
2F

Information/Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Initial Plan to Develop a Special Education CalTPA as a Performance Assessment Requirement for Initial Licensure of Education Specialist Candidates

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents a plan for the development of a Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) for Education Specialists, as well as a summary of feedback received from a series of focus group discussions with stakeholders. Guiding principles for the development of this assessment are provided for Commission consideration and discussion, and minor revisions to the Commission's TPA Assessment Design Standards are presented for review and approval.

Recommended Action: Staff asks that the Commission review and provide staff direction as needed regarding the proposed development plan and adopt minor changes to the Assessment Design Standards.

Presenters: Amy Reising, Director and James Webb, Consultant, Performance Assessment Policy and Development

Strategic Plan Goal

II. Program Quality and Accountability

- a) Develop and maintain rigorous, meaningful, and relevant standards that drive program quality and effectiveness for the preparation of the education workforce and are responsive to the needs of California's diverse student population.

Initial Plan to Develop a Special Education CalTPA as a Performance Assessment Requirement for Initial Licensure of Education Specialist Candidates

Introduction

This agenda item presents a plan for the development of a Teaching Performance Assessment for Education Specialists (SPED TPA), as well as a summary of feedback received from a series of focus group discussions with stakeholders. Guiding principles for the development of this assessment are provided for Commission consideration and discussion, and minor revisions to the Commission's TPA Assessment Design Standards are presented for review and approval.

Background

The work to revise the Preliminary Education Specialist credential structure began in fall 2016 with the formation of the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential work group. This expert group of individuals ([Appendix A](#)), who represented various stakeholders throughout the state, held several meetings from October 2016 through August 2017 to develop a basic set of program standards and Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) for the Preliminary Education Specialist credentials.

At its [February 2018 meeting](#), the Commission adopted a revised credential structure for the Education Specialist teaching credentials. The new credential structure includes five preliminary teaching credentials: Mild to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN), Extensive Support Needs (ESN), Visual Impairments (VI), Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH), and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE). Subsequent to this work, the Commission determined that every teacher candidate should take and pass a TPA prior to earning the preliminary teaching credential. During its [June 2018](#) meeting, the Commission reviewed proposed program standards and teaching performance expectations as well as proposed subject matter requirements for the credential. At the June 2018 Commission meeting, the Commission acted to do the following:

1. Affirm the current subject matter requirements for all Education Specialist credentials. (i.e., a candidate completes the subject matter requirement as a candidate for a Preliminary Multiple Subject credential or a Preliminary Single Subject credential in one of the following content areas: English, mathematics, social science, science, art, music, or world languages).
2. Adopt TPEs for Early Childhood Special Education, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Visual Impairments teaching credentials.
3. Affirm that the Early Childhood Special Education teaching credential will authorize teaching and services for birth through kindergarten once the regulatory process has been completed.

At the [August 2018](#) Commission meeting, the Commission adopted program standards and TPEs for the Education Specialist Mild to Moderate and Extensive Support Needs credentials, and in [April 2019](#) adopted authorization statements for these credentials.

Universal TPEs as the “Common Trunk” of Preparation

One of the important outcomes in the Commission’s reform work in both special education and general education over the last several years is the development of a common or universal set of TPEs that are met by both general education and special education teachers. These universal TPEs establish a common foundation for all teachers, based on the concept that all teachers are teachers of all students, that all students are general education students first and that all students need intervention at different points in their academic career. The role of the Education Specialist includes teaching, but focuses specifically on assessing student learning needs, developing individual education plans, collaborating with other adults that provide instruction and other supports for learning, and managing student caseload.

The Commission’s goal in establishing universal TPEs was to ensure that all teachers learn the fundamentals of teaching, ideally in common coursework that allows for collaboration across credential types, and then specialize in the content of their particular credential area – Multiple Subjects, Single Subject, Mild to Moderate Support Needs, Extensive Support Needs, Visual Impairment, Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Early Childhood Special Education (See [Appendix B](#)). The development of a SPED TPA will occur against the backdrop of these significant changes in the framing of teacher preparation across this range of credentials. How to balance attention between the universal TPEs and the specialized TPEs has been a driving question as staff and stakeholders consider what shape the SPED TPA might take. There is growing consensus that using the general education TPA as a foundation and springboard could strengthen preparation for all teachers in the universal TPEs. If this approach has merit, then the next question is how to augment the general education TPA to capture specific aspects of the Education Specialist credentials.

To launch this development work, Commission staff held multiple focus group sessions across the state. Online opportunities for focus groups were provided to ensure that teachers and teacher candidates were able to participate in the discussion and share their insights and expertise. Finally, staff held a discussion with several educator preparation programs that currently require their special education candidates to take and pass the general education (Multiple Subject or Single Subject) CalTPA in order to gather information about what worked well, what was challenging, and what programs learned from asking Education Specialist candidates to complete and pass the CalTPA. Additionally some Education Specialist preparation programs that use the edTPA with their general education candidates have asked their special education candidates to take and pass that assessment. In order to get that perspective staff plan to meet with the edTPA sponsor, the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE) in the coming weeks to learn more about how that process worked. The findings of the focus group conversations are summarized below.

