

Date of Hearing: March 26, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
AB 1119 (Patel) – As Introduced February 20, 2025

SUBJECT: Teacher credentialing: dual credentialing: workgroup

SUMMARY: Requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), by July 1, 2026, to convene a workgroup to recommend measures to develop and establish efficient routes for teacher candidates to obtain a multiple subject or single subject credential and an education specialist credential, known as dual credentialing, through preservice programs of preparation; and for existing teachers who have a multiple subject or single subject credential to obtain an education specialist credential. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the CTC, by July 1, 2026, to convene a workgroup to recommend measures to develop and establish efficient routes for 1) teacher candidates to obtain a multiple subject or single subject credential and an education specialist credential, known as dual credentialing, through preservice programs of preparation, and 2) existing teachers who have a multiple subject or single subject credential to obtain an education specialist credential.
- 2) Requires the CTC, in developing recommendations to do all of the following:
 - a) Review current routes that holders of multiple subject and single subject credentials have to earn additional credentials and supplementary authorizations;
 - b) Determine which content of preparation in multiple subject and single subject programs and education specialist programs, known as the common trunk, could satisfy the requirements for both credentials to create efficiencies toward earning dual credentials;
 - c) Identify barriers and opportunities for teachers to become dually credentialed, and barriers and opportunities for programs of preparation to prepare dually credentialed teachers;
 - d) Review other states' routes to dual credentialing through programs of preparation, and for existing holders of multiple subject and single subject credentials;
 - e) Review routes for dually credentialed teachers prepared outside of the state to become dually credentialed in California; and
 - f) Make recommendations on statutory changes and other strategies necessary to promote opportunities for teachers to become dually credentialed.
- 3) Requires that at least one-half of the workgroup be composed of current classroom teachers who hold multiple subject, single subject, or education specialist credentials, including those who have completed a dual credential program.
- 4) Requires the workgroup to also include representatives from all of the following:

- a) School administration;
 - b) Institutions of higher education involved in the preparation of teachers, including institutions that currently provide routes to dual credentialing; and
 - c) A regionally accredited institution of higher education that is a division within a COE.
- 5) Requires the CTC, on or before December 31, 2026, to provide a report of the workgroup's findings and recommendations to the appropriate policy and fiscal Committees of the Legislature.
- 6) Sunsets the measure on January 1, 2029.
- 7) Makes the implementation of the measure contingent upon an appropriation for its purposes in the annual Budget Act or another statute.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the minimum criteria for issuance of a preliminary multiple subject, single subject, or education specialist credential as follows:
 - a) A baccalaureate degree or higher degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education;
 - b) Satisfactory completion of a program of professional preparation that has been accredited by the Committee on Accreditation on the basis of standards of program quality and effectiveness that have been adopted by the CTC;
 - c) Study of effective means of teaching literacy;
 - d) Verification of subject matter competence. For education specialist credentials, either a major in one of the subject areas in which the commission credentials candidates or a liberal studies or other major that includes coursework in specified content areas;
 - e) Demonstration that the candidate, has met or exceeded each of the domains of the subject matter requirements adopted by the CTC in the content area of the credential;
 - f) Demonstration of a knowledge of the principles and provisions of the Constitution of the United States; and
 - g) Demonstration, in accordance with the commission's standards of program quality and effectiveness, of basic competency in the use of computers in the classroom.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, "AB 1119 addresses California's long-standing special education teacher shortage by directing the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to form a workgroup tasked with understanding ways to bolster California's special education workforce and work toward inclusive classroom environments for all students. Under current

conditions, California will not have the supply of special education teachers needed to address the large increase in students with disabilities or achieve its goal of 100% integration of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. This workgroup will analyze how to effectively and appropriately improve dual credentialing programs to meet California's needs and goals."

Statewide Special Education Task Force finds that the most successful learning environments leverage the expertise from both general and special education working together. According to the *One System: Reforming Education to Serve All Students* report, authored by the State Board of Education (SBE), the CTC, and the California Department of Education (CDE) in 2015:

The most successful educational models call for an integrated system that makes the most of fully prepared special educators working side-by-side with highly knowledgeable general educators, together meeting the needs of all students, regardless of their formal designations as having disabilities or not. These collaborative general and special education practices support the creation of one coherent system; they include a thorough understanding of and ability to apply instruction and intervention that adhere to universal design for learning (UDL) strategies; and they align with a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) that addresses both academics and behavior in the use of response to intervention (RtI) strategies.

Dual credentialing is a promising strategy for meeting the needs of all students. Dual credentialing is viewed as a promising strategy to address numerous policy objectives, including:

- Equipping teachers to meet the needs of all students in a classroom, as every general education classroom has students with disabilities as well as students who require additional support to successfully access the curriculum;
- Facilitating greater inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms by enabling teachers to meet the needs of all students;
- Supporting co-teaching models, in which general education and education specialists work together in a classroom to meet the needs of all students. Co-teaching is also viewed as a means of addressing the retention of special education teachers;
- Enabling educators to support students who are eligible to pursue an alternate path to a high school diploma by helping them access content required for graduation; and
- Providing educators flexibility in their employment, as they are qualified to work in more educational settings.

