
4A

Information/Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Evaluation of the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents the evaluation report of the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program.

Recommended Action: That the Commission approve the evaluation report of the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program for transmittal to the Legislature.

Presenters: Iyore Osamwonyi, Assistant Consultant, Professional Services Division; Amy Schutter, Lead Qualitative Researcher, Shasta College; Lois Abel, Lead Researcher and William Rolland, Principal Investigator, Sinclair Research Group

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.

Evaluation of the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program

Introduction

This agenda item presents the results of the evaluation of the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program as required by statute (Education Code §44393(e)).

Background

The California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program (Classified Program) addresses the state's teacher shortage in STEM, special education, and bilingual education by supporting local education agencies (LEAs) to recruit classified school employees into teaching careers and support their undergraduate education, professional teacher preparation, and certification as credentialed California teachers. The state budget allocated a total of \$20 million for a first round of funding for the Classified Program in July 2016; an additional \$25 million was approved for a second round of funding in July 2017. Classified staff at grantee LEAs who were selected to participate in the program (participants) received financial assistance for degree and credentialing-related expenses such as tuition, fees, books, and examination costs; academic guidance; and other forms of individualized support to help them complete their undergraduate education, teacher preparation program, and transition to becoming credentialed teachers. Together, the two rounds of funding for the Classified Program, which total \$45 million, are helping to support 2,260 classified school employees statewide to become credentialed classroom teachers for California's public schools.

Twenty-five local education agencies were funded for Round One and twenty-eight local education agencies were funded for Round Two. The grantee LEAs are shown in [Appendix A](#), along with the number of allocated participant slots and amount of funding awarded. Note that some of the grantee LEAs represent a consortium of districts and/or counties. As of spring 2021, Round One grantee LEAs are in their fifth and final year of the program, and Round Two grantee LEAs are in their fourth year, soon to finish in fiscal year 2021-22. The December 2020 [Classified Annual Report to the Legislature](#) provides a complete summary of the Classified Program, program grantees, program participants, and outcomes to date.

Evaluation of the Classified Program

Education Code §44393(e) requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) to contract with an independent evaluator with a proven record of experience in assessing teacher training programs to conduct an evaluation to determine the success of the Classified Program. The evaluation shall be completed on or before July 1, 2021. The enabling legislation required that the evaluation be conducted by a Local Education Agency (LEA): school district, charter school, county office of education, or California Community College.

In July 2020, an award of \$250,000 was funded to Shasta College to develop and conduct the evaluation. Shasta College submitted a proposal in response to the [Evaluation of the Classified Program RFP](#), which was reviewed in accordance to the selection criteria and found to be of sufficient quality to be fundable. Shasta College, the lead evaluator, collaborated with Sinclair Research Group (SRG) for this evaluation work. The evaluation design proposed using a mixed-methods approach containing both qualitative (focus groups, in-depth one-on-one interviews, and narrative responses from surveys) and quantitative measures (online surveys) to determine the success of the Classified Program. Areas to be reviewed included:

1. Program implementation and monitoring
2. Recruitment of participants (particularly recruitment aimed at addressing teacher shortages)
3. Financial assistance provided to participants (tuition, fees, books, examination costs)
4. Collaboration with IHEs (developing coursework and teaching programs for participants)
5. Provision of individualized support (information, timely academic guidance, access to coursework, economic support, flexibility of hours of employment, assistance in preparation for certification)
6. Sufficiency of annual progress of participants
7. Meeting teacher shortage needs within grantee's service area (school district, charter school or county office of education)
8. Employment as an intern or fully credentialed California teacher

Shasta College provided the Commission with three progress reports during the project period, with reports due to Commission staff on the following dates: October 30, 2020; January 31, 2021; and April 30, 2021.

The executive summary of the evaluation report is provided in [Appendix B](#). The [full report](#) provides detailed analysis of the learnings gleaned from the evaluation and provides recommendations for improvement.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the evaluation report to the Legislature on the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program for transmittal to the Legislature.