Special Education Teaching Performance Assessment Focus Groups

During the fall, Commission staff held focus group meetings with stakeholders to gather information to inform a future design team who will work with the Commission and Evaluation Systems group of Pearson, the Commission's performance assessment technical contractor, to build a TPA for candidates seeking a Preliminary Education Specialist credential. A total of eight meetings were held; three of the meetings were held using an online platform, and the rest were in person. Meetings were held in northern and southern California, and a total of 102 educators registered for the in-person meetings, which were held at Cal Baptist University (5 DHH programs attended), at Brandman University and at National University, Spectrum Campus. Two meetings via Zoom technology for additional participation were held which added another 210 registered attendees. The last meeting held via Zoom technology was with stakeholders who had specific input for the Visual Impairments (VI) educator preparation programs that would be implementing a TPA. A final meeting was held with programs who currently require their Education Specialist candidates to complete and pass the CalTPA.

All of the meetings followed the same format. Participants were introduced to the current CalTPA tasks and rubrics and asked the following four questions about each of the two cycles of the TPA, *Cycle 1: Learning About Students and Planning Instruction* and *Cycle 2: Assessment Driven Instruction*:

1. What aspects of CalTPA Cycle 1 or Cycle 2, would work well for your Education Specialist candidates?
2. What aspects of CalTPA Cycle 1 or Cycle 2 need to be modified for your Education Specialist candidates?
3. What do you not see in the current CalTPA that you believe the Education Specialist candidate should be assessed on?
4. How does the instructional setting influence, impact and/or change how Education Specialist candidates engage in and complete the CalTPA?

Analysis of Focus Group Findings

Focus groups received a general overview of the current CalTPA cycles and analytic rubrics. Following this overview, participants then gathered in role-alike groups to discuss the four key questions listed above in regard to their particular credential and experience working to develop and support Education Specialist candidates. Groups included Mild to Moderate Support Needs, Extensive Support Needs, and Early Childhood Special Education program faculty and teachers. Participants at each focus group provided feedback and shared ideas; overall educators were supportive of the performance assessment concept and eager to launch the work.

Staff reviewed and analyzed responses from the various focus group meetings to the questions above. A central focus of the discussion was around examining aspects of Cycles 1 and 2 of the CalTPA for the possibility of serving as the foundation for the design of the Special Education CalTPA. In particular, focus groups were encouraged to discuss what design/structural elements in the existing CalTPA would transfer to Education Specialist credential areas. Additionally,

focus groups were also asked to consider what considerations should be discussed by the Special Education CalTPA Design Team as it pertains to the work of the development of the SPED CalTPA. Staff has summarized the information gathered by credential area of emphasis in order to identify the unique needs of the various credential areas for Education Specialist candidates. The credential specific information gathered through the focus groups is provided in [Appendix D](#) of this item.

Overarching themes included a general agreement that for Mild to Moderate and Extensive Support Needs candidates, the CalTPA as designed for general education teacher candidates could serve as the foundation for the development of the Special Education CalTPA. Most felt that requiring candidates to demonstrate the Universal TPEs was appropriate in a performance assessment. Many recommended that if a third Cycle is developed for Education Specialist candidates it should focus on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process and/or collaboration with other educators and support staff. The Early Childhood Special Education groups had more reservations about adopting the current CalTPA, sharing that adjustments would have to be made given the age range of their students (birth through kindergarten) and the settings in which they teach. DHH faculty expressed interest in local scoring options. Visual Impairments faculty also wondered how the CalTPA could be modified to support their specialized contexts and candidates. Common themes that arose from the feedback on the questions posed during focus group meetings include the following:

1. What aspects of CalTPA *Cycle 1: Learning About Students and Planning Instruction*, or *Cycle 2: Assessment-Driven Instruction*, would work well for your Education Specialist candidates?
 - a. Maintaining the inquiry process of Plan, Teach and Assess, Reflect and Apply steps to move through an assessment cycle.
 - b. Ensuring that the assessment includes a range of required evidence, written narratives, video recordings (as appropriate) with annotations, student work, assessments, observations of students, and lesson plans is preferred.
 - c. Developing reflective practitioners is a common goal.
 - d. Analytic rubrics can be helpful to provide descriptive feedback to candidates.
 - e. Special education candidates' work with English learners and ELD pedagogy should be included.
 - f. The content area focus for Education Specialist candidates should be aligned to the content area the candidate satisfied subject matter or the candidate's teaching assignment.

2. What aspects of CalTPA Cycle 1 or Cycle 2 need to be modified for your Education Specialist candidates?
 - a. Allow for single student, small group, or whole group instruction.
 - b. Carefully consider video as evidence or provide options.
 - c. Range of settings should be considered and flexibility provided for the candidate.
 - d. Maintain Focus students and consider the most appropriate focus for the credential.

