Date of Hearing: June 23, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION Patrick O'Donnell, Chair SB 488 (Rubio) – As Amended March 4, 2021

SENATE VOTE: 39-0

SUBJECT: Teacher credentialing: reading instruction

SUMMARY: Requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to ensure, by July 1, 2025, that an approved teaching performance assessment (TPA) for a preliminary multiple subject credential and a preliminary education specialist credential assesses all candidates for competence in instruction in literacy, revises the definition of literacy instruction for purposes of teacher preparation and requires the CTC to ensure that its standards for program quality and effectiveness align to this definition, and provides an alternate means of meeting the current reading instruction competence assessment (RICA) for some credential candidates affected by COVID-19 test center closures. Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Requires that the study of teaching literacy in teacher preparation programs include evidencebased means of teaching foundational reading skills in print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency to all pupils, including tiered supports for struggling readers, English learners, and pupils with exceptional needs.
- Requires that the study of effective means of teaching literacy be in accordance with the CTC's current teaching performance expectations, be aligned to the current English Language Arts/English Language Development (ELA/ELD) Curriculum Framework, and incorporate the state's program guidelines for dyslexia.
- 3) Permits the existing requirement to complete a subject matter program to be met by a combination of coursework and passage of a subject matter examination.
- 4) Requires the CTC, by September 1, 2022, to ensure that its standards of program quality and effectiveness for the preparation of candidates for the preliminary multiple subject credential, the preliminary single subject English language arts credential, and the preliminary education specialist credential; and the teaching performance expectations for the preliminary multiple subject credential, the preliminary single subject English language arts credential, and the preliminary multiple subject credential, the preliminary single subject English language arts credential, and the preliminary education specialist credential, include and specify all of the requirements of the law for the content of teacher preparation in literacy instruction.
- 5) Requires the CTC, by September 1, 2024, to ensure that its standards of program quality and effectiveness for the preparation of candidates for the preliminary multiple subject credential, the preliminary single subject English language arts credential, and the preliminary education specialist credential; and the teaching performance expectations for the preliminary multiple subject credential, the preliminary single subject English language arts credential, and the preliminary multiple subject credential, the preliminary single subject English language arts credential, and the preliminary multiple subject credential, the preliminary single subject English language arts credential, and the preliminary education specialist credential, include all of the requirements of existing law for the content of teacher preparation in literacy instruction, including those added by this measure, such as alignment with the state's dyslexia program guidelines.

- 6) Requires the CTC, by July 1, 2025, to ensure that an approved TPA for a preliminary multiple subject credential and a preliminary education specialist credential assesses all candidates for competence in instruction in literacy, including evidence-based methods of teaching foundational reading skills, as required in existing law.
- 7) Requires teacher credential candidates for multiple subject and education specialist credentials to meet the existing RICA requirement until the CTC has ensured that TPAs meet the above requirements.
- 8) Permits candidates to meet the existing RICA requirement through a combination of the written and performance assessments authorized under existing law, as approved by the CTC.
- 9) Requires the CTC to ensure that any competencies assessed pursuant to this section are assessed in a manner aligned to the requirements existing law, the CTC's standards of program quality and effectiveness and current teaching performance expectations, and the current ELA/ELD Curriculum Framework.
- 10) Requires the CTC to ensure that the assessment meets the CTC's adopted TPA design standards for validity, reliability, and sponsor support responsibilities.
- 11) Requires that, prior to requiring successful passage of the TPA for the preliminary multiple subject teaching credential and the preliminary education specialist credential, the CTC certify that all approved teacher education programs provide instruction in the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for instruction in literacy under existing law.
- 12) Requires the CTC, commencing on July 1, 2022, and annually thereafter until the above requirements are met, to report to the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature on its progress in meeting these requirements, including how stakeholders were engaged in the process of meeting the requirements.
- 13) Permits a holder of a preliminary multiple subject credential or a preliminary education specialist credential who was unable to take the RICA due to the closure of assessment centers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and who must complete this requirement in order to earn a professional clear credential to, if the RICA is no longer being administered, complete this requirement through successful completion of an assessment required by another state that is identified by the CTC as meeting requirements of existing law.
- 14) Makes conforming changes to the "early completion option" (ECO) requirements for candidates for multiple subject credentials and education specialist credentials for mild to moderate disabilities.
- 15) Deletes obsolete code sections related to the RICA and makes technical changes.

