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## Information

### *Professional Services Committee*

#### **Discussion of the Proposed New Education Specialist Teaching Credential Specialty Area Authorization**

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**Executive Summary:** This agenda item presents information about the proposed new Education Specialist Teaching Specialty Area authorization. In addition, this item clarifies the differences between the new proposed teaching authorization and the Speech-Language Pathology Services Credential.

**Recommended Action:** For information only

**Presenter:** Terri Fesperman, Consultant, Certification, Assignment and Waivers Division and Teri Clark, 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 and for the accreditation of credential programs

November 2010



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## **Discussion of the Proposed New Education Specialist Teaching Credential Specialty Area Authorization**

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### **Background Information**

In response to the repeated calls for a special education teaching authorization that focuses on communication, language, and literacy, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing Special Education Workgroup and Design Team recommended the addition of an Education Specialist teaching authorization that focuses on those communication deficiencies that impede academic achievement. At the December 2008 meeting, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing approved the proposed Education Specialist: Communication Development teaching authorization (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2008-12/2008-12-3B.pdf>). This new teaching authorization focuses on literacy, communication, language development and pragmatic skills. The preparation program's curriculum will focus on school based issues and the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the academic setting and with the core curriculum. The new credential will authorize teaching in preschool and grades K through 12 to age 22. Teachers holding this authorization would serve students identified by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) who require services to support communication and social interaction skill development. The holder may also reinforce student's communication and language development as a teacher in an academic setting. The proposed regulations for this new Education Specialist teaching authorization were withdrawn in summer 2010 after concern was expressed about the name of the new authorization.

### **A Change in the Name of the New Education Specialist Teaching Credential**

Originally, the proposed new teaching authorization was named the Education Specialist Credential in Communication Development. The California Speech-Language-Hearing Association (CSHA) and many Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) expressed concerns about the similarity of the title "Communication Development" and the Communication Disorders or Communication Sciences degree programs offered at colleges and universities. The concern was expressed that individuals, including parents, would confuse the two distinct roles—the teacher who works with students who have been identified as having a language development disability and the SLP who provides services to the students who have been identified as having a language disorder. Commission staff, in collaboration with CSHA leadership, proposes changing the title of the new authorization to the Education Specialist Credential in Language and Academic Development.

In addition to the confusion about the name of the new teaching credential, there was general lack of clarity as to what services an SLP is authorized to provide and what a Language and Academic Development teacher would be authorized to teach in the schools and the important differences in their roles. It is the intent of agenda item to clarify the roles that individuals holding a Speech-Language Pathology Services Credential currently fill in California schools and what roles the Language and Academic Development teaching authorization is designed to fill.

### ***Speech-Language Pathology Services Authorization***

Speech-Language Pathology (SLPs) Credential holders are responsible for serving students whose disabilities have a clinical or medical disposition and involve speech and/or language disorders. When a student is unable to produce speech sounds correctly or fluently, or has problems with his or her voice, then he or she has a *speech disorder*. Difficulties pronouncing sounds, or articulation disorders, and stuttering are examples of speech disorders. When a student has trouble understanding others (*receptive language*), or sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings completely (*expressive language*), then he or she has a *language disorder* (<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/>).

A description of services that a Speech-Language Pathologist is prepared to provide are listed below:

- Speech sound disorders - (difficulty pronouncing sounds)
- Language disorders - (difficulty understanding what they hear as well as expressing themselves with words)
- Cognitive-communication disorders - (difficulty with thinking skills including perception, memory, awareness, reasoning, judgment, intellect and imagination)
- Stuttering (fluency) disorders - (interruption of the flow of speech that may include hesitations, repetitions, prolongations of sounds or words)
- Voice disorders – (quality of voice that may include hoarseness, nasality, volume-too loud or soft)

The SLP program standards adopted by the Commission require the approved SLP program to prepare each candidate with both the theoretical knowledge and accompanying fieldwork to enable the individual to provide the range of speech and language services in California's schools. The updated authorization for the SLP credential has been presented to the Commission and is scheduled for a public hearing in December 2010.

SLPs provide diagnostic information as part of an education evaluation team. They complete comprehensive language and speech assessments for students. Services to students with speech-language disorders may be provided in individual or small group sessions, in classrooms when teaming with teachers or in a consultative model with teachers and parents. SLPs integrate students' speech-language goals with academic outcomes and functional performance. (<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/schoolsFAQ.htm>). When the IEP process has identified a student as needing speech services, the services are provided by an individual with a SLP credential in Language, Speech and Hearing or equivalent previously issued credentials authorizing speech services. Provided in the Appendix is a table of the federal disability categories and the California authorizations that allow an individual to teach or provide services to students with the identified disability.