Next Steps

Commission staff will continue to monitor the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program. The Commission will submit the Classified Program evaluation to the Governor and the education policy and fiscal committees of the Assembly and Senate no later than July 1, 2021.

Appendix A

Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program Grant Recipients and Participant Slots, Round One

Local Education Agency (LEA)	Classified Employee Participant Slots Allocated to Grantees	Amount Allocated per Year
Alhambra Unified School District	40	\$160,000
Chico Unified School District	25	\$100,000
Clovis Unified School District	25	\$100,000
Davis Joint Unified School District	60	\$240,000
Elk Grove Unified School District	20	\$80,000
Garden Grove Unified School District	40	\$80,000
Los Angeles County Office of Education	40	\$160,000
Madera Unified School District	20	\$160,000
Modesto City Schools	20	\$80,000
Monterey County Office of Education	45	\$80,000
Orange County Department of Education	110	\$180,000
Pomona Unified School District	20	\$440,000
Riverside County Office of Education	100	\$80,000
Sacramento County Office of Education	40	\$400,000
San Francisco Unified School District	25	\$160,000
San Juan Unified School District	20	\$100,000
San Luis Obispo County Office of Education	45	\$80,000
San Mateo County Office of Education	50	\$180,000
Santa Clara County Office of Education	50	\$200,000
Santa Cruz County Office of Education	50	\$200,000
Sonoma County Office of Education	40	\$200,000
Ventura County Office of Education	50	\$160,000
Visalia Unified School District	35	\$200,000
West Contra Costa Unified School District	20	\$140,000
Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District	20	\$80,000
Total	1010	\$4,040,000

Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program Grant Recipients and Participant Slots, Round Two

Local Education Agency (LEA)	Classified Employee Participant Slots Allocated to Grantees	Amount Allocated per Year
Berkeley Unified School District	12	\$48,000
Chico Unified School District	30	\$120,000
Clovis Unified School District	20	\$80,000

Local Education Agency (LEA)	Classified Employee Participant Slots Allocated to Grantees	Amount Allocated per Year
Davis Joint Unified School District	115	\$460,000
Fresno Unified School District	25	\$100,000
Huntington Beach Union High School District	20	\$80,000
Kern County Superintendent of Schools	45	\$180,000
Lake County Office of Education	20	\$80,000
Los Angeles County Office of Education	22	\$88,000
Los Angeles Unified School District	45	\$180,000
Marin County Office of Education	30	\$120,000
Merced County Office of Education	20	\$80,000
Monterey County Office of Education	135	\$540,000
Moreno Valley Unified School District	22	\$88,000
Mount Diablo Unified School District	20	\$80,000
National University Academy ¹	10	\$40,000
Oakland Unified School District	40	\$160,000
Orange County Department of Education	200	\$800,000
Placer County Office of Education	50	\$200,000
San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools	70	\$280,000
San Joaquin County Office of Education	20	\$80,000
San Ramon Valley Unified School District	24	\$96,000
Santa Ana Unified School District	20	\$80,000
Santa Barbara County Office of Education	45	\$180,000
Sonoma County Office of Education	115	\$460,000
Ventura County Office of Education	20	\$80,000
Visalia Unified School District	35	\$140,000
Westside Unified School District	20	\$80,000
Total	1250	\$5,000,000

¹ National University Academy Lakeside (Charter Number 0991) closed in January 2019. Grant money has been reallocated.

Appendix B

Shasta College Classified Program Evaluation Initial Process, Summary, and Findings

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

California is faced with chronic teacher shortages, often most acutely visible in high-need fields and high-need schools. These disproportionately impact students of color and those from low-income families. Shortages are most dire in STEM, bilingual, and special education (Carver-Thomas et al., 2021). The **California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program (Classified Program)** aims to help meet the need for teachers by recruiting classified school employees into a program designed to "encourage them to enroll in teacher training programs and provide instructional service as teachers in public schools." [Education Code 44393 \(a\)](#) The Classified Program, unique in the nation, has shown promise in ameliorating the teacher shortage by facilitating participants to earn nearly 800 credentials since the program's inception (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2020).