EXISTING LAW:

1) Establishes the minimum requirements for the preliminary multiple or single subject teaching credential and education specialist teaching credential for first time applicants who are not

credentialed in another state, including, commencing January 1, 1997, satisfactory completion of comprehensive reading instruction that is research-based and includes all of the following:

- a) The study of organized, systematic, explicit skills including phonemic awareness, direct, systematic, explicit phonics, and decoding skills;
- b) A strong literature, language, and comprehension component with a balance of oral and written language;
- c) Ongoing diagnostic techniques that inform teaching and assessment;
- d) Early intervention techniques; and
- e) Guided practice in a clinical setting.
- 2) Defines "direct, systematic, explicit phonics" to mean phonemic awareness, spelling patterns, the direct instruction of sound/symbol codes and practice in connected text, and the relationship of direct, systematic, explicit phonics.
- 3) Authorizes a teacher who does not hold a specialist credential to teach pupils with mild to moderate disabilities in a special day class setting to teach in such a setting if the teacher consents to the assignment and passes the RICA within one year of the beginning of the school year. Deems passage of the assessment to be evidence of the teacher's competence in reading instruction.
- 4) Requires the CTC to develop, adopt, and administer a reading instruction competence assessment consisting of one or more instruments to measure an individual's knowledge, skill, and ability relative to effective reading instruction. Requires the assessment to measure the knowledge, skill, and ability of first-time credential applicants who are not credentialed in any state that the CTC determines to be essential to reading instruction, and requires the assessment to be consistent with the state's reading curriculum framework adopted after July 1, 1996, and the Reading Program Advisory published by the California Department of Education (CDE) in 1996.
- 5) Requires the CTC to perform the following duties with respect to the RICA:
 - a) Develop, adopt, and administer the assessment;
 - b) Initially and periodically analyze the validity and reliability of the content of the assessment;
 - c) Establish and implement appropriate passing scores on the assessment;
 - d) Analyze possible sources of bias on the assessment;

- e) Collect and analyze background information provided by first-time credential applicants who are not credentialed in any state who participate in the assessment;
- f) Report and interpret individual and aggregated assessment results;
- g) Convene a task force to advise the CTC on the design, content, and administration of the assessment, with not less than one-third of the members of the task force classroom teachers with recent experience in teaching reading in the early elementary grades; and
- h) Prior to requiring successful passage of the assessment for the preliminary multiple subject teaching credential, certify that teacher education programs offer instruction in the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the assessment.
- 6) Establishes the requirements for issuance of the preliminary multiple subject teaching credential to include successful passage of one of the following components of the RICA:
 - a) A comprehensive examination of the knowledge and skill pertaining to effective reading instruction of the credential applicant; or
 - b) An authentic assessment of teaching skills and classroom abilities of the credential applicant pertaining to the provision of effective reading instruction.
- 7) Establishes a TPA as a requirement for the issuance of preliminary multiple and single subject teaching credentials.
- 8) Establishes an ECO internship for multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist (mild/moderate) intern program candidates which allows candidates to obtain a preliminary credential without completing preparation coursework, including student teaching.
- 9) Requires ECO candidates in these programs to pass the RICA unless the written assessment adopted by the CTC is validated as covering content equivalent to the reading assessment.
- 10) Requires the CTC to conduct a public study session to consider the implications of incorporating the assessment of ability, skills, and knowledge related to effective reading instruction that is assessed by the RICA within the TPA.
- 11) Provides the CTC with powers and duties including the adoption and implementation of an accreditation framework setting forth the CTC's policies regarding the accreditation of educator preparation programs in California.