### ***Language and Academic Development Authorization***

Although the discussions about the new teaching authorization began as a reaction to the shortage of personnel available to provide services to students with speech and language disorders in public school settings, the SLP Services authorization and the proposed Language

and Academic Development teaching authorization are designed to fill different roles for students who have speech and language needs.

As the Special Education Design Team explored this issue, they found that the shortage of SLPs was an important issue that needed to be addressed, but the shortage was a separate issue from the need for a teaching authorization which would support students who have the communication and language development needs and do not fall within the federal disability category of “Speech and Language Impaired.” Furthermore, progress is being made to address the SLP shortage as new programs have been developed and many approved programs are accepting more candidates than before. These changes will allow a greater number of candidates to complete speech Language Pathology programs.

Students with language and communication needs are “falling through the cracks” due to a lack of services. These students include: 1) students who are not receiving services because their communication disability is not severe enough to meet the federal disability requirements to qualify for Speech and Language Impaired special education services through the IEP process; and 2) students whose academic achievement is so impacted by their lack of skill development in literacy and communication that both their self esteem and their social interaction skills make it difficult to function in a school setting. Providing students with academic instruction along with learning and language support and skill development necessary for success in school serves to not only help the student, but could prevent the need for continued special education instructional services to that student in the future.

With respect to the issue of addressing those students who have communication and language development needs but who do not fall within the federal disability category of Speech and Language Impaired, an individual with an Educational Specialist: Language and Academic Development teaching authorization will be able to teach these students and it is important to note that Speech-Language Pathologists are not authorized to serve as “teachers” unless they hold a Special Class Authorization (SCA). If an individual holds a SLP Services credential with a SCA, the individual is limited to teaching students requiring instructional services in the area of autism and speech and language impaired. But there are many other communication and language instructional needs that need to be addressed in a teaching setting to help students achieve success in the core curriculum.

Holders of the Education Specialist: Language and Academic Development authorization will be prepared to teach students who demonstrate a lack of communication and language or literacy skills required to access meaningful benefit from academic instruction. Academic skills interventions include but are not limited to the following areas: literacy development, written language, and quantitative reasoning. Authorization holders must demonstrate a depth of knowledge and skills in the teaching strategies for early literacy skills, reading, writing and language arts including linguistic elements of reading, decoding/word analysis strategies, vocabulary, comprehension, academic language, spelling, and written language. The ability to diagnose deficits and offer intervention strategies in the areas of language and academic development that ultimately enable students to access the academic core curriculum is essential to this credential and undergirds the role and function of the holder in the school setting. In addition to being skilled in issues of literacy, holders of the Language and Academic

Development authorization will be authorized to teach all academic subjects, consistent with the other Education Specialist teaching credentials: e.g., mathematics, science, social studies, art, physical education, and music. The proposed language for the Language and Academic Development authorization statement is provided here for the Commission's information:

*The Education Specialist Instruction Credential: Language and Academic Development authorizes the holder to conduct Educational Assessments<sup>1</sup> related to student's access to the academic core curriculum and progress towards meeting instructional academic goals, provide instruction, and Special Education Support<sup>2</sup> to individuals across the federal disability categories, except speech and language impaired, to students with academic communication and language needs in the following areas: language development, pragmatic skills, school readiness skills, and literacy development addressing competencies across the curriculum in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and academic areas, in preschool, kindergarten, in grades 1 - 12 through age 22, and classes organized primarily for adults in services across the continuum of program options available.*

<sup>1</sup>“Educational Assessment”: Assessment of students in a comprehensive manner within the authorization of the teaching credential or added authorization using multiple sources of information and a variety of strategies that directly measure a student's performance to meet goals in areas of grade-level academic curriculum and/or functional goals designed to meet the Individualized Education Program (IEP), Individualized Family Service Program, and/or Individualized Transition Plan goals and objectives regarding eligibility and services that directly result from the student's disability according to state and federal accountability systems. The assessment process may include both formal and informal assessments to evaluate students' educational instruction needs and strengths for the purpose of making accommodations, modifications, and instructional decisions.

