

Date of Hearing: April 9, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
AB 606 (Quirk-Silva) – As Amended March 28, 2025

SUBJECT: Certificated employees: professional services credential: out-of-state applicants

SUMMARY: Requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to issue a preliminary professional services credential with a specialization in pupil personnel services (PPS) to an out-of-state prepared applicant who meets specified requirements. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to issue a preliminary professional services credential with a specialization in PPS to an out-of-state prepared applicant who meets all of the following requirements:
 - a) Possesses a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education (IHE).
 - b) Has earned a valid corresponding PPS credential specialization in school counseling, school social work, or school psychology, based upon an out-of-state preparation program.
 - c) Has successfully completed a criminal background check for credentialing purposes.
- 2) Requires a preliminary professional services credential with a specialization in PPS to be valid for a period of two years and eligible for renewal for a period of no more than two years so long as the credentialholder demonstrates satisfactory progress, as determined by the local educational agency (LEA) that employs the credentialholder, pursuant to the LEA's established criteria.
- 3) Requires the CTC, on or before August 1, 2026, to maintain and make publicly available an up-to-date checklist of the requirements and processes for out-of-state PPS credentialholders to obtain a California professional services credential with a specialization in PPS.
- 4) Authorizes the CTC to approve a program of professional preparation for a services credential with a specialization in PPS offered by an LEA if the program of professional preparation meets standards of program quality and effectiveness that have been adopted by the CTC.
- 5) States that it is the intent of the Legislature to ensure that out-of-state school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers have access to clear and equitable pathways for meeting California credentialing requirements while promoting the availability of qualified professionals to address the needs of pupils in the state.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the minimum requirements for the services credential with a specialization in PPS to be a baccalaureate degree or higher degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education, a fifth year of study, and any specialized and professional preparation

including completion of a commission-approved program of supervised field experience that includes direct classroom contact, jointly sponsored by a school district and a college or university or a program of professional preparation. States the services credential with a specialization in PPS shall authorize the holder to perform, at all grade levels, the pupil personnel service approved by the CTC as designated on the credential, which may include, but need not be limited to, school counseling, school psychology, child welfare and attendance services, and school social work. (Education Code (EC) 44266)

- 2) Requires the CTC to award the following types of credentials to applicants whose preparation and competence satisfy its standards:
 - a) Basic teaching credentials for teaching in kindergarten, or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, in public schools in the state;
 - b) Credentials for teaching adult education classes and vocational education classes;
 - c) Credentials for teaching specialties, including, but not necessarily limited to, bilingual education, early childhood education, and special education. The CTC may grant credentials to any candidate who concurrently meets the CTC's standards of preparation and competence for the preliminary basic teaching credential and the preliminary specialty credential; and
 - d) Credentials for school services, for positions including, but not necessarily limited to, administrators, school counselors, speech-language therapists, audiologists, school psychologists, library media teachers, supervisors of attendance, and school nurses. (EC 44275)
- 3) Requires the CDE, by January 1, 2023, to recommend best practices, and identify evidence-based and evidence-informed training programs for schools to address youth behavioral health, including staff and student training, contingent upon an appropriation for this purpose. (EC 49428.15)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “As a teacher for over 30 years, I know how important our support staff specialists are in helping students thrive. Every student deserves access to the mental health and academic support they need to succeed. California’s outdated credentialing process should not stand in the way of getting trained professionals into our schools. AB 606 breaks down unnecessary barriers, streamlines hiring, and ensures students, especially in rural and underserved communities, receive the support they deserve.”

What does this bill do? For most credential subjects, California has a two-tier credential structure. A preliminary credential is the first document issued after an individual meets basic credential requirements. The preliminary credential is issued for a maximum of five years. A clear credential is issued when all credential requirements have been completed. If requirements for the clear credential are not completed before the expiration of the preliminary, the holder will be unable to provide services in California's public schools with that credential until those

requirements are met and the document is renewed. Currently, California does not have a preliminary credential for PPS credential applicants. This bill would create a preliminary PPS credential so that out of state applicants with an out-of-state credential based on a preparation program could be hired in California schools while they complete any remaining requirements for a clear credential.

What is currently required for out of state prepared service credential holders? According to the CTC, out-of-state prepared educators who are authorized by another state or U.S. Territory to perform services such as School Counseling, School Psychology, or School Social Work may apply for California's PPS Credential. Out-of-state prepared educators who are authorized by another state or U.S. Territory to perform Speech Services may apply for California's Speech-Language Pathology Services Credential.

To qualify for either of these service credentials based on out-of-state preparation, a candidate must submit the following minimum requirements:

- Application Form and processing fee;
- Official transcripts verifying your Bachelor's degree (and any additional higher degrees);
- Evidence of fingerprint processing; and
- Supporting documentation for the specific credential, including evidence of completion of an accredited professional preparation program with specified subject and unit requirements, and field experience.

