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July 31, 2020

Dr. Tine Sloan

Chair, Commission on Teacher Credentialing

1900 Capitol Avenue

Sacramento, CA 95811

Dr. Mary Vixie Sandy

Executive Director, Commission on Teacher Credentialing

1900 Capitol Avenue

Sacramento, CA 95811

Dear Chair Sloan and Executive Director Sandy:

The California Teachers Association has reviewed the Commission on Teacher Credentialing meeting agenda for August 5-7, 2020 and offers commentary on several items as detailed below.

Agenda Item 4C: Possible Pathways for Current Education Specialist Credential Holders Interested in Earning the New Education Specialist Credential

CTA appreciates the Commission's direction to provide multiple pathways for any current Education Specialist credential holder to earn an additional scope of authorization if they so choose. Allowing that authorization to be obtained through coursework, professional development, or a demonstration of competence broadens access to those who already have, and can present evidence of, qualifications for the authorization. It also lessens potential barriers for those who may choose to pursue new qualifications to earn the authorization.

We also note that the agenda item clearly states that current Education Specialist credential holders are not required to earn the new authorization. We believe the decision to do so must remain with the individual credential holder and recommend that language be included in any future regulations that the authorization must be obtained only with the teacher's consent. Similar language is currently found in local option authorizations and we strongly urge it be included in this authorization as well. Experience has shown that too often teachers may be coerced or pressured into adding authorizations and that has led to negative consequences such as highly skilled educators leaving the profession, an unintended outcome that this action would mitigate.

In this item, staff poses a question for Commissioner discussion on which entities should be eligible to verify that the credential holder has met the requirements. CTA recommends that careful consideration be given to this question and that while appropriate entities may recommend, individual credential holders should also have the ability for direct application to

the Commission. Because the approved entities are being granted the authority to, in effect, recommend for a credential, any entity should be held to a clear and high standard.

Finally, CTA has two questions that arise from this item:

- 1) Does the original Education Specialist credential remain in place while a second, separate Educational Specialist credential is issued? For example, would a current Education Specialist with a Moderate/Severe authorization continue to hold that credential and also be issued an Education Specialist/ Extensive Support Needs authorization? Or would the individual have a single credential with the ESN authorization?
- 2) Has the Commission had the opportunity to thoroughly discuss the hiring, placement, and potential reduction in force implications of these changes with employers and bargaining units across the field? Although this is just the beginning of the process and the impact of the change will not be seen for several years, engaging in that conversation early may help reveal some of the promises and pitfalls of different implementation designs and inform decisions the Commission may make on structuring the bridge pathways.

Agenda Item 4D: Update on the Development of the Education Specialist Teaching Performance Assessment

The description of the Design Team work from February through June is detailed and informative, and the work of the Design Team is to be commended. As of the date of this letter, Senate Bill 614 is scheduled for hearing by the Assembly Education Committee on August 3rd. The ultimate outcome of the bill will be known within several weeks or less. If SB 614 progresses and is chaptered, CTA believes the Commission should revisit the timing of the pilot and the planned development and implementation dates to assess whether it is feasible and cost effective to incorporate the new components required by SB 614 in the Teaching Performance Assessment for Education Specialists during this design and development process or whether a longer pause may be advisable to avoid a revision to a newly-developed TPA.

Agenda Item 4I: Study Session on Micro-Credentialing

As the posted agenda item is extremely brief on content, other than links to various organizational and business enterprise policy statements, CTA looks forward to hearing the presentation on micro-credentialing. Although micro-credentialing is not new, CTA has concerns that the use of the term “micro-credential”, *in the context of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing*, may be misleading to some who would interpret that as a form of licensure backed by the authority of the CTC.

Micro-credentialing is nothing more than a renamed digital badge; the term was chosen as a marketing device aimed to attract teachers and other educators to participate in the endeavor, often for the financial profit of those offering the micro-credential. CTA suggests that any discussions of “micro-credentialing” in the context of a CTC meeting clearly delineate that these professional development delivery systems are simply digital badges and while some undoubtedly have merit as professional learning systems, they are not a license to perform services in a public school system as the term “credential” is commonly understood in California.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and we are available to answer any questions or discuss further if requested.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Toby Boyd', with a stylized flourish at the end.

E. Toby Boyd, President
California Teachers Association

C: CTA Executive Officers
Teri Holoman, Associate Executive Director
Lori Easterling, Manage, Legislative Relations
Members of the CTC
Liaisons to the CTC

ETB:db