AGENDA INSERT

**Executive Summary:** This study session reviews the current requirements and preparation for those seeking an Education Specialist credential. It also explores the rationale for changing the Education Specialist credential structure and the program standards and Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) that serve as the foundation for it.

**Policy Questions:** What is the appropriate way to define the “common trunk” of preparation for all teachers to create one coherent education system? How can the Commission support the unifying vision of one system to serve all students through educator preparation requirements?

**Recommended Action:** That the Commission consider the recommendations presented in this agenda item and take any action deemed appropriate by the Commission.

**Presenters:** William Hatrick and Sarah Solari Colombini, Consultants, Professional Services Division
Information about Educator Preparation Programs
To gather more information about what types of special education educator preparation programs are currently offered in California, Commission staff sent out a survey to all of the institutions of higher education that offer an approved Education Specialist credential program (see Appendix K). Of the 45 programs that responded, 13 allow their candidates to complete all requirements for the baccalaureate degree and Education Specialist preliminary credential simultaneously, also known as an integrated program. Approximately half of the current programs plan to offer an integrated program within the next two years. Currently, 23 programs offer candidates the option to earn both a general education credential and a special education credential concurrently, also knows as a dual program. An additional 14 programs plan on offering the dual credential option within the next two years.

Information about Types of Services Provided by Special Education Teachers in California
As a result of a collaboration with the California Department of Education, a survey was sent out to all special education teachers in California to gather information about the types of settings in which special education teachers are providing services (see Appendix L). Of the 2,111 respondents, the data collected shows the following trends for teachers of students with disabilities. It should be noted there are approximately 48,000 special education teachers currently working in California.

Summary of Some of the Survey Questions

| Holders of the Mild/Moderate Disabilities credential | 72% |
| Holders of the Moderate/Severe Disabilities credential | 26% |
| Do not co-teach with a general education teacher | 49% |
| Do not push in to provide support to students in the general education classroom | 40% |
| Do not pull out to provide support to students in a separate classroom | 41% |
| Primarily provide services in a Special Day Class or self-contained classroom | 54% |
| Teachers who have noticed an increase in students with disabilities receiving services within general education classrooms | 63% |
| Teachers who have noticed a significant increase (> 40%) providing special education services in general education classrooms | 39% |

Eighty-seven percent of the respondents identified that this survey captured most settings where the teachers are primarily providing services to their current students. As the Commission deliberates the future of appropriate preparation for Education Specialists in California, the information presented helps provide the context in which California’s teachers are being prepared to teach and the capacity in which they serve.
Information about Administrators’ Perceptions of the Preparation of Education Specialists

An additional survey was sent to administrators of special education teachers. 430 responses were received. The primary purpose of this survey was to determine what, if any, perceived barriers existed to implementing inclusive education and the adequacy of the preparation of Education Specialists for each of the seven initial credentials. The survey in Appendix M includes the full response for each initial credential.

**Barriers Identified by Site Administrator Survey Responders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clarity about full inclusion and how to incorporate “all” students into general education</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance from the general education teachers</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of fully prepared teachers</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, barriers exist to implementing full inclusion on your campus</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional information was gathered from the administrator survey about the areas in which Education Specialists need the most support and additional learning, which were addressing behavior issues, managing and supervising paraprofessionals, designing lessons for individual student’s needs, writing IEPs, and collaboration with general education teachers to support students with disabilities. This information will be used to inform the final revisions to the Education Specialist Program Standards and TPEs.

**Response to Specific Questions about the Role of Educator Preparation and Credentialing with Respect to Special Education from a National Perspective**

As part of California’s collaboration with CEEDAR, the center prepared responses to some questions central to the issues that may affect the redesign of California’s Education Specialist credential and preparation programs. The complete technical assistance response can be found in Appendix N of this agenda insert. These questions were an attempt to gather information about the impact of requiring special education teachers to have a general education credential on retention, on student outcomes. Some of the key research findings were:

1. Credentialing does not offer solutions to improving student outcomes (generalist versus specialists) or teacher shortages.
2. Teacher retention can be linked to preparation pathway and program length. Those with extensive preparation had attrition rates of 9% compared to a 14% attrition rate for those with little or no preparation.
3. The difference in program length between a single credential and a dual credential varies in the number of units but is usually 2 years in length.
4. 18 states offer a generic special education credential and 18 other states have at least one differentiated license in addition to the generic special education license. The generic licenses are often divided by grade level bands.
5. No consensus has been reached about how best to prepare and license special education teachers.
Q1 What is the name of your institution?

Q2 Does your institution currently offer an integrated program that enables a candidate to complete all requirements for both a preliminary Education Specialist teaching credential and a baccalaureate degree simultaneously?

Yes

No

Q3 Does your institution currently offer a dual credential program that enables a candidate to earn a general education credential (multiple or single subject) and Education Specialist credential concurrently?
Q4 Please specify which credentials a candidate can earn in the dual program at your institution. (check all that apply)

Answered: 23  Skipped: 22

**ANSWER CHOICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credentials</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Subject and Mild/Moderate Disabilities</td>
<td>95.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Subject and Moderate/Severe Disabilities</td>
<td>39.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Subject and Mild/Moderate Disabilities</td>
<td>43.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Subject and Moderate/Severe Disabilities</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q5 Does your institution plan on offering an integrated credential program to undergraduate students within the next 2 years, if you do not do so already?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q6 Does your institution plan on offering a dual credential program in the next 2 years, where candidates can earn a general education and Education Specialist credential concurrently, if you do not do so already?
Special Education Teacher Preparation Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>24.44%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This report was generated on 11/22/17, giving the results for 2111 respondents. A filter of 'All Respondents' has been applied to the data.

The following charts are restricted to the top 12 codes. Lists are restricted to the most recent 100 rows.

**How many years of full-time special education teaching experience do you have?**

- 12 years or more (964) **46%**
- 1 year-4 years (415) **20%**
- 5 years-8 years (374) **18%**
- 9 years-11 years (276) **13%**
- Less than 1 year (80) **4%**

I have served only as a paraprofessional in special education settings (2) **0%**

"In my first special education teaching job, I ............" (Please select the statement that best describes you).

- Already completed a traditional credentialing program (987) **46%**
- Was an intern (720) **33%**
- Held a permit requested by my school district (417) **19%**
- Other (57) **3%**
Which credential(s) do you currently hold? (Please check all that apply)

- Education Specialist Mild to Moderate (1516) 
  - 72%
- Multiple Subject Teaching Credential (709) 
  - 34%
- Education Specialist Moderate to Severe (538) 
  - 26%
- Other (266) 
  - 13%
- Single Subject Teaching Credential (192) 
  - 9%
- Education Specialist Early Childhood Special Education (171) 
  - 8%
- Education Specialist Deaf and Hard of Hearing (41) 
  - 2%
- Education Specialist Visual Impairments (22) 
  - 1%
- Education Specialist Language Academic Development (21) 
  - 1%
- Education Specialist Physical and Health Impairments (12) 
  - 1%
Please rank the following teaching settings to show how you primarily provide services to your current students. (Co-teaching with a general education teacher)

- do not provide services at all (1032) 49%
- provide very little services (300) 14%
- provide many services (235) 11%
- provide some services (228) 11%
- provide a few services (177) 8%
- provide quite a few services (139) 7%

Please rank the following teaching settings to show how you primarily provide services to your current students. (Push In to provide support to students on your caseload in the general education classroom)

- do not provide services at all (836) 40%
- provide many services (343) 16%
- provide some services (267) 13%
- provide quite a few services (231) 11%
- provide very little services (229) 11%
- provide a few services (205) 10%
Please rank the following teaching settings to show how you primarily provide services to your current students. (Pull Out to provide support to students on your caseload in a separate classroom)

- do not provide services at all (858) 41%
- provide many services (612) 29%
- provide quite a few services (237) 11%
- provide some services (169) 8%
- provide very little services (130) 6%
- provide a few services (105) 5%

Please rank the following teaching settings to show how you primarily provide services to your current students. (Special Day Class or self-contained classroom)

- provide many services (1148) 54%
- do not provide services at all (684) 32%
- provide quite a few services (97) 5%
- provide some services (70) 3%
- provide very little services (60) 3%
- provide a few services (52) 3%

Are there teaching settings other than those indicated in Question 4 where you primarily provide services to your current students?