Research on dual credentialing has found that:

- Students with disabilities taught by teachers with dual certification score better in math, and teachers with dual certification exhibit more positive dispositions related to teaching students with disabilities. (Kirksey, 2022)
- Collaborative teacher education programs are challenging to implement, but beneficial to the preparation of new content area teachers. The field experiences in a variety of classroom settings provided better preparation for preservice teachers to face the

challenges of working with a diverse population of students in general education classrooms. (Kent, 2016)

- Teachers in dual credentialing programs develop competency in differentiated planning, assessment, and instruction in content area classrooms and were able to embed the provision of accommodations into their planning process and collaboratively engage with colleagues. (Fullerton, 2011).
- Preservice teachers who graduated from teacher preparation programs in which both general education and special education teacher preparation curricula were infused had significantly more positive attitudes toward inclusion than preservice teachers who graduated from discrete programs. (Kim, 2011)

Statewide special education task force supports dual credentialing programs. The *One System* report also noted that:

A growing number of states have encouraged blended or dual-credentialing programs that purposefully ensure that teachers acquire both general and special education expertise within a program that is integrated... California currently does neither of these, although a few forward-looking blended or dual programs have emerged under the leadership of pioneering teacher educators and are preparing specialists who also have a general education background.

Additionally, the report expressed support for incentive grants to colleges and universities, local education agencies (LEAs) and COEs to develop innovative programs that combine preparation to become general and special education teachers.

History of special education credentialing in California. Prior to the mid-1990's, California teachers earned a multiple or single subject credential prior to earning an education specialist credential, which made all education specialists dually credentialed.

According to the CTC's invaluable 419-page history of teacher credentialing in California, *A History of Policies and Forces Shaping California Teacher Credentialing*, special education teaching credential policy has gone through several phases:

- The Fisher Act of 1961 authorized special education teachers to obtain a credential without first obtaining a basic teaching credential. By the time of the Ryan Act in 1970, there were 28 special education authorizations.
- The Ryan Act of 1970 required that all teachers earn a general education teaching credential as a pre-requisite for earning a special education credential. It also consolidated the special education credentials into four Specialist Instruction Credentials.
- In 1996, the requirement that teachers first earn a general education credential was eliminated in light of "the widespread shortage of qualified teachers for special education assignments." Elimination of the prerequisite teaching credential requirement was intended to reduce these shortages.

- In 2016, as described below, the CTC adopted a “common trunk” approach to teacher preparation, by adopting a set of “universal” teaching performance expectations (TPEs) for multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist teaching credentials. It also based credentials on support needs rather than disability, and included more focus on inclusion.

What did the bifurcation of the general and special education credentials achieve? As noted above, the splitting of the two credentials in 1996 was intended to make it easier for candidates to earn a special education credential, in hopes that this would ease the teacher shortage. According to the *One System* report, “unfortunately, that decision has had little, if any, effect on teacher shortages, which continue unabated.” It did, however mean that:

Education Specialists no longer had to learn about general pedagogy, standards, or content in depth and thus were no longer deemed by the CTC to be authorized to teach students who do not have disabilities. As a result, many of the most productive service models, as outlined in the previous section, cannot be easily implemented in many California districts because the very professionals who can help make these models work—special educators—are not authorized to work with general education students, unless they have separately acquired a general education credential.

This restriction creates a significant barrier to developing coherent systems of instruction. Those very teachers—special educators, who are trained to provide supports to struggling students and to differentiate instruction— cannot work with general education students who, with a little special and targeted help, may never need to be referred to the special education system. The current credentialing and funding system does not champion or invest in these collaborative, tiered approaches, despite the extensive and proven research base of their efficacy. The current divide within general education and special education teacher credentialing undermines any type of coherent system. Many students remain inadequately served as a result.

The report also highlighted the effects of inadequate preparation on inclusion:

The [least restrictive environment] for most students can be created when both the classroom teacher and the special education teacher have the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively instruct both students with and without disabilities as well as the strategies to collaborate effectively with one another and with the students’ family members. Because generalist teachers typically do not have enough training in special education, and specialist teachers often do not have enough training in general education, most prospective educators in California are left without a clear, common credentialing pathway to learn these kinds of skills.

The splitting of the two credentials also occurred at the same time as the state adopted a major effort to reduce class sizes in kindergarten through 3rd grade, creating an immediate and acute teacher shortage.

In response to these concerns, state adopts “common trunk” reform. The *One System* report set forth a vision for teacher preparation in which “general and special education preparation programs require all aspiring teachers to master content standards, evidence-based strategies,

pedagogy, intervention strategies, and collaboration among teachers and across assignments—essentially in a ‘common trunk.’”

Spurred by the *One System* report, the CTC engaged in a multi-year effort to address needed changes to the ways in which students with disabilities were served in California schools.

