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Information

Professional Services Committee

Adoption of the Common Core Standards and Implications for the Commission's Examinations and Program Standards

Executive Summary: Staff will present an overview of the adoption of the Common Core Standards and implications for the Commission's examinations and program standards.

Recommended Action: For information only.

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Strategic Plan Goal:

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

November 2010

Adoption of the Common Core Standards and Implications for the Commission's Examinations and Program Standards

Introduction

This agenda item presents information on California's adoption of the Common Core Standards for K-12 public school students. Because the Common Core Standards have now been adopted in California for mathematics and English-language arts, the question has been raised about how this new adoption impacts the work of the Commission and the preparation of educators in California to teach to the new standards. In preparation for changes that may be necessary in the future with the adoption of the Common Core Standards, this agenda item presents an overview of the role of academic content standards and frameworks in the Commission's examinations and program standards.

Common Core Standards

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (<http://www.corestandards.org/>). The concept of common academic standards across states for all K-12 students had been discussed and debated for a number of years. At the urging of the Obama Administration, the Common Core Standards were developed in the areas of mathematics and English-language arts with the purpose of increasing rigor and building national consensus on what students should know as they advance from kindergarten through high school. The standards are intended to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our nation's children for college and the workforce.

Forty-eight states, including California, participated in the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The development of the Common Core Standards were informed by what many consider the highest, most effective models from states across the country and high performing countries around the world. They are intended to provide teachers and parents with a common understanding of what students are expected to learn. Consistent standards are intended to provide appropriate benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live. These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education so when they graduate from high school they will be ready to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs.

The NGA Center and CCSSO developed the standards in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts and received initial feedback on the draft standards from national organizations representing, but not limited to, teachers, postsecondary educators (including community colleges), civil rights groups, English language learners, and students with disabilities. Following the initial round of feedback, the draft standards were opened for public comment, receiving nearly 10,000 responses. As of the writing of this agenda item, 35 of the 50 states and two U.S. territories have adopted the Common Core Standards.

In response to the development of the Common Core Standards by the NGA and the CCSSO, the Governor signed Senate Bill X5 1 in January 2010 which required that 21 representatives be appointed to the Academic Content Standards Commission (ACSC) to develop California-specific academic content standards in language arts and mathematics. The bill required that 85 percent of the standards recommended by ACSC were to be from the Common Core Standards and fifteen percent could be added to the Common Core Standards to address perceived gaps and to ensure that the rigor of California's existing standards would be maintained. The ACSC then met in June and July of 2010 to develop the California Common Core Standards for English-language arts and mathematics.

On August 2, 2010, California's State Board of Education (SBE) adopted the Common Core State Standards with additions unique to California. These replace the previously adopted California K-12 Student Content Standards. Subsequent to SBE action, in accordance with Education Code §60605.8(h), the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) and SBE shall present to the Governor and appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature a schedule and implementation plan for integrating the academic content standards adopted into the state education system. California is also participating in a multi-state consortium to develop assessments aligned to the Common Core Standards (*For more information, see: <http://achieve.org/files/CCSS&Assessments.pdf>*).

The adoption of the Common Core Standards for English-language arts and mathematics in California by the State Board of Education was only the first step in a long process. Academic content standards serve as the basis for the development of frameworks and implementation of instructional programs and strategies, instructional materials, professional development, and assessments that are aligned with the standards. These support structures are necessary to ensure that the new academic content standards are effectively utilized at the local school level. The implementation plan and timeline being developed by the SSPI and the SBE will likely address these many issues.

Likewise, the credentialing system must ensure that new teachers are appropriately prepared to teach to the newly adopted content standards. Teachers must not only have the subject matter knowledge detailed in the standards but must also have the appropriate subject specific pedagogical preparation in order to teach this content knowledge effectively to students.