- e. Consider how to measure specific pedagogy including creating IEP goals and working/collaborating with other educators to design and support instruction for students on IEPs.
 - f. For MMSN and ESN the Design Team is encouraged to consider how much of the assessment should focus on the common trunk (Universal TPEs) and how much on the specialty area TPEs.
 - g. DHH, VI, and ECSE groups emphasized the need for the Design Team to consider their specific settings, specialized contexts, and approaches to pedagogy as defined in their TPEs.
 - h. DHH and VI faculty expressed a preference for having locally administered and scored assessments.
3. What do you not see in the current CalTPA that you believe the Education Specialist candidate should be assessed on?
- a. Creating IEP goals and leading IEP meetings.
 - b. Collaborating with other educators to support student learning and well/being (for example: paraprofessionals, classroom aids, parents, specialists, administrator, occupational/physical therapists, and language therapists).
 - c. Student led IEP (student voice and choice in instruction).
 - d. Life skills in addition to academic content.
 - e. Transition from one grade to another, from school to school, from high school to work.
4. How does the instructional setting influence, impact and/or change how Education Specialist candidates engage in and complete the CalTPA?
- a. Education Specialist candidates work in a range of settings from hospitals to home settings to school rooms, with different types of student groups from single students to small groups to whole groups, and with other educators. The feedback from the focus groups noted that the assessment should be designed to allow for flexibility and demonstration of pedagogical skills in a range of settings with a diverse group of students and their specific assets and learning needs.

Conversation with Programs Currently Using the CalTPA Cycles with Education Specialist Candidates

To further explore and understand current assessment practices with Education Specialist candidates Commission and Evaluation Systems staff met with four Education Specialist credential programs that currently use the CalTPA with their candidates as a requirement for completion of the preliminary program. These programs included Azusa Pacific University, Concordia University-Irvine, Point Loma Nazarene University, and High-Tech High. All programs indicated that they use the CalTPA with their MMSN candidates. Some common themes, examples, and challenges emerged with using the CalTPA for Education Specialist candidates. Specific feedback from Education Specialist programs already using the CalTPA included:

- The performance assessment provides authenticity for Education Specialist candidates in preparing for courses addressing the Universal TPEs and greater inclusion and “pushing in” of Education Specialists in co-teaching models.
- The CalTPA encourages more collaboration from Education Specialist candidates with general education teachers. This collaboration is due, in part, to the selection of the focus students required in Cycle 1, allowing the Education Specialist candidate to have direct contact with the general education teacher to provide data and information that identifies assets and learning needs for the selected student. Education Specialist candidates have a deeper learning of their students when working with general education teachers as they share data to meet the needs of the IEP. The programs shared that this model speaks to the full inclusion setting.
- Rubrics for the CalTPA appear to accurately reflect the skills/assets necessary for the preliminary Education Specialist credential. These rubrics capture teaching behaviors among Education Specialist candidates as well as their general education counterparts.
- One challenge shared by programs was the placement of the Education Specialist candidate to provide enough context and depth to develop their CalTPA submission. Since co-teaching and full inclusion models are still relatively new to districts, these placements presented some challenges for candidates as they are encouraged and supported to collaborate with general education teachers. Only one program, High Tech High, did not share these placement concerns as this program places its Education Specialist candidates in its own classrooms.
- All programs shared excitement with the requirement in Cycle 1 to select focus students for further understanding and exploration for an asset-based approach to learning. There was support for the idea that special education candidates select a focus student who is on the autism spectrum.
- There was support made to examine students from a culturally-responsive pedagogical lens to allow candidates the opportunity to incorporate aspects of a student’s home culture into the classroom and to build upon these funds of knowledge for the general education teacher as well as promoting capacity for the student.

Appointment of Design Team and Plan for Development

As the focus group sessions were underway during fall 2019, Commission staff circulated an invitation to apply for the SPED TPA Design Team. More than 100 applications were received. Among the considerations that were used to establish a diverse and appropriately representative group were the following:

- Credential areas of emphasis (MMSN, ESN, ECSE, VI, and DHH)
- Balance of represented preparation programs (IHE, LEA, etc.)
- Balance of geographic areas from across the state
- Previous work with Commission structures (Board of Institutional Review, Task Groups, etc.)

The Design Team was appointed by the Executive Director in late December and will have their first meeting in early February 2020 (See [Appendix C](#)). Additional appointments may be made to ensure adequate balance in expertise and perspective. The general components and timeline for the development of the SPED TPA include:

- Develop and draft assessment cycles (2020)
- Pilot Testing, refine cycles as needed with input from educational field (2020-21)
- Field test cycles, refine cycles as needed with input from educational field (2021-22)
- Standard Setting Study (Spring 2022)
- Operational Administration (Fall 2022-23)

Developing five variations of the SPED TPA simultaneously will be logistically challenging, so staff is planning to phase the development work. Phase 1 will begin early in 2020 and focus on the MMSN and ESN credentials and Phase 2 would begin later and focus on DHH and VI. Development of the Early Childhood Special Education TPA would coordinate with the state Master Plan for Early Childhood Education that is currently under development and expected to be released at the end of 2020. Given the timeline around the broader statewide effort on early childhood, work in this credential area will not begin before the winter or spring of 2021. This staged approach to development will provide staff and the Design Team the opportunity to learn from the initial SPED TPA pilot test and apply those learning to the DHH, VI and ECSE assessments. As reflected in the focus group feedback and suggestions for the Design Team's consideration, it is clear that the needs of these students and candidates and their instructional context must be thoughtfully considered and carefully navigated.