In 2016, the CTC adopted new a new “universal” set of TPEs for all preliminary multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist candidates. These TPES reflect a redesigned “common trunk” approach, which requires education specialist candidates to master general pedagogical principles common to teaching all students. The new TPEs also have increased expectations regarding how new single and multiple subject credentialed teachers teach students with disabilities in the general education classroom. At the same time, CTC adopted a new credentialing structure designed to provide more flexibility to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Number of dual credentialing programs in California. According to the California State University (CSU), the following CSU campuses offer dual credentialing programs of various types:

- CSU Chico
- CSU Fresno
- CSU Long Beach
- CSU Los Angeles
- CSU Northridge
- CSU San Marcos
- CSU Stanislaus

It is not known how many other dual credentialing programs exist at the University of California (UC) or independent colleges and universities in California. In total, there are 246 institutions (institutions of higher education and local education agencies) approved by the CTC to provide teacher preparation.

Barriers and opportunities for dual credential programs. According to a recent presentation by CSU Vice Chancellor Dr. Shireen Pavri to the California Council on Teacher Education, some of the key barriers to dual credentialing include:

- The number and depth of TPEs across the two credentials;
- Clinical practice challenges: breadth of clinical requirements in education specialist programs, additional semester, inclusive settings, loss of salary, securing placements;
- Candidates can only accept a state authorized internship in one area; and
- Completing Teaching Performance Assessments (TPAs)

Some opportunities to make obtaining two credentials easier include though changes to licensure include:

- Integrating and aligning standards and TPEs across credentials;
- Streamlining TPA cycles for dual credentials;
- Revisiting clinical practice requirements for both general and special education credentials;

- Revisiting subject matter requirement for education specialists;
- Simplifying adding education specialist credentials to existing credentials; and
- Avenues for dual credential students to work and earn while in their preparation program.

Additionally, grants to develop dual credential programs, district partnerships for inclusive placements, and hiring incentives for dually credentialed teachers could support growth in the number of dually credentialed teachers.

Arguments in support. Teach Plus - California writes “As teachers who are in the classroom with California students every day, we know better than anyone the skills needed to educate our diverse students. Creating a clear pathway for dual credentialing would give teacher candidates the ability to extend their expertise in both general and special education. This will increase their versatility in the classroom and allow for greater employment opportunities. For school districts this would mean a larger pool of well-prepared candidates to fill difficult-to-staff positions.

By expanding access to dual credentials, schools can strengthen inclusive practices, such as co-teaching and integrated classrooms, that benefit all students. When students are placed in inclusive environments with highly trained educators, they receive the individualized support they need while also engaging with their peers in meaningful ways.

Every student deserves to be in the least restrictive environment possible, and equipping more teachers with dual credentials will help make that a reality. This bill takes a modest but important step to help state leaders better understand what it will take and the implications of establishing a pathway for dual credentials.”

Recommended Committee amendments. Staff recommends that the bill be amended to:

- Add the PK-3 Early Childhood Education credentials to the list of general education credentials, and add the Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction credential, to the list of education specialist credentials reviewed by the workgroup;
- Add a requirement that the workgroup consider efficient routes for existing education specialists to earn general education credentials (in addition to general education teachers earning education specialist credentials);
- Change the dates by which the workgroup would need to submit its report of recommendations to July 1, 2027;
- Add supplementary authorizations to the workgroup’s review of current means by which credential holders earn additional credentials; and
- Make minor changes to the findings and declarations, and other clarifying changes.

Related legislation. SB 354 (Ochoa Bogh) of the 2023-24 Session would have required the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to revise its administrative services credential standards and performance expectations with a focus on inclusive learning environments; and (2) required the CDE, in consultation with the CTC, to develop and disseminate guidance on the ways in which inclusive classrooms may be staffed. This bill was vetoed by the Governor with the following message:

Serving students with disabilities in inclusive settings is an essential strategy for improving the academic achievement of these and all students, and one that my Administration, like the author, is committed to advancing. However, this bill is substantially similar to SB 1113 of 2022, which I vetoed, and several of the same concerns remain. In particular, portions of this bill are subject to an appropriation and should be considered as part of the annual budget process.

In partnership with the Legislature, we enacted a budget that closed a shortfall of more than \$30 billion through balanced solutions that avoided deep program cuts and protected education, health care, climate, public safety, and social service programs that are relied on by millions of Californians. This year, however, the Legislature sent me bills outside of this budget process that, if all enacted, would add nearly \$19 billion of unaccounted costs in the budget, of which \$11 billion would be ongoing.

With our state facing continuing economic risk and revenue uncertainty, it is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications, such as this measure. For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

AB 1914 (O'Donnell) of the 2019-20 Session would have established the Supporting Inclusive Practices project, to be administered by the CDE; required the CDE and the CTC to issue guidance on clarifying the ways in which inclusive classrooms and placements may be staffed under current law; required that one member of the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) have expertise in UDL, and required the CDE to issue guidance clarifying the ways in which early education inclusive placements may be established and expanded under current law. This bill was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Alameda County Office of Education
California Charter Schools Association
Californians Together
Disability Rights California
San Diego Unified School District
Teach Plus - California

Opposition

None on file

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