<sup>2</sup>“Special Education Support”: Support includes participation in the IEP, Individualized Family Service Program, and/or Individualized Transition Plan process including planning and implementation of the student's IEP, Individualized Family Service Program, and/or Individualized Transition Plan; providing consultative, collaborative, and coordinating instruction with students, parents, teachers, and other community and school personnel; planning, developing, and implementing instructional program plans relative and within the authorization of the credential or added authorization. Special education support does not include providing speech, language and hearing, orientation and mobility, or audiology services.

The new authorization does not authorize instruction for any specific federal disability category but rather to teach students with specific identified instructional needs across the disability categories, except for Speech or Language Impairment. Holders of the authorization may serve as the teacher of record in a classroom setting or push-in or pull-out services in a special education or general education setting to provide services to students with various primary disability areas who share the need for services authorized by the Language and Academic Development authorization. Below are two examples.

Following the IEP assessment, it is determined that a student needs services that fall within the authorization of the Physical and Health Impairment Credential. However, the student also needs services that fall within the Language and Academic Development authorization. The Language and Academic Development teacher can push-in to a special education class where the student is taught by the teacher with an Education Specialist in Physical and Health Impairments to assist a student or students with needs in literacy development, written language, and quantitative reasoning.

Following the IEP assessment, it is determined that a student needs services that fall within the Mild/Moderate Disabilities (Specific Learning Disability or Mental Retardation Mild/Moderate Federal disability categories) specialty area. The Language and Academic Development Credential holder can either do push-in or pull out instructional services for students with instructional needs specific to the Language and Academic Development Credential. The individual could also be the teacher of record for students needing instructional services in the area of Mild/Moderate Disabilities that are specific to literacy development, written language, and quantitative reasoning.

Language and Academic Development authorization holders must be able to actively engage students with limited communication abilities in the classroom and in social activities appropriate to the age level of the student. Authorization holders must be able to provide interventions that will improve a student's ability to effectively communicate and increase the extent and variety of social interactions to achieve meaningful social relationships. In addition holders would be able to teach students with behavioral challenges including, but not limited to, students with autism and emotional disturbance in the area of academic communication and language needs. Authorization holders need to understand the impact of sensory deficits on the development and application of language and other communications. Language and Academic Development authorization holders will be prepared to teach, adapt, modify, accommodate, and make supplements to the core curriculum so that students who “are falling through the cracks” can achieve maximum potential of their academic ability.

Like all Education Specialist Teaching Authorizations, those holding the Language and Academic Development authorization may be the primary teacher of record, conduct educational assessments authorized by the credential, and provide resource services as well as collaboration, consultation, and co-teaching services in inclusive classroom setting. They are also authorized to serve as case managers, inclusion specialists and provide instruction in a variety of group settings and sizes if the local employer job duties fall within the authorization of the new specialty area. Services provided by the individual with a Language and Academic Development authorization would be based upon a student's IEP (see Appendix for the list of federal disability categories). Among the roles that an individual holding the proposed Education Specialist: Language and Academic Development authorization might fill include the following:

- Teacher of record for a self contained class that consists of special needs students with language-based needs
- Provide intervention and/or language and communication instruction to special needs students who require teaching interventions

- Provide language and communication development instruction for special needs students with moderate/ severe disabilities including secondary students who need language development and functional communication/pragmatic skills
- Itinerant intervention teacher for special needs students who have reading deficiencies and are in need of specialized methodologies to improve reading/decoding skills
- Teacher of record for language-based language arts class at middle/high school for special needs students; focusing on language arts and content reading, with a co-teacher
- Assist special needs students through naturally occurring academic transitions by grade level (i.e., preschool-K, K-1, 3-4, elementary to middle school, middle school-high school, high school to postsecondary, life skill transition strategies)
- Co-teacher, collaborative teacher for general education classroom to provide reinforcement of language arts and core content skills and focus on academic language to special needs students
- Teach language-based preschool special needs class
- Provide language-based instruction including instructional activities to facilitate special needs student development of pre-literacy skills, language concepts and related vocabulary
- Program/case manager for special needs students with social skills needs, conduct social skills groups
- Itinerant resource teacher for special needs students needing concurrent academic and social language development skills including rural area support where geographically required
- Special class teacher for special needs students with autism who would focus on language, academic development and social/pragmatic skills
- Provide diagnostic teaching as a part of the assessment process; document and fill 'holes' in lagging skills; and memory strategies to retain learning
- Assess lagging and evaluate student skills related to reading including vocabulary, decoding, words per minute, comprehension, narrative and expository text
- Assure requisite/pre-requisite core academic language skills are intact for middle and high school levels, to enable special needs students to have access to core curriculum and reach full academic standards
- Provide language instruction in meaningful, vocabulary with concepts while introducing new procedures and processes for special needs students
- Implement social pragmatics and transition strategies for high school special needs students entering the work world
- Provide mega cognitive strategies to organize and enhance study skills for special needs students
- Provide pull-out, push-in strategies to address specific language goals and academic concepts for special needs students
- Implement social skills practice in small groups, on the playground, embedded in real life situations for special needs students

