

Date of Hearing: July 12, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Al Muratsuchi, Chair  
SB 223 (Menjivar) – As Introduced January 19, 2023

**[Note: This bill is double referred to the Assembly Human Services Committee and was heard by that Committee as it related to issues under its jurisdiction.]**

**SENATE VOTE:** 40-0

**SUBJECT:** Pupil personnel services: child welfare and attendance services

**SUMMARY:** Authorizes the Commission on Teaching Credentialing (CTC) to approve a program of professional preparation for a services credential with a specialization in pupil personnel services (PPS) in the area of child welfare and attendance (CWA) offered by a local educational agency (LEA) if the program of professional preparation meets standards of program quality and effectiveness that have been adopted by the CTC.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes minimum requirements for a PPS credential to include 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 that the CTC requires, including completion of a CTC-approved program of supervised field experience that includes direct classroom contact that is jointly sponsored by a school district and a college or university. (Education Code (EC) 44266)
- 2) Requires the CTC to issue credentials with a CWA services specialization in PPS under the law as read on December 31, 1986, for a time period of two years from the effective date of regulations adopted for the issuance of certificates to any candidate in the process of obtaining a services credential in the specified field. (EC 44266)
- 3) Authorizes the CTC to approve a professional preparation program for a school nursing credential offered by an LEA that had 40,000 or more students enrolled during the 2019-20 school year. Requires the CTC to apply the standards for approval of a professional preparation program offered by a postsecondary educational institution to a program of professional preparation offered by an LEA. (EC) 44267.5)
- 4) Authorizes a holder of a services credential with a PPS specialization to perform, at all grade levels, the pupil personnel service approved by the commission 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. (EC 44266)
- 5) Establishes the CTC's responsibility to rule on the eligibility of an applicant for initial accreditation for the purpose of offering a program of educator preparation. (EC 44372(c))
- 6) Requires the governing board of each school district and each county superintendent of schools to appoint a supervisor of attendance and any assistant supervisors as may be necessary to supervise the attendance of pupils in the school district or county. Among other

duties related to compulsory full-time education, truancy, work permits, compulsory continuation education, and opportunity schools, classes, and programs. (EC 48240)

- 7) Authorizes a county school attendance review board to be established in each county in order to adopt plans to promote interagency and community cooperation and to reduce the duplication of services provided to youth who have serious school attendance and behavior programs. Among the membership of the county school attendance review board are various representatives from the community and includes a representative of child and welfare attendance personnel. (EC 48321)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, “The bill’s authorization for CTC to approve a stand- alone CWA authorization program could result in additional one-time costs in the tens of thousands of dollars for each LEA to develop and submit the new program to CTC for review and approval. Additionally, a participating LEA is likely to incur ongoing costs estimated to be in the tens of thousands of dollars each year to offer the program for free to a single cohort of students. To the extent that a program charges a program candidate fees to participate, these costs could be lower. It is unclear how many LEAs statewide would elect to develop a stand-alone CWA authorization program.

The CTC indicates that any additional workload resulting from this measure would be minor and absorbable within existing resources.”

#### **COMMENTS:**

***Need for the bill.*** This bill would authorize the CTC to approve of a professional preparation program offered by an LEA for a PPS credential with the specialization of Child Welfare and Attendance services on the condition that the professional preparation program meets standards set by the CTC.

According to the author, “There is a well-documented shortage of mental health professionals in schools. With a tight budget this year and an ongoing workforce shortage, it’s extremely important that California comes up with creative ways to increase mental health service providers in schools. Since the pandemic, absenteeism has only gotten worse. Having credentialed Pupil Personnel Services providers with a specific certification in Child Welfare and Attendance will help to ensure that students who may need extra support are receiving it without missing meaningful time in the classroom. By allowing Local Education Agencies to offer their own Child Welfare and Attendance certification, we will be effectively working to meet the need for qualified service providers in public schools by expanding access to these programs and complimenting those already offered by a few institutions of higher education.”

***What is the pupil personnel services (PPS) credential?*** Credential holders who have been granted a PPS credential may be authorized in one of the following specializations: school counseling, school social work, school psychology. Holders of a PPS credential in one of these areas may add an additional authorization in welfare and attendance services. Each specialization has specific requirements. The table (figure 1), shows the focus of each PPS credential authorization.

