
2B

Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Pathways for Current Education Specialist Credential Holders Interested in Earning the New Education Specialist Credential

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents possible pathways for Education Specialist credential holders seeking to earn the equivalent authorization under the new Education Specialist standards and Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) when their credential was issued based on the previous standards and TPEs. Development of such a pathway will ensure that current credential holders interested in obtaining the new Education Specialist authorization(s) meet the 2018 TPEs that were not addressed in their original preparation program.

Recommended Action: Staff is recommending the following: 1) The Commission take action to approve the options for current Education Specialist credential holders to complete coursework, professional development, demonstrated competence, or a combination thereof to earn the equivalent authorization of the new Education Specialist credentials going into effect summer/fall 2022, and 2) The Commission take action to allow approved Preliminary Education Specialist program sponsors, Local Education Agencies, and statewide organizations to verify that a current Education Specialist has met the new TPEs.

Presenters: William Hatrick and Sarah Solari Colombini, Consultants, Professional Services Division

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.

Pathways for Current Education Specialist Credential Holders Interested in Earning the New Education Specialist Credential

Introduction

At the August 2020 Commission meeting, [Agenda Item 4C](#) was presented as an information item for Commission review. The Commission directed staff to seek more input from the field regarding possible bridge pathways and bring back a plan to identify the way(s) that interested current Education Specialist teaching credential holders would be able to earn the new credential with its accompanying authorization statement in order to begin the regulatory process. After consulting with experts in the field, staff recommends the pathways that have been developed and are presented in this item.

This agenda item identifies the specific additional/modified TPEs that would need to be addressed in order to bridge the two credentials and presents ways in which they may be addressed by current credential holders interested in obtaining the new authorization. While current Education Specialist teaching credential holders are not required to earn the new authorizations, some may want to hold an authorization equivalent to the most current credential.

Background

The Commission has been engaged in a multi-year, cross-agency effort, inclusive of multiple stakeholders, to address needed changes in the way students with disabilities are served in California public schools. This work was launched following the report of the Statewide Special Education Task Force in 2015, and has led the Commission to restructure its Education Specialist teaching credentials and develop new program standards and TPEs for the preparation of both general education and special education teachers in a manner consistent with the state's vision and expectations. A set of universal TPEs, ensuring a common base of knowledge and skills, serves as the centerpiece for the preparation of all teachers, with the expectation that general education and special education teachers will learn the fundamentals of teaching through coursework and fieldwork applied and adapted to their prospective credential area. As new credential candidates move through their general preparation and into their specialized credential areas, they will encounter and master TPEs specifically tailored to the credential they are seeking.

In addition to adopting new program standards and TPEs, the Commission adopted a new structure for the Preliminary Education Specialist teaching credentials that will take effect in summer/fall 2022. This credential structure is designed to support the vision of "one system for all" called for by the Statewide Special Education Taskforce. It was redesigned to provide more flexibility to meet the needs of students with disabilities while complying with federal guidelines relating to disability categories. The seven Education Specialist credential areas that previously existed were reorganized to five, eliminating the separate credentials for Language

and Academic Development and Physical and Health Impairments while building preparation for these areas into the remaining five credential areas. The five new credential areas are:

- Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE),
- Visual Impairments (VI),
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH),
- Mild to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN), and
- Extensive Support Needs (ESN).

Historically, when credentials have been modified or expanded, the Commission has developed a way for existing credential holders to obtain the new authorization without having to complete an entire preparation program. Of these five new credentials, only three will have modified/expanded authorizations and, thus, would require existing Education Specialist teaching credential holders to complete additional coursework and/or clinical practice if they are interested in obtaining the new authorization. These three credential areas include: ECSE, MMSN, and ESN. The Visual Impairment and Deaf and Hard of Hearing credential authorizations will remain the same, therefore no bridge process will be necessary; the current Education Specialist teachers will have the same authorization as the newly prepared teachers.

The MMSN and ESN credentials reflect a shift in focus from preparing teachers to serve students based on their primary disability to preparing teachers to serve students across a range of disabilities based on the intensity of their designated support needs. This means the new authorizations that accompany the new credentials are not solely limited to the federal disability categories – as the current credentials are – and are somewhat broader and more flexible than the authorizations associated with the current credentials.

As the Commission moves forward with these changes, holders of current Education Specialist teaching credentials will continue to be authorized to serve the populations of students they are currently serving, without interruption and without a requirement that they must earn the new credential. Some holders of these existing credentials, however, may want to earn the broader authorization that accompanies the new credentials.

