

Date of Hearing: March 29, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Al Muratsuchi, Chair

AB 1106 (Soria) – As Amended March 9, 2023

SUBJECT: PK-3 early childhood education specialist credential: bilingual authorization: grant program

SUMMARY: Establishes a grant program for institutions of higher education (IHEs) to establish programs of professional preparation that lead to more credentialed teachers obtaining the PK-3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialist Credential, with a preference for programs that also offer a bilingual authorization. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the CTC to develop and implement a program to award, on a competitive basis, planning grants of up to \$250,000 each to regionally accredited IHEs for the development of plans to guide the creation of programs of professional preparation that lead to more credentialed teachers obtaining the PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential and a bilingual authorization.
- 2) States that a regionally accredited IHE awarded a planning grant may use the grant funds to create a new four-year integrated program of professional preparation, adapt an existing integrated program of professional preparation, or establish a stand-alone program of professional preparation.
- 3) States that a regionally accredited institution of higher education awarded a planning grant may use grant funds for any purpose in support of planning for a program of professional preparation described, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
 - a) To provide faculty release time to design new courses or redesign existing courses;
 - b) To assist with hiring and training of faculty who are equipped to use culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate pedagogies in their instruction;
 - c) To provide stipends for program coordinators to assist in collaboration with subject-matter professors, such as bilingual educators and ECE educators, and pedagogy professors, including those at other institutions of higher education;
 - d) To expand or establish partnerships with California community colleges to create four-year integrated programs of professional preparation;
 - e) To develop high-quality clinical experiences in partnership with local education agencies (LEAs) other preschool programs;
 - f) To recruit individuals for participation as students in programs of professional preparation, especially those who are already educators in the early learning and care field;
 - g) To develop a marketing strategy to publicize the new credential program;

- h) To plan for the concurrent provision of bilingual authorization for teacher candidates; or
 - i) To offer coursework at times and locations that are convenient for current working candidates.
- 4) Requires the CTC to develop and implement a program to award, on a competitive basis, implementation grants of up to \$500,000 each to regionally accredited IHEs for the implementation of programs of professional preparation, that lead to more teachers with the PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential and a bilingual authorization.
- 5) States that a regionally accredited institution of higher education awarded a planning grant may use the grant funds to create a new four-year integrated program of professional preparation, adapt an existing integrated program of professional preparation, or establish a stand-alone program of professional preparation.
- 6) States that a regionally accredited institution of higher education awarded a planning grant may use grant funds for any purpose in support of implementing a program of professional preparation described, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
- a) To provide faculty release time to design new courses or redesign existing courses;
 - b) To assist with hiring and training of faculty who are equipped to use culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate pedagogies in their instruction;
 - c) To provide stipends for program coordinators to assist in collaboration with subject-matter professors, such as bilingual educators and ECE educators, and pedagogy professors, including those at other institutions of higher education;
 - d) To expand or establish partnerships with California community colleges to create four-year integrated programs of professional preparation;
 - e) To develop high-quality clinical experiences in partnership with LEAs and other preschool programs;
 - f) To recruit individuals for participation as students in programs of professional preparation, especially those who are already educators in the early learning and care field;
 - g) To develop a marketing strategy to publicize the new credential program;
 - h) To develop and provide academic supports for teacher candidates, including specialized advising for nontraditional students and emergent multilingual teacher candidates;
 - i) To provide tuition and nontuition assistance for teacher candidates, such as childcare, transportation, and stipends;
 - j) To plan for the concurrent provision of bilingual authorization for teacher candidates; or