- No (1829) 87%
- Yes (282) 13%
Of the services that you currently provide, approximately what percentage of these services do you provide in a general education setting? (please report your answer as a numeric percentage. For example, use '80' for 80%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Range</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2111</td>
<td>63315</td>
<td>29.99</td>
<td>32.50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate how well your teacher preparation program prepared you to teach your current students.

- moderately (553) 26%
- quite (523) 25%
- very (406) 19%
- somewhat (346) 16%
- a little (138) 7%
- barely (104) 5%
- not at all (41) 2%
In what aspect(s) of your current special education teacher placement were you most prepared in to work with your current students? (Please check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum, Accommodations and Modifications</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing and Identifying Student Needs</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP Development</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing Content Area Lessons</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing Behavior Challenges</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Teaching Techniques</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseload Management</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Planning</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Assistive Technology</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (92)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other aspect(s) that you were most prepared, please describe (Other aspects that you were least prepared, please describe)

- Task analysis
- none of the above
- Goal writing, collaboration with special teachers and staff, research based practice.
- I was most prepared in the area of RSP. My student teaching took place with a school site resource specialist and not in a special day class setting.
- SPED Law
- Building relationships with students
  - supporting paraeducators assigned to the classroom
- I was not provided with preparation for my current classroom.
- legal aspects, special education theory
- Social Skills, Differentiation within and without the Sped. class setting
- Classroom Management
- Working with EL students with disabilities
- Previous work experience
- Teaching strategies for mod to severe.
- AAC, using technology in the classroom, co-teaching
- Identifying a student for observation
- Collaborating with ParaEducators, Defining pull in and push in services, goal setting,
- Honestly, I feel like the job has been self taught. Very poor preparation
- Teaching academic subjects to the DHH
- parent/family communication
- integrated art & academics
Other aspect(s) that you were most prepared, please describe (Other aspects that you were least prepared, please describe)

Classroom management
NPS Speech and Language Assessor/Admin position
one of the above
Reading instruction
I have out of state training.
Social/emotional support/assistance to child & family
none, I learned what to do through experience.
Working as a team with families and colleagues.
Providing reading instruction to student with disabilities
Previously worked with students with multiple disabilities, which are the eligibility of my current students.
Understanding and being sensitive to needs of students with IEP's; and advocating for their families :-)
My program focused on explaining the disability categories, not on actual pedagogy.
Job Coaching, Job Development
There was not a singular discrete aspect for which I was significantly more prepared than I was for any other such aspect.
Braille Instruction from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Reflecting on practice
Only as a result of OJT
My MSW/LCSW ed. and experience prepared me to teach well, not Teacher Education program.
Language Development and Delays, and strategies for therapy
Managing Aides, Being a leader, and Teaching Special Education Students
Classroom management and set-up
Writing clinical diagnostic reports, addressing highly specialized cases including voice and fluency disorders
Behavior and Classroom Management.
Terminology, Definitions
Language Development
Determining a students qualification through assessment
family engagement
None
Understanding SPED Law
I received all training after i got the short term position
I felt that the majority of my classes were preparing me for the first two items. The real world classroom was very different than what I was taught. I had to often rely on veteran sped teachers for guidance or find my own way.
Working with diverse populations
My on-the-job experience was the better preparation compared to credential training.
With my experience of working with special ed. as an instructional aide, I was able to experience working with students different learning styles and different disabilities
I feel like my teaching program mostly prepared me to learn acronyms and laws.
Providing speech therapy
Organization
Other aspect(s) that you were most prepared, please describe (Other aspects that you were least prepared, please describe)

I had to learn these aspects on my own by taking more education than originally offered in each program I took.

Counseling parents/guardians regarding their child’s case

ABA
social emotional development, augmentative communication, managing paraeducators, social relationship development
work based learning, collaborate with outside agencies

My out-of-state Masters program was meaningful and helped me learn the world of special education classrooms, all the coursework I did in CA was merely theory and little to do with real-time skills.
as an intern, the best part about it was practicing what I was learning in my classes. The worst part about it, was not observing other teachers in how they handled their classroom.

Co-teaching/Co-planning, leadership, advocacy
all

Reading Strategies in decoding and comprehension, writing strategies
Early Childhood Special Education and General Education Bachelor Program in NY
Art Education, Science and Math
self determination for people with disabilities, communication supports (AAC)
Person-Centered Planning

I really don't feel that my credential program prepared me in any of these areas. I learned everything on the job.

Knowing programs, knowing how the education system works

These are not because of courses but of experience and practice.

None, all of my previous teaching placements I went through additional training. At my current placement I am not offered enough support/training that has prepared me for this current placement.

Use of alternate curriculum using the Unique Learning System.

Knowledge of early childhood development and classroom experience

Technology
overall preperation

Classroom management

21 centery technologies in the classroom

I do not feel that the programs offered in the state of CA are adequate in anyway

Designing and managing health and orthopedic issues/equipment/environment, safe lifting techniques

Student teaching

Cultural aspects of disabilities; Communicating with Parents
In what aspect(s) of your current special education teacher placement were you least prepared in to work with your current students? (Please check all that apply)

- Use of Assistive Technology (967) 46%
- Caseload Management (817) 39%
- Transition Planning (772) 37%
- Addressing Behavior Challenges (750) 36%
- IEP Development (628) 30%
- Collaborative Teaching Techniques (627) 30%
- Designing Content Area Lessons (434) 21%
- Curriculum Accommodations and Modifications (325) 15%
- Assessing and Identifying Student Needs (279) 13%
- Other (129) 6%

Other aspect(s) that you were least prepared, please describe (Other aspect(s), please describe)

- collaboration with outside agencies
- Working with AP’s that create red-tape for increasing support for children and LRE support
- Disabilities such as Autism and Emotional Disturbance
- dealing with administrators who know nothing about Sp Ed
- Co-teaching: rigor
- Paraprofessional
- Legal aspects of the IEP & collaborative communication techniques
- inconsistancy in roles at different locations.
- Dealing with parents
- Formal Evaluation by the Administration
- Organization of contents
- managing staff. I have a large staff. Currently I have 4.5 but have had as many as 8. Managing students is the easy part of my job, managing the adults is the most difficult part of my job.
- Paraeducator support/training
- I wasn’t prepared to teach self-contained resource classes, but that's what I am required to do in my current position.
- Working with paraprofessionals
- working with the adults (parents & service providers)
- dealing with Administrative personnel
- The gen ed students with whom we collaborate provide no role model. The children with special needs have better skills.
- none
- full inclusion of students with moderate to severe disabilities

GS 1H Insert-15  December 2017
Other aspect(s) that you were least prepared, please describe (Other aspect(s), please describe)

none

I'm not prepared to deal with not being allowed to accommodate students' according to their special needs, due to Administrator's restrictions on curriculum that is in place.