Considerations for the Design Team in Developing the SPED TPA

Given the information collected from the field to date, staff proposes consideration of the following concepts to guide the work of the SPED TPA Design Team:

- a) Consider CalTPA as the foundation for the development of the SPED TPA and support candidates who seek to earn both a general education and Education Specialist credential, with a goal of strengthening common preparation and assessment in the Universal TPEs.
- b) To the extent that the general education CalTPA is the foundation for the SPED TPA, consider how best to adapt it for use with Preliminary Education Specialist candidates.
- c) Consider developing a third cycle to augment the approved general education performance assessments (CalTPA, edTPA, FAST) for Education Specialists so they can demonstrate competence appropriate to their area of specialization. Options could include a focus on the specialty content area TPEs, on working with other educators, or on the data collection and planning process for developing an IEP.
- d) Consider ways to create flexibility for candidates and programs that allow the candidate to earn both a general education and an Education Specialist credential, if that is their goal. The key idea is that candidates would have the opportunity, with program guidance, to complete a series of cycles to demonstrate the full range of pedagogy for

the desired credentials. For candidates who have already completed a general education TPA and want to add an Education Specialist credential, then the candidate would be required to complete an additional cycle based on the desired special education credential.

Assessment Design Standards Additions to include Education Specialist Context

Given the analysis of Education Specialist feedback collected through the focus group process during fall and winter 2019, staff reviewed the approved Assessment Design Standards that guided the re-development of the CalTPA and other approved TPAs. Staff determined that the current Assessment Design Standards are applicable to development of the SPED TPA with two minor additions to the first Assessment Design Standard - Assessment Designed for Validity and Fairness. These modifications are to define the content area for special education candidates and to provide additional flexibility if video recording is not a possibility in a candidate's placement. Specifically, staff recommend the following revisions (bolded language) to 1 (e) and to 1 (f):

1(e)

1. For Multiple Subject candidates, the model sponsor must include assessments of the core content areas of at least Literacy and Mathematics. Programs use local program performance assessments for History/Social Science and Science if not already included as part of the TPA.
2. **For Education Specialist candidates, the model sponsor must include assessments that allow for either Multiple Subject (Literacy and Mathematics) or Single Subject content (as deemed appropriate for special education) and that aligns with the student teaching and/or clinical practice placement.**

1(f) The model sponsor must include a focus on classroom teaching performance within the TPA, including a video of the candidate's classroom teaching performance with candidate commentary describing the lesson plan and rationale for teaching decisions shown and evidence of the effect of that teaching on student learning. **For specialized settings, video recording of teaching practice may be a choice among several options for providing evidence of the effect that teaching has on student learning.**

Upon staff review and discussion, Assessment Design Standard 2 - Assessment Designed for Reliability and Fairness and Assessment Design Standard 3 - TPA Model Sponsor Support Responsibilities can be applied as currently adopted by the Commission.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Commission:

1. Review, discuss, and, if appropriate, provide staff direction regarding the plan for development of the SPED TPA, the feedback from the focus groups, and the considerations identified in this agenda item.
2. Adopt the minor revisions to the Assessment Design Standards 1 (e) and 1 (f) as shown in this item.

Next Steps

Staff will begin work with the Design Team using the guidance provided by the Commission. Staff will continue to update the Commission on the Special Education Performance Assessment development efforts.

Appendix A
Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Work Group

Representatives to the Work Groups

Names	Affiliations	Current Positions
Mary Briggs	California School Boards Association Liaison	Education Policy Analyst
Mary Gomes	Association of California School Administrators Liaison	Educational Services Executive
Cheryl Mohr	California County Superintendents Educational Services Association Liaison, Madera County Office of Education	Executive Director, Student Programs and Services
Emily Solari	University of California Liaison, UC Davis	Associate Professor of Education
Kristin Stout	California State University Liaison, CSU Long Beach	Education Specialist Credential Program Coordinator
Ingrid Gunnell	California Federation of Teachers Liaison, Los Angeles Unified School District	UTLA/LAUSD Salary Point Advisor
Stephanie Stotelmeyer	California Teachers Association Liaison, Santa Ana Unified School District	Education Specialist, Resource
Diana Taylor	Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities Liaison, Mt. St. Mary's University	Education Specialist Program Director
Aaron Christensen	California Department of Education Liaison	Education Programs Consultant

Work Group Members

Names	Affiliations	Current Positions
Suzanne Borgese	Placentia Yorba Linda Unified School District	Education Specialist, Mild/Moderate
Jessica Burrone	Yuba County Office of Education	Special Education Principal, Moderate/Severe
Cathy Creasia	University of Southern California	Credential Analyst and Project Specialist for Accreditation and Evaluation
Anne Delfosse	West Orange County Consortium for Special Education	Executive Director
John Erratt	Orange Unified School District	Special Education Program Coordinator
Elizabeth Freer	Etiwanda School District	Director of Special Education
Jean Gonsier-Gerdin	California State University, Sacramento	Professor
Victoria Graf	Loyola Marymount University	Professor of Education
Elizabeth Jara	San Joaquin County Office of Education	Education Specialist, Emotional Disturbance
Talya Kemper	California State University, Chico	Assistant Professor, Special Education
Meghan Magee	Mother Lode Union School District	School Psychologist