- k) To offer coursework at times and locations that are convenient for current working candidates.
- 7) Requires, as a condition of the receipt of a planning grant, or an implementation grant, a regionally accredited institution of higher education to provide to the CTC program and outcome data for at least five years after receiving the grant. Requires that the information include program design and features, the number of teacher candidates and their demographics, the number and type of credentials earned, the time taken to earn a degree and credential, the number of graduates and their demographics, and any other information the CTC may require for purposes of documenting the effect of the grant and identifying effective practices in program design and implementation.
- 8) Requires the CTC to require applicants for planning grants, and for implementation grants, to provide assurances of both of the following:
 - a) That candidates will have the ability to teach designated and integrated English language development (ELD) classes; and
 - b) Coordination with existing sources of candidate support, such as the Golden State Teacher Grant Program, the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program, the Teacher Residency Grant Program, Integrated Teacher Preparation Program Planning Grants, or Integrated Teacher Preparation Program Implementation and Expansion Grants.
- 9) Requires the CTC to give preference to proposals for planning grants, and for implementation grants, that commit to all of the following:
 - a) A plan to collaborate with bilingual authorization programs in order to produce teachers that have a bilingual authorization;
 - b) A plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of teacher candidates who have prior experience in the early learning and care field, and who reflect the demographics of pupils in the local community; and
 - c) A ratified articulation agreement for teacher preparation coursework between one or more California community colleges and one or more four-year IHEs
- 10) Authorizes the CTC to use up to 1.5% of moneys appropriated to administer the grants and provide support to those grantees, pursuant to Department of Finance approval.
- 11) Requires the CTC to annually report to the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature on any grants funded until funds are fully expended. States that in addition to the data required to be reported to the CTC, the report shall also include data on the progress of community college partnerships and institutions relative to the assurances made.
- 12) States that implementation is contingent upon an appropriation by the Legislature for these purposes in the annual Budget Act or another statute.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) 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.
 - 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. (Education Code 44225)
- 2) Authorizes the CTC to issue single subject teaching credentials in agriculture, art, biological sciences, business, chemistry, dance, English, geosciences, health science, home economics, industrial and technology education (ITE), mathematics, music, physics, physical education, science (various subjects), social science, theater, and world languages (English language development and languages other than English). (EC 44257)
- 3) Authorizes the CTC to issue a multiple or single subject teaching credential with a specified concentration in a particular subject based upon the depth of an applicant's preparation in an important subject of the school curriculum in order to ensure excellence in teaching in specific subjects. (EC 44257.2)
- 4) Authorizes the CTC to issue credentials for teaching specialties, including bilingual education, early childhood education, and special education (education specialist). Requires education specialist teaching credentials to be based upon a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, completion of a program of professional preparation, and standards that the CTC may establish. (EC 44274.2)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, "California is home to approximately 2.5 million multilingual learners, more than any other state. Despite the high need, the state is facing a low supply of bilingual educators. 76% of children aged 0-4 in California are children of color and yet only 39% of the current TK-12 workforce are teachers of color (CDE, 2020).

California has made significant investments towards the goal of expanding transitional kindergarten (TK) to all 4-year-olds in the state by the 2025-26 school year, consistent with the

state's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care. The expansion of TK has created demand for new teachers in public school classrooms. To meet the demand, districts will need to hire between 11,000 and 15,600 TK teachers on top of the state's existing shortage.

AB 1106 establishes a one-time grant program, administered by Commission on Teacher Credentialing, to IHEs to incentivize development and implementation of the PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential pathway and support program development that is rooted in best practices to support diverse candidates."

What does this bill do? This bill establishes, upon appropriation in the Budget Act, a grant program for IHEs to establish PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential programs and give a preference in the grant awards to those programs that also offer a bilingual authorization. The bill establishes \$250,000 planning grants and \$500,000 implementation grants for these programs.

PK-3 early childhood education specialist credential. According to the CTC, California is making historic investments that will increase access to transitional kindergarten (TK) for all four-year-old children in the state. Recent estimates from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley indicate a need for between 8,000 and 11,000 new teachers in a K-12 system that is already struggling with critical teacher shortages across the state. The proposed PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential is specifically designed and intended to meet this demand for a qualified, diverse workforce of ECE teachers to serve children and their families/guardians from three years to third grade. The proposed credential will provide accelerated pathways for current Multiple Subject Credential holders as well as for Child Development Teacher Permit holders with a bachelor's degree. The PK-3 ECE Credential is an opportunity to advance best practices in child development in the current TK-12 education system. The PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential is a unique opportunity that has not been available in California for decades and may not be again.

Current early childhood educators who want to work in TK classrooms and those teachers and teachers-to-be who want to teach preschool to grade 3 in public schools are potential candidates for PK-3 ECE specialist credential. While Multiple Subject Credential holders are already authorized to serve in grades PK-3, this credential will be available to help them meet a requirement that they complete 24 units of child development or ECE coursework required to teach in TK. This credential will also be an option for Child Development Teacher Permit holders as well as other individuals interested in a career in teaching in ECE who want to teach in grades PK-3. Beginning in early 2023, CTC accredited institutions may apply to offer a PK-3 Specialist Instruction Program.

Existing supports for IHEs. The CTC will provide a series of ongoing technical assistance webinars for the field to help support IHEs interested in offering preparation for the PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential if and when this credential is established in regulations. In addition, the CTC will continue to hold bimonthly office hours as a further support to interested IHEs when the PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential is established in regulations. The need for support for IHEs to implement the PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential has been communicated to state leadership, specifically guidance around ECE/Child Development and Education departments or colleges working collaboratively. Conversations to address support for IHEs are needed across state systems.

Bilingual authorization. The bilingual authorization allows a holder to provide English Language Development (ELD) and instruction for primary language development at the level indicated by the holder's prerequisite credential including preschool, grades K-12 and in classes organized primarily for adults.

The bilingual authorization authorizes instruction in the following areas:

- *Instruction for English language development (ELD)*, which means instruction designed specifically for EL students to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. This type of instruction is also known as English as a Second Language (ESL) or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).
- *Instruction for primary language development*, which means instruction for EL students to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in their primary language.
- *Specially Designed Academic Instruction Delivered in English (SDAIE)*, which means instruction in a subject area delivered in English that is specially designed to provide EL students with access to the curriculum.
- *Content Instruction Delivered in the Primary Language*, which means instruction for EL students in a subject area delivered in the students' primary language.