None- I was well prepared after getting my BS and MS at one of the top schools in the country for Spec. Ed.

Providing in-service training to General Education Staff for best practices with working with students with special needs

Managing paraprofessionals who are poorly trained

Writing assessment reports and laws

Asking for support from Administration, strategies when presented with challenges to FAPE from Admin

supporting resource students in SDC setting was a big surprise to me

With all of the years I spent working on my credential it had absolutely nothing to do with the reality of teaching. The change in 20 years has been abominable. We are understaffed, over IEP'd, and NONE of my administrators have ever taught in special ed ...

Para-professionals

Knowing the grade level standards and expectations of my population

I did not get enough practice with real-life situations, didn't learn how to manage so much paperwork effectively, no anticipation/tools for handling classes with 50% major behav.issues, no prep whatsoever for the horrible systemic crowded/negative environment of catch-all "LD" SDC classes in...

Managing paraeducators

Collaborating with paraeducators

Working with paraeducators

To support students with OHI issues.

Changes in admin and expectations

My credentialing program didn't prepare me for any of these in a meaningful fashion. I learned everything from knowledgeable veterans and my own motivation to learn to serve my students as best as possible.

Managing district policies and procedures

Grading RSP and SDC students.

Working with paraprofessionals, untrained staff, and unsupportive staff, parents in denial, zero funding...

Technology use. I never seem to get it; so, I never learn to use it.

staff management, managing increasingly difficult behaviors

I feel well prepared

Classroom Staff management

staff management, classroom management

computer technology

I was very well prepared in ALL areas, but I think some of the programs have removed some vital coursework recently.

Secretary/paperwork

Caseload management because there is no time

managing classroom assistants

causal factors related to today's students inappropriate classroom and social behaviors.

Severe needs in the general ed class, especially medical needs.

Severe behavior problems

GS 1H Insert-16 December 2017
Politics in Education: Working with Administration to Meet Student Needs, Advocating for Student Rights and Litigious Parents

none

"Autism-eligibility" students who are not ASD re: Best AUT Practices

Dealing with resource case loads over the state max of 28 which does not consider students pending eligibility

How to get the school team on board with inclusion for small periods of time when appropriate.

Understanding how different learning disabilities impact students’ learning

Health care issues

Social emotional support

The reluctance of gen. ed and admin at this site to work together with special educators to provide best educational plan for those with mild special education needs

Emotionally Disturbed population

new procedures and district software

Tracking in Resource

I have been teaching in a severe SDC classroom for the last three years, I do not provide RSP services and was less familiar working with students who were not just focused on basic skills such as colors, letter, and 1:1 correspondence.

Community-Based Instruction, Evidence-Based Practices, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Teacher Wellness Strategies, Inclusive Education, Social Skills Development, Data-Driven Lesson Planning, Differentiated Instruction, Managing Para-professionals, Classroom Management techniques, PLC, Building Rel

The changes, additions, and the continually increasing time required for IEP paperwork.

None

managing support staff - aides

I think there needs to be more hands on or video watching of situations that come up in the classroom with deficient students. They can disrupt the learning of the whole classroom. Not because of their disability, but their choice. All the positive reinforcement in the world will not change that.

Working with paraprofessionals

Co-teaching/Co-planning

The amount of work that is required to do a good job, upwards of 70-75 hours a week.

I have an out of state teaching certification

managing more than 12 students, para educators, scheduling, administration type work, consulting with 10 plus people per student

I was well prepared for my current assignment between my credential program and life/business experience.

Managing Para educators

time management

All, I had to learn everything by gathering my own resources and training.

Working with students under the AUT Spectrum

Gang and outside agency information

working with/directing classroom paraprofessionals.

working with a para

Overall severity and medical needs

GS 1H Insert-17 December 2017
Other aspect(s) that you were least prepared, please describe (Other aspect(s), please describe)

- Techniques for working with adults/colleagues
- Managing paraprofessional staff, creating a realistic daily schedule for a mod/severe class
- Teaching 4 grade levels/4 different LA and Math curriculums
- Overcoming the resistance from Gen Ed. teachers to collaborative teaching practices
- Working with paraprofessionals
- Dealing with administration not following protocol or planning IEPs and documents in a timely meeting
- Each school, SELPA and District do things differently. There is no formal training that is done upon entering a school district or new SELPA
- Working with severely physically disabled students
- Co-teaching
- Racism among teachers/adults
- Managing Support Staff
- Teaching content in ELA and math
- Dealing with the real life day to day challenges, and high profile parents/settings

If you have been teaching for 1 year or more, have you noticed an increase in students with disabilities receiving services within general education classrooms?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Apply</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Since my first year of teaching, the time that I spent providing special education services in general education classrooms has increased ......" (Please select the answer that best describes your experiences) (If you answered Yes in #9, please choose the answer from ...)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...moderately (10%-40%)</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...slightly (less than 10%)</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...somewhat significantly (40%-80%)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...significantly (80% or more)</td>
<td>14%</td>
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Is there anything else that you want to share with regard to the revision of the current state wide special education teacher (Education Specialist) credentialing process? (Optional)

I know it does not apply to this question but more behavior support training needs to be provided to Speech therapist/Gen. Ed teachers

Needs to be more emphasis on the disabilities and behaviors, also medical issues teacher's might face.

The inclusion model does not fit all students. And co-teaching looks very different from period to period.

I feel like there should be more instruction on behaviors that interfere with learning

Credentialing should include caseload management strategies
Is there anything else that you want to share with regard to the revision of the current state wide special education teacher (Education Specialist) credentialing process? (Optional)

More real-world application, problem solving strategies

Teachers are grossly underpaid for the level of professional preparation required and for the work load that they are expected to maintain.

I work with the severely physically handicapped population and my program touched very little on this population. I would also love to see more training for general education teachers on how to best involve and accommodate students with special needs into their classroom.

Better Behavior Management classes

I think MUCH more needs to be done on IEP preparation. I student taught with a teacher that was very diligent about IEPs, so I learned most everything from her. My 3 friends who came into teaching after me could barely write IEPs their first year. IT can be overwhelming for new teachers.

more indept identification and approaches to challenging behavior

It should be easier to gain dual credentials with the increase of inclusion.

The process needs to be rigorous and selective in candidates. Districts also need to be better equipped to support new teachers, hold them accountable, and efficiently usher them out of the profession when necesecary.

The process was long and very expensive. If I could go back - I would have gotten my credential in another state.

Only one class focused on techniques to help students overcome disabilities and that is not nearly enough

I was prepared to take on my position thanks to 9 years working as a paraeducator and thanks to an amazing Master Teacher. A book can only teach you so much. It is the hands-on experiences that truly prepare one for this type of teaching environment. I would recommend more time be spent actually working with students, whether that be through more internship opportunities, or more required coursework hours in the classroom (not simply observing, but working with students).

more classes on counseling students and working on effective discipline.e.g. strategies,

I think it is great that Special Education teachers can now clear their credentials through BTSA. I thought it was ridiculous that this was not the case when I first started teaching - Special Education teachers are already stretched and the fact that they had to pay a college/university to clear credentials when Gen Ed teachers could to this through BTSA was really frustrating.

