

Date of Hearing: March 23, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
AB 1893 (Cunningham) – As Amended February 18, 2022

SUBJECT: Teacher credentialing: emergency teaching permits

SUMMARY: Requires, until July 1, 2024, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to waive the basic skills proficiency requirement for the issuance of an emergency 30-day substitute teaching permit.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Prohibits the CTC from issuing a credential, permit, certificate, or renewal of an emergency credential to a person to serve in the public schools unless the person has demonstrated proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills in the English language. (Education Code (EC) 44252)
- 2) Requires the CTC to exempt the following persons from the basic skills proficiency test requirement:
 - a) A person credentialed solely for the purpose of teaching adults in an apprenticeship program;
 - b) An applicant for an adult education designated subject credential for other than an academic subject;
 - c) A person credentialed in another state who is an applicant for employment in a school district in this state who has passed a basic skills proficiency examination administered by the state where the person is credentialed;
 - d) A person credentialed in another state who is an applicant for employment in a school district in this state who has passed a basic skills proficiency examination that has been developed and administered by the school district offering that person employment, by cooperating school districts, or by the appropriate county office of education. Requires that the applicant be granted a nonrenewable credential, valid for not longer than one year, pending fulfillment of the basic skills proficiency;
 - e) An applicant for a child care center permit or a permit authorizing service in a development center for the handicapped if the holder of the permit is not required to have a baccalaureate degree;
 - f) The holder of a credential, permit, or certificate to teach, other than an emergency permit, who seeks an additional authorization to teach;
 - g) An applicant for a credential to provide service in the health profession;

- h) An applicant who achieves scores on the writing, reading, and mathematics sections of the College Board SAT Reasoning Test, the enhanced ACT Test, or the California State University Early Assessment Program that are sufficient to waive the English placement test and the entry level mathematics examination administered by the California State University;
 - i) An applicant for an eminence credential; and
 - j) An applicant who earns at least a letter grade of B in qualifying coursework determined by a credential preparation program, or determined by the commission for an applicant not enrolled in a California credential preparation program, to sufficiently serve as an indicator of proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills in the English language. (EC 44252)
- 3) Requires the CTC to administer the California basic skills proficiency test (CBEST) in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the CTC. Requires a fee to be charged to individuals being tested to cover the costs of the test, including the costs of developing, administering, and grading the test. Requires the amount of the fee to be established by the CTC to recover the cost of examination administration and development. (EC 44252.5)
- 4) States that an individual who passes the state basic skills proficiency test, as adopted by the Superintendent, is considered proficient in the skills of reading, writing, and mathematics, and is not be required to be retested by this test for purposes of meeting the proficiency requirements. (EC 44252.5)
- 5) States that an individual who passes one or more components of the CBEST in the subjects of basic reading, writing, or mathematics shall be deemed to have demonstrated his or her proficiency in these subject areas and shall not be required to be retested in these subjects during subsequent test administrations. (EC 44252.5)
- 6) Authorizes the CTC to issue or renew emergency teaching or specialist permits provided that all of the following conditions are met:
- a) The applicant possesses a baccalaureate degree conferred by a regionally accredited institution of higher education and has fulfilled the subject matter requirements of Section 44301;
 - b) The applicant passes the state basic skills proficiency test as provided for in Section 44252; and
 - c) The commission approves the justification for the emergency permit submitted by the school district in which the applicant is to be employed. (EC 44300)
- 7) Requires a person holding an emergency teaching or specialist permit to attend an orientation to the curriculum and to techniques of instruction and classroom management, and to teach only with the assistance and guidance of a certificated employee of the district who has completed at least three years of full-time teaching experience, or the equivalent thereof. States the intent of the Legislature to encourage districts to provide directed teaching experience to new emergency permitholders with no prior teaching experience. (EC 44300)

- 8) Requires the holder of an emergency permit to participate in ongoing training, coursework, or seminars designed to prepare the individual to become a fully credentialed teacher or other educator in the subject area or areas in which he or she is assigned to teach or serve. Requires the employing agency to verify that employees applying to renew their emergency permits are meeting these ongoing training requirements. (EC 44300)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “Our school districts are struggling with their most severe substitute and teacher shortage in years. AB 1893 will temporarily remove the most time consuming component of the 30 day emergency substitute permit process to expedite the number of substitutes available to schools and ease strains on staff.”

