

Date of Hearing: March 27, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
AB 988 (Berman) – As Introduced February 21, 2019

SUBJECT: Teacher credentialing: out-of-state prepared teachers: education specialist credential

SUMMARY: Authorizes an out-of-state prepared candidate for the education specialist credential to demonstrate their area of concentration based on two years of experience in California, while the candidate holds a Preliminary credential.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to issue a five-year preliminary multiple subject teaching credential authorizing instruction in a self-contained classroom, a five-year preliminary single subject teaching credential authorizing instruction in departmentalized classes, or a five-year preliminary education specialist credential authorizing instruction of special education pupils to an out-of-state prepared teacher who meets all of the following requirements:
 - a) Possesses a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education.
 - b) Has completed a teacher preparation program at a regionally accredited institution of higher education, or a state-approved teacher preparation program offered by a local educational agency.
 - c) Meets the subject matter knowledge requirements for the credential. If the subject area listed on the out-of-state credential does not correspond to a California subject area, the CTC may require the applicant to meet California subject matter requirements before issuing a clear credential.
 - d) Has earned a valid corresponding elementary, secondary, or special education teaching credential based upon the out-of-state teacher preparation program. For the education specialist credential, the CTC shall determine the area of concentration based on the special education program completed out-of-state.
 - e) Has successfully completed a criminal background check for credentialing purposes. (Education Code 44274.2)
- 2) Requires the holder of a preliminary credential who is prepared out-of-state to meet the state basic skills proficiency requirement within one year of the date the credential is issued or the credential becomes invalid. (Education Code 44274.2)
- 3) Requires the CTC to issue a clear multiple subject, single subject, or education specialist teaching credential to an applicant who satisfies the requirements above, provides verification of two or more years of teaching experience, including, but not limited to, two satisfactory performance evaluations, and documents, in a manner prescribed by the CTC,

that he or she has met the state requirements for teaching English learners including, but not limited to, the requirements in Section 44253.3 or 44259.5. (Education Code 44274.2)

- 4) Requires, for applicants who do not meet the experience requirement, the CTC to issue a clear multiple subject, single subject, or education specialist teaching credential upon verification of the following requirements:
 - a) The CTC has issued to the applicant a preliminary five-year teaching credential.
 - b) The applicant has completed a beginning teacher induction program.
 - c) The applicant has met the requirements for teaching English learners.
 - d) Before issuing an education specialist credential, the commission shall verify completion of a program for the Professional Level II credential accredited by the CTC. (Education Code 44274.2)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill: Current law states that California teachers are required to obtain a credential to be able to teach in California, based on a two-tiered credentialing system. A Preliminary credential, is issued once a teacher meets the basic requirements for a credential, and is valid for five years. After meeting all other requirements, the teacher then obtains a Clear credential. The term Clear credential signifies that all education and program requirements for the credential have been met.

Some states do not specify the types of disabilities that a special education teacher may teach and their credential does not align perfectly with California's specialization in either Mild/Moderate or Moderate/Severe student needs. When an out-of-state teacher applies for a credential in California with this type of out-of-state credential, the CTC will issue a Preliminary credential, however, the teacher will need to demonstrate their specialization in either Mild/Moderate or Moderate/Severe student needs by documenting two years of teaching out-of-state in one of these specializations, or, complete additional coursework, before they can attain their Clear credential. This means a teacher with 20 years of experience teaching a broad spectrum of special education students in another state could be required to return to school to demonstrate their subject matter knowledge and earn a Clear credential in California. Instead, AB 988 would allow out-of-state special education teachers to demonstrate their specialization in either Mild/Moderate or Moderate/Severe by documenting two years of successful teaching in California, while the teacher holds a Preliminary credential.

According to the Author: "California is facing a severe teacher shortage, and the most vulnerable populations of students are affected. Nine out of ten school districts in California report a shortage in special education teachers, and the shortage disproportionately impacts low-income and minority students. AB 988 would remove an existing barrier to out-of-state special education teachers that choose to teach in California in response to this alarming shortage. To be fully qualified to teach in California, a teacher must hold a credential, based on a two-tiered credentialing process. Each tier involves a set of requirements that the teacher must meet. This bill would streamline the credentialing process for out-of-state special education teachers by