Mod/Sev credential does not prepare us for the profound disabilities we encounter

no

I work at an alternative campus focusing on students with ED or other mental health impairments.

There are many different teaching settings that teachers need to be prepared to teach in. Also, learning to work with paraprofessionals is key.

I currently work for [Redacted] Teacher Induction as a Presenter for Education Specialist as well as General Education Teachers and I feel like new Education Specialist would benefit from a more diversified program in which they work in a variety of settings (both Mild/Mod and Mod/Severe) as the reality of an Education Specialist job is that during your career you will encounter the range of students due to parent rights and the changing structure of the General Education classrooms. With the combination of Gen Ed and Ed Spc Induction standards it makes sense to provide a full continuum of teaching experiences.

Special Education teachers need to understand and know the norms of gen. ed. before they work with students with disabilities to see the differences and what is abnormal (outside the bell curve)

Please support the teacher and know what is happening to them at the classroom level. Ask them what their needs are and have a support group that has the sole task of helping them to succeed.

It is vital to spend plenty of time observing and teaching students with special needs both in general education and a separate setting. That was very important to my preparation.
Is there anything else that you want to share with regard to the revision of the current state wide special education teacher (Education Specialist) credentialing process? (Optional)

While I was required to go through many courses to enhance literacy etc for gen/ed students, I believe there should be some kind of course work that involves both gen/ed and sped teachers collaborating on how to provide students with least restrictive environments. Too much is put onto SPED teachers without collaboration efforts in Gen/Ed requiere general education knowledge/experience PRIOR to entering a Special Ed Credentialing program

Limit class size, more adults to SH student ratio, MORE SUPPORT

I appreciate that I don't have to pay a university to clear my crsential.

There are many more students in my SDC class than in the past. When I started in 1997 classes were 8 to 10 students. I now have 20-24 students in each class.

I got my degree/license in NC first then transferred it over to CA. We did a great deal of lesson plan development that many of my fellow sped teachers trained in CA did not have the same instruction in their programs.

Allow Ed Specialists an accelerated way to add a GE credential given all the years we've already spent teaching; more training on teaching kids with Dyslexia, now that we actually use the word.

Educating general education teachers about special education, an emphasis on rights, supports, and just legalities for teachers students and parents because, from my experience, there is a discrepancy in these areas in particular. It has been an ongoing battle of he said, she said, and inconsistency of placement at least in the experiences of

We should be able to add supplemental credentials by taking the CSET.

Shadowing current special ed teachers in different grade levels

There needs to be a class on how to manage high profile parents with advocates and their high demands that take up instructional time and planning/paperwork time

It did not prepare me to work with students who have orthopedic impairments, vision impairments, or hearing impairments.

SESAC CASELOADS AND # OF STUDENTS PER CLASS ARE VERY HIGH

Clear definitions of credentials, expectations, student eligibility, and expectations are needed. Standardization state wide is needed. Differentiation should be taught to gen ed/sped teachers together.

More prep on caseload management i.e. parent and staff interactions

Do away with non-paid student teaching and allow the teachers to teach side-by-side another teacher for a year. And, do not allow Resource Teachers to be Case Managers; too much time is being taken away from the students to focus on paperwork.

MTSS and Understanding the System of General Education Supports as a Funnel to Determine Assessment Needs is HUGE. I observe over ID at schools where specialists are not able to articulate and encourage this process in development of team and directions

More hands on experiences: videos, classroom visit would be beneficial at understanding special education. Also more training on the legal aspects of special education.

I don't think that the state should provide permits that allow teachers who have not gone through a rigorous teacher preparation program to teach. I have seen teachers that are put in the classroom that are not prepared and have no idea what to do. This is a disservice for students in special education because they are the students who need the most help. They need and deserve well trained teachers that can help them.

Any credential process should require student teachers more time in the classroom for "hands on" experience while completing their teaching credential program. All general education teaching credential programs should require student teachers to work/inter in a special education setting in order to understand the importance of collaboration with education specialists when they become a teacher. The education specialist program needs to be more rigorous in order to meet the needs of our current student population. By providing a more rigorous program, an educational specialist will be better prepared to provide the services necessary to best support our special education student population and their families.
Is there anything else that you want to share with regard to the revision of the current state wide special education teacher (Education Specialist) credentialing process? (Optional)

It would be nice if the Mod/Sev and Mild/Mod were combined to be one credential. I looked at taking a mod/sev job and they said I would have to re-do my student teaching and therefore did not apply for the job. I taught in Idaho for 5 years and their credential included all levels. With such a teacher shortage that would help teachers take those positions without having to pay or take a year to do student teaching again.

Coming from an outside state I do not find they CA nor the SELPA system user friendly in anyway. I find the the extra credentialing is “busy work” and does not address any areas of real concern in Special education. Not having unity among procedures in districts and SELPA’s continues to show the incompetence the state has in the field of education.

New SPED teachers need to understand the legal ramifications of the job, how to assess students and write reports. The need to understand that being in the classroom is only a part of their job duties.

I was trained to be a classroom teacher of the Deaf/HH, however, those jobs are far and few between as itinerant positions are plentiful and we have a shortage of credentialed teachers of DHH in [redacted]. Secondary Special Education Teachers should have a single subject credential or take methods classes in their area of expertise, especially high school teachers. Then they will be more prepared to prepare, modify, and teach content area lessons.

Internships are vital to experiencing the magnitude of responsibilities more special education training for gen ed teachers OR train all as Spec. Ed which reflects the current climate

I have received a very good education and training from [redacted]. I'm not sure what this "revision" entails, however, obtaining spec ed credentials should not be reduced/lightened, it should maintain or increase rigor, especially in ABC/behavior management/task analysis, and foundational skills of setting up learning environment to target whole group and individualized instruction

I feel that there should be more time for the credential candidates to spend in the school setting. My current student teacher is fabulous but is only here for two full days per week, and one of those is an early release day. I don't feel that I was able to provide the IEP meeting experience with her during her limited afternoons here.

I've currently been teaching in a self contained classroom for about 3 years with little to no general ed. services other an PE and an elective

Hate the RSP Tracking form on Weligent-it is cumbersome and I have to block out hours to complete it.

General education teachers seem to feel that once a student qualifies they are no longer responsible

I needed more information on how to address the various levels and need of the students while still teaching the rigorous content standards to students that have not acquired the basic skills in order to be successful.

Not well prepared to work with severely disabled and/or provide alternative communication options. No preparation in program for EDTPA, ridiculous test

SeSAC caseloads and # of students in class are too high,

N/A

I have noticed that when I have had student teachers, they are unaware of how to write a lesson plan that addresses different learning modalities. They also have no idea how to interpret data to help with the writing of goals, nor the rest of the IEP.
Is there anything else that you want to share with regard to the revision of the current state wide special education teacher (Education Specialist) credentialing process? (Optional)

The program in which I received my credential did not prepare me for many aspects of job. I did not know about assessments and how to score them and what it all ment so i could explain it to my parents. I was also not taught how to write proper goals, and what the percentage out of so many trails ment. I also was not taught classroom management skills, how to assess goals to make sure the student was adequately meeting them. We also were not informed about teh many different accommodations/modificaton/ supports we couuld provide for our students and how they may help/ what they were used for. I also had not training in types of assistive technology that could help my students. I would like for these credentialing programs to be checked up on and to be made to teach these areas. I felt very unprepared and I have had to learn everything I know in the field, which is a detriment to the students who have IEPs. General education credentials should have a basics class about IEP law.