Alignment of Educator Preparation Standards with California Student Content Standards

For a number of years, California has ensured alignment of its educator preparation programs to the adopted Academic Content Standards for California Public Schools K-12. All of California's adopted educator preparation standards, from subject matter preparation through induction, have as a major focus the K-12 academic content standards. Pursuant to subdivision (a) of California Education Code §60605, SB 2042 requires that each multiple and single subject candidate recommended for a credential demonstrate satisfactory ability to assist students to meet or exceed state content and performance standards for pupils. The standards-based credentialing system is intended to hold programs and candidates accountable for teaching and learning and to reflect congruence with California's K-12 academic content standards. Each of the pathways for earning a preliminary credential – integrated programs of subject matter preparation and professional preparation, post baccalaureate programs of professional preparation, and internship programs of professional preparation – reflect this requirement.

A major focus of SB 2042 (Chap. 548, Stats. 1998) was increased alignment of educator preparation for multiple and single subject educator credentials with the K-12 academic content standards. In particular, SB 2042 called for:

- The implementation of new standards to govern all aspects of teacher development, including subject matter studies, professional preparation, induction, and continuing growth;
- The alignment of all teacher preparation standards with California's K-12 academic content standards for students and the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*;
- The creation of a two-tiered teaching credential that establishes the completion of a standards-based induction program as a path to the Level II or Clear credential;
- Increased accountability by building a teaching performance assessment into initial teacher preparation; and
- The establishment of multiple routes into teaching that meets the same high standards, including internship programs, student teaching programs, and programs that blend pedagogy and subject matter courses into a single program.

Passage of SB 2042 served as the impetus for the extensive standards and assessment development effort designed to significantly improve the preparation of K-12 teacher candidates. Pursuant to statute, educator preparation standards all along the continuum of educator preparation are aligned with the K-12 academic content standards, the Curriculum Frameworks, and the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*. The credential reform of SB 2042 encompasses, in sequential order, the acquisition and demonstration of subject matter competency; the completion of an educator preparation program with focus on subject specific pedagogy, intensive field experience and demonstration of the teaching performance expectations; and the completion of a two year induction program or approved clear credential program. A unique feature of the SB 2042 reform was the opportunity to develop three sets of program standards simultaneously (Subject Matter Preparation, Preliminary Teacher Preparation, and Teacher Induction) so that the three sets of standards would be coherent, would build upon and reinforce each other, and would provide a logical and seamless transition for teacher candidates throughout their subject matter preparation, their pedagogical preparation, and their induction in their initial two years as teachers.

The standards for each phase of teacher preparation are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: SB 2042 Standards and Routes

| Level of Preparation | Standards | Possible Candidate Routes |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Subject Matter Preparation: Multiple Subject | <i>Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for the Subject Matter Requirement for the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passage of CSET: Multiple Subject Examination¹ |
| Subject Matter Preparation: Single Subject | <i>Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Subject Matter Preparation Programs</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passage of CSET: Single Subject Examination • Completion of an approved subject matter program |
| Pedagogical Preparation: Multiple Subject and Single Subject | <i>Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Teacher Preparation Programs for Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject Teaching Credentials</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional teacher preparation program offered by a college or university • Intern teacher preparation program offered by a university or a local education agency (LEA) • Early Completion Option Intern • Blended program of teacher preparation offered by a college or university |
| Induction into the Profession | <i>Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Teacher Induction Programs</i> <i>Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for the Multiple Subject and Single Subject Clear Teaching Credential</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved LEA sponsored teacher induction program (BTSA) • Approved university sponsored teacher induction program • Early Completion Option (induction) • Approved Clear Credential Program² |

¹Commission action was taken in October 2003 to require passage of the CSET Multiple Subject examination to comply with No Child Left Behind (NCLB); therefore, completion of an approved subject matter program no longer meets the subject matter requirement.

²As of August 2004, completion of a Clear Credential program is only available to those teachers for whom Induction is not available. Verification by the employer is required.

Subject Matter Preparation: Subject Matter Assessments and Subject Matter Program Standards

The Commission standards related to subject matter preparation are likely to be the most directly impacted of all the Commission standards by changes in the California academic content standards. These standards address the actual academic content in which prospective teachers will teach and therefore need to be competent.