<b>PPS Credential Authorization</b>	<b>General Emphasis of Services Authorized</b>
School Psychology	Psychological, Social, and Behavioral
School Counseling	Academic, Career, and Personal
School Social Work	Interventions and Outreach
School Child Welfare and Attendance	Attendance and Enforcement

Figure 1, Source: California Commission on Teacher Credentialing

A PPS credential in each of the following specializations authorizes the holder to perform the following duties:

- School psychology: provide psychological counseling for students and families, provide services that enhance academic performance and address problems of adjustment, consult with parents and educators on issues of social development and behavioral and academic difficulties.
- School counseling: advocate for the high academic achievement and social development of students, develop and implement a school counseling and guidance program that includes academic, career, personal, and social development, and provide prevention and intervention strategies.
- School social work: assess home, school, community, and personal factors that may affect a student's learning, identify and provide intervention strategies including counseling, case management, and crisis intervention, and coordinate family, school, and community resources on behalf of students.
- Child welfare and attendance: access appropriate community services, both public and private, which may include law enforcement and social services, address school policies and procedures that are barriers to academic success for students, implement strategies to improve student attendance, participate in schoolwide reform efforts, and promote understanding and appreciation of factors that affect the attendance of culturally-diverse student populations.

***PPS credential requirements.*** In order for a candidate to earn a PPS credential, the candidate must “clear” their credential or satisfy a set of CTC-established requirements.

The minimum requirements to clear a PPS Credential are the following:

- 1) A baccalaureate degree or higher from a regionally-accredited college or university;
- 2) Completion of a post baccalaureate professional preparation program in the requested PPS area of specialization (social work, psychology, or school counseling) including successful completion of a supervised field practice specific to the chosen specialization, in a school setting that is in direct contact with pupils;

- 3) Demonstrate proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills by completing the basic skills requirement, which includes, but is not limited to, passing the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST), or completing certain coursework by way of providing official transcripts to a CTC-approved preparation completing program; and
- 4) Obtain the recommendation of a California college or university with a CTC-approved PPS program in a chosen area of specialization.

***Requirements for the added authorization in Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA).*** The following requirements for an added authorization in CWA are:

- 1) Completion of a professional preparation program specializing in school counseling, school social work, or school psychology, plus a professional preparation program in school child welfare and attendance services. In addition, a minimum of 150 clock hours of supervised school-based field experience participating in the following capacities: student attendance, student enrollment and discipline, educational records, parent engagement, and legal and ethical compliance related to pupil services; and
- 2) Obtain the recommendation of a California college or university with a CTC approved PPS program that offers the additional supervised school-based field experience in school child welfare and attendance services, which will result in the college or university submitting the recommendation as an additional CWA authorization to the PPS credential.

***Institutions that offer the CWA authorization.*** There are 15 CTC-approved preparation programs that offer the CWA added authorization, eight California State Universities (CSU) campuses, two Universities of California (UC) campuses, and at five private/independent institutions. These campuses are concentrated on the central coast and in southern California. One institution, CSU Fresno, is located in the Central Valley. Information provided by the author's office lists tuition for CWA programs ranging from \$1,500 to \$14,000 per candidate for the program. The CTC issued 512 CWA added authorizations in the last fiscal year.

***New program standards for PPS credentials.*** In April of 2019, the CTC adopted new standards for the services credential specializing in PPS and all PPS programs offered at institutions of higher education were required to meet the new standards by July 1, 2022. The new standards changed how a candidate can earn a CWA authorization. The CWA content became embedded within the three specialization areas of the PPS credential: School Social Work, School Psychology, and School Counseling. This is a significant shift from the previous 2000 PPS program standards in which candidates had to complete additional coursework in order to add the CWA authorization.

An institution may choose to offer the CWA authorization within one or more of their CTC-approved PPS credential specialization programs under the 2019 PPS program standards. Candidates intending on earning the CWA authorization must complete 150 of their supervised fieldwork hours within CWA settings aligned to the requirements of one of the three selected PPS specialization standards. The CTC permits PPS programs that have the CTC-approved CWA authorization program may recommend individuals who completed their base PPS program at a different institution on the condition that the candidate completed the program under the 2019 standards. The CTC requires institutions that seek to recommend candidates for

the CWA authorization to be approved by the CTC for the specialization (School Counseling, School Psychology, and School Social Work) in which it will be offered.

For prospective candidates who intend to pursue a CWA authorization, but earned their PPS credential prior to the implementation of the 2019 program standards, institutions may assess the coursework that the candidates have previously completed against the new standards to determine what coursework, content, and required fieldwork they would need to fulfill in order to earn the CWA authorization. The CTC is currently in the process of developing guidance to assist institutions in making this process more streamlined.

Previously, the CTC sent out a survey to the 15 institutions that offered the CWA authorization under the old standards to see if they plan to continue the CWA program moving forward. A list resulting from the survey is to be presented in August of this year to the CTC's Committee on Accreditation.

