
7G

Information

Professional Services Committee

Update on Issues Concerning Education Specialist Credentials

Executive Summary: This report provides an update on some current issues in the area of special education that may have implications for Commission policy relative to structure and authorization for the Education Specialist Credential.

Recommended Action: This is an information item that requires no action.

Presenter: Jan Jones Wadsworth, Consultant

Goal 1: Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators.

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation of professional educators.
- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the performance of credential candidates.

Update on Issues Concerning Education Specialist Credentials

Introduction

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing has authorized credentials in the area of Special Education for more than four decades. Currently, the Commission issues Education Specialist credentials in Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Moderate/Severe Disabilities, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Physical and Health Impairments, Visual Impairments, and Early Childhood Special Education. The Commission also issues the Clinical Rehabilitative Services credential in Language, Speech and Hearing, Orientation and Mobility, Audiology, and Special Class Authorization, as well as certificates for Early Childhood Special Education and Resource Specialist.

This item provides information regarding current issues in special education credentials in California that may have implications for Commission policies and authorization for the California Education Specialist Credential.

Background

Prior to 1997, all candidates pursuing a special education credential were required to obtain a basic multiple subject or single subject teaching credential and then earn the special education authorization as an advanced specialization. A major reform effort of the special education credentials was completed when the Commission adopted the new Education Specialist Credential program standards in 1996 with implementation beginning January 1997. A major change of this reform was to designate the Education Specialist Credential a basic teaching credential (not requiring a pre-requisite credential). The new structure also:

- Required completion of coursework and fieldwork in both general and special education.
- Required candidates to demonstrate subject matter competence, either through completion of an approved subject matter preparation program, or passage of a Commission-approved subject matter examination.
- Created the Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe authorizations to serve as K-12 credentials and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Visual Impairment and Physical and Health Impairments authorizations to serve birth to 22 years.
- Implemented a two-level credential structure, beginning with a Level I preliminary credential (issued for five years), followed by a Level II professional clear credential that required completion of a college or university-based program that included an individualized induction plan, advanced content in special education and the disability

area, completion of an assessment of candidate performance and two years of teaching experience while holding the preliminary credential.

There were widespread shortages of teachers in special education at the time the Commission changed the credential structure and some of the changes specifically addressed the shortages. For example, the elimination of the prerequisite teaching credential requirement was expected to help alleviate the shortage and facilitate the credentialing of candidates trained out-of-state.

To further address this shortage, policy makers and the Commission have encouraged the development of professional preparation programs leading to the education specialist credential. Currently, of the 96 California teacher preparation program sponsors, 44 institutions have one or more special education teacher preparation programs (37 have at least one or more internship programs). In addition, six school districts and/or county offices of education offer an Education Specialist Internship program. Of the 50 program sponsors, 43 offer internship programs. This represents significant growth in the number of program sponsors from 1999, when there were only 38 special education program sponsors.

Even though the Commission has continually increased the number of Education Specialist teacher preparation programs including internship programs and the number of candidates being issued Education Specialist credentials has continued to increase, the shortages of teachers in special education has continued. Information about the number of special education students and the number of teachers prepared in special education is provided in Appendix 1.

In 2001, the Commission adopted new program standards (SB 2042) for multiple and single subject credential teacher preparation. Under these new standards, this was the first time the credential requirements were designed so that each candidate was required to complete an initial preparation program for the preliminary credential, followed by an induction program for the professional credential. Previously, many candidates were able to earn the professional clear credential as their first credential. As the SB 2042 teacher preparation standards have now become fully implemented and are the route for all general education credential candidates, the new credential requirements for the Multiple Subject and Single Subject credentials have raised some issues related to credentialing for special education. While some requirements for the Education Specialist and Multiple/Single Subject Credential programs are very similar, there are some significant differences. Two charts showing the different requirements for the Multiple/Single Subject Credentials and the Education Specialist Credential are in Appendix 2. The following four issues are discussed further in this agenda item: The subject matter requirement for the Multiple/Single Subject Credentials is closely related to the teaching assignment of the candidate, however, that is not the case with the Education Specialist Credential. The Multiple/Single Subject Credentials include the authorization to teach English learners and the Education Specialist Credential does not. The programs at the professional level (induction) for the Education Specialist and the Multiple/Single Subject Credential have different emphases. The requirements for these two types of basic credential have not been reviewed for consistency. A brief discussion of each issue will be presented.

