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Information/Action

Professional Services Committee

Further Discussion of Assessment Options for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents options for the use of performance assessment for candidates for the preliminary administrative services credential.

Policy Question: Should the Commission begin the process of developing an administrator performance assessment for preliminary credential candidates?

Recommended Action: Staff recommends that the Commission adopt a policy direction concerning administrator performance assessment for candidates for the preliminary administrative services credential and direct staff to bring back a development plan as appropriate.

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Strategic Plan Goal

I. Educator Quality

- ◆ Develop, maintain, and promote high quality authentic, consistent educator assessments and examinations that support development and certification of educators who have demonstrated the capacity to be effective practitioners.

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Further Discussion of Assessment Options for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential

Introduction

The Commission has recently considered a range of issues relating to preparation of California school administrators. Prior agenda items were presented in August 2012 (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2012-08/2012-08-4B.pdf>) and in September 2012 (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2012-09/2012-09-2D.pdf>). Annually there are approximately 4,000 candidates for the preliminary administrative services credential prepared by 61 preparation programs (21 CSU; 3 UC; 28 private institutions; and 9 local school districts).

This agenda item addresses specifically the development of an Administrator Performance Assessment (APA) for potential use with candidates for the preliminary administrative services credential. The item also proposes that the APA be developed to serve as part or all of a replacement strategy for the current examination being used for the expedited route to an administrative services credential when the current contract for the use of that examination expires in October 2014.

Background

Similar to the increasing demands placed on teacher preparedness, the demands on school administrators have also changed in recent years. California needs to have confidence that the administrator workforce serving its public school students and teachers is highly qualified, with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary not only to lead but to inspire students, teachers, parents and the community to work together in improving student achievement, including meeting or exceeding the Common Core State Standards.

Legislation in the last decade made it permissible for the Commission to adopt an examination to serve as a proxy for preparation, enabling experienced credential holders in other areas to pursue an expedited route to a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential. In 2002, the Commission adopted the School Leadership Licensure Assessment (SLLA) for this purpose and in 2010 replaced that assessment with the California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination (CPACE). As the demands upon principals have increased, the Commission's views regarding what constitutes appropriate and adequate preparation have shifted, calling into question whether the scope and content of the examination currently being used to satisfy the expedited route provides the necessary assurance of candidate quality and competence to serve as a replacement for the full preparation program. The examination currently being used was intended by an earlier Commission to be an examination of the candidate's underlying content knowledge relating to school administration which included a performance component rather than a performance assessment of the integration and application of content knowledge to the job role of a school administrator. The contract for use of the current examination expires in October 2014. The Commission does not presently have a performance assessment for preliminary administrative services credential candidates.

The Commission took action in 2012 to strengthen the requirements for a preliminary administrative services credential, and consequently for the expedited examination route, by (1) extending the required prerequisite years of experience from three to five and (2) requiring candidates to hold the clear underlying prerequisite credential. In addition, the examination route is further strengthened by (3) not allowing candidates who use the expedited route to waive two of the five years of experience. Current statute authorizes the Commission to adopt an examination for use in an expedited route, but does not allow the Commission to add other requirements to this route. The Commission has previously discussed other criteria that would strengthen this route to the credential, but all other options would require legislation expanding the scope of the Commission's existing authority. While the Commission could take action to un-adopt the current examination, such action would break an existing contract and potentially expose the Commission to fiscal liability.

While the current approach may not fully meet the Commission's expectations, prior testimony from employers and from candidates suggest that there is still a need and a purpose for an expedited route to the credential, especially in remote areas of the state and for experienced candidates who have been successfully performing administrator or quasi-administrator roles for a period of time.

Administrator Performance Assessment

Increasingly states are looking to performance assessments as a means of providing evidence of candidate quality and the candidate's ability to perform the specific job role relative to the credential being sought. Similar to the use of information from teaching performance assessments, information from administrator performance assessments can also be used to provide formative information for program improvement, document the quality and preparedness of candidates for the credential, and serve as one source of evidence about program quality for accreditation purposes. A survey of state use of administrator assessments was provided in the September 2012 agenda item (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2012-09/2012-09-2D.pdf>). Appendix A in that agenda item shows that of the 50 states plus the District of Columbia, 10 use a customized Pearson assessment for administrator certification purposes, 22 use the ETS-developed SLLA, 1 (Connecticut) uses a customized performance assessment developed in collaboration with a testing company but not administered by the testing company, 1 (Massachusetts) has a new performance assessment under development, and 15 do not use an administrator licensure assessment.

The Commission has indicated interest in developing an administrator performance assessment that would reflect the current work being done by its Administrative Standards Writing Team to revise and update the set of content knowledge and professional knowledge expected of administrative candidates. The panel's work is focused on organizing the content knowledge around powerful ideas of school leadership, such as, for example, how to serve as the school's instructional leader, providing focused feedback to teachers about their instruction; how to support teachers in implementing the Common Core State Standards with an increasingly diverse student body; how to analyze and use student performance and other data to develop and implement school improvement strategies; how to work effectively with parents and the community to improve student achievement; and how to effectively and efficiently manage the school's human, fiscal and material resources.

As a complement to updated content specifications, the Administrative Services Writing Team is also developing a set of performance expectations, parallel to the *Teaching Performance Expectations* for teachers, the “CAPEs” (*California Administrator Performance Expectations*). The CAPEs will reflect the Commission’s expectations regarding the application and integration of the candidate’s administrator content knowledge with the candidate’s professional performance within the job context of a school administrator. The revised administrator preparation program standards are also expected to incorporate this content as required elements for all preliminary administrative services credential preparation programs. The content expectations and CAPEs will be presented to the Commission for information in early 2013 prior to a proposed field review.

Also similar to the role of the TPEs for development of the Teaching Performance Assessment, the CAPEs would form the basis for the development of a new performance assessment for preliminary administrative services credential candidates (APA), including assessment tasks and scoring rubrics for the APA. Development and implementation of an administrative services candidate performance assessment that will certify that each candidate recommended for the preliminary administrative services credential has demonstrated the ability to successfully perform the job role of a competent beginning level school administrator could be a powerful lever for improving candidate readiness as well program quality, and could provide evidence of program quality and effectiveness to inform accreditation decisions. It is estimated that the time frame for development and field testing of an APA would be approximately two years.

An administrator performance assessment could be an appropriate replacement for the current administrative services examination used by examination route candidates. The Commission could also consider if this assessment would be sufficient for the purpose of waiving the completion of an administrator preparation program or if an additional assessment of the candidate’s content knowledge might be needed as well in order to constitute a full proxy for the preparation program.

The Commission could further consider if the APA would be useful as a capstone assessment for all candidates, including those who complete an administrator preparation program. The Commission has previously discussed this possibility which was a recommendation in the recent *Greatness by Design* report. Legislation would be needed to require that all candidates for the preliminary administrative credential pass an administrator performance assessment as a requirement for earning the credential.

Staff Recommendations

Staff recommends that the Commission:

- a) Complete the current contract for use of the CPACE for the expedited route to the preliminary administrative services credential;
- b) Develop an Administrator Performance Assessment for use with candidates for the expedited route to the credential, subject to the availability of identified funding; and
- c) Direct staff to explore with the administration the viability of sponsoring legislation to require the APA for all preliminary administrative services credential candidates.

Next Steps

Based on Commission discussion, and if so directed by the Commission, staff would bring back additional agenda items to implement the Commission's policies regarding development of an Administrator Performance Assessment.