Comparison of Current Credential Authorizations and New Credential Authorizations

The table below illustrates that the new Education Specialist teaching credentials are no longer solely restricted by federal disability categories. For example, the current Mild to Moderate Education Specialist credential holder may only serve students with one of the following primary disabilities: autism, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, other health impairment, or a specific learning disability. Under the new credential structure, the Mild to Moderate Support Needs credential holder would not be restricted to those disability categories. The Mild to Moderate Support Needs credential holder will have a broader scope of preparation which will be reflected in the authorization statement on his/her credential. This broader base of preparation will allow the MMSN credential holder to work with a variety of students at their need level. The changes for the Mild to Moderate and Extensive Support Needs specialty content areas are shown in the table below.

Federal Disability Categories addressed by the Current Mild/Moderate and Moderate Severe Credentials and the New Mild to Moderate Support Needs Credential and the Extensive Support Needs Credential *	MM (Current)	MMSN (New)	MS (Current)	ESN (New)
Autism	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deafblindness			✓	✓
Emotional Disturbance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Intellectual Disability	✓	✓	✓	✓
Multiple Disabilities		✓	✓	✓
Orthopedic Impairment		✓		✓
Other Health Impairment	✓	✓		✓
Specific Learning Disability	✓	✓		✓
Traumatic Brain Injury		✓		✓

MM = Mild/Moderate Disabilities

MS = Moderate Severe Disabilities

MMSN = Mild to Moderate Support (Needs)

ESN = Extensive Support (Needs)

*The list of federal disability categories is not inclusive of all federal disabilities. Visual Impairment and Deaf and Hard of Hearing credential holders meet the requirements associated with the requisite disability categories.

Purpose of a Bridge Option for Existing Credential Holders

Currently in many TK-12 special education programs, students are assigned to classrooms based on federal disability categories in order to align with the specific disability categories authorized by the teacher's credential. The new credential structure enables Education Specialists to continue serving students who are sorted according to their disabilities, and supports the vision that districts move towards a model where students receive services based on the level of support necessary. Creating a bridge option between the current and new Education Specialist teaching credentials provides interested credential holders with the opportunity to obtain the expanded authorization, thereby allowing them to serve students beyond the federal disability categories to which their credential is currently limited and instead allow them to serve a broader spectrum of students as authorized by the new MMSN, ESN or ECSE credentials. This flexibility would grant Education Specialists the opportunity to focus on the needs of students with disabilities as opposed to the limitation of placement as directed by the authorization accompanying an educator's credential.

Possible Pathways for Expanding Credential Authorizations

As indicated earlier in this item, three of the new Education Specialist credentials, *Mild to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN)*, *Extensive Support Needs (ESN)*, and *Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)*, have broader authorization statements that reflect the modified TPEs now included in the preparation of new Education Specialist teaching credential candidates for these three credentials. As the Commission moves through the regulatory process to finalize the new authorization statements, staff has identified the specific TPEs that were added/modified along with the preparation content that helps candidates learn, practice, and master these TPEs. These TPEs are provided in the [Appendix A](#) of this item.

Staff has identified three possible bridge pathways that a current Education Specialist teaching credential holder could use to demonstrate mastery of the additional TPEs:

1. Completion of Coursework
 - Coursework could be developed that is aligned to the additional content that an existing teacher could take to satisfy the new competencies covered by the new authorization.
2. Completion of Professional Development
 - Professional development that is aligned to the additional content in the Teaching Performance Expectations would be another way for existing Education Specialists to acquire the content that was not part of their original preparation.
3. Confirmation of prior knowledge and experience as verified through demonstrated competence.
 - Observation data, a portfolio submission, video demonstration, a performance assessment or another means to show demonstrated competence of the identified Teaching Performance Expectations that represent the additional content that was not part of the Education Specialist's original preparation that is covered by the new authorization is another pathway to use to demonstrate mastery of the additional content.

Any one of these three routes, or a combination of these routes, could be used to verify that existing Education Specialists have mastered the additional/modified preparation content, as reflected in the applicable updated TPEs.

Pathways/Verifying Agencies	Coursework	Professional Development	Demonstrated Competence
Approved Preliminary Education Specialist Teacher Preparation Programs	Yes	Yes	No
Local Education Agencies (without an approved program)	No	Yes	Yes
Statewide Agencies	No	Yes	No

Implementation of the Bridge Process

As there are multiple ways that an Education Specialist teaching credential holder may choose to demonstrate knowledge of the additional content in the TPEs, there could also be flexibility with the entities eligible to provide the service. In addition to existing approved educator preparation programs, local educational agencies (LEAs), Special Education Local Planning Areas (SELPA), or agencies such as the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) could develop the curriculum and process for existing Education Specialists to obtain and demonstrate their mastery of the additional knowledge, skills, and abilities included in the identified TPEs.