No

More time should be spent in the classroom with students with a Master/Mentor Teacher to earn units for the credential. Its a sink or swim profession.

General Education teachers have classes that are full of special needs students. They need more training to deal with them when they have them in class. It is difficult to co-teach with a teacher with no training in co-teaching. The movement between gen ed and sped for teachers should be more fluid. Sped teachers should be encouraged to teach gen ed for a portion of their career and visa versa. Also the flow between teachers aide and sped teacher should be more fluid as well. Maybe on same salary schedule with increase in pay for experience as an aide while studying and for more education while working as an aide.

Yes, classes need to be centered for those who teach Severe Populations. Not very much content in this area.

I have been a Sp. Ed. teacher for 31 years. Things have changed in that time. My answers are based on my education from 30 plus years ago.

I did not answer question above because I do not provide services in the general education classrooms. Although, through the years I have witnessed students with SLD entering Gen Ed. with Co-teaching. I would say at a moderate level. My students only receive electives with the general population.

None

Much more info needed for IEPs. In my 2nd year those are still a struggle

Being a paraeducator before becoming a teacher is what prepared me the most for teaching in special education. Student teaching in a sped class is very beneficial also having a mentor teacher to help you as a new teacher. New teachers need a lot of support in IEP writing.Teachers also need support working with paraeducators

Special Education teachers should not be assessed with rigorous assessments for credentialing.

Should include permission to teach the general education students as a co-operative teacher, instead of requiring immediate supervision of a GED teacher. We are not treated as certificated NCLB professionals. This would make co-teaching easier if we as SPED teachers were able to teach a small group P.E. while the GED teacher teaches a science lesson. It is very insulting that we are treated with less respect than a substitute teacher with no credential. We should be encouraging teacher strengths in order to improve student learning and engagement.

no

I feel that the current credentialing process is significantly better than the training I received 20 years ago. With the creation of programs that support teachers both during and after they receive their preliminary credential, I am proud to say they have a much easier time integrating into the school environment than those of us that came before.

I completed my credential while teaching and found the practical lessons useful in my teaching. I think it would have been harder to remember and implement had I not been teaching or in the classroom at the time.
Is there anything else that you want to share with regard to the revision of the current state wide special education teacher (Education Specialist) credentialing process? (Optional)

I find it ridiculous that as an Education Specialist, I’d have to return to a beginner intern program in order to earn a general education credential. At this point, I cannot even add a Math Authorization allowing me to teach a GE math class. I am a math dept. chair, provide PD to general & special education teachers through a textbook company outside of work, and I’ve won an award for my instruction. And yet, I would have to become an intern again to become a GE teacher while the process from GE to SPED is supported & encouraged. It is disrespectful & demonstrates an institutional de-valuing of special education & special education teachers. The push for successful, full inclusion will result best with leadership from Education Specialists. We are required to be content, instruction, & behavior experts but are treated by the education system at large as though we are less knowledgeable.

New Special Education Teachers are not mentored by someone knowledgeable about Special Education.

I think all special education teachers should be required to take a class about training and working with Instructional Assistants. This is an area that is so vital to the running of a strong program.

Teachers are not being trained with effective, supportive behavior management skills. Interns are not getting critical skills/practice of teaching and working with special needs students. Just because they have a mentor who checks on them...really? So if a Resource Specialist Teacher is re-named an Education Specialist does that mean no law of 28 students in CA? Why are Education Specialists easier to take advantage of? (give higher case loads, take away their classrooms and make them itinerant within their own school) Why doesn't the state mandate that SPED staff receive a higher pay due to the triple amount of hours or more they put into after school meeting, testing, writing reports, writing IEPs, etc?

Everyone NEEDS Autism training and Autism Credential...maybe through CENTSE

Focus more on Transitional Services

More help with lesson plans and content areas

Since many districts are moving towards more inclusive programs, working with the general education teacher should be emphasized in the credentialing program.

They need to include in the first semester of programs how to develop/expectations for IEP (format, goal writing, assessments). Since this is a legal document it needs more attention right away in program, especially if so many people are choosing the intern path.

I feel there needs to be more instruction on how to manage support staff, how to creatively and successfully manage the increase in student behaviors- especially in the real of mental health issues that are often undiagnosed, and how to write effective IEP's.

Behavior/classroom management skills are critical, regardless of whether a self contained class or supporting general education.

Forget the in-class in university time; get teachers out into functioning classrooms asap with a master teacher; a variety of teaching opportunities to watch. Theory does nothing; hands on is everything, and the most valuable.

I teach a transition class of young adults with mild to severe disabilities. Transition classes and their particular needs are lightly touched in most teacher training programs I have seen. The whole continuum of the student, from Pre to Adult should be addressed more thoroughly so that teacher candidates get the whole picture. I also found that learning in a classroom with an established teacher mentoring was a very effective way to begin my career and learn hands on skills.

More focus on teaching in an urban environment and the impact it may have on certain populations (i.e. foster care. homeless, very low social economic families).

It is not always appropriate to push special ed students into gen ed classes, although I see it done regularly. This approach/philosophy is endeavored at the detriment of students both special ed and gen ed.

Working with a master teacher beyond PLCs in the first year or two would be amazing. I have reached out to people on my site, but it would be helpful to have a seasoned educator in the classroom at least 25%-50% of the time to assist and help new teachers learn on the job. Perhaps in a situation like a co-teaching environment.
Is there anything else that you want to share with regard to the revision of the current statewide special education teacher (Education Specialist) credentialing process? (Optional)

revision? I don't know anything about this.

ingcrease proficiency in AAC and computer hardware and software

More theoretical based more application based; Less based on what the politicians want and more input from actual educators.

How to connect curriculum at every grade level while keeping meaningful adult outcomes in mind.

There is absolutely no reason for an Education Specialist in the Mod/Severe credentialing track to have to take the RICA, I genuinely feel that it is a form of extortion.
This report was generated on 11/22/17, giving the results for 430 respondents. A filter of 'All Respondents' has been applied to the data.

The following charts are restricted to the top 12 codes. Lists are restricted to the most recent 100 rows.