## **Coordination of Services to Students**

The Special Education Workgroup and Design Team emphasized that the new teaching authorization does not replace the current Speech-Language Pathology Services Credential. No recommendations have been made to change the structure of the SLP services credential. It is important to understand that the Language and Academic Development teacher and the SLP services provider will work collaboratively much like all other special education teachers work with SLP providers when the students the individual teaches have identified needs in the area of speech and language therapy.

There have been numerous modifications in the service delivery modes of Special Educators over the past decade; team approaches assure more comprehensive services to students with disabilities. Multi-disciplinary teams practice collaborative integration of services that has increased results for students. Participation in the inclusive setting and providing access to the core curriculum is an area of focus for all special education credentials—teaching and service credentials. Environmental, social, cognitive, and developmental aspects of learning shared among SLP Services and Education Specialist Teachers in an itinerant or classroom setting are identified below.

- Structure and forms of words
- Speech sounds in the development of language
- Grammar and organization of word groups
- Receptive and expressive language
- Pragmatics and social interaction
- Brain based learning skills
- Differences vs. disorders in acquiring language
- Related physical, social, environmental factors
- Attention/ focusing, memory and sequencing
- Problem solving and negotiating skills
- Executive functioning
- Effective social skills
- Skills in appropriate communication

In summary, the purpose of the Education Specialist credential in Language and Academic Development is to provide highly needed support for academic and social success for special needs students. Individuals will be prepared to enhance skills in literacy, language and communication for special needs students. By incorporating the diagnostic and remedial skills of a general education reading specialist with the pragmatic and developmental skills of an Education Specialist serving Mild/Moderate students, the added components of language and communication skills assure that gaps are filled and missing links are found for children with special needs.

## **Next Steps**

Staff requests that the Commission discuss the proposed name change for the Education Specialist teaching credential specialty area. If the Commission concurs that the name change is appropriate, staff will prepare an agenda item to begin the regulatory process to add the new authorization into regulations.

**Appendix**  
**Federal Disability Categories and California's Education Specialist Teaching Authorizations**

Federal Disability Categories	LAD	MM	MS	ECSE <sup>1</sup>	DHH	VI	PHI
<b>Autism:</b> developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction that adversely affects a child's educational performance.	#	*	X	X	*	*	*
<b>Deaf-Blindness:</b> concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness	#		X		X	X	
<b>Deafness and Hearing Impairment:</b> impairment in hearing or processing linguistic information through hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance	#				X		
<b>Emotional Disturbance:</b> An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors, an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers that adversely affects a child's educational performance	#	X	X	X			
<b>Mental Retardation:</b> significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance	#	X	X	X			
<b>Multiple Disabilities:</b> means concomitant impairments, the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments.	#		X	X			X
<b>Orthopedic Impairment:</b> severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance	#						X
<b>Other Health Impairment:</b> limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, is due to chronic or acute health problems adversely affects a child's educational performance	#	*		X			X
<b>Specific Learning Disability:</b> means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia	#	X		X			
<b>Speech or Language Impairment:</b> a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance							
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury:</b> an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.	#			X			X
<b>Visual Impairment:</b> an impairment that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance	#					X	

X = Programs under both the 1997 and 2009 standards prepare candidates to work with students in this disability category

<sup>1</sup> Birth to Pre-K Only

\* = Programs under the recently adopted standards (2009) prepare candidates to work with students in this disability category

# = Proposed *Education Specialist: Language and Academic Development* programs would prepare candidates to provide academic instruction for students in this disability category **if** the student has an **identified language development disability**. Usually additional services would still need to be provided for students with DB, DHH, MD, OI, OHI, or VI. **Bold** indicates the disability categories that are most likely to be served by an individual holding a LAD

LAD= Language and Academic Development

MM= Mild/Moderate

MS=Moderate/Severe

ECSE= Early Childhood Special Education

DHH=Deaf and Hard of Hearing

VI= Visual Impairment

PHI= Physical and other Health Impairment