Subject Matter Preparation Issues

For the Multiple Subject Credential, candidates are required to pass the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET) to meet the subject matter requirement for the credential and are authorized to teach all subjects in the self-contained classroom. For the Single Subject Credential, candidates are required to complete an approved subject matter preparation program or pass the appropriate single subject CSET to meet the subject matter requirement for the credential. They are authorized to teach that subject in departmentalized classrooms. The subject matter preparation requirements for both of these credentials are closely aligned to the Student Academic Content Standards and are designed to prepare the candidates to be able to deliver appropriate content in the classrooms to which they are assigned. Multiple and Single Subject credential holders have been determined to meet the “highly qualified” teacher requirements under No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Currently, Education Specialist candidates are required to complete any approved subject matter preparation program or pass any CSET examination to meet the subject matter requirement for the credential. Although the subject matter preparation is aligned to the Student Academic Content Standards, the teaching assignment may not be directly related to the subject matter preparation of the candidate. Under the present credential structure, Education Specialist Credential holders may be assigned to serve students with special needs in a variety of settings grades K-12 (or birth-22 for some credentials). This may present a problem for compliance with NCLB, especially at the middle school and high school levels. The decision has not yet been made about the definition for a “California highly qualified special education teacher.” Depending on the definition of “highly qualified” teachers to meet the IDEA/NCLB requirements, the Commission may need to reconsider subject matter preparation requirements or assignment authorizations for these credentials.

The *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* (Public Law 94-142) enacted in 1975 was landmark federal legislation requiring education and related services for children with disabilities as well as state and local aid for special education. It later became known as the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), and since that time, amendments and reauthorizations were passed in 1986, 1990, 1997 and most recently, 2004. On December 3, 2004 President Bush signed the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act* (P.L. 108-446). Although the latest law preserves the basic structure and civil rights guarantees of the original IDEA, it also has significant implications related to credentialing. Among them is the definition of “highly qualified” teachers for special education, which is linked to the definition of “highly qualified teacher” for NCLB, but modifies the definition as it applies to special education teachers.

As was the case with NCLB for Multiple and Single Subject credentials, the California State Board of Education (SBE) is responsible for implementing the provisions of IDEA and interpreting the definition of “highly qualified special education teacher” for California. The SBE will not take final action until the federal regulations for states’ implementation of IDEA are available. They are expected in the very near future. Once the federal regulations are released, the SBE will review the regulations and determine California’s policies related to IDEA and NCLB. The SBE decision about definition is necessary before it would be appropriate for

the Commission to make any changes to the current special education credential requirements and/or authorizations to align them with NCLB and IDEA.

English Language Learner Authorization Issues

Candidates earning the Multiple or Single Subject credential under SB 2042 standards are required to have preparation to teach English language learners as part of the program for both the preliminary and the professional levels. The SB 2042 credentials include an authorization to teach English language learners, because the content is built into the preparation programs. However, candidates earning the Education Specialist Credentials must complete additional coursework or pass an additional examination to earn the authorization to teach English language learners. Many employers are requiring the authorization to teach English language learners for new special education teachers, or are requiring employed special education teachers to earn the authorization. There are a number of special educators who support the idea of adding the content necessary for the authorization to teach English language learners to the Education Specialist Credential programs. Some already include English language learner content in programs, but it does not change the authorization of the credential.

Professional Level Induction Program Issues

Candidates for the Multiple and Single Subject Credential are required to complete a two-year induction program that includes an individualized induction plan, advanced content in technology, health, English learners, and special populations, and the completion of a formative assessment. Induction programs are closely related to the candidate's employment. Currently, all approved induction programs are offered by school districts or coalitions of school districts.