What is the California basic skills requirement? The main path to satisfy the basic skills requirement is by taking the CBEST, which is designed to test basic reading, mathematics, and writing skills found to be important for the job of an educator. The test is not designed to measure the ability to teach those skills. There are exemptions from passage of the CBEST exam for certain types of teachers and for applicants who have passing scores on other exams, such as Advanced Placement exams and college admissions exams. Applicants may also fulfill the basic skills requirement through coursework. All teacher candidates must demonstrate basic skills by passing the CBEST or through one of the existing exemptions.

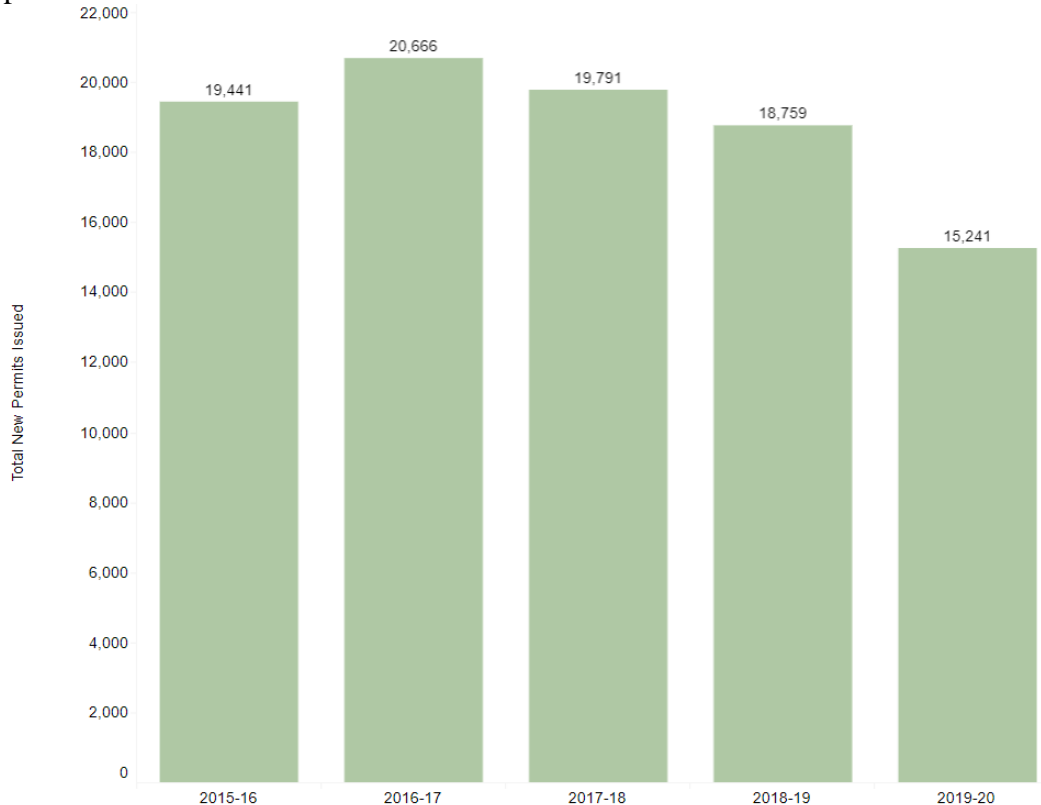
According to the CTC, once the CBEST is completed, it takes approximately two weeks to receive test results. If a candidate is satisfying the basic skills requirement through coursework, the evaluation of the candidate’s coursework is evaluated within the 50 day CTC application processing time.

