

Date of Hearing: April 12, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Al Muratsuchi, Chair  
AB 238 (Muratsuchi) – As Amended March 30, 2023

**SUBJECT:** California Student Teacher Support Grant Program

**SUMMARY:** Establishes the California Student Teacher Support Grant Program to compensate teacher credential candidates during required student teaching. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes, subject to an appropriation of one-time funds for this purpose, the California Student Teacher Support Grant Program, under the administration of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), to compensate teaching credential candidates during the student teaching component of the 600 hours of clinical practice that is required as part of the candidate's teacher preparation program.
- 2) Requires the CTC to issue a request for proposals to all local educational agencies (LEAs) to solicit applications for funding.
- 3) Requires the criteria adopted by the CTC for the selection of LEAs to participate in the program to include all of the following:
  - a) An applicant must require participants to satisfy both of the following requirements before participating in the program:
    - i) Pass a criminal background check; and
    - ii) Provide verification of one of the following:
      - (1) Has earned an associate or higher level degree.
      - (2) Has successfully completed at least two years of study at a postsecondary educational institution.
      - (3) Has entered a teacher preparation program.
- 4) Requires an applicant to certify that it has received a commitment from each participant that the participant will accomplish all of the following:
  - a) Graduate from an institution of higher education (IHE) with a bachelor's degree.
  - b) Complete all of the requirements for, and obtain, a multiple subject, single subject, or education specialist teaching credential.
  - c) Complete the 600 hours of clinical practice that is required as part of the candidate's teacher preparation program.

- 5) Requires, on or before January 1 of each year, the CTC to report to the education policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature regarding the status of the program, including, but not limited to, the number of student teachers paid, the academic progress of the student teacher, the number of student teachers who are subsequently employed as teachers in the public schools, the degree to which the applicant meets the teacher shortage needs of the school district, charter school, or county office of education (COE), and the ethnic and racial composition of the participants in the program.
- 6) Defines LEA as a school district, charter school or COE.
- 7) States that it is the intent of the Legislature to create a grant program to compensate student teachers in order to help alleviate financial stress at an important time in the teacher preparation process and improve both teacher retention and recruitment in California's public school system.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Requires the CTC to establish standards for the issuance and renewal of credentials, certificates, and permits. Requires the CTC to adopt standards for the accreditation of postsecondary teacher preparation programs. Prescribes "clinical practice" as one of the CTC-adopted standards and requires that teaching credential candidates perform 600 hours of clinical practice throughout the candidate's teacher preparation program. (Education Code (EC) 44300 and the CTC's Teaching Performance Expectations)
- 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 44225)
- 3) 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)

- 4) 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)
- 5) 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, “The state’s ongoing educator and workforce shortage has only increased as a result of the pandemic. Schools are having trouble finding appropriately credentialed teachers, especially in STEM and special education fields. AB 238 helps relieve the teacher shortage by establishing the California Student Teacher Support Grant Program, which compensates student teachers during their required student teaching hours to help alleviate financial stress at an important time in the teacher preparation process.”

***What does this bill do?*** This bill creates a grant program, for which LEAs can apply to receive funding to pay student teachers during their 600 hours of required clinical practice. Research suggests that because student teaching is currently unpaid, it is a financial burden and therefore a barrier to individuals entering the teaching profession.

***Required clinical practice for teachers.*** According to the CTC, the CTC’s adopted standards for preliminary multiple and single subject teacher preparation programs set forth the expectations for programs to provide candidates with appropriate supervised clinical practice. In adopting the program standards related to supervised clinical practice, the CTC signals the critical role that a high quality and extensive clinical practice experience plays in preparing effective educators. The standards related to clinical practice are at times specific and directive, while also allowing for flexibility for institutions to design experiences that work well for their candidates and the TK-12 schools they serve.

The program’s clinical practice experiences are designed to provide the candidate with a developmental and sequential set of activities that are integrated with the program’s coursework and extend the candidate’s learning through application of theory to practice with TK-12 students in California public school classrooms. Clinical practice is a developmental and sequential set of activities integrated with theoretical and pedagogical coursework, and must consist of a minimum of 600 hours of clinical practice across the arc of the program. The range of clinical practice experiences provided by the program includes supervised early field experiences, initial student teaching (co-planning and co-teaching with both general educators and education specialists, as appropriate, or guided teaching), and final student teaching. Student teaching includes a minimum of four weeks of solo or co-teaching or its equivalent. For interns, early field experience would take place in an experienced mentor’s classroom. In most cases, clinical practice hours are unpaid. AB 238 will compensate student teachers during their required student teaching hours.

**Teacher survey data.** In a September 2022 survey of TK-12 teachers in California conducted by Hart Research Associates, aspiring and former teachers shared their suggested policy changes to develop a strategy for teacher retention and recruitment. This survey provided several insights on teacher preparation programs, teacher workload, and the financial costs of teacher preparation programs. Aspiring teachers recommended compensating student teachers to help alleviate financial stress at an important time in the teacher preparation process. Specifically the report noted:

- Aspiring teachers of color were more likely to feel less motivated to teach than their white counterparts, and through those discussions, a clear disparity emerged. The reasons they feel *less* motivated include heightened financial stress, low or no pay for time spent student-teaching, discouraging feedback, and the required teacher candidate assessments, which some express are racially biased. The testing and evaluation process required to enter the profession was cited as a significant reason for why future teachers of colors became less motivated.
- The cost of tuition and assessments is a major financial burden and source of stress for these aspiring teachers in California. Many report that they specifically chose the institution they attended based on tuition costs and the availability of scholarships, grants, and financial aid. Several indicated that, had they not had financial support from a spouse or partner or received some form of financial assistance or a scholarship, they likely would not have pursued a career in teaching.
- Compensating student teachers was suggested by a significant number of the aspiring teachers and is viewed as a very important policy change that will help alleviate financial stress at an important time in the teacher preparation process.

**What are other states doing?** In 2022, the State of Michigan established the MI Future Educator Stipend to pay student teachers and mentor teachers. Student teachers are paid \$90 for each day they work as a student teacher.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education is investing federal relief dollars to compensate qualified candidates for their work as student teachers. The program will fund Oklahoma student teachers in school year 2021-22 through school year 2023-24. Through a partnership with state IHEs, payments of up to \$3,250 will be provided to each student teacher approved by educator preparation providers. The payments are divided into two, with the first half going directly to the student teacher and the second payment through the school district which will pass the funding onto the student teacher.

**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. 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. 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.

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

- 1) Specify that the grant amount shall be equal to the daily wage for substitute teachers at the LEA.
- 2) Make technical and clarifying amendments to remove the requirement for student teachers to complete their bachelor's degree, show academic progress, and specify that the CTC shall create a request for applications, instead of a request for proposals.
- 3) Clarify that the grant shall be funded out of Proposition 98.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

California Catholic Conference

California Charter Schools Association  
California Faculty Association  
Edvoice

**Opposition**

None on file

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