

**Study of the Effectiveness of the
Education Specialist with Mild/
Moderate Disabilities District
Intern Program:
Report to the Legislature
2007**



**COMMISSION ON
TEACHER CREDENTIALING**

Ensuring Educator Excellence

FEBRUARY 2007 COMMISSION REPORT

This report was developed by Michael McKibbin, Patricia Bosley Mette, and Nicholas Pierce of the Professional Services Division of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. For more information about the contents of this study, contact mmckibbin@ctc.ca.gov.

The staff of the Professional Services Division acknowledge the contributions of the program directors, interns, intern graduates, site administrators and mentors in the six participating district intern programs: Los Angeles Unified School District, Orange County Office of Education, Project Impact, Project Pipeline, San Diego Unified School District, and Stanislaus County Office of Education for participating in the data collected for this study.

FEBRUARY 2007

This report, like other publications of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, is not copyrighted. It may be reproduced in the public interest, but proper attribution is requested.

Commission on Teacher Credentialing
1900 Capitol Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-7254
(916) 445-7256
(888) 921-2682 (toll free)

This report is available at: <http://www.ctc.ca.gov>

Commission on Teacher Credentialing



1900 Capitol Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95814

(916) 445-0184

Dale Janssen
Executive Director

Banker, Catherine	Public Representative	2007
Calderon, Josie	Public Representative	2009
Cheung, Caleb	Teacher Representative	2009
Cordeiro, Paula	Public Representative	2008
Gaston, Margaret	Public Representative	2009
Gomez, Guillermo	Teacher Representative	2008
Grant, Gloria	Teacher Representative	2007
Littman, Leslie	Designee, Superintendent of Public Instruction	Ongoing
Molina, Aida	Administrative Services Representative	2007
Pearson, P. David	Faculty Member	2009
Perry, Lillian	Teacher Representative	2009
Schwarze, Leslie P.	School Board Member	2008
Stordahl, Jon	Teacher Representative	2008
Whitson, Loretta	Non-Administrative Services Credential Representative	2008
Vacant	Teacher Representative	
Ex-Officio Members		
McGrath, Marilyn	California Postsecondary Education Commission	
Symms Gallagher, Karen	Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities	
Waite, Athena	University of California	
Young, Beverly	California State University	

Study of the Effectiveness of the Education Specialist with Mild/ Moderate Disabilities District Intern Program: Report to the Legislature 2007

State of California
Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor



COMMISSION ON
TEACHER CREDENTIALING

Ensuring Educator Excellence

1900 Capitol Avenue
Sacramento, California 95814

Study of the Effectiveness of the Education Specialist with Mild/ Moderate Disabilities District Intern Program: Report to the Legislature

Executive Summary

This report to the Legislature is required by Education Code Section 44329. The study examines the effectiveness of the District Intern Education Specialist (Mild/Moderate Disabilities) program after it was expanded to six programs throughout the state and provides conclusions and recommendations based on the data collected. The Commission's authority to issue credentials in this area is scheduled to sunset on January 1, 2008; (EC 44325 a).

The Commission staff has collected data on the effectiveness of this program from a variety of sources. These include:

- Review of each program's response to the Commission's Accreditation Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness that all programs must meet including descriptions of required coursework and the support system for each intern.
- Review of Alternative Certification Funded Program data. This includes review of annual narrative reports on the successes and challenges of the programs well as demographic and quantitative data such as retention rates.
- Interviews with each District Intern program director conducted in January 2007, about the successes and challenges of developing an Education Specialist Mild/Moderate disabilities program.
- Responses to questionnaires sent in December 2006 to District Intern Education Specialist interns, graduates, support providers and site administrators to survey their judgments on the effectiveness of the program particularly in terms of the skills and knowledge taught and the support provided to interns in the program.

The findings of the study were organized around five questions that examine the effectiveness of the program to achieve the goals of the District Intern Education Specialist program. Following are the questions and the major conclusions of the study.

1. **Does the Education Specialist District Intern Program help meet the shortage of special education teachers in California's classrooms?**
The number of Emergency Permits and Credential Waivers for Education Specialist Credentials issued has been reduced significantly in the past six years and the Education Specialist District Intern Program has expanded six fold in that time frame. In 2000-2001 There were 6,249 persons serving on Special Education Emergency permits. By 2004-05 this number was reduced to 3,065. Although there may be a number of reasons why this has happened,

the availability and expansion of both university and district intern programs have contributed significantly to this decrease.

