STATE OF CALIFORNIA PETE WILSON, Governor

COMMISSION ON TEACHER CREDENTIALING
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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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To: Persons Interested in Changes Related to the Restructuring of Special Education Specialist Credentials

From: Philip A. Fitch, Ed. D., Executive Director

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Program Evaluation and Research

Re: Commission Action on Special Education Credentials

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing has made a series of decisions affecting credentials in special education. The information contained in this memo should be distributed to all individuals (credential candidates, faculty members) who may need to be informed of the pending changes. As with any changes in Commission policies which affect licensure, a number of activities will be required before these changes become effective. Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for Special Education Specialist and Services Credential programs need to be developed by advisory panels, and the regulation adoption process, including formal public hearings, must be completed. As the attached timeline reflects, it is anticipated that approximately two years will be needed to develop and recommend new special education program standards and to implement these standards at institutions of higher education. During this interim period, the existing requirements will remain in place.

All current holders of special education credentials should be informed that they will continue to be authorized in the areas specified by their credentials. There will be no adverse effect stemming from these changes on any current holder of a special education credential. Candidates currently enrolled in special education preparation programs should not be affected adversely by changes in the special education credential structure. Institutions of higher education, county offices of education and school districts need to inform and advise candidates in preparation programs and teachers serving on emergency credentials, waivers, and the Preliminary Special Education Specialist Credential for out-of-state trained teachers, about pending changes related to special education credential requirements.

Policy Change I: Elimination of the Prerequisite Credential

The Commission adopted a policy eliminating the requirement that a regular education teaching credential (Multiple or Single Subject) be earned as a prerequisite to a special education teaching credential. However, the Commission also adopted as policy the requirement that all special education teaching credential programs include coursework and fieldwork in regular education, as is required under Education Code Section 44265. As part of this policy, institutions will be required to allow those teachers who obtain a special education teaching credential and then choose to complete a Multiple or Single Subject Credential to apply the regular education coursework and fieldwork from the special education program toward the second credential.

Opportunities will need to be built in for candidates who choose to earn both a Special Education Specialist Credential and a Multiple or Single Subject Teaching Credential concurrently. Alternative and experimental program standards will continue to be available for IHEs who wish to develop and continue offering innovative programs to meet the requirements for both the regular and special education credentials.

Policy Change II: Mild/Moderate Disabilities and Moderate/Severe Disabilities Credentials and Low Incidence Credentials

The Commission adopted Special Education Specialist Instruction Credentials in Mild/Moderate Disabilities and Moderate/Severe Disabilities, and to include resource specialist competencies in program standards for all special education credentials. The current categorical credentials in Learning Handicapped and Severely Handicapped will be replaced by the new credentials. The Resource Specialist Certificate of Competence will no longer be available as a separate certificate when these changes are implemented. Holders of the new Special Education Specialist Instruction Credentials in Mild/Moderate Disabilities and Moderate/Severe Disabilities will be authorized to serve students in Kindergarten through grade 12 and classes organized primarily for adults.

The Commission also voted to maintain separate and distinct credentials for teachers of the Visually Handicapped, Communication Handicapped for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Physically Handicapped (with a name change to Orthopedically Handicapped to be more consistent with language in the law). All low incidence credentials will have a birth through age 22 authorization and not be limited to the K-22 population, even though an early childhood special education credential has been adopted.

Policy Change III: Creation of Two Level Credentials

The Commission adopted a policy that requires all special education <u>teaching</u> credential candidates to complete preparation programs for a preliminary (Level I) and professional (Level II) credential. Two level credentials will be required for:

Special Education Specialist Credentials in Mild/Moderate Disabilities and Moderate/Severe Disabilities, Visually Handicapped, Communication Handicapped --Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Orthopedically Handicapped. Two levels of preparation will not be required of special education services credential holders in the areas of Audiology, Orientation and Mobility, Speech and Language, and the Special Education Specialist Credential in Early Childhood.