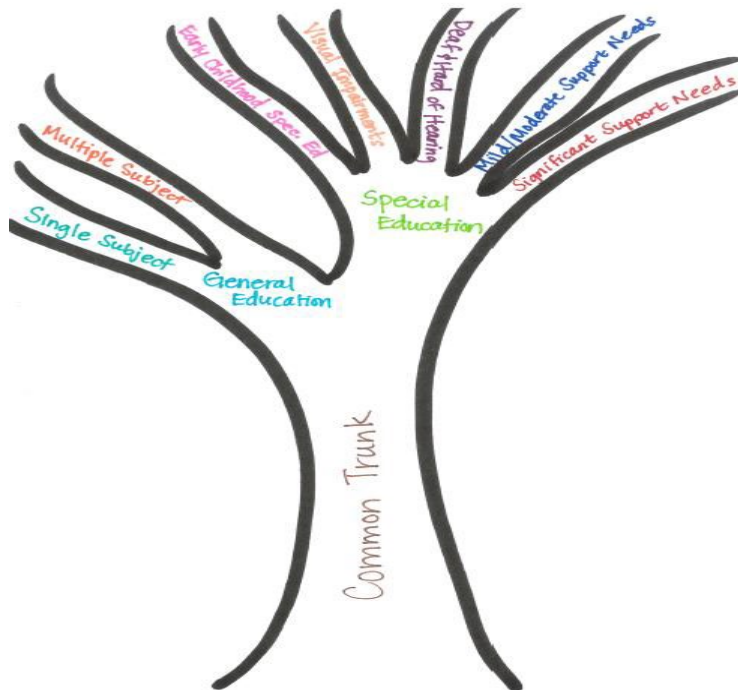
Names	Affiliations	Current Positions
Elise Morgan	San Diego Unified School District	Education Specialist, Mild/Moderate
Susan Porter	National University	Associate Professor/Chair, Special Education
Diana Sanchez	Los Angeles Unified School District	Teacher of the Deaf
Zachary Smith	Sanger Unified School District	Project Manager, Universal Design for Learning and Special Education
Michael Solis	University of California, Riverside	Assistant Professor, Special Education
Sally Spencer	California State University, Northridge	Professor, Special Education
Deanna Torrington	Rocklin Unified School District	Education Specialist, Resource
Julie Tucker	South San Francisco Unified School District	Induction Special Education Support Provider
Mary Yung	San Mateo County Office of Education	Coordinator, Special Education Teacher Induction
Andrea Zetlin	California State University, Los Angeles	Professor, Special Education

Appendix B

Education Specialist Credential Structure Recommendation:

At the December 2017 meeting, staff recommended a revised credential structure, reflecting the consensus of the Commission's special education task force, intended to work in concert with the general education credential to best meet the needs of California's students with disabilities. The proposed structure includes five initial Education Specialist Credentials building off of the same base of preparation (i.e. common trunk) as the general education Multiple Subject and Single Subject Credentials:

1. Early Childhood Special Education (Birth through K)
2. Visual Impairments (Birth to age 22)
3. Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Birth to age 22)
4. Mild/Moderate Support Needs (K to age 22)
5. Significant Support Needs (K to age 22).



Appendix C

Special Education CalTPA Design Team Members

Name	Employer	Role
Amy Andersen	El Dorado County Office of Education	Executive Director, Special Services
Amanda Baird	Orange County Department of Education	Coordinator
Jessica Burrone	Yolo County Office of Education	Director of Special Education
Shawna Draxton	WISH Charter Schools	Executive Director
Vicki Graff	Loyola Marymount University	Technical Advisor, CTC/ES
Megan Gross	Poway Unified School District	Teacher, ESN
Allan Hallis	Riverside County Office of Education	Administrator, Preliminary Teacher Preparation
Cheryl Kamei-Hannan	California State University, Los Angeles	Professor
Elizabeth Jara	Teachers College San Joaquin	Coordinator, Special Education Programs
Jennifer Kritsch	Point Loma University	Director of Special Education, Associate Professor
Robert Perry	Los Angeles Unified School District	Administrative Coordinator
Elisa Pokorney	William S Hart Union High School District	Teacher, ESN
Nina Potter	San Diego State University	Director of Assessment & Accreditation
Julie Sheldon	Walnut Valley Teacher Induction	Induction Coordinator
Cheryl Sjostrom	Brandman University	Director of Clinical Services/Associate Professor
Sarah Steinbach	Santa Clara County Office of Education	Teacher, ESN
Stephanie Stotelmeyer	Santa Ana Unified School District	Teacher, MMSN
Reginald Thomas	Fontana Unified School District	Instructional Coach
Jacquelyn Urbani	Mills College	Director of ECSE/Associate Professor
Janice Myck-Wayne	California State University, Fullerton	Professor, Special Education
Robin Zane	California Department of Education	Director, State Special Services Schools Division

Appendix D

Full Analysis of Credential Area Focus Group Findings

Mild to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN)

For this credential area of emphasis, focus group members found the structure of the Cycle 1 design to be in line with current program standards. The Plan, Teach, Reflect, and Apply focus is already embedded in Education Specialist programs. Another point of relationship with the general education TPA is the emphasis on asset-based learning and Universal Designs for Learning (UDL) for students. Focus group members could see the correlation among the areas of planning instruction, reflecting on practice, and application of new knowledge gained from the examination of teaching against sets of standards for the goal of student growth with state-content standards and emotional well-being. In addition, group members found the inclusion of academic language as a component of instructional design to be an important crossover from the existing TPA to strengthen the common trunk of knowledge with general education classes and to allow for more development of teaching models, which can include, but not be limited to, “push-in,” co-teaching, and full-inclusion models for instruction.