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

• The CTC indicates that based on previous development costs, this bill would result in special fund costs of approximately \$2 million over three years including two consultant-level full-time equivalent employees at a total cost of \$300,000 annually. The CTC would be required to design, field test, and implement new tasks for the Education Specialist and Multiple Subject TPAs—as well as approve reading/literacy tasks for the EdTPA and FAST.

- There could be ongoing special fund fee revenue losses to the CTC beginning in the 2025-26 fiscal year due to the repeal of RICA and resulting loss of RICA fees. The CTC currently receives fees of either \$67 or \$102 per test, depending on the test version. A precise amount for the lost revenues is unknown but it could be in the high hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.
- This bill could also result in unknown General Fund cost pressures to teacher preparation programs at the University of California and California State University to modify their programs to comply with this bill's new approach to demonstrating competency in reaching instruction.

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, "As a classroom teacher for 17 years, and someone who has taken the RICA, I can attest to the critical importance of updating this outdated assessment. RICA has been in statute for 25 years, and unfortunately does not align with the current K-12 English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework. SB 488 will preserve California's high standards for teacher preparation, address the state's teacher shortage, and increase teacher diversity, all while preparing educators to effectively teach reading comprehension and better meet our students' needs."

What is the RICA? Current law requires individuals seeking to obtain a teaching credential in California to fulfill several requirements, including completion of an accredited preservice preparation program, demonstration of subject matter competency, and successful completion of an assessment of basic skills. Additionally, for those seeking a multiple subject (elementary) or an education specialist (special education) credential, candidates must pass the RICA to obtain a preliminary teaching credential.

Established in 1996, the RICA was one part of a broader set of policies known collectively as the California Reading Initiative (CRI). The RICA requirement was put in place by the CTC in 1998 for multiple subject credential candidates, and in 2000 for educational specialist credential candidates.

The RICA is organized into five domains:

- Domain 1: Planning, Organizing, and Managing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment
- Domain 2: Word Analysis
- Domain 3: Fluency
- Domain 4: Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge
- Domain 5: Comprehension

The CTC offers two test formats. The RICA Written Examination is a four hour, 70 question test taken on a computer, which includes multiple choice, constructed response, and case study essay items. The RICA Video Performance Assessment requires candidates to submit 3 videos showing instruction in whole class, small group, and individual instruction as well as an instructional context form. The vast majority of candidates take the written version of the

assessment. The cost of the assessment is \$171. Unlike the state's basic skills assessment (CBEST), which allows candidates to retake portions which they fail to pass, candidates who fail one section of the RICA must take the entire assessment over.

RICA administration suspended by Executive Order in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic.

In the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of testing centers used to administer teacher credentialing assessments. On May 29, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-66-20, which suspended a number of teacher credentialing requirements, including the RICA, for candidates who, between March 19, 2020 and August 31, 2020, were or are unable to complete the RICA due to COVID-19 related testing center closures. The Executive Order, which was then codified in Chapter 110, Statutes of 2020 (SB 820, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), extended this time frame to candidates affected through December, 2021, and requires that candidates complete and pass RICA prior to being recommended for a clear credential, essentially giving teachers who obtain a preliminary credential five years to fulfill this requirement. Language proposed by the Governor for the 2021-22 budget would authorize the CTC to extend this provision to candidates affected through June, 2022. Additionally, the CTC adopted a Variable Term Waiver, which allows candidates who were on track to complete program requirements by January 31, 2021 to qualify for a one-year waiver document when requested by a teacher preparation program sponsor.

In order to accommodate teachers who must fulfil this requirement to earn a clear credential in the event that the RICA is no longer being administered, this bill permits those teachers to meet the requirement through successful completion of a reading instruction assessment, identified by the CTC, that is used in another state.

