

Date of Hearing: March 26, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
AB 959 (Hadwick) – As Amended March 17, 2025

SUBJECT: Teacher credentialing: administrative services credential: internship program

SUMMARY: Authorizes a county office of education (COE), a school district, or a regionally accredited institution of higher education (IHE) to offer a one year internship program for candidates for a preliminary administrative credential. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Authorizes a COE, a school district, or a regionally accredited IHE to offer a one year internship program for candidates for a preliminary administrative credential.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the minimum requirements for the preliminary services credential with a specialization in administrative services as the following:
 - a) Possession of one of the following:
 - i) A valid teaching credential requiring the possession of a baccalaureate degree and a professional preparation program including student teaching;
 - ii) A valid designated subjects career technical education, adult education, or special subjects teaching credential, provided the candidate also possesses a baccalaureate degree;
 - iii) A valid services credential with a specialization in pupil personnel, health, or clinical or rehabilitative services, or a valid services credential authorizing service as a teacher librarian; and
 - iv) A valid credential issued under the laws, rules, and regulations in effect on or before December 31, 1971, as specified.
 - b) Completion of a minimum of three years of successful, full-time classroom teaching experience in the public schools, including, but not limited to, service in state- or county-operated schools, or in regionally accredited private schools of equivalent status or three years of experience in the fields of pupil personnel, health, clinical or rehabilitative, or librarian services.
 - c) Completion of an entry-level program of specialized and professional preparation in administrative services approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) or a one-year internship in a program of supervised training in administrative services, approved by the CTC as satisfying the requirements for the preliminary services credential with a specialization in administrative services.

- d) Current employment in an administrative position after completion of professional preparation, whether full or part time, in a public school or regionally accredited private school of equivalent status.
 - e) Makes the preliminary administrative services credential valid for a period of five years from the date of initial employment in an administrative position, and non-renewable. (Education Code (EC) 44270)
- 2) Establishes the minimum requirements for the professional services (“clear”) credential with a specialization in administrative services as all of the following:
- a) Possession of a valid preliminary administrative services credential;
 - b) A minimum of two years of successful experience in a full-time administrative position in a public school or private school of equivalent status, while holding the preliminary administrative services credential, as attested by the employing school district or agency, including, but not limited to, the department, in the case of state school administrators, and COEs, in the case of county school administrators; and
 - c) Completion of a CTC-approved program of advanced preparation. (EC 44270.1)
- 3) Authorizes the CTC to, at the request of a credential candidate, grant a waiver of the requirement of university coursework upon its finding that the candidate, in consultation with personnel of the employing school district and personnel of the university, is not able to develop an individualized program of professional development for the advanced preparation program that meets the individual needs of the candidates. (EC 44270.1)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “California’s students deserve strong, well-prepared school leaders who can foster positive learning environments and drive student success. Assembly Bill 959 ensures aspiring administrators can pursue high-quality, localized training by requiring allowing county offices of education and school districts to offer administrative credentialing internships. By including school districts in this amendment, we expand access to well-supervised, high-quality training opportunities while maintaining the rigorous standards necessary for effective leadership preparation.

This bill strengthens the pipeline of qualified administrators, particularly in underserved and rural communities, by ensuring that school districts and county offices of education along with accredited higher education institutions—can offer structured, hands-on training programs. By doing so, we help reduce administrator turnover, support equity in leadership preparation, and create a more accessible, effective pathway for aspiring school leaders. Rather than restricting opportunities, AB 959 ensures that all candidates receive the comprehensive preparation needed to succeed in today’s educational landscape and improve outcomes for California’s students.”

Current law does not specify which institutions may operate administrative services intern programs; CTC’s practice has been to approve only IHE programs. Current law requires candidates for an administrative credential to either complete a program of professional

preparation in administrative services approved by the CTC, or a one-year internship in a program of supervised training in administrative services, approved by the CTC as satisfying the requirements for the preliminary services credential with a specialization in administrative services. The law does not specify which institutions may offer either preparation programs or internship programs. According to the CTC, since the statute does not explicitly permit LEAs to operate these programs, while it does for other internship programs, they are unable to authorize LEAs to operate internship programs for this credential. This bill aims to enable the CTC to authorize such programs.