Verification Process

An educator who applies directly to the Commission for the bridge authorization would need the cooperation and support of the Local Education Agency or other agency to confirm that the teacher has met all of the TPE requirements. This would be the same process used if the approved program sponsor is making the recommendation based on coursework. The responsibility would be on the recommending entity to do the verification. This would not be handled by Commission staff.

Once an Education Specialist with the existing authorization has demonstrated competence in the additional content represented in the 2018 Education Specialist TPEs then the appropriate entity would use documentation such as the sample verification form for a Mild to Moderate Support Needs Education Specialist credential that is provided in [Appendix B](#) to verify that the educator has met the additional content.

Staff Recommendations

Staff is recommending the following:

1. The Commission take action to approve the options for current Education Specialist credential holders to complete coursework, professional development, demonstrated competence, or a combination thereof to earn the equivalent authorization of the new Education Specialist credentials going into effect summer/fall 2022.

2. The Commission take action to allow approved Preliminary Education Specialist program sponsors, Local Education Agencies, and statewide organizations to verify that a current Education Specialist has met the new TPEs represented in the expanded authorization as outlined in the table above.

Next Steps

Based on the Commission's discussion and action, staff will incorporate the Commission's action into proposed regulatory language to be presented at a future Commission meeting. Until the regulations take effect, the bridge for a current Education Specialist teacher to earn the new authorizations will not be available.

Appendix A

TPEs that are not addressed in the Current Education Specialist Program Requirements but are Addressed by the New Standards and TPEs (2018)

Mild to Moderate Support Needs (7 TPE elements):

- MM 2.2 Demonstrate the ability to support the movement, mobility, sensory and specialized health care needs required for students to participate fully in classrooms, schools and the community. Organize a safe environment for all students that include barrier free space for independent mobility, adequate storage and operation of medical equipment (as appropriate) and other mobility and sensory accommodations.
- MM 2.3 Demonstrate the ability to address functional limitations of movement and/or sensation for students with orthopedic impairments who may have a co-existing health impairment and/or intellectual disability but have difficulty accessing their education due to physical limitations.
- MM 2.11 Demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities to understand and address the needs of the peers and family members of students who have sustained a traumatic brain injury as they transition to school and present with a change in function.
- MM 3.3 Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of atypical development associated with various disabilities and risk conditions (e.g. orthopedic impairment, autism spectrum disorders, cerebral palsy), as well as resilience and protective factors (e.g. attachment, temperament), and their implications for learning.
- MM 4.5 Demonstrate knowledge of core challenges associated with the neurology of open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments and adjust teaching strategies based upon the unique profile of students who present with physical/medical access issues or who retain a general fund of knowledge, but demonstrate difficulty acquiring and retaining new information due to poor memory processing, as well as neuro behavioral issues.
- MM 5.2 Each candidate utilizes assessment data to: 1) identify effective intervention and support techniques, 2) develop needed augmentative and alternative systems, 3) implement instruction of communication and social skills, 4) create and facilitate opportunities for interaction; 5) develop communication methods to demonstrate student academic knowledge; and 6) address the unique learning, sensory and access needs of students with physical/orthopedic disabilities, other health impairments, and multiple disabilities.
- MM 6.6 Possess the knowledge that the diminishment or loss of previous abilities (learning, social, physical) may have significant, long-term effects on the self-concept and emotional well-being of the student who acquires a traumatic brain injury as well as

on their family members, requiring the provision of appropriate supports and services to address these issues.

Extensive Support Needs (7 TPE Elements):

- EX 2.6 Demonstrate the ability to support the movement, mobility, sensory and specialized health care needs required for students to participate fully in classrooms, schools and the community. Organize a safe environment for all students that include barrier free space for independent mobility, adequate storage and operation of medical equipment (as appropriate) and other mobility and sensory accommodations.
- EX 2.7 Demonstrate the ability to address functional limitations of movement and/or sensation for students with orthopedic impairments who may have a co-existing health impairment and/or intellectual disability but have difficulty accessing their education due to physical limitations.
- EX 2.14 Demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities to understand and address the needs of the peers and family members of students who have sustained a traumatic brain injury as they transition to school and present with a change in function.
- EX 3.5 Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of atypical development associated with various disabilities and risk conditions (e.g. orthopedic impairment, autism spectrum disorders, cerebral palsy), as well as resilience and protective factors (e.g. attachment, temperament), and their implications for learning.
- EX 4.6 Demonstrate knowledge of core challenges associated with the neurology of open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments and adjust teaching strategies based upon the unique profile of students who present with physical/medical access issues or who retain a general fund of knowledge, but demonstrate difficulty acquiring and retaining new information due to poor memory processing, as well as neuro behavioral issues.
- EX 5.3 Each candidate utilizes assessment data to: 1) identify effective intervention and support techniques, 2) develop needed augmentative and alternative systems, 3) implement instruction of communication and social skills, 4) create and facilitate opportunities for interaction; 5) develop communication methods to demonstrate student academic knowledge; and 6) address the unique learning, sensory and access needs of students with physical/orthopedic disabilities, other health impairments, and multiple disabilities.
- EX 6.7 Possess the knowledge that the diminishment or loss of previous abilities (learning, social, physical) may have significant, long-term effects on the self-concept and emotional well-being of the student who acquires a traumatic brain injury as well as on their family members, requiring the provision of appropriate supports and services to address these issues.