Students' reading skills have improved since establishment of RICA, but achievement gaps persist. Over the last 20 years, California students' scores on the 4th grade reading portion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) have consistently improved, and the gap between the state and the national average has nearly closed. In 2019, California 4th graders scored 216 compared to 219 nationally, and 8th graders scored 259 compared to 262 nationally, both on a 500 point scale. Since 1998, the percent of California 4th graders scoring proficient in reading has increased from 20 percent to 32 percent. However, both the national average and California's performance remain below the NAEP "proficient" threshold.

NAEP scores also identify significant achievement gaps which have largely persisted over the same time period. In 2019, students who were eligible for free or reduced price meals had an average score that was 31 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap has only slightly reduced since 1998 (36 points). 8th grade scores show similar patterns, though with less improvement over time.

Why does assessment of teachers' skill at teaching reading matter? Research has established that teacher preparation and certification are by far the strongest correlates of student achievement in reading and mathematics, even when controlling for student poverty and language status (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Ensuring that teachers are able to teach foundational reading skills is critical to student success in reading in the early grades and as a foundation for all other literacy in subsequent grades. Research indicates that early reading skills have a profound effect on later school outcomes. One frequently cited study of older data suggests that

a student who can't read on grade level by 3rd grade is four times less likely to graduate by age 19 than a child who does read proficiently by that time, with effects compounded significantly by poverty (Hernández, 2011).

Teaching Performance Assessments (TPAs). According to the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), during the 1990s, the Legislature became concerned with the coherence of the teacher credentialing system, as the state had added credential requirements incrementally over the years without comprehensive evaluation. At the request of the Legislature, the CTC convened a workgroup to review the state's teacher credential requirements. The workgroup concluded that existing assessments varied considerably across preparation programs and often failed to provide a good measure of teachers' preparation. At the same time, research and policy organizations such as the National Research Council and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards were supporting the development of more authentic assessments of teacher candidates. In response, the Legislature required the CTC to develop a new assessment (TPA).

As of 2008, California requires all teacher candidates for a preliminary multiple and single subject teaching credentials to pass TPA as part of the requirements for earning a preliminary teaching credential. The CTC recently developed a TPA for teachers of special education and expects that the first administration of the CalTPA for education specialist credential candidates (with the exception of three specialty areas for which assessments are still in development) will occur in the fall of 2022.

The CTC adopts TPAs are designed to measure a candidate's knowledge, skills and ability in relation to California's Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs), including demonstrating their ability to appropriately instruct all students in the state's content standards. There are now three teaching performance assessment models available: the CalTPA developed by the CTC, the edTPA developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE), and the Fresno Assessment of Student Teaching (FAST) developed by California State University, Fresno.

Each of the three approved TPA models requires a candidate to complete performance tasks relating to subject-specific pedagogy, designing and implementing instruction and student assessment, video-recorded teaching, and reflecting on practice. Performance tasks must be completed within a site placement where the candidate is working with supervising teachers, master teachers, and students. Multiple-subject candidates must demonstrate their capacity to teach literacy and mathematics. Candidate performances are scored by trained assessors against multiple rubrics that describe levels of performance relative to each performance task. Each model must also meet and maintain specified standards of assessment reliability, validity, and fairness to candidates. Model sponsors of approved assessments annually report on candidate performance and this data is used to inform program accreditation.

According to the LAO, the evidence linking TPA performance and student outcomes is limited but positive. According to an analysis of the existing literature by the LAO, two small studies evaluated an earlier version of the TPA in California and found that—controlling for other factors—students assigned to teachers who had performed better on the TPA performed somewhat better on math and reading assessments. A third study from 2017 tracked a larger sample of teachers taking a version of the TPA in Washington and found similar results, with TPA scores having a relatively strong association with student performance in mathematics and a moderate association with performance in reading.

A report by the Center for American Progress, "Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: How Teacher Performance Assessments Can Measure and Improve Teaching," (Darling-Hammond, 2010) notes that, compared to traditional assessments of teachers, "Performance assessments that measure what teachers actually *do* in the classroom, and which have been found to be related to later teacher effectiveness, are a much more potent tool for evaluating teachers' competence and readiness, as well as for supporting needed changes in teacher education...Such assessments have been found to be stronger predictors of teachers' contributions to student learning gains than traditional teacher tests."

