



California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program

*An Annual Report to the Legislature as Required
by SB 1636 (Chap. 1444, Stats. 1990)*

December 2015

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Vision Statement

All of California's students, preschool through grade 12, are inspired and prepared to achieve their highest potential by well-prepared and exceptionally qualified educators.

Mission Statement

To inspire, educate and protect the students of California.

California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program
An Annual Report to the Legislature
2015

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Executive Summary..... | 1 |
| I. Description of the California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program ... | 2 |
| II. Program Funding History | 3 |
| III. Program Policy Issues | 4 |
| IV. Conclusion..... | 4 |

The California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program A Report to the Legislature

Executive Summary

The primary purpose of the California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program (PTTP) was to create local career ladders that enable school paraprofessionals – including teacher assistants, library-media aides, and instructional assistants – to become certificated classroom teachers in K-12 public schools. This pathway to teaching program was established in 1990 by Chapter 1444 of the Statutes of 1990 (SB 1690, Roberti), which added sections 69619 to 69619.3 to the State Education Code. The PTTP program was subsequently expanded by Chapters 737 and 831 of the Statutes of 1997 (The Wildman-Keeley-Solis Exemplary Teaching Training Act of 1997), which added sections 44390 to 44393 to the State Education Code. Chapter 554 of the Statutes of 2007 (SB 193, Scott) was signed into law in October 2007. SB 193 amended the law, which now includes a mandate for common entry and participation criteria for new PTTP participants.

Changes to the PTTP and program funding occurred when, as part of the revised 2008-09 budget, the Governor and the Legislature changed how funds for General Fund Proposition 98 programs were allocated. PTTP funding was no longer identified as a per participant allocation and became a part of a block grant in which the local education agency (LEA) has flexibility in determining how PTTP funds are used. Due to the 2008-2009 Tier III funding designation, the enrollment of new participants in the PTTP program was suspended in March 2011.

The 2013-2014 state budget process and subsequent legislation brought additional significant changes to the funding and program status of the PTTP. Funding for the PTTP and other Proposition 98 Local Assistance Programs is now part of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Program funding under LCFF remains flexible and the program sponsors may elect to use funds for other educational purposes. Additionally, under LCFF, most of the state categorical programs such as PTTP have been folded into the flexible funding for districts and county offices of education. AB 97 (Chap. 47, Stat. 2013) includes implementation requirements for LCFF.

Section 44393 of the Education Code requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) to report to the Legislature regarding the status of the California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program. This report fulfills the Commission's legislative reporting requirement.

The California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program

I. Description of the California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program

From 1995 to 2008, the California School PTTP provided academic scholarships and other related academic support services directly to individuals recruited from paraprofessional job classifications who are seeking a preliminary California teaching credential as a K-12 teacher (with special emphasis on individuals seeking to become a bilingual, special education, K-3 teacher, or a teacher in another field of identified district need). PTTP programs were sponsored by local school districts, county offices of education and/or consortia that applied to the Commission for program funding based on a competitive grant application process. During that time, participating districts have been responsible for local efforts in terms of recruiting and enrolling participants in the program, monitoring the progress of participants in accordance with each participant's individual education plan, providing supplementary academic support services as needed by participants, assigning mentors or "buddies" to facilitate continued progress and expending state program funds in support of participants' certification goals. Participants did not directly receive program funds. Instead, the program sponsor expended state program funds on behalf of the participants for the tuition, fees, books and other services at an institution of higher education while the participant is completing his/her education and/or teaching credential preparation. At the time of this writing, the Commission is not aware of any local education agencies continuing to support paraprofessional teacher training in this way.

Historical Certification Path for PTTP Participants

The typical certification path for a PTTP participant was to be accepted into the PTTP, complete degree and subject matter requirements and complete an internship program which culminated in full teacher certification. The PTTP graduate then entered the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA/Induction) program to complete an induction program that built upon the skills of the newly credentialed teacher and supported him/her through the first two years of certificated employment. PTTP program sponsors that placed a focus on recruitment of paraprofessionals seeking special education certification also were required to have a collaborative relationship with their Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA). These collaborative relationships resulted in enrichment for PTTP participants, as the skills and knowledge paraprofessionals already possessed were enhanced by the academic support and professional development activities offered by the local intern, BTSA/Induction and SELPA programs. This additional support facilitated participant success in fulfilling degree and certification requirements. As of summer 2012, the PTTP had produced a total of 2,267 fully-credentialed program graduates.

