be awarded on the basis of one per 200,000 students.
3. Sets minimum requirements for renewal of the county eminence credential as:
 - a. a valid three-year county issued eminence teaching credential;
 - b. two years of successful teaching as a county eminence credential holder;
 - c. completion of a program of personalized preparation approved by the commission (similar to requirements for renewal of a three-year Career Technical Education credential);
 - d. health education, U.S. Constitution and computer based technology, as specified;
4. Requires counties to report to the Commission on the number of county issued eminence credentials, as specified;
5. Requires the Commission to track and report all county issued eminence credentials in the same manner that existing eminence credentials are reported; and
6. Sunsets the bill's provisions on January 1, 2015.

Summary of Current Law

Education Code §44262 authorizes the Commission to issue an eminence credential upon recommendation of a school district to any person who has achieved eminence in a field taught in the public schools. This credential authorizes the holder to teach or perform services at the level or levels approved by the Commission.

Each credential is issued initially for a two-year period and renewed for three years upon the request of the recommending school district. Upon completion of the three-year renewal period and a written statement of support from the school district governing board adopted at a public meeting, the holder is eligible to apply to the Commission for a clear teaching credential.

Title 5 regulations (5 CCR, §§80043-80045) define an eminent individual as a person recognized as eminent beyond his or her community, has demonstrably advanced his or her field and has been acknowledged by his or her peers beyond the norm for others in a specific endeavor.

Further, these regulations specify that verification of eminence qualifications include:

- Recommendations, which may be from (but need not be limited to) professional associations, former employers, professional colleagues and other individuals or groups whose evaluations would support eminence; and
- Documentation of achievement, which may include (but need not be limited to) advanced degrees earned, distinguished employment, evidence of related study or experience, publications, professional achievement, and recognition attained for contributions to his or her field of endeavor.

In addition, these regulations require the Commission to provide public notice of individuals for whom it is considering Eminence Credentials (as specified) and outline the procedure for staff review of initial applications.

Finally, the regulations echo statute in setting the terms of the credential; two-year initial issuance, renewal for three years and after five years the Commission issues a professional clear credential.

Current Commission Practice

Over the last six years (2001-2007) the Commission has considered 27 applications for either initial, renewal or clear Eminence Credentials. Nine of those applications were for initial issuance of Eminence Credentials. Of those nine applications for initial issuance, the Commission approved six, one was sent back for more information, one is pending and one application was denied.

At the June 5, 2008 Commission meeting, the Commission took an “Oppose” position on SB 1643 (as amended on May 8, 2008).

Fiscal Impact

Commission: Unknown costs to the Commission to approve programs of personal preparation. Additionally, there may be some costs related to the reporting requirement. (Most likely, between \$30,000 and \$50,000).

COE: The county office of education may charge a fee to applicants to cover the expense incurred in processing the county eminence credential applications.

Relevant Commission Legislative Policies

Policy 2: The Commission supports legislation that proposes to maintain or establish high standards of fitness and conduct for public school educators in California and opposes legislation that would lower standards of fitness or conduct for public school educators.

Policy 6: The Commission supports alternatives to existing credential requirements that maintain high standards for the preparation of educators and opposes alternatives that do not provide sufficient assurances of quality.

Organizational Positions

“Watch”: California Teachers Association, California Federation of Teachers

“Oppose”: Public Advocates, California Association for Bilingual Education

Background

Prior Legislation:

Last year the Commission supported SB 859 (Scott) which created a new Visiting Faculty Permit (VFP) for college instructors who wish to teach in a K-12 *departmentalized* setting. In addition, the measure establishes a new route toward earning a single subject teaching credential with the VFP as the first step. The program sunsets July 1, 2015.

Governor’s Advisory Committee on Educational Excellence:

In November 2007, the Governor’s Advisory Committee on Education Excellence issued their report “*Students First*” at the conclusion of their two-year exploration of changes and reforms in education (<http://www.everychildprepared.org/>). The advisory committee focused on four areas in education: governance, finance, teachers and administrators. The advisory committee also published a technical report. One of the recommendations in this report addressed county superintendents’ ability to grant exceptional candidates an exemplary credential. SB 1643 is the result of this recommendation.