The Level II program for the Education Specialist Credential is offered by approved colleges and universities (with the exception that district internship programs in special education are integrated Level I and Level II programs) and also includes an individualized induction plan. For the Education Specialist Credential, the advanced content in special education and the disability emphasis is an essential component at this level.

When candidates decide to earn both a Multiple or Single Subject Credential and an Education Specialist Credential, the differing requirements of the Level II programs become an issue. A number of questions emerge. Is a candidate required to complete two induction programs? How much teaching experience or field experience is required for each credential? Can the two Level II programs be completed simultaneously? Can SB 2042 induction programs provide services for both types of credential, either simultaneously or in tandem? How do the two program sponsors work together in helping the candidate clear both credentials? May a candidate complete the Level II requirements for one credential, while teaching on the other?

Consistency of Basic Credential Structure

The Commission adopted the current structure and requirements for the Education Specialist Credential in 1996. In 2001, the Commission adopted the current structure and requirements for the Multiple/Single Subject Credential. Both of these types of basic credential emerged with a two level structure that includes a preliminary credential as the first level and the professional credential as the second level. Although there are many similarities, there are some significant differences, as discussed previously. The requirements of these basic credentials, especially at the second level, have not been reviewed for consistency. As the Commission considers this topic, it may wish to consider if the current structure for the Education Specialist continues to be the most appropriate to meet the needs of California's schools.

Future Policy Questions for Consideration

This agenda item explores some of the current issues related to credentialing in special education. The following policy questions appear to arise from the above discussion:

1. Should the authorization for some of the Education Specialist Credentials be changed to allow less flexibility or more flexibility for grade level and subject matter assignment?
2. Should the current Education Specialist Program Standards be adapted to include the necessary EL content in order to qualify the holder for an EL authorization?
3. Should candidates completing more than one basic credential have to complete more than one Induction Program? What requirements should candidates who are getting more than one basic credential have to complete to "streamline" the credential process?
4. Since they are all basic credentials, should the Education Specialist, Multiple Subject and Single Subject credential requirements be more consistent? If so, to what extent? Is the current structure for the Education Specialist Credentials the most appropriate for meeting the needs of the California public school system?

Staff is seeking direction about which of these policy questions the Commission would like further information. Are there additional policy questions for consideration?

Appendix 1

Growth in the Number of Special Needs Students in California Public Schools

	Number of Special Education Students	% Growth	Number of General Education Students	% Growth	Relative Proportion
2000-01	650,719		6,050,895		10.75%
2001-02	663,220	1.92%	6,147,375	1.59%	10.79%
2002-03	675,332	1.83%	6,244,642	1.58%	10.81%
2003-04	681,980	0.98%	6,298,774	0.87%	10.83%

Growth in the Number of First Time Special Education Credentials Issued

	Number of Special Education Credentials Issued	Growth
2000-01	2,154	
2001-02	2,341	8.68%
2002-03	2,976	27.13%
2003-04	3,338	12.16%

Decrease in the Number of Emergency Permits Issued in Special Education

Year	Permits Issued	% Change
2000-2001	6,249	
2001-2002	5,970	-4.5%
2002-2003	5,444	-8.8%
2003-2004	3,640	-33.1%

Growth in the Number and Percentage of Candidates in Funded Internships in Special Education

Year	Multiple Subject	Single Subject	Special Education	Total
2002-2003	4508 (62.5%)	1588 (22%)	1121 (15.5%)	7217
2003-2004	3882 (43.4%)	2575 (28.8%)	2485 (27.8%)	8942*
2004-2005	2578 (30.4%)	2817 (33.2%)	3094 (36.4%)	8489**

* 62 Applicants seeking two credentials

**148 Applicants seeking two credentials

**Distribution of Enrollments in Funded Internships in Special Education
by Disability Specialty in 2004-2005**

Mild Moderate	Moderate Severe	Deaf/Hard of Hearing	Visually Impaired	Early Childhood Special Education	Physical and Hearing Impaired	Total
2,568	526	15	24	44	11	3,188*
80.5%	16.5%	.5%	.7%	1.4%	.3%	

*94 Seeking Multiple Specialties

Appendix 2

Table 2, Figure 1: Structure of the Multiple and Single Subject Learning to Teach System