2. **Are there any differences among those who enter classrooms through this route compared to more traditional student teaching based routes?** The persons who become special education teachers through the internship route, including the District Intern Education Specialist program bring into the profession candidates who may not otherwise enter teaching through student teaching routes:
 - The interns are twice as racially diverse as the current teaching workforce.
 - The percentage of males seeking special education credentials through internships in California is twice the national average.
 - Nearly forty percent come into teaching after another professional career.
3. **Have these six programs developed teacher preparation that meets the needs of partnering districts?** These programs are now providing district interns for nearly two hundred of California's school districts. The primary reason for creating these programs given by the six directors was to meet the need for special education teachers in their service areas. Practice based programs were developed for a variety of school settings specifically to meet the needs of the partner schools and districts. Every year the programs have grown as the requests from their partnering districts have increased.
4. **Have these programs been able to develop instructional and support systems that meet the needs of their clients?** All programs have responded to the Commission's program standards in designing and implementing their programs. Programs provide preservice instruction before the intern becomes teacher of record, instruction is based on classroom application, coursework is offered after school and on Saturdays, programs use a cohort model and support is provided both at the site and the program level. In Spring 2006, interns were asked to judge the effectiveness of 45 different content measures in helping them become competent special education teachers. Eighty percent of the ratings fell in the "highly effective" or "effective" range and the remaining 20 percent were rated as "somewhat effective." None were rated lower than "somewhat effective."
5. **Do the six programs who participated in this pilot have the capacity to prepare and support high quality Education Specialist teachers for students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities?** In interviews with program directors, issues about the ability of the programs to provide high quality instructional and support services were addressed. Directors expressed confidence in their ability to provide a full array of instructional activities. The directors also provided a complete description of the support system, but frequently reflected on the challenges they face in that component. Putting together the instructional programs seemed to be less of an issue than finding the kinds of quality support providers with experience and expertise in Special Education. Programs are using retired teachers to

supplement on site supervision. This strategy moves in the right direction, but it is not sufficient in and of itself. On site support continues to be an area of concern. Programs will need to engage partnering districts and schools in discussions of how to increase the on-site support of special education intern teachers. Measures that have been implemented such as the enhanced support provisions in SB 1209 that will help address on site support issues.

Recommendation: As a result of the positive evidence of program effectiveness provided in the responses to the questions asked in the study, the Commission recommends that the sunset date of January 1, 2008 be removed from statute. This would allow Education Specialist (Mild/Moderate Disabilities) District Intern Programs that meet the Commission Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness to continue and be authorized to recommend candidates for California credentials. This study has identified some areas for improvement, especially in the area of intern support. The Commission and its staff will work with programs in these areas and they will be addressed in the report due to the Legislature in 2009.

Study of the Effectiveness of the Education Specialist with Mild/ Moderate Disabilities District Intern Program: Report to the Legislature

Introduction and Background

The District Intern Program was originated in 1983 (Stats.1963, Chap.498, Hughes, Hart). The original program allowed districts and county offices to offer teacher preparation programs for single subject candidates. Since then the enabling statutes have been amended eight times as this type of teacher preparation program has expanded into new credential areas and increased the number of providers. Among the changes that have occurred was expansion into multiple subjects and bilingual credentials (1987) and special education (1994). Most recently SB 933 (Chapter 304, Statutes of 2006, Machado) amended the District Intern statutes to authorize another pilot program (until January 2010) to allow school districts to provide Education Specialist credential services in all areas of disability. A more detailed description of the amendments may be found in Appendix A.

With each expansion, Education Code Section 44329 has been amended to require a study of the effectiveness of the program. The first two studies examined the effectiveness of the statewide district intern program. The third study required the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) to study the effectiveness of the Education Specialist (Mild/Moderate Disabilities) District Intern Pilot Program that is being implemented in Los Angeles Unified School District. The fourth study, reported in this agenda item, once again examines the District Intern Education Specialist (Mild/Moderate Disabilities) program and the effectiveness of the program after it was expanded to six programs throughout the state and provides a series of conclusions and recommendations based on the data collected. A fifth effectiveness study is required in SB 933 (Chapter 304, Statutes of 2006, Machado).The Commission is required to report on the expansion into all special education areas on or before January 2009.

