



PROGRAM SPONSOR ALERT

DATE:

November 10, 2022

NUMBER:

PSA 22-13

SUBJECT: RICA REQUIREMENT FOR THE NEW EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION (ECSE) AUTHORIZATION

Key Provisions:

On July 1, 2022, regulations took effect that implemented new Education Specialist Program Standards, Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs), and authorizations. The regulation included a provision that added Kindergarten to the authorization of the Education Specialist: Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) credential. This change is intended to support the implementation of Universal Transitional Kindergarten and allow ECSE credential holders to earn the expanded birth-K authorization and continue working with four-year-olds in TK.

Prior to July 1, 2022, Education Code sec. 44283.2 exempted all ECSE credential candidates from the Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA) requirement. Upon further analysis and consultation with educational partners regarding the implementation of Senate Bill (SB) 488 (Chapter 678, Statutes of 2021) and the new ECSE authorization allowing service from birth through Kindergarten, it was found that new credential candidates seeking the Birth through K authorization must pass RICA. The exemption in Education Code section 44283.2 specifically identifies the ECSE credential with an authorization "from birth through prekindergarten," so the exemption does not apply to the expanded ECSE credential that authorizes service through Kindergarten.

Therefore, candidates who enroll in a preparation program on or after July 1, 2022, to earn the birth to Kindergarten ECSE authorization are required to pass a reading instruction assessment approved by the Commission under Education Code sec. 44283.

Routes for Current Candidates:

Candidates who first enrolled in an approved ECSE program on or after July 1, 2022, have two credential options available:

1. Candidates who have completed the requirements associated with the revised 2018 program standards and TPEs that took effect July 1, 2022, and **who take and pass the RICA will receive an ECSE credential with a birth-Kindergarten authorization.**
2. Candidates who have completed all the requirements associated with the revised 2018 program standards and TPEs that took effect July 1, 2022, but **have not passed the RICA** will be eligible for the previous **birth-prekindergarten ECSE authorization.**

Background:

In 2018, the Commission approved a new Education Specialist credential structure reducing the number of preliminary credentials from 7 to 5. TPEs for each of the five preliminary Education Specialist credential areas (Mild to Moderate Support Needs, Extensive Support Needs, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Visual Impairments and Early Childhood Special Education) were also adopted. The new Education Specialist program standards focus on what programs must offer to candidates, including clearly defined expectations for clinical practice, while the TPEs define the knowledge and skills each candidate must have prior to recommendation for the preliminary teaching credential. Part of the revision process included examining the scope of the credentials including grade level and age ranges. In June 2018, the Commission moved to expand the authorization of the ECSE credential under the new standards to include birth through Kindergarten. Subsequently, regulations were approved by the Office of Administrative Law and became effective on July 1, 2022.

Senate Bill (SB) 488 (Chapter 678, Statutes of 2021), requires the Commission to update its standards and Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) for preparation programs leading to a Multiple Subject, Single Subject: English, and Education Specialist credential, as well as to develop a performance assessment for effective literacy instruction to replace the RICA beginning in 2025-26. At its October 2022 meeting, the Commission [approved literacy standards and TPEs](#) for Multiple Subject, Single Subject: English, Education Specialist: Mild to Moderate Support Needs and Extensive Support Needs, and PreK-3 Early Childhood Education credentials. Literacy standards and TPEs for the remaining three low-incidence Education Specialist credentials will be reviewed by the Commission at its February 2023 meeting. All Multiple Subject and Education Specialist credential programs, including Early Childhood Education Specialist, will be reviewed during the 2024-25 academic year to ensure they meet the standards, and all teaching credential candidates completing these preliminary credential programs are required to take and pass the RICA until such time as the new literacy performance assessment is adopted by the Commission for operational administration.

Resources Available:

The 2022-23 state budget included \$24 million to create a fee waiver program for exams and assessments required for teacher credentialing, including the RICA. More information can be found at https://www.ctcexams.nesinc.com/PageView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/GENRB_AnnounceFeeWaiver.html.

Online RICA preparation resources are available, including a free course from the San Diego County Office of Education:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeGMrJoCqtpwM17mHveWtjWLXFs-cLVNFVftfTJXG00kb61Rg/viewform>.

Important Dates:

The RICA requirement for the new ECSE authorization (birth-K) is effective July 1, 2022.

Sources:

[Senate Bill 488, Chapter 678](#)

[Education Code Section 44259](#)

[Education Code Section 44283](#)

Contact Information:

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