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Information/Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Proposed Modification of the Equivalency Process for Commission-Approved Subject Matter Preparation Programs

Executive Summary: This agenda item provides information on the current equivalency process for Commission-approved subject matter preparation programs (SMPPs) and proposes a modification to the process that would allow Commission-approved SMPPs to grant an equivalency when a candidate has passed one or more subtests of the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET).

Recommended Action: That the Commission discuss the proposed modification of the equivalency process for SMPPs and approve this process if appropriate.

Presenters: Mike Taylor, Consultant, and Teri Clark, Director, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal:

I. Educator Quality

- b) Develop, maintain, and promote high quality authentic, consistent educator assessments and examinations that support development and certification of educators who have demonstrated the capacity to be effective practitioners.

Proposed Modification of the Equivalency Process for Commission-Approved Subject Matter Preparation Programs

Introduction

This agenda item provides background information on the current process for Commission-approved subject matter preparation programs (SMPPs) to review a candidate's transcript and grant an equivalency for one or more courses in the Commission-approved SMPP when the candidate has completed the course(s) at a different institution. Further, this item proposes a modification to this process for the Commission's review and potential action.

Background

Teacher candidates in California are required to demonstrate subject matter competence in the subject matter they will be authorized to teach. The Commission has developed a comprehensive set of subject matter requirements (SMRs) that define the subject matter competence required for each of its general education teaching credentials. Demonstration of subject matter competence may be done by passing an examination of subject matter knowledge via the [California Subject Examinations for Teachers](#) (CSET) or completing a Commission-approved subject matter preparation program (SMPP). Additional information on the subject matter competence requirement may be found in [Appendix A](#) of this agenda item.

At its [September 2018 meeting](#), the Commission began a discussion of the current subject matter competence requirement for prospective teachers and indicated interest in updating the process for candidates to meet this requirement. Staff noted that the requirements for determining subject matter competence follow specific statutory requirements for alignment with the K-12 content standards for students and congruence between testing and programmatic routes. As a result, significant changes to current requirements could require legislative action to implement. At this time staff is working with the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson to review practices in other states and in countries known for excellent teacher preparation and gather information that will be brought to the Commission at a future meeting to inform this discussion.

This agenda item, however, proposes a more immediate process consistent with current policy that would provide an additional option for individuals who have taken the applicable CSET examination but who have been unable to pass one or more of the CSET subtests in a content area for which an individual would like to earn a teaching credential. This option could potentially move forward while the Commission further discusses and considers additional potential changes or updates to the process of verifying subject matter competence.

Proposed Modification of the Equivalency Process for Meeting the Subject Matter Requirement

Currently, any regionally-accredited college or university may submit to the Commission a course matrix documenting where the Commission-adopted SMRs are addressed in its coursework and may request Commission approval for the ensemble of these courses to be approved as an SMPP under the Commission's subject matter program standards. The [process for submitting a SMPP for review and approval](#) has been updated and streamlined in the past ten years. The process requires the institution to submit a course matrix showing where the SMRs are addressed in coursework and a short narrative addressing the [SMPP program standards](#).

The SMPP courses are usually completed by undergraduate students, including prospective teacher candidates, as they complete their bachelor's degree. As required in statute, the Commission purposefully uses the same SMRs for both SMPP approval and developing subject matter examinations. This enables and supports the current policy of allowing Commission-approved SMPPs to grant equivalency for coursework taken at another institution. See [Appendix C](#) for a list of Commission-approved SMPPs.

The current subject matter equivalency option, as specified in section [80094](#) of Title 5 of California Code of Regulations, is further explained below and allows a Commission-approved SMPP to review a candidate's transcript and grant an equivalency for coursework taken at a different institution to count toward completion of the Commission-approved SMPP. The regulations currently specify conditions for this equivalency, including that the coursework was completed at an institution that does not offer a Commission-approved SMPP in that credential content area and that the college degree is in the same content area as the equivalency being sought. Pursuant to Title 5 regulations, currently candidates may request equivalency from a SMPP as long as:

- (1) the candidate earned his or her degree in the same major as the subject area for which equivalence is being sought, and
- (2) neither the institution of higher education (IHE) where the candidate earned his or her degree nor the IHE where the candidate is completing his or her teacher preparation program offer a SMPP in the subject area for which equivalence is being sought.

Commission-approved SMPPs are not required to evaluate and grant equivalency to candidates, so this option is only available when SMPPs agree to take on this additional responsibility. Candidates are typically charged a fee for this review by the institution offering the approved SMPP. [Appendix B](#) provides the regulatory language for the current equivalency process.

Staff proposes a modification to the existing subject matter equivalency process in order to enable a program route option for those candidates who initially chose the examination route but may have been unsuccessful in passing one or more subtests of the CSET. This modification would allow Commission-approved SMPPs to grant equivalency for SMPP program coursework that addresses the SMRs assessed in the CSET subtests that have been successfully passed by the candidate. This modification would then allow those candidates to complete SMPP coursework covering the remaining SMRs for the CSET subtest(s) the candidate did not pass in

order to gain full subject matter equivalency and thereby meet the subject matter competence requirement through the program route.