Out-of-state prepared teachers in other subject areas are issued a preliminary credential. This bill creates parity for PPS credentialholders.

California lags in providing critical mental health support to students. Recent research on access to comprehensive school-based mental health services in California (Romer, 2022) includes the following key findings:

- Students in California had significant mental health and related support needs prior to the pandemic that has only further increased;
- Despite growing student mental health needs, critical school and community behavioral and mental health staffing shortages persist;
- School-based mental health referral pathways are not always aligned and coherent, and approaches to service delivery vary greatly across the state;
- Limited funding flexibility and varied understanding of how to navigate, maximize, and plan for sustainability of available funding sources constitute a key barrier to expanding access to mental health services for students; and
- A limited understanding of complex privacy laws and regulations by educational leaders and community partners can be a barrier to providing school-based mental health services.

Schools offering mental health services may provide services with credentialed school staff trained to address student mental health needs, and/or may rely on partnerships with community systems, such as county behavioral health agencies, community mental health providers or

centers, hospitals, and universities. Credentialed school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses provide critical health and mental health services to students. The distribution of support personnel in schools differs significantly from one school district to another throughout the state, but it is clear from the CDE data below that, as a state, California lacks sufficient numbers of trained personnel in our schools to meet the mental health needs of over six million students. The recommended ratios are those of the relevant national organizations.

School health professional	Number of professionals in California schools in 2018/19*	2018/19 ratio of students/professional	Recommended ratios by relevant professional associations
School counselors	10,416	576:1	250:1
School psychologists	6,329	948:1	500-700:1
School social workers	865	6,936:1	250:1
School nurses	2,720	2,205:1	750:1

Health professional workforce shortage. A 2022 report by the California Future Health Workforce Commission notes that California has a severe workforce shortage, with too few of the right types of health workers in the right places to meet the needs of the population. Millions of Californians struggle to access the care they need, and the COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that under-resourced communities and communities of color are hit hardest by an inadequate workforce. The aging of a generation of baby boomers will exacerbate the shortages in primary care, behavioral health care, and among workers who care for older adults.

This shortage holds true for the public education system in California as well. Schools are facing a severe workforce shortage across multiple job classifications, including the Pupil Personnel Service (PPS) credentialed professionals identified in the table above.

Arguments in support. The California Association of School Psychologists states, “Currently, individuals who possess an equivalent, out-of-state PPS credential including school psychologists, school counselors, school social workers, and child welfare and attendance specialists must prove they have completed the requisite field experience through documentation on official letterhead, eligibility for the equivalent credential authorization, and education via an eligibility letter from their institution. If the out-of-state preparation program does not meet the criteria, the applicant must engage with a California college or university with a Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC)-approved program for an evaluation and formal recommendation.

These requirements often result in roadblocks to efficiently hiring qualified individuals into the profession in California. AB 606 provides essential support and clarity by establishing much needed standards for the issuance and renewal of credentials and permits for out-of-state applicants. With the passage of AB 606, California can attract and retain well-qualified professionals, alleviating staffing shortages and enhancing critical student support services.

California has seen a significant increase in the number of students needing assessments and special education services. School psychologists are critical to these services. AB 606 aligns with existing state investments, such as the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative fee schedule and strengthens our commitment to student well-being.”

Related legislation. AB 2508 (Quirk-Silva) Chapter 153, Statutes of 2022, urges the governing board of a LEA to provide a comprehensive educational counseling program for all pupils and redefines educational counseling and services to reflect current practices.

AB 2072 (Gabriel) Chapter 909, Statutes of 2022, requires, by November 1, 2024, county offices of education (COEs), in consultation with the CDE and other relevant state and local agencies, to coordinate agreements between school districts and charter schools within the county to develop a system for rapidly deploying qualified mental health professionals and other key school personnel employed by individual school districts and charter schools throughout the county to areas of the county that experienced a natural disaster or other traumatic event.

SB 1229 (McGuire) of the 2021-22 Session, would have required, upon appropriation by the Legislature, the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) to administer the Mental Health Workforce Grant Program (Program), as established by this bill, to increase the number of mental health professionals serving children and youth. This bill was held in the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

AB 918 (Smith) of the 2019-20 Session, would have required the California Department of Education (CDE), on or before November 1, 2020, in coordination with other relevant state and local agencies, to submit recommendations to the Legislature and governor about how to develop a system through which qualified mental health professionals and other key school personnel employed by local educational agencies (LEAs) throughout the state could be rapidly deployed on a short- or long-term basis to an area of the state that has experienced a natural disaster or other traumatic event, in order to provide support to pupils and staff. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Alameda County Office of Education
Association of California School Administrators
California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO)
California Association of School Counselors
California Association of School Psychologists
California County Superintendents
California School Nurses Organization
Edvoice
Office of The Riverside County Superintendent of Schools

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Chelsea Kelley / ED. / (916) 319-2087