How well do you feel newly credentialed special education teachers (Education Specialists) are prepared to address the needs of the students with disabilities at your school? (Education Specialist Mild to Moderate)

- moderately prepared: 114 (27%)
- somewhat prepared: 110 (26%)
- quite prepared: 69 (16%)
- a little prepared: 51 (12%)
- N/A: 33 (8%)
- barely prepared: 27 (6%)
- very prepared: 21 (5%)
- not at all prepared: 5 (1%)

How well do you feel newly credentialed special education teachers (Education Specialists) are prepared to address the needs of the students with disabilities at your school? (Education Specialist Moderate to Severe)

- N/A: 106 (25%)
- moderately prepared: 88 (21%)
- somewhat prepared: 81 (19%)
- quite prepared: 50 (12%)
- a little prepared: 49 (11%)
- barely prepared: 35 (8%)
- very prepared: 15 (4%)
- not at all prepared: 6 (1%)
How well do you feel newly credentialed special education teachers (Education Specialists) are prepared to address the needs of the students with disabilities at your school? (Education Specialist Deaf and Hard of Hearing)

- N/A (263) 61%
- moderately prepared (37) 9%
- somewhat prepared (34) 8%
- quite prepared (31) 7%
- a little prepared (19) 4%
- very prepared (19) 4%
- barely prepared (14) 3%
- not at all prepared (13) 3%

How well do you feel newly credentialed special education teachers (Education Specialists) are prepared to address the needs of the students with disabilities at your school? (Education Specialist Early Childhood Special Education)

- N/A (232) 54%
- moderately prepared (54) 13%
- somewhat prepared (48) 11%
- quite prepared (43) 10%
- a little prepared (22) 5%
- barely prepared (13) 3%
- very prepared (12) 3%
- not at all prepared (6) 1%
How well do you feel newly credentialed special education teachers (Education Specialists) are prepared to address the needs of the students with disabilities at your school? (Education Specialist Language Academic Development)

- N/A (209) 49%
- moderately prepared (55) 13%
- quite prepared (55) 13%
- somewhat prepared (53) 12%
- very prepared (27) 6%
- a little prepared (17) 4%
- barely prepared (10) 2%
- not at all prepared (4) 1%

How well do you feel newly credentialed special education teachers (Education Specialists) are prepared to address the needs of the students with disabilities at your school? (Education Specialist Physical and Health Impairments)

- N/A (244) 57%
- moderately prepared (50) 12%
- quite prepared (45) 11%
- somewhat prepared (31) 7%
- a little prepared (20) 5%
- very prepared (18) 4%
- barely prepared (15) 4%
- not at all prepared (7) 2%
How well do you feel newly credentialed special education teachers (Education Specialists) are prepared to address the needs of the students with disabilities at your school? (Education Specialist Visual Impairments)

- N/A (249) 58%
- moderately prepared (45) 11%
- quite prepared (36) 8%
- somewhat prepared (32) 7%
- very prepared (22) 5%
- a little prepared (20) 5%
- barely prepared (14) 3%
- not at all prepared (12) 3%

In which areas do your special education teachers require the most support and additional learning? (Please check all that apply)

- Addressing behavior issues (328) 6%
- Managing and supervising paraprofessionals (264) 61%
- Curriculum & Instruction (designing lessons for individual student's needs) (260) 61%
- Writing IEPs (258) 60%
- Collaboration with general education teachers to support students with disabilities (254) 59%
- Caseload management (196) 46%
- Assessing and identifying student needs (125) 29%
- Other (18) 4%
Other areas, please describe (Other areas, please describe:)

Understanding all the laws governing special education. Many teachers know and IEP, but have no idea why it exits. Universities are out of touch with what takes place in schools.

Sensitive, kind communication

Understanding IDEA and CA EdCode, 504

Time management

Ability to articulate what the disability is and how it impacts learning

working with parents

Professional conduct; working with parents; writing reports; teachers are generally unprepared in all areas when they exit Sped credential programs--its very frustrating and very discouraging. It causes many problems with parents, some leading to due process; programs are not comprehensive

Building relationships with families

addressing mental health issues and working with parents

Classroom Management

Classroom management

SEIS Training

Self-care to prevent burn out

Scheduling IEPs

Managing parent expectations

UDL, Co-teaching models, Integrated Service Delivery models

Special Education teachers are not always prepared with specific content knowledge necessary to support their students.

Implementing behavior supports plans

Do barriers exist to implementing full inclusion on your campus(es)?

Yes (287) 67%

No (116) 27%

Unsure (27) 6%
Which of these barriers to implementing full inclusion exist on your campus(es)? (Please check all that apply)

Lack of clarity about full inclusion models and how to incorporate "all" students into general education (234) 82%
Reluctance from the general education teachers (218) 76%
Lack of fully prepared teachers (202) 60%
Class size (143) 50%
Lack of parental support by parents of students without disabilities (47) 16%
Other (42) 15%
Lack of parental support by parents of students with disabilities (32) 11%

Other barriers, please describe

- Behavior issues in included students
- No general education classes nearby
- Preschool programs for gen ed have income guidelines and timelines that do not match when the child turns 3
- Lack of para support when beginning mainstreaming process
- Limitations created by master schedules
- Training
  - How to differentiate
  - Willingness to accommodate. One size fits all
- Ongoing training and support
  - Lack of funding to provide small enough classes, especially during the initial implementation phase
  - Lack of district vision; lack of understanding by everyone 'why' this is being promoted; lack of training for gen-ed teachers to work with students with disabilities; lack of time and resources to train, plan, and implement; lack of Sped teacher preparation to work with students in gen-ed settings
- Union bargaining agreements
- Lack of staff to support students in general environment
- No access to general education
- Community Care Licensing (these are preschool programs). This is a HUGE barrier to developing inclusion models that allow prek sped and prek state prek programs to work together.
- Principal support
- General education teachers fear that they do not have the skills and training to work with students with disabilities.
- Program located on campus where all classes are special day classes
- Class size and facilities available
- Adequately trained support staff; Staffing and recruitment; Behavior supports
- We house a regionalized program on our campus. This includes preschool and we do not have a general ed preschool. Students in this program have a higher level of need than most and full inclusion would not meet their needs.
- Lack of knowledge in accommodating and modifying curriculum and differentiating, lack of skill in dealing with behavior and understanding in PBIS

GS 1H Insert-30 December 2017
Other barriers, please describe

Logistics to get 1 SPED teacher into all grade levels for support
Not enough support staff to go into the General Education classrooms to assist students.
Lack of sufficient numbers of Paras to push-in to gen ed classes with ED students when they are ready to do so and appropriate.
Lack of training for Special Educators to be a co-teacher in a classroom
Reluctance from special education teachers
Our SPED students benefit from some small group instruction in a calm/quiet environment. Students have shown regression, or lack of progress on IEP goals, when they are in a Gen. Ed. class for the whole day, even with aide support, due to many noises, lots of students, and distractions.
Additional staffing costs to fully implement
Lack of support staff and training for them
Time for collaboration
Being on self-contained campus
Not enough planning time between SPED & Gen Ed
Personnel to support children with moderate to severe disabilities to be integrated
funding for paraprofessional support and proper training
Lack of SpEd staff to support students as called for in IEPs
Scheduling
Lack of understanding of disabilities by general education staff (e.g., Autism, ID, SLD)
Scheduling
Sufficient funding to ensure we have enough special education teachers
There is inadequate student support staff for all students
Lack of administrator knowledge in how to implement inclusion

Who provides mentoring support to your special education teacher(s)? (Please check all that apply)

Special Education teacher(s) on our campus (286) 67%
Program Specialist (276) 64%
Special Education teacher(s) in our district (248) 58%
General Education teacher(s) on our campus (89) 21%
Other (81) 19%
Support or itinerant specialist in the area of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (59) 14%
Support or itinerant specialist in the area of Visual Impairments (50) 12%
Support or itinerant specialist in the area of Physical and Health Impairments (48) 11%
Universities/Higher Education Professional Development Programs (41) 10%
Inclusion or Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) specialist (39) 9%
Unsure (21) 5%
This CEEDAR Technical Assistance Response addresses questions posed to the CEEDAR Center regarding the re-design of California’s Education Specialist credential structure. Please note that although the CEEDAR Center works to provide the most up-to-date information, state policies and practices are constantly changing. This memo provides information on existing CEEDAR Center documents, databases, and other external resources.