Focus group members did provide a wealth of information that will assist the Education Specialist design team members in their work to develop a performance assessment that will appropriately measure the teaching practices of Mild to Moderate Support Needs candidates. One area that will need to be developed and designed will be the inclusion of three focus students for Cycle 1. Currently, the CalTPA requires a special needs student, an English learner, and a student for whom school has been a challenge. Design team members will need to examine how these focus students will be selected based on IEP goals, and in collaboration with general education personnel. Recommendations included a student with a performance-level goal, a physical goal, and a behavioral goal. Others recommended that candidates work with a student who is identified along the autism spectrum. Another key element that focus group members targeted was the need for working with paraprofessionals and/or general education teachers to foster a unified approach towards the special education setting for students. This consideration may also include co-teaching and/or co-planning with a general education teacher or other specialty teacher to ensure equitable access to the state-adopted content standards and core curriculum. A final key point from the focus group discussion for Mild to Moderate Support Needs centered on the lesson plan design for Cycle 1. Members expressed the need for systematic instruction rather than the reliance on a general lesson plan. Issues related to prompting, sensory support needs, and intentional classroom environment planning all should be considered in the design of this particular cycle.

Within Cycle 2 of the CalTPA, MMSN focus group members, like with Cycle 1, identified the cyclical nature of the performance assessment (Plan, Teach, Reflect, Apply) as having application to work for Education Specialist candidates. Since Cycle 2 of the CalTPA focuses on the design of assessment to inform instruction, focus group members at each location identified the need for Education Specialist candidates to demonstrate how informal assessments inform and guide the work of summative assessments.

As the Design Team for the special education CalTPA begins its work, focus group members did highlight ideas for the team to consider in its development of the performance assessment. In the same way that group members discussed the educational setting and environment with Cycle 1, members also stated how the setting/environment will inform or guide the work for assessment in Cycle 2. In particular, Design Team members will need to be flexible in the cycle design allowing for candidates to work with small groups, whole groups, and in one-on-one settings. The Design Team will need to consider how setting and group size may influence each candidate's choices about asset based instructional design. Additionally, focus group members explored how assistive technology affects or guides assessment with students. To that end, state-adopted content standards for various levels should be weighed against developmental and/or behavioral environmental concerns among students; and, if applicable, how diploma requirements among districts inform the attainment of skills and demonstration of knowledge to satisfy these objectives.

Extensive Support Needs (ESN)

Focus group members who represented the Extensive Support Needs programs also found the inquiry-based cycle for both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 to be applicable to the design of a performance assessment for Education Specialist candidates. These group members shared that candidates in their programs already approach their coursework and clinical practice with these habits of mind in place. In addition, members shared that the funds of knowledge piece that is embedded in Cycle 1 can come from not only state-adopted content standards but also from parental input as parents are so involved with the extensive support needs of their children. Deeply understanding students' prior knowledge, funds of knowledge including languages spoken, and developmental level remains an important piece for the Design Team to consider as it builds an assessment for Education Specialist candidates.

According to focus group members, the Design Team is encouraged to take into consideration the broad range of autism spectrum disabilities and classroom environments that incorporate skills-based approaches to the state content standards while supporting the emotional well-being of students with a range of disabilities under this category. In addition, focus group members supported the idea of planning instruction with paraprofessionals and the role that instructional assistants have in the Extensive Support Needs classroom to provide instruction to a varying range of cognitive and behavioral abilities.

For Cycle 2, focus group members determined the need for assessments to inform instruction to match the importance that this pedagogical design has for general education candidates. However, assessments can have a broader definition and design for Extensive Support Needs candidates as students may have multiple measures of assessments to determine eligibility and continued placement in the classroom setting to which the student has been designated to receive support services.

With this understanding in mind, focus group members shared that Design Team members should determine how various assessments may be shared with students, especially when the student may be non-verbal or whose cognitive ability is such that alternative methods for

communication may need to be considered. Focus group members questioned this idea and how it might be captured appropriately on video and annotated by the Education Specialist candidate. Other areas for consideration among ESN focus group members are the issues of access to IEP documents and/or placement testing that a candidate may or may not have given district or school level policy. Design Team members will need to determine how placement determines access to allow candidates to have the information that they may need in order to make appropriate determinations for assessments to support the skills and objectives of the assessments in Cycle 2 designed for student growth and development and to plan instruction.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

ECSC focus group participants shared that they like the formative nature of both CalTPA cycles to inform next best steps for ECSE candidates to take when planning instruction and designing assessments to improve student learning. The asset-based approach to designing lessons encourages the current use among programs to use an activity plan aligned to preschool learning foundations, which contains a family component to design activities/lessons for birth through the age of 3. While some of the group members saw three focus students determined in the same manner as the general education CalTPA, there was a suggestion that in the preschool setting one student could be in an inclusive setting, such as a typical peer, to determine next steps with the identified child who is receiving ECSE services. Another suggestion was made to have a third focus student be a toddler who has experienced some type of trauma. For both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of the CalTPA, staff members heard from several focus group members who represented Early Childhood Special Education who shared that videos are good to use in a performance assessment for this particular credential area.