The requirement that candidates for teaching credentials verify their knowledge of the subjects they intend to teach has been in place in California since passage of the Teacher Preparation and Licensing Act of 1970. The development and use of Subject Matter Requirements (SMRs) is a primary tool that the Commission uses to define the subject-specific knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by beginning teachers. As such, the SMRs for the subject areas serve as the content specifications for both subject matter programs and the Commission's examinations. Candidates for Single Subject Teaching Credentials may satisfy this subject matter requirement by completing approved single subject matter programs or by passing subject matter examinations that have been adopted by the Commission. Because both satisfy the same requirement, these two options are as aligned and congruent as possible. Commission action was taken in October 2003 to require passage of the CSET Multiple Subject examination to comply with No Child Left Behind (NCLB); therefore, completion of an approved subject matter program no longer meets the subject matter requirement for the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential.

To achieve this alignment and congruence, the Commission asked subject matter advisory panels comprised of California education experts in the specific subjects to develop subject matter requirements (SMRs) that would be consistent in scope and content with the adopted academic content standards and the various curriculum frameworks for California public schools. When the Commission adopts subject matter program standards, it also adopts the subject matter requirements appended to the standards document. College and university faculty and administrators are required to use the SMRs as a source of information about essential content that must be taught and assessed in subject matter preparation programs, as these represent the scope of content on which both the program standards and the subject matter examinations are based and to which the program standards and the examinations are aligned.

Development and Validation of the SMRs and Examination Specifications

Panels develop preliminary SMRs aligned with available state and national student content standards, frameworks, and standards of national professional organizations. Panel members use the SMRs to design test structure (i.e., subtests if any, and the types of questions that would best match the particular content such as multiple choice and/or constructed response) and test specifications (content). The final test content and structure are reviewed by the Bias Review Committee. After the draft of the test specifications has been completed and reviewed by the panel and by the Bias Review Committee, a public input field survey is developed and implemented in order to assure that the test specifications reflect what practitioners and other experts in the field identify as relevant, necessary, and current knowledge in the field that would be needed by a beginning teacher/practitioner. At that point, the testing contractor begins to draft possible test questions, and an agenda item is presented to the Commission by staff for review and approval of the test specifications.

Parallel Activity: Development of Standards for Subject Matter Preparation Programs for Prospective Teachers

In California, a bachelor's degree in a subject is not necessarily sufficient content preparation to become a teacher. Postsecondary institutions govern academic programs that lead to the awarding of degrees whereas the Commission sets standards for academic programs that meet the subject matter requirement for a credential. An applicant for a teaching credential must have

earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, but the degree may be in a subject other than the one to appear on the credential. Approved subject matter programs differ from other undergraduate degree programs particularly because they are geared toward prospective teachers and are aligned with the K-12 academic content standards. An approved subject matter program must address the full range of content that an individual earning the credential will be authorized to teach. The SMRs are used by the Commission in developing subject matter standards and by the institutions in developing their programs to ensure that all necessary content is covered in the subject matter preparation program. Single subject candidates who complete an approved subject matter program meet the subject matter requirement for the Single Subject Teaching Credential.

In addition to the use of the SMRs within the subject matter preparation programs, Standard 1 of the *Standards Common to All Single Subject Matter Preparation Programs* (revised in August 2010) has language that states:

The program curriculum builds on the K-12 state-adopted academic content standards, with student outcomes and assessments aligned to the subject matter requirements.

Pedagogical Preparation: Overview of Standards for Preliminary Teacher Preparation Programs

Also impacted by the change in the K-12 academic content standards with the adoption of the Common Core Standards are the preliminary preparation programs for Multiple and Single Subject teachers. While the preliminary preparation programs do not provide the prospective teacher with the content knowledge, it does provide them with the tools to effectively teach that content to a diverse student body. The program standards are aligned with the K-12 academic content standards to ensure that prospective candidates have the subject specific pedagogical preparation to teach the adopted K-12 academic content standards.