Requirements for the bilingual authorization. Individuals must satisfy **all** of the following requirements:

- 1) Possession of a valid California teaching credential;
- 2) Verification of **one** of the following:
 - a) Valid Language Development Specialist (LDS) Certificate, Crosscultural, Language, and Academic Development (CLAD) Certificate, teaching credential with an English Learner Authorization or CLAD Emphasis; or
 - b) Eligibility for a CLAD Certificate or teaching credential with an English learner authorization based on one of the following:
 - i) Passing scores on Subtests 1, 2, and 3 of the California Teacher of English Learners (CTEL) Examination.
 - ii) Possession of an out-of-state credential showing an English learner authorization.
 - iii) Possession of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certificate in Early and Middle Childhood/English as a New Language or Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/English as a New Language.
- 3) Verification of **one** of the following:
 - a) Passing scores on Tests II (or III depending on the language, covering Language and Communication), IV, and V of the California Subject Examinations for Teachers

(CSET): World Languages;

- b) Completion of course work in a CTC-approved bilingual program; or
- c) Completion of course work in a CTC-approved bilingual program combined with passing scores on the CSET: World Languages Examination(s).

Ongoing teacher shortage further impacted by COVID-19. A March 2021 report by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) raised concerns about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the teacher shortage in California:

- *Teacher shortages remain a critical problem.* Most districts have found teachers to be in short supply, especially for math, science, special education, and bilingual education. Shortages are especially concerning as a return to in-person instruction will require even more teachers to accommodate physical distancing requirements. Most districts are filling hiring needs with teachers on substandard credentials and permits, reflecting a statewide trend of increasing reliance on underprepared teachers. According to the CTC, half of all documents issued during the last few years have been substandard permits, and for special education that figure is two-thirds.
- *Teacher workload and burnout are major concerns.* The transition to online and hybrid learning models has had a steep learning curve and poses ongoing challenges that have been a primary contributor to some teachers' decisions to retire earlier than previously planned. With district leaders estimating that teacher workloads have at least doubled, many were concerned that the stressors of managing the challenges of the pandemic on top of the challenges of an increased workload could lead to teacher burnout and increased turnover rates.
- *Growing retirements contribute to teacher shortages.* In some districts, retirements and resignations are contributing to shortages, while in others, these retirements and resignations offset the need for anticipated layoffs due to expected budget cuts this school year. The California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) reported in February, 2021 that in the second half of 2020, the number of retirements had increased 26% over the same period in 2019. 62% of teachers surveyed by CalSTRS reported retiring earlier than planned, and the top three reasons for retiring were challenges of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, not wanting to continue to work remotely, and not wanting to risk exposure to COVID-19. At that time CalSTRS projected that this year would be the second highest recorded for retirements. A 2021 RAND Corporation report similarly found that stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic was a primary cause of earlier-than-planned retirement.
- *Growing resignations cause further reduced supply.* In a 2022 report of survey data from large and small school districts serving a total of 20% of California students, the LPI found that the pandemic had caused an increase in teacher resignations. In one large district, resignations increased by about two-thirds, and leaves of absence increased by about 50%. This is consistent with a nationally representative survey of 3,600 teachers published by the National Education Association (NEA) in 2022, which found that, among school employees (including classified employees), 55% of educators were considering leaving the profession earlier than they had planned, an increase from 37%

from 2021, with higher rates for African American and Latino employees. 86% of respondents said that they have seen more educators leaving the profession or retiring early since the start of the pandemic in 2020. Among the most commonly cited reasons for leaving the profession or retiring early were burnout and general stress from the pandemic.

By incentivizing IHE's to expand offerings of teacher preparation programs, this bill could assist the state in meeting its goals to increase the teacher supply, especially for the newly expanded requirements for K-12 schools to offer universal transitional kindergarten.

TK expansion will require up to 15,000 more teachers. According to a 2022 report by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI):

The expansion of TK, which, in California, essentially adds another public school grade, creates a significant new demand for credentialed teachers with early childhood expertise. In 2019–20, nearly 89,000 children enrolled in TK, representing 71% of eligible 4-year-olds based on the original birthdate cutoff of December 2. That number of eligible children will increase as the age of eligibility gradually expands by several months each year until universal eligibility for all 4-year-olds in 2025–26. An LPI analysis estimates that by 2025–26, more than 447,700 children will be eligible for TK, with between 291,000 and 358,000 children enrolled, depending on the rate of uptake. In turn, TK will require an additional 11,900 to 15,600 credentialed teachers with early childhood expertise. The state can draw on existing pools of current Multiple Subject credential holders, current early childhood educators, and new candidates, but most potential TK teachers will require at least some additional preparation.

Recommended Committee Amendments. Staff recommends the bill be amended as follows:

- 1) Clarify that a preference shall be given in the grant application process for credential programs that offer both a PK-3 ECE Specialist credential and a bilingual authorization together.
- 2) Make technical amendments related to scheduling for program participants.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Children Now
Edvoice
The Education Trust - West

Opposition

None on file

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