If enacted, this bill may incentivize LEAs in areas where a program is not as easily accessible to create their own CWA professional preparation program in order to improve chronic absenteeism rates within their school districts.

***Process to become an approved credential program.*** The credentialing process and requirements are governed by the CTC. The CTC serves as a state standards board for educator preparation for California public schools, the enforcement of professional practices of educators, the licensing and credentialing of professional educators in the state, and the discipline of credential holders within California.

The CTC awards credentials to individuals who complete programs that meet Standards for Educator Preparation and Standards for Educator Competence. For each credential program, the CTC has carefully developed and adopted standards based upon current research and the recommendations of experts in each field of specialty. The CTC enforces the official standards by evaluating the approved programs to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the program are maintained.

Credential programs are offered at various institutions ranging from colleges, universities, school districts, county offices of education, to private/independent institutions. The CTC currently reports 252 approved institutions that offer various types of educator preparation programs. When a new program is proposed, an institution must go through an Initial Institutional Approval (IIA) Process in order to become an approved program sponsor. The IIA process is a rigorous and lengthy assessment that ensures potential program sponsors have the capacity, resources, and the expertise to offer an educator preparation program. The IIA process consists of five stages:

- 1) Stage I: Prerequisites - the institution verifies that it is regionally accredited, a local educational agency, or is preparing to offer STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) programs.
- 2) Stage II: Eligibility requirements - the institution must respond to 12 detailed criteria regarding eligibility.

- 3) Stage III: Documentation of alignment with all common standards, program standards, and relevant preconditions.
- 4) Stage IV: Provisional and program approval for 2-3 years or denial.
- 5) Stage V: Granting of full institutional approval - the institution is assigned to a specific cohort for a recurring 7-year accreditation cycle.

***Similar preparation program for school nursing to be offered at LEAs.*** Current law authorizes the CTC to approve a teacher preparation program for a services credential with the specialization of school nursing offered at an LEA on the condition that the preparation program satisfied the requirements and standards of the CTC accreditation process. According to the CTC, no LEAs have yet been accredited for a school nursing preparation program.

***Chronic absenteeism rates have risen dramatically in recent years.*** In California, students are determined to be chronically absent if they have been enrolled for more than 30 school days during the academic year and they were absent for 10% or more of the days they were expected to attend. These include excused as well as unexcused absences. A student is deemed truant if they miss more than 30 minutes of instruction without an excuse three times during the school year.

Chronic absenteeism can result in negative impacts for students across grade levels such as lower academic outcomes and higher rates of dropping out of school (Aucejo, 2016). According to the U.S. Department of Education, children in preschool through first grade who are chronically absent are much less likely to read at grade level by the third grade. Students who cannot read at grade level by the end of third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school.

Data provided by the CDE show that the rates of chronic absenteeism have steadily increased since 2016, with the latest data from the 2021-22 school year doubling from the previous school year to 30% of all students missing 10% or more of the expected days of attendance as shown below, in figure 2. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures for in-person learning, school attendance rates dropped significantly compared with previous years and has continued to remain below prepandemic levels most notably across subgroups, in figure 3.

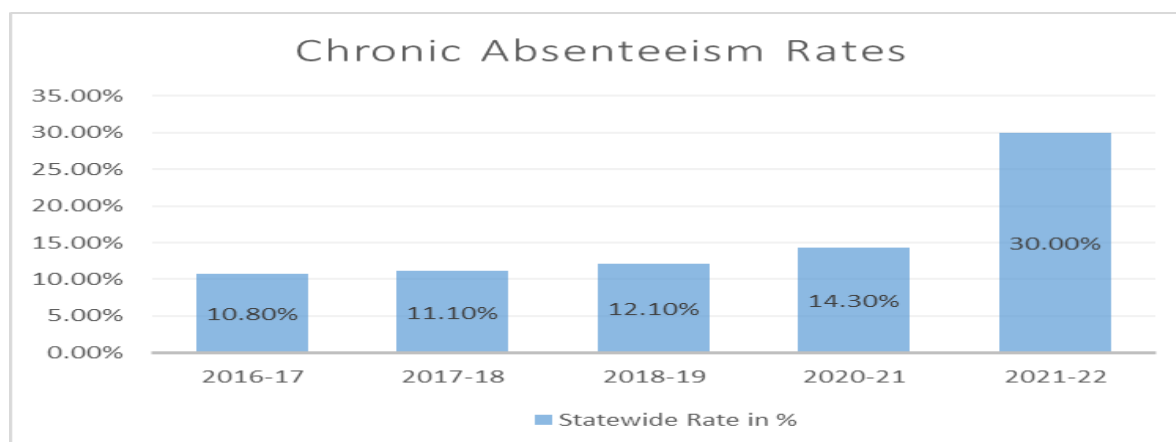


Figure 2: Source – California Department of Education, \*2019-20 school year not processed due to COVID-19 pandemic

Disproportionate rates of chronic absenteeism occur by subgroups with African American, American Indian or Native Alaskan, and Pacific Islander student populations over 40%. For student subgroups that are deemed more likely to need added support at schools, the rates were slightly higher, with foster youth and homeless youth reporting rates closer to 50%, as indicated in figure 3.

