

**COMMISSION ON TEACHER CREDENTIALING**1812 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, California 95814-7000

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 3, 1993

93-9320

To: Coordinators of Special Education Specialist Credential Programs and  
Persons Employing Special Education Internship Candidates

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

Re: Use of Resource Specialist Waivers for the Special Education Specialist  
Internship Credential Holders

A number of colleges and universities across the state have approved Special Education Internship programs that lead to the issuance of a Special Education Specialist Instruction Credential. This memo addresses two special education intern assignment issues that are increasingly problematic for credential candidates and employers. The first issue to be discussed is the placement of special education specialist internship credential holders in resource specialist settings on State Board of Education waivers. The second issue involves the teaching experience requirement that must be met when a candidate applies for the Resource Specialist Certificate of Competence (RS).

Internship programs are designed for candidates who possess a regular education teaching credential and are planned collaboratively by the institution and one or more school districts. Candidates admitted into internship programs are eligible for internship credentials, which have the same authorizations as specialist credentials, but which are valid for two years. The intent of the internship is that enrolled candidates will complete required coursework and serve as supervised interns in a special education classroom concurrently.

The Commission Guidelines for Special Education Specialist Instruction Credential Programs states that "both the basic and advanced specialization components of the program will emphasize field study with special education students". Although the guidelines do not specifically state that the candidate, or in this case interns, must be placed in a special education self-contained class, institutions preparing candidates for these credentials "shall design their programs to develop such skills and knowledge required for service in these credential areas". Placement in a resource specialist setting does not prepare the candidate to serve in a special day class which is the only legal assignment under the Special Education Specialist Instruction Credential.

A problem that has become apparent to Commission certification officers reviewing applications is that special education interns are completing the entire field experience requirement for the Special Education Specialist Instruction Credential in a resource setting. Section 80070.1 of the California Code of Regulations clearly states that issuance of a Resource Specialist Certificate of Competence requires both regular and special education classroom teaching experience.

Special education interns serving on State Board of Education waivers in a resource specialist setting must verify a minimum of supervised field experience in a special education classroom, as described in Title 5 Section 80070.1 below, in the area of the special education internship. The Commission does not recognize resource specialist experience on a State Board of Education waiver as the only special education experience to meet the three year experience requirement for the clear Resource Specialist Certificate of Competence.

#### **80070.1. The Resource Specialist Certificate of Competence: Definition and Terms.**

*(b) "Special Education Credential" means a credential that specifically authorizes the teaching of pupils with exceptional needs, including, but not limited to, the communicatively handicapped, physically handicapped, learning handicapped, severely handicapped, visually handicapped, and orthopedically handicapped.*

*(c) "Three or more years of teaching experience, including both regular and special education teaching experience" means full-time experience in one or more of the combinations specified in (1) through (6) below.*

*The minimum amount of regular classroom teaching experience required is one semester of student teaching. Various other regular classroom teaching experiences may be substituted. These may include such experience as summer school teaching in a regular classroom, or organized inservice programs designed to provide teaching experience with regular classroom students, conducted by a school district, county office, or special education service region, and included in that agency's comprehensive local plan, approved by the State Department of Education.*

*(1) One year of regular classroom teaching experience and two years of special education classroom teaching experience, or*

*(2) One year of special education classroom teaching experience and two years of regular classroom teaching experience, or*

*(3) Two and one-half years of regular classroom teaching experience and one semester or two quarters of full-time special education classroom teaching or student teaching, or*

*(4) Two and one-half years of special education classroom teaching experience and one semester or two quarters of full-time regular classroom teaching or student teaching, or*

*(5) Two years of regular classroom teaching experience and two semesters or three quarters of full-time special education classroom teaching or student teaching, or*

*(6) Two years of special education classroom teaching experience and two semesters or three quarters of full-time regular classroom teaching or student teaching.*

The number of special education waivers granted by the State Board of Education increased from 2,703 in 1991-92 to 3,394 during 1992-93. A large number of these are resource specialist waivers. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing reviews these waivers to ensure that there is no certification option available to the person seeking the waiver.

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, special education credentials based on the new structure will not be available for a minimum of two to three years. Consequently, current special education credentials authorize holders to teach in special day classes only and all special education specialist candidates, including interns, need to have such experience as part of their preparation program. Alternative and experimental program standards are available for IHEs who wish to develop innovative programs to meet the requirements for both the regular and special education credentials.

Any questions should be addressed to Dr. Marie Schrup at the Commission.