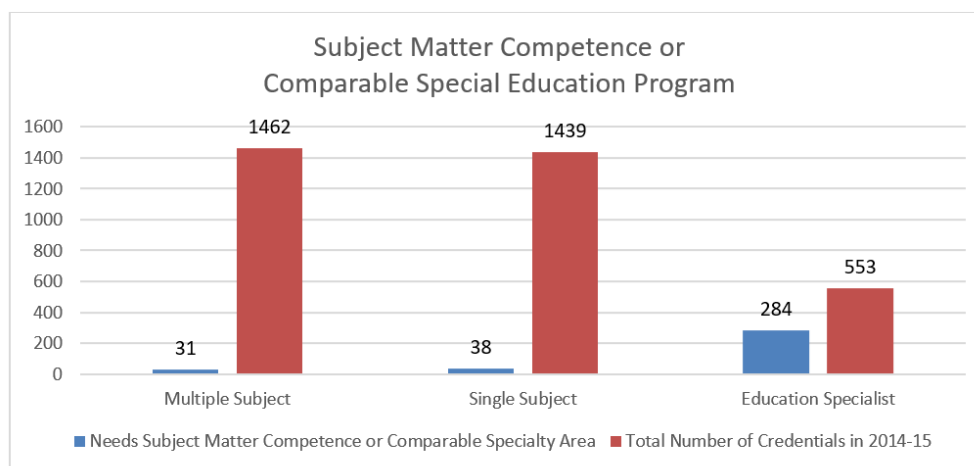
allowing these teachers to use two years of teaching in California to demonstrate the teaching experience requirement, a requirement needed to complete the second-tier of the process. Currently, teachers who have been prepared out-of-state are faced with additional requirements due to a misalignment of California’s special education areas of concentration with other states. This additional requirement results in additional costs and a prolonged process for the teacher and often discourages out-of-state teachers to teach in California. Removing this existing barrier will help California respond to the shortage that specifically impacts low-income, minority special education students.”

Teacher Shortage: School districts across the State of California are experiencing a serious shortage of qualified teachers. There are chronic shortages in the areas of special education, math, and science. Further, there is a shortage among bilingual teachers, and it is estimated that this shortage will grow with the growing popularity of language immersion and dual language immersion programs.

According to the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), “Over 1,700 underprepared special education teachers in 2015–16 were hired on emergency-style permits, which are issued to teachers with little to no preparation to teach. Substandard credentials and permits are growing in every special education subspecialty, with the greatest increases since 2012 in the areas of moderate/severe disabilities, where they have more than doubled, and mild/moderate disabilities, where they increased by more than 60%. These types of special education authorizations are needed to teach students with complex learning needs, including students diagnosed with autism, intellectual disabilities, and serious emotional disturbance. Shortages in special education are most likely to disproportionately affect English Learners, who are overrepresented in special education by nearly 30%, and Black students, who are overrepresented in special education by nearly 50%.”

Potential Impact of this Legislation: According to the CTC, in 2014-15, 51% of out-of-state prepared special education teachers were required to demonstrate their specialization in Mild/Moderate or Moderate/Severe student needs by demonstrating this type of teaching out-of-state or by completing additional coursework. The chart below shows the number of out-of-state credentials that required further subject matter knowledge to earn a Clear credential in California, and clearly demonstrates the significant issue with special education credentials.

Credentials Issued with the Subject Matter Competence or Comparable Special Education Program Renewal Requirement for Out-of-State Prepared Educators



Upcoming Changes to the California Special Education Credential: Currently, a Mild/Moderate Disabilities or Moderate/Severe Disabilities candidate's preparation program leads to authorization for the teacher to work with students in specified disability categories across a variety of educational settings. With the determination that Education Specialist credentials should focus more on a student's individual needs, the new standards place additional emphasis on language development, communication, and behavior, and the additional knowledge to support students with other disabilities. In 2018, the CTC approved a new Education Specialist credential structure reducing the number of preliminary credentials from 7 to 5. The five preliminary credentials are: Mild to Moderate Support Needs, Extensive Support Needs, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Visual Impairments and Early Childhood Special Education.

Arguments in Support: According to Long Beach Unified School District, "The amount of out-of-state special education teachers that choose to come teach in California has grown from 512 out-of-state special education teachers in the 2012-13 school year to 713 in the 2016-17 school year. We should ensure that we are continuing to incentivize qualified teachers to teach in California. AB 988 does this by removing a barrier presented by the teaching experience requirement in the credentialing process. AB 988 would allow out-of-state special education teachers who choose to teach in California to use two years teaching in California, while the teacher holds a Preliminary credential, to demonstrate the teaching experience requirement needed to obtain a Clear credential."

Committee Amendments: Staff recommends the bill be amended to eliminate outdated references to the Level II credential.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Antelope Valley SELPA
 Belmont-Redwood Shores School District
 Long Beach Unified School District
 North Coastal Consortium For Special Education
 North Santa Cruz County SELPA
 Pasadena Unified School District
 Public Advocates Inc.
 Riverside Unified School District
 San Mateo County SELPA
 Santa Barbara County Special Education Local Plan Area
 Santa Clara County Office Of Education
 Sonoma County Charter SELPA
 Sonoma County SELPA
 Tri-City SELPA

Opposition

None on file

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