The third mandated, data-based effectiveness study titled *A Study of the Effectiveness of the Education Specialist District Intern Pilot Program in Los Angeles Unified School District: A Report to the Legislature* was presented to the Legislature in spring 1999. This study determined that in the judgment of the candidates, graduates, employers, and the accreditation review team, the Los Angeles District Intern Education Specialist Program was generally effective in preparing credentialed teachers for students with mild to moderate disabilities.

The 1999 study also recommended that there were certain conditions that should be met if this pilot was to be expanded into other districts and regions of the state. The issue that was of greatest concern was the capacity necessary to put together such a

program, particularly in terms of human resources. As page 41 of the 1999 study states:

Implementation of a district intern specialist program will require an enormous commitment of resources by the participating district(s). Unless the district(s) clearly have the capacity to provide a well developed teacher preparation curriculum, have sufficient number of Education Specialist support providers and have administrators designated to staff the program, they should not undertake the creation of a District Intern Education Specialist program.

Similarly, it should be clear that the proposed specialist program has sufficient instructional and support expertise to address all competency areas at both initial (Level I) and advanced (Level II) levels. They should demonstrate the capacity of the program by responding to the Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for District Intern Education Specialist Programs.

One of the purposes of the current effectiveness study is to explore the concerns raised in 1999 study. Questions four and five of this study focus on the concerns from the 1999 study.

Definitions and Methodology Used in this Study

Based on review of the enabling statutes and discussions with policy makers, the Commission staff has arrived at the following definitions to guide the methodology of this effectiveness study. Dictionary definitions of the word effectiveness include "accomplishment of a desired result or the fulfillment of a purpose or intent, producing a result." The Education Code provides further information on what the intent of the original statute for district intern programs and this study was. It was found that the priorities of the statute were to meet the shortage needs of the participating districts and produce high quality special education teachers who were retained in their teaching positions. Therefore, this effectiveness study will focus on examining whether this pilot program was able to help accomplish the desired result of helping meet the state's need for highly qualified special education teachers.

The Commission staff has collected data from a variety of sources. These include demographic and descriptive data on Education Specialist District Interns since these programs began. In order to receive alternative certification funds each intern must complete a Consent Form which certifies program participation and provides employment and demographic information for each intern. Annually Commission staff conducts both paper and pencil and on line surveys of interns. These questionnaires focus on intern satisfaction with the program and the kinds of services that they received. For this report to the Legislature, another survey was conducted of those who support, employ and evaluate the performance of District

Intern Education Specialist Teachers with the purpose of examining the skills and abilities of those prepared through this program. Through the following data sources, the Commission will examine program and candidate effectiveness through a variety of lenses and make recommendations based on the findings from the data collected as follows:

1. Review of each program's response to the Commission's Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness. Each program must meet the Commission's Accreditation Standards. This includes all Preconditions that stipulate compliance with specific quantitative requirements such as amounts of pre-service preparation (that preparation offered prior to becoming teacher of record); Standards Common to all programs such as leadership and fiscal requirements; and Program Standards, such as those standards that set forth the knowledge, skills and abilities that each intern must demonstrate. All six District Intern Education Specialist programs have been approved by the Committee on Accreditation based on the Commission's review process for all accredited Education Specialist programs.
2. Review of Alternative Certification Funded Program Data. All of the programs that are the subject of this study have applied for and received Alternative Certification Funding pursuant Education Code Section 44380-44386. Among the funding conditions that that each program must meet is to provide information about their program. This includes review of annual narrative reports on the successes and challenges of the program, descriptions of required coursework and the support system for each intern, as well as demographic and quantitative data about the interns in the programs such as retention rates.
3. Interviews with Program Directors. Each District Intern program director was interviewed in January 2007, about the successes and challenges of developing an Education Specialist Mild/Moderate disabilities program specifically for this report to the legislature, with a particular focus on the capacity of these programs to prepare and support interns. The seven questions that were asked can be found in Appendix B.
4. Participant Surveys. In January 2007, questionnaires were given to the Mild/Moderate Education Specialist District Interns who were in their second year in the program in the six pilot programs. The support provider and the site level administrator for each sampled intern were also asked to complete a questionnaire for each intern surveyed. A fourth survey was distributed to graduates of the six programs two years following graduation. These questionnaires were used as a way to check and confirm the data from the other three sources focusing on the program's effectiveness from their particular point of view. These four surveys may be found in Appendix C.