Candidates are not currently required to demonstrate competence in teaching foundational reading skills through the TPA. As noted above, California requires that candidates' instructional competence in reading be assessed in two ways. For foundational reading instruction skills, the state requires that candidates pass the RICA – a standardized, generally computer-based, assessment. For all other areas of instruction, including other aspects of literacy, the state requires that candidates pass the TPA – a performance-based assessment. Both assessments are required to be valid and reliable, and reviewed for bias.

According to the CTC, "The treatment of literacy in TPAs is not linked specifically to foundational reading, nor does it currently reflect a comprehensive treatment of the five themes of literacy development prescribed by the ELA/ELD Framework. Rather, literacy instruction is one context in which all Multiple Subject candidates demonstrate their abilities to plan instruction, teach, assess student learning, reflect on the impact of their teaching and apply their own learning to their next cycle of instruction."

Current English Language Arts/English Language Development curriculum framework takes integrated approach to literacy. In 2014, the State Board of Education adopted the current ELA/ELD Curriculum Framework, which reflects an integrated approach to literacy instruction.

According to the CTC, the Framework incorporates five broad, overarching literacy themes, which, taken together, are intended to provide a comprehensive road map for helping students develop literacy across the curriculum. The five themes are:

- Meaning Making
- Language Development
- Effective Expression
- Content Knowledge
- Foundational Skills

Within the new organizational structure and content of the Framework, the foundational skills of teaching reading now represent one of five integrated domains that guide literacy development across the curriculum and K-12 grade span.

In 2019, the CTC adopted revised TPEs in literacy for multiple subject, educational specialist, and single subject English teacher candidates to align the document to the 2014 ELA/ELD Framework.

Stakeholder concerns with the RICA. Some stakeholders have questioned the continued use of the RICA assessment for the purposes of determining candidate competency in the teaching of reading. According to the CTC, some stakeholders cite concerns regarding:

- Candidates who are not successful on their first attempt and have to retake the assessment multiple times;
- The predominant focus of the RICA on the foundational reading skills;
- The cost to candidates for the assessment;
- The number of credentialing assessments candidates must take; and
- The need for a standardized assessment for all candidates.

The CTC notes that, in contrast to this viewpoint, other stakeholders cite the continuing need for an external verification that multiple subject and education specialist candidates have learned how to teach reading effectively, the concern that candidates be demonstrably well-trained to work with struggling readers, the effectiveness of the RICA content specifications in driving coursework content, and the nature of the RICA assessment in focusing specifically on the foundational reading skills.

Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) in Literacy. This bill requires the CTC to ensure, by specified dates, that the TPEs and preparation program standards for the preliminary multiple subject credential, the preliminary single subject English language arts credential, and the preliminary education specialist credential, include and specify all of the requirements of the law regarding the content of teacher preparation in literacy instruction.

In November 2019, the CTC adopted revised TPEs in literacy for multiple subject, educational specialist, and single subject English teacher candidates. These TPEs align to the 2014 California ELA/ELD Framework and are organized into the themes noted above: meaning making, language development, effective expression, content knowledge, and foundational skills.

These TPEs replaced a prior set, which, according to the CTC, had not been reviewed specifically with a focus on the ELA/ELD standards and Frameworks relating to literacy that call for the integration of cross-cutting literacy concepts across the curriculum and that reaffirm that all teachers, regardless of the content area of their credential, are teachers of literacy (including teaching both English language arts and English language development, as appropriate to their students and their credential authorization). Teacher preparation programs are expected to align their course content for reading instruction with the TPEs by the 2021-22 academic year.

The current TPEs and preparation program standards for multiple subject, education specialist, and single subject ELA credentials include a discussion of foundational reading skills, but do not specifically list the requirements of current law, such as "the study of organized, systematic, explicit skills including phonemic awareness, direct, systematic, explicit phonics, and decoding skills," as required by this bill.