Impact of Federal Legislation:

At least two provisions of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act would impact the proposed county issued credential:

- Federal law requires teachers to hold state certification to meet the “highly qualified” teacher requirements. SB 1643 proposes that the initial credential and renewal credential be issued by the county office of education;
- Federal law requires that all elementary teachers pass a state test to meet the “highly qualified” teacher requirements. In California, this test is the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET), Multiple Subjects. This same law requires single subject teachers to obtain subject matter competence through a degree in the subject that they are teaching or pass a state subject matter exam. SB 1643 allows eminence candidates to meet subject matter by examination, college degree or work experience.

California Department of Education (CDE) staff has indicated that the proposed county issued credential may not be in compliance with NCLB. This non-alignment with federal requirements

may have the effect of limiting the granting of county eminence credentials to non-core academic areas.

Reason for Suggested Position

Despite the substantive amendments to the bill, SB 1643 still is a duplicative procedure that allows credentials to be issued by county offices of education. Additionally, none of the amendments remediate the non-alignment with NCLB. Commissioners had previously expressed opposition to the bill for these reasons alone; therefore, staff is recommending that the “Oppose” position to SB 1643 remain.

Bill Analysis

Note: The Commission took a “Seek Amendments” position on SB 1674 at its March 5, 2008 meeting. The bill has been amended and staff has summarized and highlighted those changes within this analysis.

Bill Number: Senate Bill 1674

Author: Senator Tom Torlakson

Sponsor: Author

Subject of Bill: California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program (PTTP): Before and After School Programs

Date Introduced: February 22, 2008
Last Amended: May 27, 2008

Status in Leg. Process: Assembly Appropriations Committee

Previous Position: Seek Amendments
Recommended Position: Support

Date of Analysis: July 7, 2008

Analyst: Erin C. Duff

Analysis of Bill Provisions

Among the bill’s provisions, SB 1674 would establish the California After School Teacher Pipeline Program to recruit qualified after school instructors from the 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens program, the After School Education and Safety program, and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, to participate on a pilot basis in the California Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program (PTTP). The pilot program would sunset on July 1, 2015.

SB 1674 would require the Commission to select up to four school districts or county offices of education currently participating in the PTTP to apply for pilot program funds. In addition to satisfying all of the requirements of the PTTP program, pilot applicants would be required to demonstrate:

1. A screening process to determine if a pilot participant's after school instruction experience ensures participant readiness for the pilot.
2. Professional support for pilot participants.
3. How pilot participants will be tracked within the program.

The pilot program would be funded annually by \$150,000 from the Proposition 49--California After School Education and Safety Program (up to \$3,500 per participant per year).

SB 1674 would require the Commission to report to the Legislature by January 1, 2014 on the status of the pilot program, including the ability of the applicants to successfully integrate the pilot into their existing program and the number of participants in the pilot that receive teaching credentials. Additionally, the current PTTP reports would be required to include the number of qualified participants who apply for the program and are not accepted due to program capacity restraints.

Summary of Current Law

Established in 1990, the *California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program (PTTP)* is administered by the Commission to help meet teacher supply needs by providing financial and instructional support to skilled, experienced teachers' aides in their pursuit of teaching credentials. Ninety-five percent of the over 1,471 new teachers supported by the PTTP still serve in California's public schools.

The *21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program*, *California's 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program*, and the *After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program* have been established over the course of the last decade through federal and state legislation and funding. These programs are administered in an effort to support and encourage student achievement and enrichment and bring schools and communities together over the goal of student success.

Proposition 49, approved by the voters in 2002, expanded existing before and after school programs and renamed them the ASES program. Proposition 49 mandates an annual appropriation of approximately \$428 million in state funds without requiring Legislative approval.

Fiscal Impact

Minor/absorbable

Relevant Commission Legislative Policies

Policy 4: The Commission supports the maintenance of a thoughtful, cohesive approach to the preparation of credential candidates and opposes legislation that would tend to fragment or undermine the cohesiveness of the preparation of credential candidates.

Organizational Positions

Support

Bay Area Partnership for Children and Youth (co-sponsor)
LA's BEST (co-sponsor)

League of California Afterschool Providers (co-sponsor)
After-School All-Stars, Los Angeles
Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Alum Rock Union Elementary School District
California Association for Health, Physical Education,
Recreation and Dance
California Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs
California School-Age Consortium
City and County of San Francisco
Girls Incorporated of Alameda County
Long Beach Unified School District
Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center
Team-Up for Youth

Opposition

None noted at this time

Reason for Suggested Position

At its March 5, 2008 meeting the Commission adopted a position of “Seek Amendments” and requested several technical amendments and a sunset date for the pilot program. SB 1674 has since been amended to include the July 1, 2015 sunset date and technical amendments recommended by staff.