The information from these four sources has been collected, reviewed and summarized in the Report of the Data section of this report that begins below. Based on that data, the Commission staff makes the conclusions and

recommendations that can be found in the last section of this report, which can be found on page 25.

Effectiveness Study: Report of the Data

The data on the effectiveness of District Intern Education Specialist programs in the current study is organized around a series of questions. Each question is posed to examine one of the areas that District Intern Education Specialist Teaching Credential programs are expected to effect.

Question 1: Does the Education Specialist District Intern Program help meet the shortage of special education teachers in California's classrooms?

Special Education Teachers have been one of California's largest areas of teacher shortage. One way to determine teacher shortages is by reviewing data on credential permits and waivers. Through a series of efforts the number of persons serving on Emergency and Provisional Permits and on Credential Waivers for Education Specialist teachers has been greatly reduced over the past six years. In 2000-2001 There were 6,249 persons serving on Special Education Emergency permits. By 2004-05 this number was reduced to 3,065.

Although permit and waiver data are not yet available for later years for all districts after 2004-05, the data from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) affirms that these trends continue. There were 381 Special Education Emergency Permits in 2004-05 in the LAUSD. In 2005-2006 this number had dropped to 242. This drop was accomplished by increasing the number of candidates who were prepared to teach special education students. This was largely done through internship programs, both university and district based programs.

In the LAUSD the number of university interns in 2000-01 was slightly over 100. By 2004-05 this number had increased to 238, and 2005-06 the number was 368. The LAUSD District Intern Education Specialist program followed a similar pattern with fewer than 80 participants in 2000-01; 94 in 2004-05 and 177 in 2005-06. This year the LAUSD has 244 in the Education Specialist section of its District Intern program and continues to partner with nine University Special Education Intern programs to further increase the supply of qualified Special Education Teachers.

Six District Intern programs prepared 639 special education candidates in 2005-06. These six programs provided special education teachers for 187 districts in 23 California counties. A description of these programs may be found in Table 1. Two different program design models were used. A single district model was used in the state's two largest districts, and a consortium model, which was administered by agencies such as county offices of education that are designed to serve multiple districts. The single district models are the Los Angeles Unified School District and the San Diego Unified School District. The consortium models are Orange County

Office of Education, Project Pipeline, San Joaquin County Office of Education, and Stanislaus County Office of Education.

The number of university and district intern programs has increased in virtually the same rate as issuance of these (special education) credential permits has decreased. Both university based and district based programs have contributed to this result. The increase in the District Intern Education Specialist program has been particularly dramatic in those areas such as the San Joaquin Valley. Because there was relatively little availability of university based Education Specialist Credential Intern programs in that region, two programs emerged to fill the void. With the introduction of District Intern Education Specialist Program, the number of special education emergency permits in San Joaquin County has dropped from 71 in 2004-05 to 27 in 2005-06. In the other programs the permit and waiver use has also declined in similar ways.

**Table 1
Education Specialist Mild/Moderate District Intern Program Information**

Program Name	Year Program Approved	# of Interns Enrolled 2005-2006	Number of Graduates	Number of Districts Served	Number of Counties Served	2006-07 Intern Enrollment
Project Impact San Joaquin COE	2003	136	22	89	9	128
Orange COE	2004	53	22	22	3	61
Project Pipeline	2003	124	21	39	11	136
Los Angeles USD	1994	244	215	1	1	289
Stanislaus COE	2004	40	4	29	3	40
San Diego City Schools	2004	20	0	1	1	42

Question 2: Are there any differences among those who enter classrooms through this route compared to more traditional student teaching routes?

In addition to meeting the needs of partnering school districts in shortage areas, one of the goals of alternative certification programs is to provide a route into teaching for candidates who might not otherwise enter teaching and for those who are underrepresented in the teaching workforce. Data from annual Intern Consent forms, which document participation in an intern program for registration and funding purposes, provide information about Special Education District Interns (DIs).

