



In response to the recommendations of the March 2015 “[Report of California’s Statewide Task Force on Special Education](#),” a series of meetings are taking place to discuss the future of teacher preparation and credentialing for Special Education in California. Stakeholders are encouraged to attend a meeting to provide feedback and suggestions.

The Vision

In preparing California students to realize their full potential and become productive citizens who contribute to their own well-being and that of their communities, educators must be prepared to serve all students, including students with disabilities, within a unified and coherent education system.

Guiding Principles

All adults at the school are responsible for all students’ learning.

All students can learn and are presumed competent.

All students have a right to participate and learn together.

All students are welcomed as valued members of general education classrooms.

Context and Framing for Stakeholder Meetings

This series of stakeholder conversations will address California special education credentialing as part of a larger, integrated system of teacher preparation and credentialing, where general and special education teachers are prepared to instruct California’s diverse learners in one coherent system of education.

Given the increased needs of students in classrooms today, including students with disabilities, teachers should be prepared to provide differentiated, high-quality core instruction, and collaborate with fellow educators to provide multiple levels and intensity of supports so that all students can meet higher learning expectations.

Purpose of Statewide Stakeholder Meetings

These meetings are an opportunity to gather stakeholder input regarding the strengths and challenges of several potential new models of teacher preparation and credentialing for special education. The information gathered will be used to advise and inform the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing as they explore options within the credential system.

This process is not:

- an attempt to eliminate or alter the full continuum of placements.
- a replacement for low incidence certification.
- a prescription for a particular educational model.

Rationale/Benefit

For Students with Disabilities:

- Improve post-secondary outcomes through increased academic achievement and success in the general education curriculum.
- Increase access to well-prepared teachers and universally-designed classrooms, where students with disabilities learn alongside their peers without disabilities.

Data Points:

1. 62% of 12th grade students with disabilities graduated with a high school diploma in 2013 compared to an 80% graduation rate for students without disabilities. (Source: California Dept. of Education)
2. 32% of California students with IEPs who completed the state standardized test for English Language Arts in 2013 were deemed proficient or advanced in their grade-level state standards, as compared to 57% proficiency for their peers without disabilities. (Source: California Dept. of Education)
3. In 2012, only 52.6% of students with IEPs spent the majority of their day (80% or more) in the regular classroom. (Source: California Dept. of Education)
4. Academically strong districts for students with disabilities have reported strong correlation between access for students to the general education classrooms and curriculum and improved student outcomes. (Huberman, 2012)¹

For Teachers:

- Increase knowledge, instructional and behavioral strategies, and self-efficacy to support implementation of California's State Standards for all students in their classrooms including students with disabilities.

Data Points/Facts:

1. A 2013-2014 survey shows that general education teachers emerge from many California State University preparation programs knowing little about disabilities, instructional interventions, or ways of presenting the same content in different ways to different students. Special education teacher preparation programs may provide minimal instruction in pedagogy, standards, data analysis, and the general education curriculum. (Source: "[Report of California's Statewide Task Force on Special Education](#)")

¹ Huberman, M., Navo, M., & Parrish, T. (2012). Effective practices in high performing districts serving students in special education. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*.

2. In 1996, in an effort to address a shortage of special education credentialed teachers, the general education credential requirement for a special education credential was eliminated. As a result, special education credentialed teachers are not required to be certified to teach students without disabilities.
3. While work has been done to integrate special education students into the general education environment, there has been an identified need for opportunities for increased collaboration and collegiality between general and special education teachers. (Futernick, 2007)²
4. Collaboration between general education and special education teachers also resulted in improved academic outcomes for students with disabilities in high performing districts. (Huberman, 2012)

For Society:

- Improved positive post-secondary outcomes lead to increased economic productivity, independence, self-determination, and greater participation in civic and community life.

Data Points/Facts:

1. As of June 2012, the national labor force participation rate (LFPR) for working age adults with disabilities was 32.1% (compared to 77.7% for adults without disabilities). California currently ranks last in the nation in the LFPR of people with disabilities. (Source: [California Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities](#))
2. The goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) include assuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self- well prepared to realize their full potential. According to the ADA, "...census data, national polls, and other studies have documented that people with disabilities, as a group, occupy an inferior status in our society, and are severely disadvantaged socially, vocationally, economically, and educationally..."

In closing:

From the "[Report of California's Statewide Task Force on Special Education](#)":

"...California and all of its students would be well served by an on-going, research-informed system of professional learning that supports established teachers in implementing new initiatives and proven practices and that encourages and models purposeful integration of professional learning opportunities for special education and general education."

¹ http://www.calstate.edu/teacherquality/documents/possible_dream.pdf