Staff heard several points of discussion to consider as the Design Team begins its work with the Special Education CalTPA. One area that may affect the design of the assessment is the varied hours for clinical practice among programs. If the candidate is enrolled in a traditional program, then that candidate may have fewer required hours. However, more hours may be required of candidates who are serving as interns. This access to site-based clinical teaching could affect the artifacts and gathered evidence for the candidates' submissions. In the CalTPA, Multiple Subject candidates must choose a math and literacy focus for either Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. However, ECSC focus group members shared that math and literacy lessons may not be developmentally appropriate for this age group. As such, staff heard that the candidate needs to know what is developmentally appropriate for the students so that the lesson plan or activity makes sense for the target student (infant, toddler, etc.). A suggestion was made at one focus group session that provided the idea around framing a lesson with play that contains specific embedded learning targets.

Some other considerations that Design Team members are encouraged to consider centered around the environment in which ECSE candidates can be placed for their student teaching. These environments can include a traditional classroom, Early Start or Head Start centers, hospitals, or home settings. Further consideration would also have to be given to the number of adults in the environment, which may include parents or paraprofessionals who take an active role in the implementation of activities with the child. To this end, focus group members see a

possible need for the design team to consider a possible cycle that targets the role of the ECSE candidate with families for the purposes of intervention, coaching, and collaboration for the student's continued progress within the program. Videos could be used with parents and/or caregivers to capture these important elements of the ECSE candidates' experiences and expectations.

Much discussion centered around the CalTPA required videos and their length. Some members shared that a five-minute video may not be enough time with this age group while others felt that five minutes may be too long with certain activity components, especially with infants and toddlers. Another issue that arose was the video requirement for birth through age 3 since many children are non-verbal at these stages. With these ideas, the Design Team must consider how the video requirements for Cycles 1 and 2 may be adapted for the ECSE Education Specialist candidates.

Visual Impairment (VI)

Commission staff spoke to two VI faculty for their advice and input in relation to the set focus group questions. VI faculty agreed that the steps of Plan, Teach, Assess, and Apply, as described in the two CalTPA assessment cycles and that using video artifacts has potential for VI candidates. In addition, they shared that the concept of focus students was also appropriate for VI candidates including how to support English learners. Faculty shared that while the structure of the current CalTPA (Plan, Teach, Reflect and Apply) was appropriate for VI candidates, the content required would need to be adjusted. For example, the Design Team would need to determine different focus students including students with who are Deaf Blind; students with autism; students who are English learners; and students with neurological visual impairments. Visually impaired students vary in age (from infant/preschool through post high school grades), ability, language/communication skills and vision. VI candidates need to know how to support students with academics who have low vision or are blind, students with functional academics who have low vision or are blind, and students who are blind/low vision and have moderate/severe disabilities. The assessment cycles would need to be adjusted to support this range of students and pedagogy.

Faculty shared that the current CalTPA model has an emphasis on instruction. However, instruction is just a component of the role of a VI candidate working with students with visual challenges. They expressed that other roles beyond instruction are equally important and a large part of teaching performance during a VI candidate's fieldwork experience. The Design Team would need to consider these additional Performance Expectations:

1. Collaboration and Consultation
 - (a) Effectiveness of collaboration
 - (b) Ability to model instruction and coach others, including paraprofessionals, family members, and other specialists on specialized strategies
2. Adaptation of Materials, Learning Environments, Accessible Educational Media (AEM)
 - (a) Ability to provide, make recommendations, and adapt curricular materials for low vision or nonvisual learning, including creating materials in tactile learning formats (e.g. braille. tactile graphics)

- (b) Facilitate differentiated instruction for blind learners. (e.g. understanding how a math curriculum must be represented and taught differently using nonvisual strategies)
 - (c) Integrate adapted materials and specialized tools during instruction
 - I. Adapt and teach how VI student accesses materials with low vision aids and optical devices (e.g. slant boards, monoculers, hand held magnifiers)
 - II. Teach use of specialized tools that a VI student needs for engaging with instructional content (e.g. abacus)
 - (d) Knowledge of funding sources and materials resources for adapted media formats. (e.g. large print, embossed braille, accessible digital texts, tactile graphics, 3D models, described videos)
 - (e) Use of tools and strategies with using mainstream and specialized technologies to create, adapt, and remediate materials for accessibility. (e.g. braille translation software, formatting of digital documents, tactile graphics and 3D models design and production)
3. Assessment
- (a) Ability to conduct specialized assessments (e.g. functional vision, learning media, technology, and ECC), write reports, and communicate results effectively during IEP meetings and other discussions regarding the student
 - (b) Ability to assess and modify the environment for teaching and learning
 - (c) Ability to interpret assessment results and medical information regarding the eye condition, and to communicate information effectively to educational team members
4. Technology
- (a) Ability to assess needs for mainstream and specialized technology needed for low vision or nonvisual accessibility
 - (b) Identification, selection, procurement, and instruction of appropriate assistive technology, including: specialized and mainstream devices and software applications, and no-tech tools

Faculty explained that focus on teaching performance is not always an emphasis of the job. Much time is spent assessing, generating reports, adapting materials, communicating information, consulting, and attending IEPs. Therefore, an emphasis on instruction only reflects a very narrow component of the scope of work or role of the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI). The Design Team should consider the possibility of requiring a unique cycle of assessment for VI candidates that measures these performance expectations.