**Chronic Absenteeism Rates for subgroups: 2021-22**

Subgroup	Chronic Absenteeism Eligible Enrollment*	Chronic Absenteeism Count	Chronic Absenteeism Rate
English Learners	1,202,442	417,150	34.7%
Foster Youth	41,956	19,514	46.5%
Homeless Youth	220,162	101,601	46.1%
Migrant Education	50,187	16,515	32.9%
Students With Disabilities	828,692	336,068	40.6%
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	3,723,989	1,385,713	37.2%

Figure 3. Source: California Department of Education, \*Number of students that were enrolled for more than 30 schooldays

Reasons for students missing multiple days of school range from chronic illnesses such as asthma or diabetes, to unstable housing, barriers to transportation to school, mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, family or home situation, struggling academically, unwelcoming school climate, and misconceptions about attendance only mattering in the older grades.

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) notes in an article in March of 2023 that it is unknown as to whether the high rates of chronic absenteeism are temporary or not. They further speculate that the high rates were caused by school districts' isolation and quarantining policies of the latest year of data or may be reflections of a new reality of school connectedness for families and students.

In December of 2022, the CDE with Attendance Works sent a letter to school administrators across the state that provided resources to combat chronic absenteeism. The letter, "Working Together to Engage Students and Reduce Barriers to Attendance: A Call for Data-Informed Collaboration," emphasizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has expanded and deepened existing educational inequities. Further, "left unaddressed, disparities in the root causes and the impact of chronic absence widen gaps in academic achievement in literacy, math, and science, as well as high school graduation."

In order to reduce chronic absenteeism, the CDE and Attendance Works letter recommends several steps districts can take: examining attendance data, establishing attendance teams (including attendance clerks, social workers, and counselors), working with community partners to provide support to students and families, recognizing positive conditions for learning are in place, and utilizing a multi-tiered approach to support attendance.

**Arguments in support.** The Los Angeles Unified School District, sponsor of the bill, states, “The CWA program is a specialized student support service that covers compliance with compulsory education laws, student admission and enrollment procedures, student discipline procedures, transfers to alternative programs, and school climate and safety. As stipulated by SB 223, accreditation of an LEA to offer the CWA program must be approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and must meet standards of program quality and effectiveness that have been adopted by the CTC.

In a time where the demand for school mental health services has increased as students struggle with the economic, social, psychological impacts of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, California is experiencing a shortage of counselors that hold a CWA authorization. Recent data suggests there are fewer than 1,000 school social workers – more than seven times below the state’s recommended ratio of 1 per 800 students.

Los Angeles Unified views the work of school personnel with a CWA as crucial to help improve K-12 attendance and student wellbeing. By expanding which entities may offer the CWA authorization, SB 223 could have the effect of increasing access to high-quality certification programs with the goal of supporting LEAs with more qualified mental health professionals certified to address student needs.”

**Related legislation.** AB 815 (Luz Rivas), Chapter 668, Statutes of 2021, authorizes the CTC to approve a clear credential program offered by an LEA, that had 40,000 or more pupils enrolled during the 2019-20 school year, for school nursing; and requires the CTC to apply the standards for approval of a program of professional preparation offered by a postsecondary educational institution to a program of professional preparation offered by a LEA.

AB 2175 (Gibson) of the 2019-20 Session was substantially similar to AB 815 (Luz Rivas, Chapter 668, Statutes of 2021) and would have authorized the CTC to approve a clear credential program offered by a LEA for school nursing; and required the CTC to apply the standards for approval of a program of professional preparation offered by a postsecondary educational institution to a program of professional preparation offered by an LEA.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

Association of California School Administrators  
California Association of School Counselors  
California Association of Student Councils  
California Faculty Association  
East Bay Leadership Council  
Edvoice  
Inland Empire Economic Partnership  
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
North Bay Leadership Council  
Office of The Riverside County Superintendent of Schools  
Orange County Business Council  
Santa Clara County Office of Education



**Opposition**

None on file

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