Since 2016, to meet the need for diverse teachers in hard-to-hire subjects, California has dedicated \$45 million to develop 42 Classified Programs across the state. The Governor's Budget May Revision proposes to increase funding for the program from \$25 million to \$125 million, which will be available for five years (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, May 14, 2021). These grant-funded programs were led by partnerships between Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and colleges or Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). While these programs aimed to assist all qualified classified staff employees moving into a credentialed teaching position, additional focus was placed on recruiting participants to meet the need in the highest-demand fields (STEM, bilingual, and special education teachers).

Shasta College, in partnership with Sinclair Research Group, conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of the Classified Program. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from program managers, IHE liaisons, and classified participants using focus groups, in-depth interviews, and questionnaires. Targets examined were the program's implementation, successes and challenges, stakeholders' satisfaction, and program outcomes. The overarching goal of the evaluation was to determine if this program met the legislative goals. This report summarizes learnings gleaned from the evaluation and provides recommendations for improvement.

1.1 FINDINGS

1.1.1 Outcomes

The Classified Program initiative made progress toward moving classified staff into teaching roles. A survey was sent to a sample from the entire list of classified participants. Half of those responding to the participant survey were already teachers of record in classrooms, generally without a clear credential. Those participants who entered the program with a BA degree were generally more successful in obtaining a credential and receiving a teaching position. Virtually

all program participants who are not already in the classroom intend to continue pursuing a teaching credential. In comparing the willingness of participants to continue to pursue their credential whether or not they received Classified Program support, the number of participants that said they would not continue to pursue a credential if support were not available grew from one in twenty to one in four (approximately 5% to 25%).

1.1.2 Program Satisfaction

There is great appreciation for the Classified Program among all groups (program managers, program participants, and IHE partners). Program participants highly valued the support they received from the Classified Program, expressing deep gratitude for the financial support. The vast majority of participants believed the program was successful and would highly recommend the program to others interested in moving into teaching roles. Program Managers (LEA-appointed Classified Program Managers, hereafter referred to as “Managers”) were highly satisfied with the program overall and believe it effectively moved participants toward obtaining teaching credentials. Managers believe they successfully recruited participants and retained them in the program. However, this continues to be a very challenging aspect of their role. In addition to financial support, participants greatly appreciated the individualized (non-financial) support they received. In particular, they valued personal "check-ins," test preparation classes and working with groups of their peers. Managers agreed that these were the most effective support strategies. These were optional services offered by some programs, but not all. Maintaining continuous and frequent personal connections between managers and participants was especially valuable. The more the program "checked in" personally with participants, the more satisfied participants were with the program. Programs that evidenced strong interpersonal relationships and good communication elicited more positive feedback from stakeholders.

1.1.3 Implementation

Programs are making progress toward increasing the number of teachers of color and those in hard-to-hire areas (STEM, bilingual, and special education).

Approximately 2/3 of those participating in the evaluation were participants of color (n= 557). The areas of stated teacher shortage were closely aligned to the areas where participants reported they intended to teach. Managers were committed to recruiting classified staff of color and those interested in teaching hard-to-hire subjects, but they found this challenging.

Recruitment methods vary widely, and retention is a challenge.

Managers reported that emails and printed materials were their most common recruitment strategy. Participants, however, reported they were most frequently persuaded to join the program through a one-on-one personal approach. Many managers believe that recruitment and retention (keeping all their grantee "slots" filled) was a significant challenge.

Monitoring participant progress through personal "check-ins" seems to work best.

Many (but not all) managers had difficulty monitoring the progress of their participants. Some programs conducted regular quarterly "check-ins," either in person or by examining documents,

but many did not. There was a lack of clarity among managers regarding what constituted “sufficient annual progress” for participants. A significant number of programs had difficulty identifying their program participants. Many programs did not have up-to-date names and emails for their participants.

Support for program management varies widely.