Faculty explained that in an ideal world, a pre-service TVI should have experiences in all settings and within all service delivery models. But, that is not realistic or possible – most TVIs are itinerant (travel between different counties, schools and classrooms). CSB (California School for the Blind) is the only specialized school for students with VI, and the majority of school districts do not have VI resource rooms.

Moreover, the Design Team needs to understand that many pre-service VI teachers are interns or working in the field under provisional credentials and unsupported. Additional considerations for the Design Team include the lack of environmental control most VI candidates experience. Examples include:

1. A district adopts a curriculum that is not accessible to blind students.
2. VI student is assigned to an uncooperative classroom teacher.
3. TVI candidate does not have a dedicated instructional space; sometimes VI students are provided instruction in a busy hallway.
4. Candidates who are teachers in a resource room may attend the school's professional development related to general education and not specialized VI professional development.
5. Lack of equipment for producing alternate media, or for students to access instruction.
6. Lack of IT support.
7. Administrative support for itinerant services can vary.

A final concern focused on the use of video recordings to document teaching expectations for practice. In the current version of the CalTPA, video clips are limited to 5 minutes. For some students who require additional time to process information and respond, a 5-minute video clip may not be long enough to demonstrate much application of knowledge. On the other hand, faculty acknowledged that increasing the length of the videos makes the task of viewing, annotating, and reflecting burdensome for reviewers. In addition, the Design Team would need to consider the fact that not all VI teaching competencies can be captured by video. Different modalities for assessing certain competencies may have to be considered by the Design Team that are beyond what the current model requires.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH)

Faculty reported that Cycle 1 could potentially work for DHH candidates. Faculty agreed that candidates need to know how to plan asset-based instruction, check for understanding, reflect on practice, and apply what they have learned to the next instructional plan.

CSUN faculty are currently experimenting with a TPA like experience for DHH candidates. A teaching event is evaluated by the university supervisor, the assessment considers the environment, and candidates provide weekly reflections. The Education Specialist Design Team needs to determine how to include the two different pedagogical orientations which are offered across the five approved programs. The two approaches are American Sign Language (ASL) (two programs) and speaking and listening (two programs); one program has their students learn about and be aware of/demonstrate both pedagogical approaches. In addition, there are bilingual strategies in DHH programs. ASL has its own structure and word order just as Spanish does. ASL is a spatial language. English is a linear language. Can a TPA be designed to allow for both approaches?

Some of the five DHH programs are more oral while others are ASL oriented; programs prepare candidates differently. The Design Team will need to determine if all candidates need to be fluent in both approaches and if yes, then design the TPA accordingly. If no, then the TPA would

need to offer the choice to the candidate and then match the appropriate assessor to score the candidate's assessment submission. For example – CSU Northridge, Cal State Fresno, and UCSD teach deaf education, and it could be helpful if this approach was standardized. The John Tracy clinic's program is teaching DHH orally which is different than teaching sign with a focus on listening which is different than what a sign language program would be teaching.

The Design Team will need to think about and plan for how external assessors would be able to assess DHH candidates. Faculty, who are observing candidates teaching in the classroom space, can notice and document practice from many angles. The concern raised was how to employ technology to capture video recordings of the full setting from different angles and if this was possible. A single video recording is restrictive. It is difficult to see all of the sign language occurring and simultaneously to see all of the directions and interaction between the candidate and the students; a candidate cannot see everything since they need eyes on everyone. Video is challenging – students are doing everything – you need to be able to see and have context – as the supervisor in the classroom I would have context, all of the videos would need to be captioned. Logistically, the faculty felt that video as a requirement adds a whole layer of challenges.

A TPA requirement at the local level would acknowledge that the TPEs are important for candidates to demonstrate. The Design Team needs to determine if a local assessment, scored by faculty and K-12 teachers at the local level could be a starting place for performance assessment for DHH candidates.

Another assessor challenge was finding assessors who can assess candidates on the use of the latest hearing technology for a state-wide, centrally scored assessment.

A final issue focused on a limited number of candidates who serve the full range of students from birth to 22 years old. However, the credential allows a DHH teacher to work with this population. The Design Team will need to decide if it wants to assess the wide range of pedagogy needed to support birth to 22-year-old students or whether some of these skills are better left to program to assess.

DHH Focus group members expressed a concern for how video recordings would be required. For example, would parents be videoed in an IEP meeting? The Design team will need to carefully think through all the complications of video recording teaching practice and determine guidelines that will keep students safe while allowing for the demonstration of pedagogy for DHH students.

As one focus group member commented:

A big part of our TPE development includes culture; I think teachers need to demonstrate their understanding of the deaf culture and how that understanding influences the deaf students and also language planning – students language backgrounds vary – the deaf students need to have their language needs met first before we consider teaching so we need a language plan developed – an understanding of irregular development skills,

language acquisition and language development, and equipment – cochlear implants-hearing technology (benefits and limits).

As the focus group concluded, the following recommendation was offered to Commission staff. DHH programs already assess its candidates. If DHH programs are required to have a performance assessment for DHH candidates, then programs recommend that they be allowed to administer and score the performance assessment locally