COVID-19 implications. With the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, creative solutions that increase opportunity for substitute teacher candidates to qualify for permits are needed more urgently than ever. During the 2021-22 school year, and especially in January 2022, schools across the state were hit hard with teacher absences due to COVID-19. Some school districts had over 100 certificated absences each school day, and not enough substitute teachers to fill the need. Many districts attempted to recruit parents to substitute teach, however parents who were interested in substitute teaching needed to pass the basic skills requirement in order to earn a permit. This limited the number of parents who were able to substitute teach during this crisis period, to those who already held a substitute teaching permit. Possible periodic resurgences of the COVID-19 pandemic may again require an increase in the number of substitute teachers needed in the 2023-2024 academic year and beyond.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, California is facing a massive substitute teacher shortage. In the 2016-17 school year, the CTC issued more than 20,600 substitute teaching permits, in 2019-20, it issued only slightly more than 15,200. With dozens of teachers out every week due to COVID infection or exposure, California has leaned on its dwindling substitute teacher pool more than ever. Across the nation, states have had to cancel classes due to districts’ inability to staff classrooms, this has led many of them to ease requirements to attract more substitute teachers.

CBEST waiver during COVID-19. The CBEST was waived during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic through action taken by the CTC in April 2020 and October 2020. The CTC’s action allowed deferral of the CBEST for all credential candidates, who had not previously failed the CBEST exam. This deferral applied to substitute teaching permit applicants as well as newly prepared teacher candidates. This flexibility was in place between March 2020 through August 2021, but is not in place any longer.

California data on issuance of substitute permits. The graph below shows the number of new 30-day substitute teaching permits issued. The number of substitute teaching permits issued has dropped more than 25% since 2016-17.



(Source: CTC)

Requirements for holding a substitute teacher permit. The current requirements to earn a substitute teacher permit include:

- 1) Official transcripts showing the conferral of a baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university;
- 2) Basic skills requirement;
- 3) Completed application and a completed Live Scan receipt; and
- 4) Application processing fees.

Substitute teacher requirements in other states. Due to the acute need to increase the substitute teacher pool, some states have changed the academic requirements needed to earn a substitute

teaching permit. For example, Missouri and Oregon temporarily removed their requirement for a bachelor's degree to serve as a substitute teacher during the pandemic.

This bill would remove the requirement for substitute teachers to satisfy the basic skills requirement before earning a substitute teaching permit, through July 1, 2024. The bill would retain the current requirement for substitute teacher permit holders to hold a bachelor's degree.

Teacher shortages increase the demand for substitute teachers. Teacher shortages have increased the need and demand for substitute teachers. New strategies for substitute recruitment and retention are rapidly changing. According to a report and survey conducted by EdWeek Research Center, *The Substitute Teacher Gap: Recruitment and Retention Challenges in the Age of Covid-19*, short-term substitute teaching positions have been difficult to fill because of low wages, lack of benefits, and the requirement to hold a bachelor's degree. This report found that on average about 250,000 positions are left to be filled daily with substitute teachers with only 54% total absences covered with substitute teachers filling in the vacancies. The report also found that 71% of administrators and school board members predict that the demand for substitute teachers will increase in the next five years. The report interviewed a California school board member who stated, "Many of those people that we do recruit to become substitutes end up getting hired as fulltime teachers, which is great; however, then we lose them on the substitute teacher roles."

Already weak teaching pipeline further damaged by COVID-19 education disruptions. 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.
- ***Teacher pipeline problems are exacerbated by teacher testing policies and inadequate financial aid for completing preparation.*** Many districts attributed shortages to having a limited pool of fully credentialed applicants, with more than half reporting that testing requirements and lack of financial support for teacher education pose barriers to entry into teaching.
- ***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 and resignations further reduce supply.*** 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. District leaders anticipate higher retirement rates next year, which could exacerbate teacher shortages.

Recommended committee amendment. Staff recommends the bill be amended to clarify that substitute permit holders who utilize this flexibility, may not attain a subsequent teaching credential without satisfying the basic skills requirements.

Related legislation. AB 130 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 44, Statutes of 2021 authorized a teacher credential applicant to demonstrate the basic skills proficiency by earning a grade of “B” or better in qualifying coursework, or through a combination of qualifying coursework and existing exams, in lieu of a basic skills proficiency exam.

AB 1982 (Cunningham) of the 2019-2020 Session would have authorized a teacher credential applicant to demonstrate the basic skills proficiency by earning a grade of “B” or better in qualifying coursework, or through a combination of qualifying coursework and existing exams, in lieu of a basic skills proficiency exam. This bill was held in the Senate Education Committee.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Charter Schools Association

Opposition

None on file

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