Staff is recommending a position of “Support” for SB 1674 based on these amendments.

Bill Analysis

Note: The Commission took an “Oppose Unless Amended” position on AB 2517 (as amended on May 23, 2008) at its June 5, 2008 meeting. The bill has been substantially amended twice since the version considered by the Commission. Staff has summarized and highlighted those changes within this analysis.

Bill Number:	Assembly Bill 2517
Author:	Assembly Member Anthony Portantino
Sponsor:	Governor Schwarzenegger Office of the Secretary of Education
Subject of Bill:	Educator Preparation Programs
Date Introduced:	February 21, 2008
Date Last Amended:	July 2, 2008
Status in Leg. Process:	Senate Appropriations Committee
Previous Position	Oppose Unless Amended
Recommended Position:	Watch
Date of Analysis:	July 10, 2008
Analyst:	Marilyn Errett

Analysis of Bill Provisions

AB 2517 would add §44227.2 to the Education Code to establish the “Educator Credentialing Demonstration Project” (project) to encourage the development of educator preparation programs provided by the following entities:

- School Districts
- County Offices of Education
- Community-Based Organizations
- Nongovernmental Organizations

The Commission together with the Committee on Accreditation would be directed to establish the five-year project no later than June 1, 2009. The project would continue until the sunset date of January 1, 2015. Organizations participating in this project would be allowed to offer educator preparation programs for any credential type issued by the Commission if the organization meets the requirements for providing the program.

The project would operate within the following parameters:

- No more than 10 community-based or nongovernmental organizations would participate in the project. No restriction would be placed on the number of school districts and county offices of education participants.
- Community-based and nongovernmental organizations would be required to be accredited by an accrediting organization that is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the United States Department of Education. The Commission would be authorized to establish alternative precondition requirements, if necessary, for project participants that are not eligible for accreditation as it is specified in the bill.
- In addition to the requirements of applicable laws, participating organizations would be required to meet the same standards, policies, and procedures governing Commission approval and accreditation that all other credential programs must meet.
- Participating organizations would be required to electronically submit credential applications to the Commission.

The Commission, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education would select organizations to participate in the project and identify the goals and objectives used to evaluate their performance. Organizations that meet all institutional requirements would be allowed to submit educator preparation program proposals for approval.

The Commission would be authorized, but not required, to assess a fee on a community-based or nongovernmental organization that is seeking approval to participate in the project. The measure notes that independent colleges and universities are not considered a community-based or nongovernmental organization.

The Commission and the Committee on Accreditation would be required to report to the Legislature and the Governor on the results of the project on or before January 1, 2014, with recommendations to maintain, modify, delete, or expand the project. As stated earlier, the project would cease on January 1, 2015.

The measure also corrects obsolete references in §44227 of the Education Code related to out-of-state, regionally accredited, institutions of higher education offering Commission-accredited programs in California.

Summary of Current Law

California Education Code §44227 states that the Commission may approve any “*institution of higher education to recommend to the Commission the issuance of credentials to persons who have successfully completed a teacher education program of the institution if the program meets the standards approved by the Commission.*”

In addition, California Education Code §§44325-44329.5 allow the establishment of intern programs offered by school districts. These programs can be offered for multiple subject and single subject credentials as well as for education specialist credentials for students with mild to moderate disabilities. Subsection (e) of §44325 establishes a pilot program for district intern programs wishing to offer preparation for an education specialist credential in any of the special education credential disability areas.

In 2002, the Commission sponsored SB 1655 (Chap. 225) to add alternative routes for earning administrative services credentials. One of the options, in California Education Code §44270.5, allows a candidate for the clear credential to complete a program “accredited by the Commission,” but does not specify that the program need be offered by an institution of higher education. California Education Code §44253.10 authorized a staff development program for a certificate authorizing the instruction of English learners, to be offered by, “any school district, county office of education, or regionally accredited college or university that meets the standards included in the guidelines established pursuant to this subdivision or any organization that meets those standards and is approved by the Commission.” This certificate option sunset on January 1, 2008.

Title 5 regulations (CCR, §§80034-80042) specify that, in addition to institutions of higher education, local educational agencies may offer personalized preparation programs for designated subjects credentials such as career technical education credentials and adult education credentials.

