



PROGRAM SPONSOR ALERT

DATE:
February 10, 2026

NUMBER:
26-02

**SUBJECT: SUNSET DATE TO ISSUE PRELIMINARY EDUCATION SPECIALIST CREDENTIALS
UNDER THE 2008 PROGRAM STANDARDS**

Summary:

This Program Sponsor Alert (PSA) provides information for all Preliminary Education Specialist credential preparation programs. The purpose of this PSA is to ensure that all programs that have candidates completing a Mild/Moderate Disabilities (MMD), Moderate/Severe Disabilities (MSD), or Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), Birth – PreKindergarten program under the prior standards (2008) are aware of the upcoming sunset date of June 30, 2026 for final issuance of these credentials.

Background:

Effective July 1, 2026, Commission approved educator preparation programs will no longer be able to recommend candidates for a Preliminary MMD, MSD, or ECSE (Birth – PreK) credential aligned to the 2008 Education Specialist Program Standards. This sunset date was established to allow candidates newly enrolled in integrated teacher preparation programs, intern preparation programs, and candidates who may have an interruption in their preparation program to complete the program they started. All approved educator preparation programs should notify candidates immediately who have yet to complete all program requirements of the impending sunset date.

Key Provisions:

1. All candidates enrolled in the MMD, MSD, or ECSE (Birth – PreK) program need to complete all requirements for the credential they are seeking prior to June 30, 2026. This includes those in the traditional and intern pathways. Even if a candidate's intern credential extends beyond June 30, 2026, they cannot be recommended for the Preliminary credential past that date.
2. Candidates who do not complete all credential requirements and are not recommended on or before June 30, 2026 for the MMD, MSD, or ECSE (Birth – PreK) credentials will need to

complete the requirements for the Mild to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN), Extensive Support Needs (ESN), or ECSE (Birth – Kindergarten) credential aligned to the current standards adopted in 2018 and updated to add the Literacy standards and TPEs in 2024. This includes passing a Commission-approved Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA).

3. All Education Specialist candidates must take and pass a Commission-approved TPA in all authorization areas (MMSN, ESN, ECSE, DHH, and VI) prior to being recommended for the Preliminary credential. For ECSE, DHH, and VI candidates, this applies to those who enrolled in their program on or after July 1, 2025. Exemptions to this requirement are outlined in Program Sponsor Alert 22-14 linked below.

References:

[Coded Correspondence 22-03](#): Implementation of the New Preliminary Education Specialist Credentials

[Program Sponsor Alert 22-14](#): Approval of Amendments to Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations Pertaining to Teaching Performance Assessment

Contact Information:

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