



PROGRAM SPONSOR ALERT

DATE:

March 11, 2022

NUMBER:

PSA 22-03

SUBJECT: AB 320 IMPACT ON PRELIMINARY MULTIPLE SUBJECT, SINGLE SUBJECT, AND EDUCATION SPECIALIST EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Summary:

This Program Sponsor Alert (PSA) clarifies several changes to the California Education Code as a result of [Assembly Bill 320](#) (Chap. 663, Stats. 2021) and its impact on the preliminary multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist credential programs.

Key Provisions:

On October 8, 2021, the Governor signed [AB 320](#). Effective January 1, 2022, AB 320 made changes to numerous provisions of the Education Code with respect to teacher preparation. Among its many provisions, it clarified that an individual who earned a bachelor's degree at an institution of higher education that was in the process of gaining full regional accreditation is eligible to enter a teacher education program and earn their credential.

Further, the law now defines "regionally accredited" – as it applies to institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs – in one of two ways. "Regionally accredited" can refer to an institution that has been accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the Higher Learning Commission, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the New England Commission of Higher Education, or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. "Regionally accredited" can also refer to an institution of higher education that held pre-accreditation status at the time the degree of an applicant for a credential was conferred, if that institution achieved full accreditation status within five years of earning pre-accreditation status. It also defines "regionally accredited" to include community or junior colleges that confer baccalaureate degrees and are regionally accredited by one of the seven accrediting agencies mentioned

above or by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Education Code Section 44259 defines the requirements for the preliminary multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist credential, and the AB 320 made changes to Education Code Section 44259.1(d)(1) governing preliminary multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist programs, as follows:

(d) A postbaccalaureate program of professional preparation may only be offered by a regionally accredited institution of higher education. These programs shall enable candidates for teaching credentials to commence and complete professional preparation after they have completed baccalaureate degrees at regionally accredited institutions of higher education. The development and implementation of a postbaccalaureate program of professional preparation shall be based on intensive collaboration among the regionally accredited institution of higher education and local public elementary and secondary school districts.

This language clarifies that only regionally accredited institutions of higher education may offer preliminary multiple, single, and education specialist programs. Separate sections of California Education Code (44325-44329) govern intern programs offered by local education agencies.

Impact on Student Teaching-Based Preliminary Multiple, Single, and Education Specialist Programs

The recent changes in the law clarify that student teaching-based programs in California must be offered by a regionally accredited institution of higher education (IHE) and that the intern option is allowed for local education agencies (LEA). Pursuant to 44259 (d) (1), and in keeping with the Commission adopted standards for the preliminary multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist preparation programs, as well as with the Common Standards, all teacher education programs require a close partnership with local public elementary and secondary school districts in the implementation of their program. LEAs interested in offering student teaching-based programs, including residency programs, as the *program sponsor* may seek to establish a regionally accredited institution of higher education and apply for initial institutional approval by the Commission as such. A few examples of LEAs that have successfully undertaken this process exist in California.

Student teaching-based programs include teacher residency programs. It is important to note that residency programs and intern programs are not the same. They differ in significant ways, mainly that intern candidates are employees of the district and teachers of record whereas residents (candidate enrolled in teacher residency pathways) are student teachers in a year-long student teaching placement. By design, teacher residency programs require that the institution of higher education and the local education agencies with which it partners share responsibilities for the critical operation and success of the program.

Over the past few years, and in the 2021-22 budget year, the state has invested significant state resources in the development and implementation of student teaching-based residency programs. This high-quality pathway offers strong preparation to help address the state's significant teacher shortage. These resources are allocated to local education agencies to support the IHE/LEA partnership. It is important to note that while the state investment is at the LEA level as the grant recipient, the law requires that the program sponsor for such programs be a regionally accredited institution of higher education. Regardless of the source of funding, the law requires that only institutions of higher education approved by the Commission may be authorized to serve as the program sponsor for multiple subject, single subject, or education specialist teacher residency programs. As such, for teacher residency programs, as well as other student teaching-based pathways, it is the institution of higher education that enrolls the candidate in the program and ultimately recommends them for the credential, and not the local education agency partner.

Any student teaching-based program, including a teacher residency pathway, submitted for initial program review after January 1, 2022 (the effective date of AB 320) by a local education agency will not be accepted. LEAs must partner with Commission approved institutions of higher education that are authorized by the Commission to offer a residency-based program of teacher education. Programs that were submitted by LEAs for a teacher residency pathway prior to January 1, 2022 and that partner with a regionally accredited institution of higher education will be reviewed and if they are deemed to meet the standards and program requirements, will be moved forward to Committee on Accreditation (COA) for consideration and approval. Any LEA student teaching-based programs approved before January 1, 2022, may continue to operate after January 1, 2022, as long as a partnership with an IHE exists.

Important Dates:

January 1, 2022

Background:

AB 130 (Medina) was signed by the Governor on October 9, 2021, effective January 1, 2022.

Sources:

[AB 130 \(Chap. 663, Stats. 2021\)](#)

Contact Information:

Contact Information for the Professional Services Division is available at the [Professional Services Contact webpage](#).