The Commission’s Preconditions for initial institutional accreditation include the following reference related to institutional viability:

Pursuant to Education Code Section 44227(a), each program of professional preparation shall adhere to the following requirements of the Commission.

(1) Accreditation and Academic Credit. To be granted initial institutional accreditation by the Commission to become eligible to submit programs or to be granted initial program accreditation or continuing accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, the program(s) must be proposed and operated by an institution that (a) is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges or another of the six regional accrediting associations, and (b) grants baccalaureate academic credit or postbaccalaureate academic credit, or both. (This provision does not apply to professional preparation programs offered by school districts.) For school districts wishing to offer a professional preparation program, the Superintendent of the district shall submit verification of the governing board’s approval of sponsorship of the program.

Current Commission Practice

The Commission is responsible for determining the initial accreditation of institutions. Most recently, at its April 9-10, 2008 meeting, the Commission approved Hebrew Union University. The institution may now submit educator preparation programs to the Committee on Accreditation. The Commission’s Committee on Accreditation is responsible for the initial and ongoing accreditation of educator preparation programs.

There were 94 institutions/program sponsors approved to offer educator preparation in the 2003-04 year. Now, with the inclusion of Designated Subject programs in the accreditation system and approval of additional sponsors, there are 140 institution/program sponsors currently approved to offer educator preparation in California.

The Commission allows some service credential programs to use alternative standards for California program accreditation, such as those for the pupil personnel services credential in

school counseling, to meet the standards set by the national professional organization to accredit programs for professional licensure.

Fiscal Impact

Unknown.

The costs related to AB 2517 depend on the number of participants in the “Educator Credentialing Demonstration Project and whether or not the Commission elects to charge a fee to community-based and nongovernmental participants.

Relevant Commission Legislative Policies

Policy 6: The Commission supports alternatives to existing credential requirements that maintain high standards for the preparation of educators and opposes alternatives that do not provide sufficient assurances of quality.

Organizational Positions

Support

Association of California School Administrators
California Association of Private School Organizations
California Catholic Conference

Other

California Association of Bilingual Educators – “Oppose Unless Amended”
California Federation of Teachers – “Watch”
Public Advocates – “Oppose”

Reason for Suggested Position

In November 2007, the Governor’s Advisory Committee on Education Excellence issued their report “*Students First*” at the conclusion of their two-year exploration of changes and reforms in education (<http://www.everychildprepared.org/>). The advisory committee focused on four areas in education: governance, finance, teachers and administrators. The advisory committee also published a technical report. One of the recommendations in this report addressed expanding opportunities for credential programs by allowing multiple pathways including alternative program providers. AB 2517 is the result of these recommendations.

Currently, school districts are authorized by law to offer district intern programs for specified teaching credentials as long as the program meets Commission program standards and meets all accreditation requirements. Some of these programs are part of a consortium coordinated by a county office of education. In addition, school districts and county offices of education are authorized through regulation to offer programs of professional preparation for designated subjects credentials. These programs must also meet the Commission’s standards and are now included in the accreditation process. Further, school districts are authorized to offer Tier II programs for the administrative services credential if they meet guidelines adopted by the Commission and, prior to the January 1, 2008 sunset date, programs to prepare veteran teachers to teach English learners could be offered by professional organizations such as the California Teachers Association.

AB 2517 proposes a five-year pilot project "...investigating new options for educator preparation that do not compromise state standards."

Policymakers within the Administration have expressed the need to address impending K-12 educator shortages by broadening the range of possible educator program sponsors. On the other hand, some education organizations question this direction and feel that the current sponsorship limitations provide greater assurance of continued professionalism in the field. The Administration and the author, in amending AB 2517, propose a pilot project to test the waters in this debate.

At its June 5, 2008 meeting, the Commission directed staff to convey to the author and the sponsor their concerns and rationale for adopting an "Oppose Unless Amended Position" on the May 23, 2008 version of AB 2517. The two points the Commission directed staff to convey were:

- Delete the language allowing the Commission to charge a fee for accreditation of non-governmental entities and instead allow the Commission to charge a fee for an analysis of institutional viability.
- Amend the bill to allow the Commission to be the responsible entity to develop the standards and process by which the institutional viability is assessed.