Q: What specific skill sets does a multiple subject credentialing program provide that could not be provided in a generalist credential to the depth needed for a beginning teacher? Are these skill sets typically the domain of other specialists (i.e. Other credentials or designated instructional service providers), and should the special education teacher be relying on these providers to give more expert consultation with a greater depth of knowledge than the special education teacher?

A: Given the substantial CDE investment in the SUMS project, California is moving toward implementation of multi-tiered systems of support, or MTSS. In a general sense, MTSS provides a useful framework for differentiating the roles of “classroom teachers” from “special education interventionists.” In this sense, it also provides a useful framework for preparation and licensure, in which the work of education specialists, on the one hand, and multiple and single-subject teachers is integrated into a coherent whole.

Typically, in an MTSS framework, classroom teachers are responsible for Tier 1 core instruction and Tier 2 intervention, which is generally small group instruction for struggling students. They also are responsible for the assessments used to determine whether students are progressing satisfactorily at Tier 1 or whether more intensive intervention is necessary. At Tier 2, they may consult with special education teachers for advice regarding the design and evaluation of interventions and, in some models, co-teach, but they remain responsible for implementation and assessment. At this point, assessments inform decisions about returning students to core Tier 1 instruction or assigning them to Tier 3 intensive intervention.

The special education teacher is responsible for students who fail to succeed in spite of high quality, evidenced-based instruction at Tier 2. These students require intensive academic and/or behavioral intervention for which the “special education interventionist” is responsible. Increasingly, research on evidence-based practices (EBPs) for struggling students is organized within an MTSS framework, and EBPs for Tier 2 intervention are differentiated from EBPs for Tier 3 intervention. Tier 2 intervention typically supplements core instruction; it occurs in small groups (of up to eight students) and provides more practice on skills taught in the core. By contrast, Tier 3 intervention is remedial and may supplant core instruction. It is typically more explicit, individually
tailored, and longer in duration, both in terms of minutes per day and number of weeks. It also may take place outside the general education classroom. For students who exhibit problem behaviors, Tier 3 placement also triggers a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) for planning individualized intervention. Some contend that school psychologists not teachers should conduct FBAs.

Research-based practices identified by the National Center on Intensive Interventions are differentiated on the basis on how often and how long they are to be administered. These distinctions help to differentiate what classroom teachers do at Tier 2 and interventionists do at Tier 3. In a nutshell, interventionists—or special educators—responsible for Tier 3 intervention must master the intensive, remedial practices for students who fail to thrive in core instruction and Tier 2 intervention.

Although most students with disabilities are educated in general education environments, some require separate class placement because of the intensity of their needs. Students with significant intellectual impairments represent one such group. They may require intensive instruction in speech, alternative forms of communication, self-care, social interaction, daily living skills, and employment related skills, among others. Some special educators—perhaps all, if a single, credential undifferentiated by degrees of severity is adopted—must be prepared to implement EBPs in these alternative curricular domains.

Of course, California currently draws a distinction between education specialist credentials for teachers of students with mild/moderate impairments and students with moderate/severe impairments. According to a recent state-by-state analysis of special education certification structures (Sindelar, Fisher, & Myers, in press), 23 states in addition to California draw such a distinction.

Q: What was the impact on the number of special education teachers when the general education credential requirement was removed as part of the special education credential requirement when the credential structure changed in 1997?

A: The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) of the U. S. Department of Education requires states to report annually on variables related to the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, among them the number of special education teachers (SETs) employed and the number of SETs who are fully certified. (From 2006 to 2014, the fully certified metric was replaced by highly qualified in the NCLB sense of the term. Thus, during these years, less than fully certified teachers enrolled in alternative route programs were considered to be highly qualified.) The percent of fully certified (or highly qualified) SETs serves to identify SET shortage. These data are available in annual
Reports to Congress on the Implementation of IDEA and, since 2005, on ideadata.org. OSEP data were used to address this question, with these findings.

From 1994 to 1997, the year in which the general education prerequisite was discontinued in California, the proportion of fully certified SETs averaged 83.4%; in the 5 years after the change, the proportion of fully certified SETs dropped to 77.7%. However, it was also true that, after 1997, the total number of SETs employed in California schools grew rapidly, from just under 26,000 in 1997 to nearly 32,000 in 2002. At the same time, the number of fully certified SETs also grew (from 21,503 to 24,456) but at a slower rate, leading to the decline in proportion of fully certified SETs. Clearly, if the elimination of the general education prerequisite requirement had been intended to address SET shortage, its impact was obscured by rapid growth in the total number of SETs employed.

In 2012, the proportion of highly qualified SETs peaked at 96.2%, even though the number of highly qualified SETs dropped by over 8,000 (since peaking in 2006). Because of the Great Recession, California schools employed fewer teachers (as was also true in most other states) and greater proportions were highly qualified. In 2014, the most recent year for which OSEP has reported personnel data, California reported that 94.5% of its special education teachers were fully certified.

Thus, after 1997, when the general education credential was removed as a prerequisite requirement for the education specialist credential, the total number of SETs grew annually through 2006. The total number of fully certified SETs also grew, so that by 2006, 90% of SETs in California were considered fully certified. Over the next decade, notwithstanding the impact of the recession, the state reported increases in both the total number of SETs employed and the proportion of them who were considered fully certified.

Q: Is there research/data that speaks to the relationship between teacher shortage within a state and the length and type of credentialing program for that state?

A: In the literature, length of preparation emerges as a factor only at the extreme low end. To the best of our knowledge, for example, there are no reliable benefits that accrue to 3-year preparation programs over 2-year programs. However, it is clear that teachers who complete abbreviated or fast track programs are more vulnerable to attrition than teachers who complete tradition preparation. Furthermore, using Florida data, Feng and Sass (2013) found that K-12 students of certified special education teachers had higher achievement in both reading and math than SWDs whose teachers were not certified. However, these findings do not speak to the manner in which Florida teachers became certified, and certification may be a crude proxy for program length.
With regard to credential structure, Sindelar, Fisher, and Myers (in press) assessed the impact that licensure structure had on SET shortage and NAEP achievement outcomes for SWDs. These authors found nothing that might be construed as a standard or consensus credential structure among the 50 states. A small number of states still differentiate special education credentials by disability categories; increasing numbers use intensity of need or grade level bands, alone or in combination; and some states do not differentiate at all. On NAEP achievement scores in reading and math and SET shortage, no differences were found between states with differentiated structures and states with only generalist credentials. No differences were found between states with restrictive grade bands and states with P-12 credentials. The authors concluded that credentialing per se offers little promise of either ameliorating SET shortage or improving SWD achievement outcomes and argued that decisions regarding credential re-design should be based on factors other than hypothesized impacts. Their findings, however, do not speak to potential benefits of changing credential structures.

Q: Retention Considerations: For general background, is there any research that reviews which credentialing programs can show that teachers coming out of those programs stay in the profession longer, and what are there factors in those programs that we can look to for effectively leading to teachers staying in the profession longer? That question could help us determine what credentialing program components help teachers prepare for handling the profession in the long run/term.

A: Empirical evidence suggests that teacher attrition may be linked to preparation pathway and program length. For example, Boyd et al. (2012) found that among all teachers with 5 years of experience, graduates of traditional teacher preparation programs had higher retention rates both at both the school (i.e., original placement) and school district levels than peers from alternative route programs. Redding and Smith (2016), with data from four administrations of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), found that alternative route teachers have grown increasingly more vulnerable to attrition than to teachers who complete traditional routes, so that by 2012, the difference was 10%. Across these four SASS administrations, alternative route teachers grew less and less likely to have completed student teaching and a course in teaching methods.