- Twenty-five percent of the DIs were prepared in out of state undergraduate programs. This is almost double the normal rate in California.
- Fifteen percent of the DIs received their undergraduate degrees from University of California campuses. DIs programs provide an opportunity for special education preparation and certification since relatively few University of California campuses offer this preparation.
- Thirty one percent of the DIs are male. This is similar to those who enter university special education intern programs. This number is significantly higher than the number of male candidates who enter special education programs nationwide, which is 14 percent.
- Forty-one percent of the DIs are from those groups traditionally underrepresented in the teaching workforce. Across all intern programs, 48 percent of the interns in California are non-white, and these figures have been quite consistent for seven years. This compares to the teaching population of California's current teachers which is approximately 25 percent non-white.
- Although fewer than the number of second career single subject interns, about one third of the DIs came into teaching after a career in another profession.

To summarize, the District Intern Education Specialist teachers matriculate from University of California campuses and from out of state was greater than expected. Special Education DIs come into teaching from second careers at a lower rate than their other intern teaching credential counterparts. More males choose to become special education teachers through internships in California than the national sample, and interns are more diverse than the comparative state and national samples. The DIs are a diverse group, but not greatly different from those who choose university intern programs.

Question 3: Have these six programs developed teacher preparation programs that meet the needs of partnering districts?

In the case of all six district intern programs, the reason given by their directors that these programs were created was to meet the need for special education teachers in their service area. As was noted in the 1999 District Intern Effectiveness Study, The LAUSD program was begun because the district could not hire every person prepared in Los Angeles basin university special education programs and still not meet their needs, without regard for the other seventy districts in the county. In the San Joaquin Valley, both the San Joaquin and Stanislaus County Offices of Education programs began because the local universities were able to meet only a fraction of the need of the area. Similar stories were told by the other three programs. In each case the programs developed a practice based program specifically designed to cater to the needs of the partner schools and districts. In the beginning of each program, most of the

candidates came by recommendations from the districts. Many of the candidates were those who had been originally hired on emergency permits.

The programs were developed based on the same Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness as all accredited Education Specialist Programs. Each program brought together an advisory committee made up of special education administrators and teachers from area districts as well as representatives of nearby universities. In interviews with program directors, most stressed the importance of strong collaborations with participating districts. In the case of the consortium programs, partner districts were brought together to make program decisions. In the single district programs divisions within the district were brought together.

Each program developed an instructional program and support system that was standards-based and practice oriented, and was designed to meet the needs of teachers who would be responsible for a classroom at the same time they were engaging in teacher preparation. The programs and their partners developed recruitment and selection strategies and created decision making and program management structures that met the needs of the participants. Table 2 presents a summary of the features of the six District Intern Education Specialist programs. Each program was reviewed on those components listed in Education Code Section 44385.

An expanded description of the six programs and a listing of their instructional program coursework are provided in Appendix D.

In addition to special day class and resource settings, partnering districts requested that the programs provide interns for a variety of school settings. Two of the programs place teachers in schools for incarcerated youth. Two of the programs work with charter schools. Three of the programs serve schools in rural areas, meeting the specific needs of participating districts. All six programs target paraprofessionals, second career teachers and those underrepresented in the teaching workforce. In interviews with directors, one of the trends that was noted was that until recently a large portion of the interns began their teaching as emergency permit holders, and the most pressing need was to provide credential services for these teachers. More recently the needs of the districts have been to serve candidates are entering the intern program directly and providing them with ongoing support and practice-based instruction.

Question 4: Have these programs been able to develop instructional and support systems that meet the needs of their clients?

As Table 2 shows all of the six programs are two to three years duration. All six programs offer their instruction in segments of varying length. Review of accreditation program documents shows that in many cases the instruction is

offered initially at a foundational level and later re-examined during the program at levels of greater complexity and based on classroom applications. This is particularly true in topics such as Positive Behavioral Support and Student Assessment. Knowledge and skills such as these seem to benefit from an instructional approach that allows blending theory and application. All programs begin with at least 120 clock hours of preservice instruction before the intern becomes teacher of record. The range of instructional