In its amended form, AB 2517 maintains the option for the Commission to assess a fee for community-based and nongovernmental organizations seeking accreditation and clarifies that private, independent universities are not considered community-based or nongovernmental. However, amendments address the issue of institutional fiscal and operational stability by requiring that community-based organizations and nongovernmental organizations meet the accreditation recognition standards of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the United States Department of Education. It also recognizes that not all organizations will fit within those requirements and allows the Commission to set alternative precondition requirements if it is found to be necessary. These amendments, in addition to limiting the proposal to a pilot project, demonstrate an intent to address the Commission's requests.

For these reasons, staff recommends a **Watch** position on AB 2517.

Reference

Legislative Guidelines And Possible Bill Positions

LEGISLATIVE GUIDELINES OF THE CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON TEACHER CREDENTIALING

Adopted February 3, 1995

1. The Commission supports legislation that proposes to maintain or establish high standards for the preparation of public school teachers and other educators in California and opposes legislation that would lower standards for teachers and other educators.
2. The Commission supports legislation that proposes to maintain or establish high standards of fitness and conduct for public school educators in California and opposes legislation that would lower standards of fitness or conduct for public school educators.
3. The Commission supports legislation that reaffirms that teachers and other educators have appropriate qualifications and experience for their positions, as evidenced by holding appropriate credentials, and opposes legislation that would allow unprepared persons to serve in the public schools.
4. The Commission supports the maintenance of a thoughtful, cohesive approach to the preparation of credential candidates and opposes legislation that would tend to fragment or undermine the cohesiveness of the preparation of credential candidates.
5. The Commission supports legislation that strengthens or reaffirms initiatives and reforms that it previously has adopted and opposes legislation that would undermine initiatives or reforms that it previously has adopted.
6. The Commission supports alternatives to existing credential requirements that maintain high standards for the preparation of educators and opposes alternatives that do not provide sufficient assurances of quality.
7. The Commission opposes legislation that would give it significant additional duties and responsibilities if the legislation does not include an appropriate source of funding to support those additional duties and responsibilities.
8. The Commission supports legislation that affirms its role as an autonomous teacher standards board and opposes legislation that would erode the independence or authority of the Commission.

Possible Bill Positions for Commission Consideration

The Commission may adopt a position on each bill considered for action. The following chart describes the bill positions. The Commission may choose to change a position on a bill at any subsequent meeting.

Sponsor: Legislative concepts are adopted by the Commission and staff is directed to find an author for the bill and to aid the author's staff by providing background information and seeking support for the bill.

Support: The Commission votes to support a bill and directs staff to write letters of support to Legislative Committee members and to testify in support of the bill at Legislative Committee hearings. The Commission's support position will be recorded in the Legislative Committee's bill analysis. If the bill is successful in the Legislature, staff writes letters of support to the Governor.

Support if Amended: The Commission expresses support for the overall concept of a bill, but objects to one or more sections. The Commission votes to direct staff to contact the author with suggested amendments. If the bill is amended to reflect the Commission's recommendations, the Commission's position automatically becomes "Support."

Seek Amendments: The Commission expresses concern over one or more sections of the bill and votes to direct staff to contact the author with suggested amendments. If the bill is amended to reflect the Commission's recommendations, staff will inform the Commission at a subsequent meeting and ask if the Commission would like to adopt a new position.

Watch: The Commission expresses interest in the content of the bill but votes to direct staff to "watch" the bill for future amendments or for further movement through the Legislative process. Early in the Legislative session, the Commission may wish to adopt a "watch" position on bills that are not yet fully formed.

Oppose Unless Amended: The Commission objects strenuously to one or more sections of the bill and votes to direct staff to contact the author with suggested amendments. If the bill is not amended to reflect the Commission's recommendations, the Commission may vote to adopt an "Oppose" position at a subsequent meeting. If the bill is amended to reflect the Commission's recommendations, staff will inform the Commission at a subsequent meeting and ask if the Commission would like to adopt a new position.

Oppose: The Commission expresses opposition to the overall concept of a bill and votes to direct staff to write letters of opposition to Legislative Committee members and to testify in opposition to the bill at Legislative Committee hearings. The Commission's "oppose" position will be recorded in the Legislative Committee bill analysis. If the bill is successful in the Legislature, staff writes letters of opposition to the Governor.

No Position: The Commission may choose to delay taking a position on a bill and may vote to direct staff to bring the bill forward at a subsequent meeting. The Commission may also choose to direct staff not to bring the bill forward for further consideration.