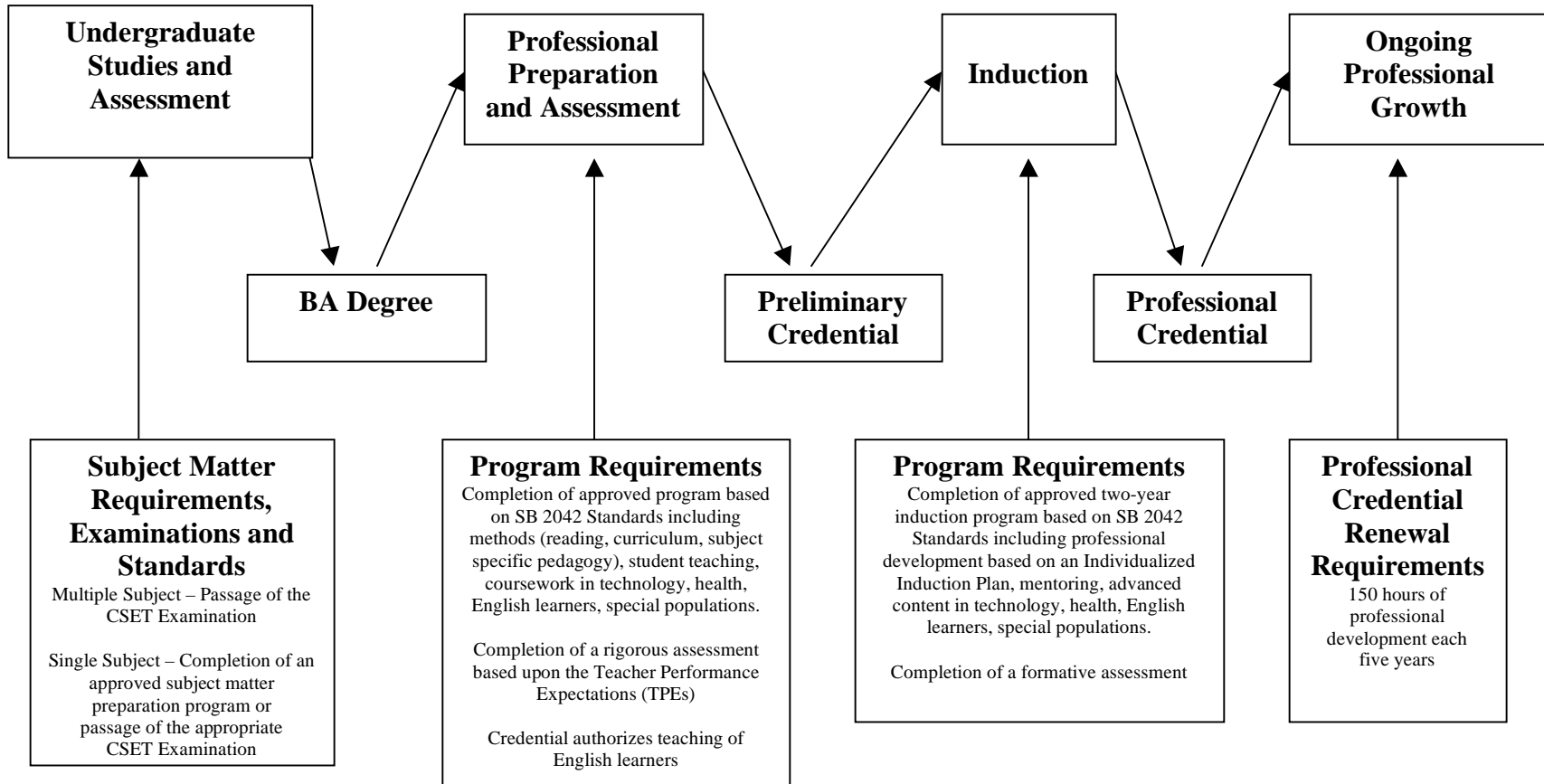


Table 2, Figure 2: Structure of the Education Specialist Learning to Teach System

