

COMMISSION ON TEACHER CREDENTIALING

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**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

03-0020

DATE: July 11, 2003

TO: All Individuals and Groups Interested in Special Education Credentialing of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

FROM: Dr. Sam W. Swofford
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Clarification of the Education Specialist Credentials Requirements re: Certificate of Eligibility and Entry to Level II

Introduction and Rationale

The current Education Specialist Credential Program Standards were implemented in 1997. Since that time a number of other credential requirements and legislative actions have taken place that are influencing the Education Specialist Credential. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) recognizes the pending reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as well as the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) will likely influence the structure of Education Specialist Credentials in the future. In April 2003, the Commission disseminated Coded Correspondence 03-0015 which was intended to clarify the requirements of the Education Specialist Credential and provide more flexibility in Special Education teacher preparation programs. This Coded Correspondence now clarifies the requirements to obtain a Certificate of Eligibility and entry into Education Specialist Level II Programs at institutions of higher education (IHEs).

Education Specialist Credential - Certificate of Eligibility:

The practice of the Commission has been to issue the Education Specialist Preliminary Level I Credential to those candidates who can verify employment in a Special Education assignment and issue a Certificate of Eligibility to Education Specialist candidates who are not employed or who are not working in a Special Education assignment. While this practice has enabled candidates more time before starting "the five year clock" for the Level II credential, candidates who complete requirements for both the Education

Specialist Credential and a Multiple or Single Subject Credential often conclude that they must work in general education prior to working in Special Education.

Since Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 80048.3 states that an applicant “may” apply for a Certificate of Eligibility, it should be determined by the candidate and the institution whether it is more appropriate to apply for the Certificate of Eligibility or the Preliminary Level I Credential without an offer of employment.

Entry into Education Specialist Level II IHE Programs:

Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 80048.4 outlines the requirements for Level II of the Education Specialist Credential Programs. One requirement is the completion of an institution of higher education (IHE) Commission accredited program. Another requirement is two years of experience while holding the Preliminary Level I Credential. Currently, IHEs view these as one requirement and do not allow Level II candidates who do not have employment to begin the IHE portion of the program. In order to continue to provide flexibility in the Special Education teacher training programs, candidates should be allowed to begin the coursework for the Level II program prior to being employed.

The Commission recognizes that there are a number of candidates who are taking coursework for both the Education Specialist and Multiple and/or Single Subject credential. In order for Multiple Subject and/or Single Subject candidates to participate in the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA), they must be employed in a position that allows them to complete the required SB 2042 Induction activities. Therefore, a candidate who is using BTSA to complete non-university requirements in the Education Specialist Level II Program must be employed to be eligible for state funding for the BTSA Induction portion of Level II.