The Level I preparation program will be required to include courses and experiences that emphasize the skills and knowledge needed by all special educators, and a cross section of unique competencies needed to serve students with specific disabilities authorized by the credential. The Level I special education credential will authorize the holder to work with students across all instructional settings. All candidates completing Level I preparation programs will be required to obtain a professional special education credential through an approved IHE program within 5 years of the date of issuance of the Special Education Level I credential. They will also be required to complete the statutory requirements for a clear credential (U. S. Constitution, Health, Computers).

Level II programs will be designed to provide teachers with advanced skills and knowledge. The second level preparation will include academic requirements and an individualized induction plan with a mentoring component. It will also include an option to allow some requirements to be met with non-university activities. The components of the Level II program will be developed in collaboration with the standards panel.

STRUCTURE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

Standards for Preliminary Level I Special Education Preparation

Special Education Common Competencies
Special Education Competencies related to Specific Credential Authorization
Regular Education Competencies related to the Core Curriculum
Fieldwork in Regular and Special Education

Standards for Professional Level II Special Education Preparation

Induction Plan for All Beginning Special Education Teachers
Advanced Coursework related to Specific Credential Authorization
Optional Plan for non-university professional development activities

Program length will be determined by individual colleges and universities whose programs are based on state standards, not the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

The two level credential structure adopted by the Commission is based on a core curriculum which will emphasize core competencies for all prospective special education teachers. Such preparation will strengthen the expertise and competence of certificated teachers while helping to alleviate the shortage of special educators in California schools. The induction plan will be developed by the candidate and the

employing school district, in consultation with a representative of a university with an approved special education program. Once the Level II credential is completed, professional growth requirements will encourage teachers to maintain currency in their instructional practices.

Policy Change IV: Special Education Specialist Instruction Credential in Early Childhood

The Commission adopted two alternative means for earning a new early childhood special education authorization:

a) A separate Special Education Specialist Credential in Early Childhood for Birth through Pre-K, and

b) An Emphasis Credential in Early Childhood (Birth through Pre-K) for holders of the Special Education Specialist Instruction Credentials in Mild/Moderate Disabilities and Moderate/Severe Disabilities, to be completed as part of the Level II preparation program, if desired.

Providing two ways to earn the early childhood special education authorization will address the needs of the preschool population with disabilities as California increases service to the birth through five age group. Providing the option for institutions to develop early childhood emphasis programs under the Special Education Specialist Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe Disabilities Credentials will allow programs to address infancy, family, and interdisciplinary content within existing coursework or to add specific coursework related to early intervention.

The Special Education Specialist Credential in Early Childhood will help to meet the growing service demands for young children as California enters into the implementation phase of federal law under Part H of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by October 1, 1993. The essential elements of an early childhood special education credential would include a bachelor's degree in a related field with a child development base and coursework and fieldwork on the specific competencies in early childhood special education. The Commission will need to determine acceptable undergraduate majors that will provide access to this credential for individuals from various backgrounds and disciplines.

Grandparenting flexibility will be an important consideration, especially for people trained in early childhood special education from out of state, for early childhood special education Master's graduates, and for those with certificates or credentials in related fields. Children with low incidence disabilities must have access to teachers who are knowledgeable about their unique needs. Early childhood special education specialists will be required to rely on individuals with specific credential authorizations to serve the low incidence populations. Individuals currently providing special education services to the birth through five population will be authorized to continue providing such service. Current credentials authorizing service with the preschool population will continue to be valid.

Policy Change V: Clinical Rehabilitative Services Credential

The Commission voted to maintain the Clinical Rehabilitative Services Credentials in Audiology; Orientation and Mobility; Language, Speech, and Hearing; and the Special Class Authorization. The authorization for all areas included under the Clinical Rehabilitative Services Credential will be birth through 22. The Commission also adopted a policy requiring all candidates for the Clinical Rehabilitative Services Credential in Language, Speech, and Hearing with Special Class Authorization to meet the Level I Standards relating to the common competencies for regular education and special education, to be developed for all special education teaching credentials.