A very likely scenario is a prospective Multiple Subject teacher candidate takes the CSET: Multiple Subjects examination. This assessment includes 3 subtests: English and History/Social Sciences, Mathematics and Sciences, and Human Development, Physical Education and the Arts. The candidate passes two of the three subtests, often the English and History/Social Studies and the Human Development, Physical Education and the Arts but has not passed subtest #2: Mathematics and Science. If this modification were put in place, the candidate could go to an institution with a Commission-approved Elementary Subject Matter Program and provide documentation of passing the two subtests. The Commission-approved SMPP would then grant an equivalency for the courses that address the SMRs assessed by the two subtests that the individual had passed and only require the candidate to complete the courses addressing the mathematics and science SMRs.

Staff notes that this proposed process, like the current subject matter equivalency process, would remain optional on the part of the individual Commission-approved SMPPs. Staff also notes that this option might encourage SMPPs to develop coursework specifically aligned to the SMRs addressed in the CSET subtests to facilitate candidate options for meeting the subject matter competence requirement through the equivalency route. As with the current equivalency process, only Commission-approved SMPPs would have the authority to grant this new type of equivalency. A candidate could take courses at any regionally accredited college, including a community college, and take the transcript to the Commission-approved SMPP for evaluation.

Under this proposed process, it may also be feasible for a Commission-approved SMPP program to formally collaborate with its local community colleges to develop courses that would be accepted by that SMPP to address the needed content without having to do a transcript review for each candidate, much like it already does with transfer agreements. If the Commission were interested in further broadening the types of institutions, such as community colleges, that may offer Commission-approved SMPPs or allowing individual courses, rather than full programs, to be included in the SMPP process, legislation would be needed.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission discuss and adopt the proposed modification to the equivalency option for meeting the statutory subject matter competence requirement, if appropriate.

Next Steps

If the Commission adopts the proposed modification as presented in this agenda item, staff would begin the regulatory process, notify the currently approved SMPPs as well as all teacher preparation programs, and work with SMPPs interested in implementing this option. Notification of this additional option for meeting the subject matter competence requirement would also be provided to candidates via the Commission's website and the Examinations website.

Appendix A

Meeting California’s Subject Matter Requirement

Pursuant to California Education Code [§44259](#) and [44280](#), teaching credential candidates in California are required to demonstrate competency in the subject matter they will be authorized by their credential to teach. This is known as the “subject matter competency requirement.” Also pursuant to Education Code ([§44281](#)), multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist teaching credential candidates must meet the subject matter requirement prior to being assigned to a classroom as an intern or a student teacher.

Current Candidate Routes to Meeting the Subject Matter Competency Requirement

The Ryan Act of 1970 laid the groundwork for the adoption of a statutory requirement in 1976 that candidates must pass subject matter examination prior to completing teacher preparation and earning a preliminary teaching credential. Education Code [§44259](#) allows two routes for candidates to satisfy the subject matter competency requirement:

- 1) Pass a Commission-approved subject matter examination in the content of the credential sought, or
- 2) Complete a Commission-approved subject matter preparation program (SMPP) in the content of the credential sought.

With regard to the subject matter examinations, and consistent with the distinction between content and pedagogy, statute (EC [§44291](#)) prescribes that the examinations are to be “...instruments whose purpose is to measure achievement and shall be used solely to measure objective knowledge of subject matter.”

With regard to subject matter preparation programs, EC [§44311](#) states that the standards for program quality and effectiveness governing SMPPs that waive the subject matter examination must “be consistent with the assessments and examinations of subject matter knowledge and competence adopted by the Commission.” The Commission has implemented this requirement for consistency by requiring credential candidates who choose to pass a subject matter exam and candidates who choose to complete a Commission-approved SMPP to demonstrate subject matter competence across the same set of Subject Matter Requirements (SMRs) as applicable to each credential content area.

Content Currently Included in the Commission’s Subject Matter Requirements

Statute requires that subject matter preparation program standards and the subject matter examinations be aligned with the academic content and performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education for public K-12 students (EC [§44259\(b\)\(5\)](#)). Consistent with statute, the California K-12 student content and performance standards have served as the basis for determining the content adopted by the Commission to define the SMRs for each credential content area. The SMRs are used to develop the subject matter examinations and to define the content that must be addressed within Commission-approved SMPPs.

Statute prescribes the following regarding how to determine subject matter competency of credential candidates. EC [§44281](#) states that “The commission shall select, administer, and interpret subject matter examinations, which shall be a prerequisite for assignment to assure minimum levels of subject matter knowledge by all certified personnel regardless of the pattern and place of preparation.” Statute thus takes a “minimum competency” approach, requiring the Commission to set a minimum standard that defines the acceptable level of required subject matter knowledge for the credential sought.