Early Childhood Special Education (8 TPE Elements):

- 2.5 Identify, acquire, and implement assistive technology for individual children and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for all children, including those with low-incidence disabilities, physical/orthopedic, and other health impaired, to promote access, learning, and participation across learning environments, including using augmentative and alternative strategies and interventions for the development of communication and social skills.
- 3.1 Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of the Early Start Personnel Manual, Infant/Toddler Learning and Developmental Foundations, Preschool Learning Foundations, and state-adopted Kindergarten Student Standards, including the principles of Universal Design for learning.
- 4.2 Apply knowledge of the Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations, Preschool Learning Foundations, California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks, and state-adopted student standards for Kindergarten, as well as principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), to effectively plan and design learning experiences for all children that incorporate recommended, evidence-based practices.
- 4.3 Apply knowledge of early development (birth through Kindergarten) when identifying and selecting developmentally appropriate strategies, culturally and linguistically relevant and appropriate materials, and designing effective sequencing interventions to engage children in learning across developmental and curricular domains.
- 4.6 Gather and use evaluation and assessment data on an ongoing basis to inform learning experiences for young children with disabilities, including children with low incidence, physical/orthopedic disabilities, and other health impaired, and young children who are dual language learners.
- 6.4 Develop and implement effective transitional plans to support the ongoing learning and development of children entering different learning settings (e.g., home-based services to preschool, preschool to kindergarten).
- 6.6 Demonstrate knowledge of professional standards and all applicable laws and regulations governing service provision for children with disabilities from birth to kindergarten and their families.
- 6.8 Facilitate effective collaborative transitions between the stages of schooling and educational settings (e.g., infant/toddler to preschool, preschool to kindergarten, kindergarten to elementary).

Appendix B

Sample Verification Form for the Mild to Moderate Support Needs Teaching Performance Expectations

Teaching Performance Expectation	Coursework ¹	Professional Development ²	Demonstration of Competence ³
2.2 Demonstrate the ability to support the movement, mobility, sensory and specialized health care needs required for students to participate fully in classrooms, schools and the community. Organize a safe environment for all students that include barrier free space for independent mobility, adequate storage and operation of medical equipment (as appropriate) and other mobility and sensory accommodations.			√
2.3 Demonstrate the ability to address functional limitations of movement and/or sensation for students with orthopedic impairments who may have a co-existing health impairment and/or intellectual disability but have difficulty accessing their education due to physical limitations.		√	
2.11 Demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities to understand and address the needs of the peers and family members of students who have sustained a traumatic brain injury as they transition to school and present with a change in function.		√	
3.3 Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of atypical development associated with various disabilities and risk conditions (e.g. orthopedic impairment, autism spectrum disorders, cerebral palsy), as well as resilience and protective factors (e.g. attachment, temperament), and their implications for learning.		√	

Teaching Performance Expectation	Coursework ¹	Professional Development ²	Demonstration of Competence ³
4.5 Demonstrate knowledge of core challenges associated with the neurology of open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments and adjust teaching strategies based upon the unique profile of students who present with physical/medical access issues or who retain a general fund of knowledge, but demonstrate difficulty acquiring and retaining new information due to poor memory processing, as well as neuro behavioral issues.	√		
5.2 Each candidate utilizes assessment data to: 1) identify effective intervention and support techniques, 2) develop needed augmentative and alternative systems, 3) implement instruction of communication and social skills, 4) create and facilitate opportunities for interaction; 5) develop communication methods to demonstrate student academic knowledge; and 6) address the unique learning, sensory and access needs of students with physical/orthopedic disabilities, other health impairments, and multiple disabilities.			√
6.6 Possess the knowledge that the diminishment or loss of previous abilities (learning, social, physical) may have significant, long-term effects on the self-concept and emotional well-being of the student who acquires a traumatic brain injury as well as on their family members, requiring the provision of appropriate supports and services to address these issues.	√		

¹ **Coursework:** Transcript

² **Professional Development:** Certificate of Completion

³ **Demonstration of Competence:** Through formal observation, video of practice with reflection, or compilation of portfolio of evidence of practice.