Similarly, Boe, Cook, and Sunderland (2006), using data from the SASS Teacher Follow-Up Survey, reported that attrition rates were higher among novice teachers with little or no teacher preparation (14%) compared to their peers who had undergone extensive teacher preparation (9%). Likewise, Ingersoll, Merrill, and May (2014) found that teachers with more pedagogical training were significantly less likely to leave the profession after their first year of teaching.
Thus, we can assert with confidence that teachers who complete traditional preparation programs are more likely to remain in the field than teachers who complete fast-track alternative routes. (Fast-track alternative routes should not be confused with internship or residency programs.) Nonetheless, novice teachers generally are vulnerable to attrition, regardless of the nature of their preparation. Induction and mentoring are commonly recommended as remedies for novice teacher attrition, and, done right, induction and mentoring have a substantial evidentiary base (e.g., Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). However, providing effective mentoring for novice SETs can be difficult, particularly at smaller schools. Mentoring is most effective when mentors and novices perform the same roles and when mentors work in close proximity to their mentees. Given the small number of SETs at any one school and the reality that their work is often differentiated within a school, these conditions for success are hard to achieve for special educators.

Generally speaking, more is known about how school-based factors influence attrition than how preparation influences attrition. Thus, good working conditions, collegiality, and, importantly, administrative support all promote SET retention and commitment to special education teaching. In some studies of SET attrition, caseload is cited as a reason for leaving special education teaching. However, caseload is not cited consistently, and no study has ascertained the caseload size of that prompts SETs to leave the field.

The importance of administrative support raises the question of leadership preparation. To promote retention of special education teachers—indeed, of all teachers, school administrators must foster among their faculty a sense of common purpose, provide novice teachers opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues, and define teachers’ work coherently. Poor working conditions in special education—and stress—may lead to attrition and transfers to general education classrooms. Collegial support perhaps even more so than mentoring has been shown to reduce stress. However, the essential messages from this literature are that (a) school-based factors are more powerful than pre-service factors in promoting SET retention and (b) school principals and the working conditions they create are perhaps the most powerful factor of all. Instead of looking to preservice preparation of teachers for ways to promote retention, we would be well advised to look to preparation of school administrators.

Q: What is the current length of program difference between an education specialist only credential program and an education specialist and general education dual credential program?

A: A compelling argument can be made for requiring SETs also to obtain a general education credential (as California once did), particularly for teachers who work with SWDs in the general education curriculum. (We make this general argument below; in addition, in California, SETs with general education credentials are eligible to teach all
students, not just SWDs.) However, a prerequisite of this sort extends training and may discourage trainees from considering special education as a career. It also seems less pertinent for trainees who plan to teach students with more significant disabilities, students who take an alternative assessment and whose curriculum may be more functional than academic.

Cal State Long Beach recently designed and implemented the Urban Dual Credential Program. For post-baccalaureate students, this program requires 54 credits and takes 2 years to complete. The dual credential program at Fresno State requires 57 credits. Cal State LA has recently developed a dual credential program for undergraduates with extended field experience requirements.

Q: Are there current dual credential programs for receiving a mild/moderate and moderate/severe credential simultaneously, and what are the lengths of these programs?

A: Generally speaking, licensure distinctions based on intensity of student need are adopted in order to differentiate training. Instead of requiring dual credentials, states are more likely to use a generic licensure structure that covers the full range of severity of need. Although we are unaware of any dual credential programs in which trainees receive distinct mild/moderate and severe/profound credentials concurrently, 18 states currently offer a purely generic special education teaching license (Sindelar et al., in press), and another 18 use a generic license in combination with at least one differentiated license. Recipients of generic special education licenses are expected to work effectively with students with the full range of intensity of need.

Generic licenses are often divided by restrictive grade bands. When both severity and grade level distinctions are drawn, the latter commonly apply only to mild/moderate credentials.

Q: What do we know about the outcomes for students receiving special education services in states that have a generalist credential structure versus states that have a multiple credential structure?

A: Sindelar et al. (in press) compared 4th and 8th grade NAEP math and reading scores of students with disabilities from states that offered generic licensure and states with differentiated licensure structures. No significant effect on any of the four variables was observed. However, it is important to note that some states differentiate preparation and licensure by disability categories, while NAEP scores for students with disabilities are aggregated across disability categories. Thus, any impact of disability specific preparation would be diluted in aggregated NAEP achievement scores.
Q: Is there current research on the effect of teacher credentialing on student placement? An issue that feels really important for the commission to consider is the potential that student placement decisions will be driven by teacher availability versus student needs.

A: OSEP also reports educational placement data based on the proportion of time students spend in general education: 80% or more, 40 to 79%, and 39% or less. Fisher, Myers, and Sindelar (2016) found that placement of students with disabilities in inclusive environments (that is, for 80% or more of the school day) is lowest for states that maintain strictly generic licensure with no severity or grade band distinctions. It was highest in states with generic licensure differentiated by grade bands. Overall, there were no statistically significant differences among the licensure structures on proportion of SWDs placed in inclusive placements (for 80% or more of the school day).

Because of the manner in which OSEP differentiates between placement categories, these findings should be interpreted with caution. According to the OSEP definition of inclusive placement—that is, 80% or more of the school day, students who spend up to an hour of a 5-hour school day in special education placements would be included in the same category as students who are fully included. Thus, the most inclusive OSEP category does not provide a fine-grained depiction of inclusive placement. On the basis of OSEP data, it would be incorrect to assert that credential structure has no impact on inclusive placements as it is conventionally understood.

Q: Which credentialing model is best suited to meet the needs of students on IEPs going forward as the state continues to trend toward more inclusive programs, including many students with high level of support needs?

A: Based on their analysis of SET credential structures in the 50 states, Sindelar et al. (in press) concluded that no consensus has been reached about how best to prepare and license special education teachers. However, logic compels consideration of this set of propositions:

1. Preparation of SETs should be differentiated on the basis of whether the trainees prepare to teach students who take standard or alternative state assessments. This is roughly a mild/moderate, severe/profound distinction, with a clear demarcation between the two.
2. Because the work of elementary SETs differs substantially from the work of secondary SETs, preparation should be differentiated on the basis of grade level.
3. There is an inverse relationship between the length of preparation and the degree of differentiation in an SET credential structure. A generic credential, which allows
teachers to work with students of all ages and functioning at all levels of severity, necessitates more extensive preparation than other, more focused credentials.

4. A general education prerequisite, should it be deemed desirable, makes sense only for SETs working with students with mild/moderate disabilities (or taking the standard state assessment). Depending on the grade level of the students, this prerequisite would require either multiple subjects or subject specific content instruction credentials.

Ultimately, decisions regarding the special education credential structure must consider its impact on teacher shortage, preparation quality, and student outcomes. Generic credentials provide districts more hiring flexibility; at the same time, differentiation allows programs to focus preparation. In our judgment, both factors should be taken into consideration in decisions regarding credential reform.

For additional information or answers to questions you have about this Technical Assistance Response, please contact Dr. Paul Sindelar at pts@coe.ufl.edu or 352.273.4266.
References