There is high turnover among managers, and many of those surveyed were new to this role. Managers greatly appreciated their focus group because it allowed them to share and learn about best practices from other managers, and they expressed a desire to have more of these meetings. New managers need more consultant support. While managers were very busy in other roles, they felt they could effectively balance their Classified Program leadership work with their other professional responsibilities. There was a wide disparity in financial support retained by grantees for program management among the LEAs. Some LEAs provided in-kind support for program administration and distributed all grant funds to participants, while other programs kept a portion of the grant for program administration. Of the allowable \$4,000 per participant allotment, managers reported they kept between \$200 to \$2500 of these funds for program management. Additionally, critical components of program management were significantly strengthened when there were strong LEA/IHE partnerships and shared implementation.

Support for participants varies widely.

All participants expressed deep appreciation for the financial support they received. Qualified reimbursements varied widely from program to program. The development of cohorts for participants and supporting them in moving through the program as a group was a very successful strategy. The provision of individualized (non-financial) support was lacking in most programs. For example, programs which provided participants with a mentor and test preparation classes were more successful in assisting participants in passing their required assessments and in program retention and completion.

1.1.4 Challenges & Confounding Variables

There are ongoing challenges to recruitment and retention in the Classified Program.

The most significant challenges to managers were reaching a diverse candidate pool and recruiting in specialties identified as teacher shortage areas. Participants face financial barriers and family/personal challenges in joining the program. Participants are sometimes fearful of the commitment to the program. Failure to obtain time off from their classified job during required observations and student teaching and financial and family constraints inhibited retention.

Participants experience challenges in passing required tests.

Some participants found difficulty passing the CBEST, RICA, or CSET. Some expressed disappointment that they could not continue in the program as a consequence. Managers also agreed that participants passing these required tests was a hurdle, particularly for English language learners. Several programs provided test preparation classes to prepare participants

for these tests, and some programs developed cohorts to study together. Participants were very grateful for these types of additional support.

LEA and IHE collaboration was complex for most programs.

Several programs and IHEs were beginning to build strong working relationships, but there were challenges to most collaborations. Some partnerships worked well, and other collaborations did not exist. Many managers and IHE liaisons found collaboration and communication complex due to leadership turnover. About 1/3 of programs reported no IHE partnership.

There continue to be many financial challenges for participants.

Classified Program participants were offered a small stipend for their time to participate in the evaluation. Despite financial challenges, over 40% of participants donated their evaluation stipend to Scholarship America. This generosity demonstrated their altruism and commitment to education. The financial assistance provided by the program was highly valued. The Classified Program was the primary source of financing for most participants to pursue a teaching credential. Many participants struggled to meet their financial needs, necessitating them to draw on additional sources of financial support (loans, scholarships, grants, and part-time jobs). Approximately one in five participants worked a second job in addition to their classified or teaching employment. Distribution of funds to participants from programs varied widely and had differing definitions of what costs were qualified for reimbursement (such as tuition, books, childcare, transportation). Participants were less successful with completing their coursework at private IHE's because of the high financial costs. Participants were asked how likely they were to continue pursuing a credential whether or not they received financial support from this program. The number of participants that said they would not continue to pursue a credential grew from one in twenty to one in four (approximately 5% to 25%) if Classified Program support was not available.

Time to get everything accomplished is a continuing challenge for participants.

Participants spent an average of 16 hours per week on Classified Program activities. Approximately 1/5 of the participants also worked an additional part-time job. This means these participants worked 63 hours per week or approximately 13 hours per day.

In the COVID-19 crisis, participants faced significant challenges with internet access.

Internet access challenges grew significantly because of the COVID-19 disruptions. Food and housing insecurity showed slight increases. There was little evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic caused a rise in transportation challenges or added to participants' inability to pay living expenses and school-related bills. Participants had concerns about whether COVID-19 disruptions would negatively affect their ability to obtain teaching positions.

1.1.5 Potential Long-Term Impact

Assessing the long-term impact of this program was difficult at this stage. However, the evaluation team decided to assess participants using the "Quality of Life Indicators" developed by the World Health Organization (Skevington et al., 2004). Participants believed the Classified

Program positively impacted their quality of life in terms of education level, security, environment, mental health, wealth, safety, social belonging, freedom, and physical health. The only area with no demonstrable positive impact was recreation/leisure time.