II. Program Funding History

Initial Funding and Program Expansion

Although the initial legislation authorizing the California School PTTP was enacted in 1990 and amended in 1991, funding for program implementation was not provided until the 1994-95 state budget. The PTTP was identified at that time as a pilot program, with a legislative requirement to

recruit a maximum of 600 paraprofessional participants. Initial program funding in the 1994-95 state budget was set at \$1.478 million in local assistance funds for program implementation, and \$60,000 in funds was added to the budget of the Commission to administer the program. These state operations funds were available for that fiscal year but were not included in subsequent budgets. For the other fifteen years that the Commission administered the program, administrative costs were sustained in the base budget of the Professional Services Division of the Commission.

Subsequent expansion legislation in 1997 required the PTTP to recruit a minimum of 600 paraprofessionals and established an expenditure cap of \$3,000 in state funds per participant per year. However, no funding was allocated for the required program expansion. Additional funding became available in the 1999-2000 state budget through a \$10 million program augmentation, bringing program funding to \$11.478 million. PTTP program funding was reduced in July 2002 in response to fiscal challenges faced by the state. The PTTP allocation was reduced from \$11.478 million to \$6.583 million.

Although there were increases in tuition costs, the PTTP received no funding increase from 1999-2000 until the Budget Bill Act of 2006-07. The Budget Bill Act of 2006-07 allocated a PTTP per capita funding increase of \$500. As of July 1, 2007, program funding increased from \$6.583 million to \$7.80 million and participants received support in the amount of \$3,500 per capita annually to support their teacher certification goal.

Tier III Funding Designation

As part of the 2008-2009 mid-year budget negotiations, the Governor and Legislature changed how funds for Proposition 98 programs were allocated. Senate Bill X3 4 (Chap. 12, Stats. 2009) identified the PTTP as a Tier III program and the total program allocation was reduced. Tier III status provided a school district or county office of education the flexibility to reallocate funds intended to be used in support of paraprofessionals for other educational purposes. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that used the flexibility provision were required to hold a local public hearing prior to reallocation of funds. In districts where the PTTP funds were reallocated, the LEA was still deemed to be in compliance with program and funding requirements contained in statute, regulatory and provisional language. Due to the 2008-2009 Tier III funding designation and uncertainty of program continued funding, in March 2011 Commission staff no longer enrolled new PTTP participants.

2013-2014 Local Control Funding Formula

During 2013 budget negotiations, legislation was enacted that changed the way LEAs are funded. The 2013-2014 Budget Act included legislation that changed school finance funding from a tiered categorical funded programs system to a system focused on equity, transparency and performance through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). According to the California Department of Education website, the goal of the LCFF is to significantly simplify how state funding is provided to LEAs. Among the changes, LCFF allowed LEAs greater flexibility to use funds to improve student outcomes. Additionally, most state categorical programs that were included in the previous tiered categorical program funding system were included in the LCFF.

III. Program Policy Issues

Funds Recovery Efforts - §44393 (d)(4)

PTTP funds were provided through the Proposition 98 local assistance fund. The PTTP served as a valued teacher recruitment and development program since 1995 and included the successful recruitment and full teacher training and certification of more than 2,200 program graduates. Although the program was successful, some PTTP participants did not satisfy certification requirements and have not provided required certificated service pursuant to §44393 (d) (3). This included required service as a teacher in California, which was further complicated by the economic downturn in 2008, preventing some participants from either completing an intern program or finding teaching positions. Section §44393 (d) (4) requires dropped participants who did not fulfill their certification and service obligations to reimburse the State of California.

At this time, the only aspect of the PTTP program currently in place is that the Commission staff continues to collect funds from dropped participants who failed to meet certification and employment requirements. Funds recovered through these efforts are reported annually to the California Department of Finance pursuant to Education Code Section 44393 (h) (2).

IV. Conclusion

The PTTP was established to address local employer needs and teacher shortages, particularly in the areas of bilingual education, English language learner education, and special education. Between 1995 and 2008, during which funding was available per participant, the PTTP has produced more than 2,200 educators for the State of California. The number of successful, fully-credentialed program graduates and their areas of certification demonstrate a dedication and commitment to the education of California's children.

Identification of the PTTP as part of the LCFF has created a new reality for an effective teacher development program that has previously met its legislative mandates. Due to the recent changes in program status and funding, and given that local program sponsors may choose to use dollars previously intended for the PTTP for unrelated yet important purposes, and because the Commission has not enrolled new participants since 2011, it has not been possible for Commission staff to collect the required data regarding program operation and program participants so that complete data can be reported to the legislature as required in law.