Alignment of the teacher preparation standards with the state-adopted academic content standards and performance levels for K-12 students is evident in the multiple and single subject preparation program standards as shown by the following sentences in the noted standards:

- *Standard 1: Program Design:* By design, the program provides extensive opportunities for candidates to learn to teach the content of the state adopted K-12 academic content standards to all students; to use state-adopted instructional materials, to assess student progress, and to apply these understandings in teaching K-12 students.
- *Standard 7A: Preparation to Teach Reading-Language Arts:* Each candidate will be prepared to deliver a comprehensive program of systematic instruction in reading, writing, listening, and speaking aligned to the state-adopted English Language Arts Content Standards and the Reading/Language Arts Framework (2007).
- *Standard 7-B: Single Subject Reading, Writing and Related Language Instruction:* The single subject credential program prepares candidates to demonstrate knowledge of

components for effective instructional delivery in reading as described in the California Reading/Language Arts Framework (2007).

- *Standard 8-A: Pedagogical Preparation for Subject-Specific Content Instruction by Multiple Subject (MS) Candidates:* In subjects other than Reading-Language Arts, the preliminary teacher preparation program provides introductory coursework and supervised practice that begin to prepare each candidate for a Multiple Subject (MS) teaching credential to plan and deliver content-specific instruction consistent with state-adopted academic content standards for students and curriculum frameworks in the following major subject areas: mathematics, science, history-social science, visual and performing arts, physical education, and health.
- *Standard 8-B: Pedagogical Preparation for Subject-Specific Content Instruction by Single Subject (SS) Candidates:* In the subject to be authorized by the single subject teaching credential, the preliminary teacher preparation program provides substantive instruction and supervised practice that effectively prepare each candidate for a Single Subject Credential to plan and deliver content-specific instruction that is consistent with (a) the state-adopted academic content standards for students and/or curriculum framework in the content area.

Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Teacher Induction Programs

The Commission's adopted teacher induction program standards are also aligned with the state-adopted academic content standards and performance levels for K-12 students. The following excerpt from the induction standards is illustrative of the alignment.

Program Standard 5: Pedagogy: They utilize the adopted academic content standards and performance levels for students, curriculum frameworks, and instructional materials in the context of their teaching assignment.

In addition, induction in California is designed as a job-embedded professional growth experience in which the new teacher, assigned to his or her own classroom, is thoroughly immersed in the academic content standards, using standard aligned instructional materials and standards aligned assessments as required by the district or school in which he or she works. Along with the use of Commission adopted induction standards and the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*, the induction program is designed to support the growth of the new teacher within the educational context specific to each new teacher.

Next Steps for the Commission Regarding Alignment with the Recently Adopted Common Core Standards

The Commission's adopted plan and timeline for the review of educator preparation standards calls for standards to be reviewed every ten years. However, there are instances when a review of adopted standards should take place before ten years, e.g. a legislative directive or the adoption of revised framework or content standards. In the next several months the SSPI and SBE will present to the Governor and to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature a schedule and implementation plan for integrating the recently adopted academic content standards into the state education system. Clearly, the Commission will need to review

and possibly revise its scheduled timeline once the SBE and SSPI timeline and plan become available.

Among the activities that will need to take place and that will be included in the Commission plan will be a review of its SMRs. When new formally-adopted academic content standards become available (like the newly adopted Common Core Standards), supplemental alignment and congruence studies are conducted to determine whether any further course of action is necessary.

- If the studies find no substantive changes are necessary, any references made in the SMRs to the content standards will be simply revised to reflect the newer standards and materials.
- If substantive changes are needed, then staff would begin the process of realigning the SMRs. As previously discussed, this process addresses the content validity of the examination for use with teacher credential candidates.

Once the SBE and SPPI plan becomes available, staff will present to the Commission an agenda item that discusses the impact of that plan on the Commission's future work as it relates to the Commission's standards and examinations.