1.2 DECISION ON THE SUCCESS OF THE CLASSIFIED PROGRAM

As yet, there are no state-adopted Standards for the Classified Program. The Evaluation Leadership Team decided to use the preponderance of the evidence standard for this judgment, which is defined as "clear and convincing *proof* which results in reasonable certainty of the truth" (Garner, 2004; Orloff & Stedinger, 1983).

Each Leadership Team member individually rated the extent that the Classified Program successfully achieved each of the four goals outlined by the Legislature. All team members independently decided the level of success for each goal on a 1-5 Likert scale (1-not successful, 2-slightly, 3-moderately, 4-very, and 5-completely successful.) The results from the Leadership Team ratings were as follows:

Legislative Goal 1: Supporting the LEA recruitment of classified school employees into teaching careers - Very successful

Legislative Goal 2: Supporting undergraduate education of classified employees - Very successful

Legislative Goal 3: Supporting teacher preparation of classified school employees- Moderately successful

Legislative Goal 4: Supporting classified school employees' subsequent certification as credentialed California teachers - Moderately successful

The Evaluation Leadership Team collectively believes that the Classified Program has indeed been a success, notwithstanding the challenges in implementation. It is deemed a valuable program that is helping to alleviate the shortage of teachers in California.

1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the qualitative and quantitative evaluation findings and broader research from the field, the Evaluation Leadership Team offers the following recommendations to policymakers, advocates, and other leaders supporting Classified Programs:

1. Develop a "Program Management Guide" that includes reporting requirements, rules, procedures, and allowable expenses.
2. Encourage stable leadership and management roles in both the LEA and IHE.
3. Clarify expectations of and desired outcomes for IHE/LEA collaboration.
4. Ensure all managers have access to the Program Management Guide to safeguard continuity during management changes.

5. The wide disparity in the amount of funds kept for program management should be further investigated with an eye toward equity among participants. The CTC should impose an upper limit to ensure fairness to all participants.
6. Collect data from program inception to now regarding all allowed expenses to identify the broadest possible scope of financial supports for participants.
7. Provide clarity that Classified Program funds can be received by participants IN ADDITION TO receiving alternative sources of financial aid (such as the Golden State Teacher Program, other scholarships, grants, and loans).
8. Prioritize best practices in providing individualized non-financial support (such as test preparation, mentoring, or cohort models), and share these with managers and IHE liaisons.
9. Create a forum for managers and IHE liaisons to frequently share best practices.
10. Continue the Commission's course of addressing inequitable barriers to passing the professional teacher licensure exams and encourage Classified Programs to provide additional support to overcome these barriers.
11. Consider allowing funding for classified staff to take time off to complete required fieldwork/student teaching.
12. Provide additional structure in the RFA to set more explicit expectations of LEAs as follows:
 - a. Incorporate accountability structures into the RFA that support program delivery and consistent collaboration with IHEs.
 - b. Require each program to keep an up-to-date list of participants' contact information and send it to the CTC annually. The list should include (at minimum) name, current email, current phone number, and information about their enrollment status.
 - c. Clarify the most comprehensive scope of allowable expenditures on which funds may be spent to encourage standardization across programs.
 - d. State an appropriate % of funds the LEA may use for program management.
 - e. Clarify a minimum of required individualized non-financial supports which must be in place.
 - f. Give guidance and require programs to clarify rules for funding participants that replace those who dropped out.
 - g. Ensure plans are in place to assist participants in finding preservice placements and teaching positions.
 - h. State the policy for funding time off for participants to complete required fieldwork/student teaching.
 - i. Describe plans for data collection and continuous improvement.
13. Continue to provide and extend ongoing technical assistance opportunities to funded programs individually and as a group to support new managers and best practices in implementation.
14. Implement a statewide system for Classified Program continuous improvement.

References

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