Appendix B
5 CCR § 80094

§ 80094. Institutionally Approved Subject Matter Equivalencies.

Regionally accredited California colleges and universities approved by the Commission to offer subject matter programs in compliance with Education Code Section 44256 shall be authorized to determine the equivalence of courses and programs to their Commission approved program which students may submit from another institution. The Commission shall accept the verification of subject matter equivalence from approved institutions provided that, with the exception of persons whose academic and professional preparation were completed in regionally accredited institutions outside of California, the applicant for a multiple or single subject teaching credential has completed all or part of his or her undergraduate or graduate academic or professional preparation at the institution determining the equivalency of the subject matter. The Commission shall also accept the verification of subject matter equivalence from an approved institution where the applicant has not completed course work when neither the degree granting institution nor the institution at which the program is being completed has an approved subject matter program in the subject to be listed on the credential. However, the verification of subject matter equivalence must be in the applicant's degree major. The Commission shall also accept the verification of subject matter equivalence from an approved institution where the applicant has not completed course work if the equivalence was approved prior to the implementation of these regulations and all academic standards required in the institution's approved subject matter have been met.

For applicants whose academic and professional preparation were completed in regionally accredited institutions outside of California, the Commission shall accept subject matter equivalence determinations by approved California institutions so long as the institution submits verification that the out-of-state applicant has met requirements equivalent to those in the institution's approved program. Such verification shall include, but not be limited to, a listing of courses completed by the applicant deemed to be equivalent to courses in the institution's approved program, attainment of all academic standards required in the institution's approved program, and successful completion of any final assessment required of students in the institution's approved program.

Note: Authority cited: Section 44225(q), Education Code. Reference: Section 44259(b)(5), Education Code.

Appendix C: Commission Approved Subject Matter Preparation Programs (January 2019)

Commission Approved Subject Matter Programs																		
Institution	ESM	Eng	FLM	Math	HSS	FLGS	Bio	Chem	Geo	Phys	Art	Music	PE	WL	Ag	HSci	Total	
CSU	San Luis Obispo		X		X	X						X			X		4	
	Pomona		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	1	X		12	
	Bakersfield		X		X	X					X			1			5	
	Channel Islands	X	X	x	X												4	
	Chico	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	1	X		13	
	Dominguez Hills	X	X		X	X		X	X				X	1			9	
	East Bay			x	X	X							X				5	
	Fresno	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	X		13
	Fullerton		X		X	X							X	3			8	
	Long Beach	X	X		X	X						X	X	5		X	13	
	Los Angeles	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	2			14	
	Monterey Bay	X	X		X							X					3	
	Northridge		X		X	X						X	X	X	1		7	
	Sacramento	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X				10
	San Bernardino		X		X							X		X	1		5	
	San Marcos	X			X	X						X					2	
	Stanislaus	X	X		X	X						X		X	1		7	
	Humboldt		X		X	X						X	X	X	1		7	
San Diego		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X			10		
San Francisco	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1		11		
San Jose	X	X		X	X						X	X	X			7		
Sonoma		X	X	X								X	X			5		
UC	Davis				X										X		2	
	Irvine				X												1	
	Los Angeles				X							X					2	

Commission Approved Subject Matter Programs																		
Institution	ESM	Eng	FLM	Math	HSS	FLGS	Bio	Chem	Geo	Phys	Art	Music	PE	WL	Ag	HSci	Total	
Public	San Diego				X		X										2	
	Santa Barbara			X	X												2	
	Santa Cruz				X												1	
Private and Independent	Azusa Pacific		X		X	X						X	X	1			6	
	Biola											X					1	
	California Baptist		X		X	X						X		1			5	
	California Lutheran				X	X							X				3	
	Concordia	X															1	
	Loyola Marymount		X		X	X	X	X	X			X			1			8
	Mount Saint Mary's	X															1	
	National		X		X													2
	Otis Art and Design											X						1
	Pepperdine		X															1
	Pt. Loma Nazarene	X			X							X						3
	St. Mary's		X															1
	La Verne						X	X	X	X	X			X				6
	Redlands												X					1
	San Diego				X													1
	Pacific					X		X	X	X	X		X					6
Vanguard	X	X		X								X					4	
William Jessup		X															1	
Totals	16	28	6	36	21	5	12	11	8	9	15	22	20	23	5	1	238	

There are currently NO Commission-approved Subject Matter Programs in Business, Home Economics, or Industrial and Technology Education

ESM = Elementary Subject Matter (Multiple Subject)

Eng = English

FLM = Foundational Level Mathematics

HSS = History Social Science

FLGS = Foundational-Level General Science

Geo = Geosciences

Phys = Physics

PE = Physical Education

HSci = Health Sciences

WL = World Languages: Spanish- 15; French-2; Latin-2; Italian-1; German-1;

Japanese-1; English language Development -