What is an administrative services internship program? Individuals seeking to earn administrative credentials in California must meet a number of requirements, including having earned a teaching or other specified credential, and having completed three years of successful teaching, and completing a program of professional preparation or an internship meeting the standards of the CTC. Administrative internship programs allow a candidate to work as an administrator while earning their credential. This is akin to district internship programs for teachers, which allow the candidate to work as a teacher while earning their credential.

According to the CTC's invaluable 419-page history of educator credentialing in California, *A History of Policies and Forces Shaping California Teacher Credentialing*, the idea of administrator internship programs dates to the 1977 Assembly Education Committee Task Force on the subject of the elementary and secondary school principalship. The Task Force's report led the CTC to support principal internship programs, and also led to legislation in 1981 creating the first two-tier credential of any kind.

According to research shared by the author, administrator internship programs have shown promise in increasing the number of qualified administrators in rural areas (McConnell), and that research comparing traditional and alternative principal preparation programs indicated no significant difference in student outcomes (Pannell, 2015).

Internship not a widely used pathway for this credential, but growing. According to data from the CTC, intern credentials increased in issuance from 67 in 2010-11 to 191 in 2022-23. In 2022-23, there was a total of 526 preliminary administrative services credentials issued (prepared by any route).

Trend toward LEA-based preparation, driven by workforce shortages. This bill proposes to authorize LEAs to operate internship programs for administrative services credentials.

For many decades, candidates have been able to pursue a teaching credential through district internship programs. This route allow candidates to serve as teacher of record while earning their credentials. According to the CTC, intern programs tend to attract a more diverse pool of teacher candidates, and allow candidates to earn a salary right away, but teachers prepared through intern programs are more likely to leave the profession early than teachers who have completed a residency, traditional, or integrated undergraduate program pathway.

Recently this Committee has seen other bills which would authorize LEAs to provide more of the preparation for different aspects of credentialing, including for school nurses, and, as proposed, the English learner and bilingual authorizations. Like this bill, these measures require approval from the CTC that the programs meet its program standards. ***The Committee may wish***

to consider that these proposals are a response to increasingly acute workforce shortages, and may provide a faster and less expensive route for candidates than IHE-based programs.

Arguments in support. The Placer County Office of Education writes, “County offices of education (COEs) and school districts often play major roles in their regions’ teacher and administrator preparation, and many already offer both intern programs for teachers, and traditional programs for administrators. Due to interpretation of current law, these local educational agencies are prevented from offering preliminary administrative credential candidates the important and highly-sought after opportunity to learn while you earn though an internship program. Allowing COEs and districts to run these programs will foster an environment where teacher leaders can stay close to home for their administrative preparation in a context that is highly localized, contributing to a ‘grow your own’ model that has been shown to be highly effective in reducing turnover.

While the ongoing teacher shortage has, rightfully, received a great deal of focus over recent years, we must also take advantage of common-sense opportunities to improve the administrator pipeline. AB 959 does just that, and for that reason we are pleased to support and co-sponsor.”

Related legislation. AB 1306 (Muratsuchi) of the 2025-26 Session would allow the CTC to approve a teacher education program offered by a local education agency (LEA) purposes of earning a cross-cultural language and academic development certificate or a bilingual authorization certificate, including a California Teacher of English Learners program.

AB 815 (Luz Rivas), Chapter 688, Statutes of 2021, authorizes the CTC to approve a clear credential program offered by an LEA for school nursing, and requires the CTC to apply the standards for approval of a program of professional preparation offered by a postsecondary educational institution to a program of professional preparation offered by a LEA.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Association of California School Administrators
California County Superintendents
Office of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
Placer County Office of Education
Small School Districts Association

Opposition

None on file

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