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Information/Action

Certification Committee

Proposed Revision of Options for Meeting the Subject Matter Requirement for Multiple Subject Credential Candidates

Executive Summary: This agenda item provides a review of current regulations that require multiple subject credential candidates to demonstrate their subject matter competence by passing the CSET, and do not allow completion of an approved subject matter program to waive this requirement. Staff recommends that the Commission amend its regulations to increase options for candidates seeking the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential.

Policy Question:

Should subject matter preparation programs be reauthorized for use to meet the state's subject matter requirement when seeking a Multiple Subject Credential?

Recommended Action: That the Commission direct staff to initiate the rule making process to reinstate the option to complete an elementary subject matter program to meet the state subject matter requirement.

Presenter: David Crable, Program Analyst, Certification Division

Strategic Plan Goal

I. Educator Quality

- c) Ensure that credential processing and assignment monitoring activities accurately, effectively, and efficiently identify educators who have met high and rigorous certification standards and who are appropriately assigned.

Proposed Revision of Options for Meeting the Subject Matter Requirement for Multiple Subject Credential Candidates

Introduction

This agenda item provides a review of current regulations that require multiple subject credential candidates to demonstrate their subject matter competence by passing the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET), and do not allow completion of an approved subject matter program to waive this requirement. Staff recommends that the Commission amend its regulations to increase options for candidates seeking the Multiple Subject teaching credential.

Background

The Education Code (EC) provides two routes for individuals to satisfy the subject matter requirement for earning teaching credentials. EC §44282 directs the Commission to adopt examinations and assessments to verify subject matter knowledge and competence for Multiple and Single Subject Teaching Credentials. In addition, EC §44310 authorizes the Commission to “waive” the subject matter examination requirement for individuals completing coursework at authorized institutions as approved by the Commission:

The commission shall waive the subject matter examination requirement for graduates of accredited public and private institutions of higher education who successfully complete subject matter programs specified by the commission.

Eligibility for an examination waiver can only be achieved when the subject matter program is one which is listed by the commission under Section 44282, and the program has been successfully completed in an approved institution of higher learning.

To conform with the Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law and the California State Board of Education’s State Plan, the Commission took action at its October 2003 meeting that all candidates for a Multiple Subject Credential must pass the Commission-adopted examination (CSET) to satisfy the subject matter requirement, and credential candidates enrolled after July 1, 2004 would no longer be able to complete a subject matter program to satisfy the subject matter requirement, as outlined in [Coded Correspondence 03-0025](#).

Implications of the Examination Requirement

Concern has been expressed that there are multiple subject candidates beginning their teacher preparation programs without a deep understanding of the content they will be teaching. Also to be considered is whether it is fair to offer only the examination option for demonstrating elementary subject matter competence while candidates for the Single Subject credential retain the option of completing either an examination or a Commission-approved subject matter program. Some candidates may have issues with tests due to disability, or may have weak standardized test-taking skills, yet may demonstrate strong undergraduate academic

performance or have relevant experience in the practical application of the subject matter knowledge in question. As California seeks to remedy the decline of the recent past in recruiting and retaining individuals in the teaching profession, restricting multiple subject credential candidates to only the examination option could be seen as creating an unnecessary barrier to individuals who may otherwise be qualified to be effective teachers.

Recent Change Eliminating the Highly Qualified Designation

One of the key components of NCLB was the designation of highly qualified teachers (HQT). In California, the State Board of Education (SBE) defined HQTs as those individuals who hold a bachelor's degree, are credentialed in the content they are teaching, and have completed a minimum of 32 semester units or passed an examination in the content they are teaching. California's definition of HQT for elementary teachers, those who hold a Multiple Subject teaching credential, included passage of the CSET: Multiple Subjects. Beginning in 2004, newly prepared teachers were no longer given the option of completing a Commission-approved elementary subject matter program that had previously waived the requirement that a prospective teacher pass the CSET (http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2003-08/august_2003_GS-10.pdf).

Section 1119 of NCLB, which requires all teachers of core academic subjects in the state to be "highly qualified," is among the provisions of the ESEA, as reauthorized by NCLB, that states are **not** required to implement in the 2016-17 school year in order to facilitate an orderly transition to the ESSA. Highly qualified is a term that originated and was defined in NCLB. Under ESSA, the federal definition of HQTs is eliminated in favor of allowing states to determine their own teacher qualifications. States will continue to be required to disclose the steps they're taking to evaluate the equity of teacher distribution and the qualifications of their teachers and school administrators.

With this change, the Commission is in a position to make the completion of elementary subject matter programs once again an option for teaching credential candidates to meet the subject matter requirement for the Multiple Subject teaching credential.

Program Implications

The reauthorization of elementary subject matter programs to meet the subject matter requirement would necessitate an amendment to current regulations. Title 5 CCR, §80413(a)(5)(A) specifically states that educators enrolled in California teacher preparation programs on or after July 1, 2004 seeking a Multiple Subject credential must pass a subject matter examination to meet the subject matter knowledge requirement:

"For a multiple subject credential, an applicant enrolled in a teacher preparation program prior to July 1, 2004 shall meet this requirement either by passage of an examination as provided in Education Code Sections 44280, 44281, and 44282 or by completion of a subject-matter program as provided in Education Code Section 44310. An applicant enrolled in a teacher preparation program on or after July 1, 2004 shall meet this requirement by passage of an examination as provided in Education Code Sections 44280, 44281 and 44282."

Allowing subject matter programs to serve as a means of demonstrating subject matter competence for credentialing purposes would provide a strong, consistent program route for multiple subject credential candidates, and address the current inequity between the multiple and single subject credential requirements.

The reauthorization of elementary subject matter programs would require that the Commission develop program standards and initiate a program development and review process. Institutions intending to offer these programs would develop and submit a response to new Subject Matter Program Standards for review and approval by the Commission. The work recently completed regarding the alignment of the CSET: Multiple Subjects examination to the Common Core State Standards and the work in progress regarding the Next Generation Science Standards would inform the new standards.

Staff Recommendation

That the Commission direct staff to initiate the rule making process to reinstate the option to complete an elementary subject matter program to meet the state subject matter requirement.

Next Steps

If the decision is to reinstate the option to complete an elementary subject matter program to meet the state subject matter requirement, staff would return at a future Commission meeting with a plan for the Commission's consideration, including proposed regulations outlining any changes directed as well as a plan for program review and approval.