The Special Education Specialist Instruction Credential in Communication Handicapped (CH) -- Language and Speech Emphasis will be eliminated as a separate credential for any new candidates upon implementation of Standards of Program Quality to be developed for special education credentials.

STRUCTURE FOR CLINICAL REHABILITATIVE SERVICES CREDENTIAL PREPARATION

Standards for the Clinical Rehabilitative Services Credential in Audiology or Language, Speech, and Hearing

Competencies specific to Audiology or Language, Speech and Hearing Disabilities
Fieldwork with students with Language, Speech and Hearing Disabilities

Standards for the Special Class Authorization

Competencies related to Special Class Authorization
Fieldwork in Classroom for Students with Speech and Language Disabilities
Preliminary Level I Special Education Preparation
- Special Education Common Competencies
- Regular Education Competencies

Program length will be determined by individual colleges and universities whose programs are based on state standards, not the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

The Commission also adopted a policy requiring the Master's degree for the Clinical Rehabilitative Services Credential in Language, Speech, and Hearing and in Audiology, effective in 1995. The federal regulations adopted in 1989 require that all states use their own "existing highest standard" in the state for a profession providing similar services to children and youth with disabilities. When a state's standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a profession, as is the case in California with emergency credentials and waivers, the state plan must include steps the California Department of Education will take for retraining or hiring of personnel to meet appropriate professional requirements in the state.

All current holders of the Clinical Rehabilitative Services Credential in Language Speech, and Hearing and Audiology will continue to be authorized in the areas specified by their credentials and candidates currently enrolled in preparation programs should be notified of the pending Master's degree requirement for the credential. It is anticipated that the National Teachers Examinations in Speech Pathology and Audiology will also be required for the credential some time in the future.

Policy Change VI: Resource Specialist Local Assessor Agencies

The Commission approved the plan to conduct on-site evaluation of local assessor agencies approved to assess and recommend candidates for the Resource Specialist (RS) Certificate of Competence during 1994. Under the new structure for special education credentials, the competencies currently required for the RS Certificate of Competence will be included in program standards for special education credentials and the RS Certificate will not be offered as a separate document. However, current special education credentials limit holders to teaching in special day classes, so there may be a need for methods by which these teachers may earn a RS Certificate tin order to serve students across all educational settings.

To determine if the twelve assessor panels currently authorized to assess and recommend applicants for the RS Certificate should continue to be approved whil colleges and universities transition to the new credential structure, the Commissio will use its authority under Title 5 § 80070.7 to review these agencies. A more detailed explanation of the evaluation process will be mailed to each agency under separate cover. No new local assessor agencies will be approved to assess and recommend candidates for the Resource Specialist Certificate of Competence after January 1, 1994.

Any questions on the above policy changes should be addressed to Dr. Marie Schrup at the Commission.

Tentative Timeline for Commission Activities Related to Restructuring Special Education Credentials

The following timeline is a tentative schedule of activities that will need to be completed in order to implement changes as adopted by the Commission.

1993

August — Staff to present a plan to the Commission to form advisory panel to guide the development of Standards of Program Quality for Special Education for Commission approval.

September — Call for nominations for Advisory Panel in Special Education.

November — Panel appointed by Executive Director.

1994

Convene Advisory Panel in Special Education.

Begin Title 5 rulemaking process for changes in regulations related to special education credentials.

Hold public hearings on proposed Title 5 changes.

On-site review of Resource Specialist Local Assessor Agencies.

Present draft standards to Commission for preliminary review and for approval to disseminate to field for comment.

Hold regional public forums on draft standards for special education.

Report to the Commission on comments from the field; revise standards as necessary.

Complete rulemaking process for changes in Title 5 regulations.

Present Standards of Program Quality for Special Education Credentials to Commission for adoption.

Hold regional meetings to discuss implementation of new standards and timeline for transitions to new standards.

1995 — Institutions begin submitting program documents based on new standards.

Field test new standards for special education during 1994-95 program evaluation cycle, if possible.