CTC recently considered three alternatives to the RICA. In November, 2019, the CTC considered three options to replace the RICA. An analysis of these options from the agenda from that meeting is shown below:

• Replace the RICA	Possible Options for Future Assessment and Implications			
with a new statewide external- to-program assessment for reading and		External, Statewide Assessment	Program Embedded Coursework and Assessment	Enhanced Teaching Performance Assessment
	Requires a Statute Change?	Maybe	Yes	Yes
	Provides Statewide Outcomes Data	Yes	Maybe	Yes
literacy.	Requires Validity and Reliability Work?	Yes	No	Yes
5	Reduces Candidate Testing?	No	Maybe	Maybe
• Develop and implement a program coursework option with embedded candidate assessment(s) such	Cost to Candidates?	Yes	No	Likely
	Cost to Programs?	No	Yes	Likely
	Cost to Develop Content Expectations?	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Cost to the Commission?	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Impact on TPA Model Owners?	No	No	Yes
	Time Frame to Full Implementation?	2 years*	2-3 years*	3-4 years*
	*post-statute change			

as a fieldwork embedded case study approach.

• Modify the TPAs to include the teaching of reading and literacy. This option is reflected in this bill.

Strengthening teacher preparation in reading instruction. In recognition of the fact that the TPA, as a performance assessment, cannot assess every aspect of reading instruction content, this bill includes several provisions aimed at strengthening teacher preparation in reading instruction to ensure that candidates achieve mastery of the full range of this content. Among them, this bill requires that the TPEs and preparation program standards be updated to include and specify the content of existing reading instruction content in existing law, and requires that prior to the requiring successful passage of the revised TPA the CTC certify that all approved teacher education programs approved provide instruction in the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for instruction in literacy under existing law.

Arguments in support. Decoding Dyslexia California writes, "Many teacher preparation programs do not adequately prepare their teaching credential candidates in how to address the needs of students with dyslexia in their classroom and, as a result, teachers are unaware of the evidence-based practices detailed in the California Dyslexia Guidelines. Many issues have been addressed in this amended bill which emphasizes the strong need for teacher preparation programs to better prepare new teachers based on improved standards that are aligned with the science of reading. In addition, the bill provides that the CTC will also ensure that the California Dyslexia Guidelines are incorporated into teacher preparation coursework. DDCA appreciates that SB 488 will ensure that the progress made in strengthening our state requirements with respect to reading instruction will be reported on annually by CTC to the state legislature and involve stakeholder input. We believe, by strengthening the statutory requirements with respect to reading instruction based on the science of reading, this will result in new teachers entering

the classroom armed with a stronger base of knowledge and skill with respect to effective reading instruction."

Arguments in opposition. The California Association for Parent-Child Advocacy writes, "We are glad to see, in SB 488, a firm endorsement of evidence-based reading instruction in a way that even more firmly entrenches the rhetoric of scientific reading instruction into California law. It is not clear, however, whether that will filter down to teacher preparation programs or improve classroom practices. While we appreciate the hard work that went into removing some of the problems that led our organization to oppose SB 614 last year, and the decision to strengthen rather than undermine California's requirements relating to quality reading instruction, we believe that the current bill—unless amended to preserve a comprehensive evaluation of teacher candidates' knowledge of reading instruction—will do more harm than good. The RICA stands essentially alone in ensuring that incoming teachers master key aspects of the science of reading; it needs to be continued."

Recommended amendments. Staff recommends that the bill be amended to 1) change a reference to "struggling readers" to "pupils with reading difficulties," and 2) reinstate Section 44283.2, which is proposed to be deleted.

Related legislation. SB 614 (Rubio) of the 2019-20 Session would have repealed the RICA on January 1, 2025, and directed the CTC to ensure, by July 1, 2024, that all TPAs assessed candidates for multiple subject credentials and education specialist credentials for competency in reading instruction. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Association of California School Administrators California Association for Bilingual Teacher Education California Association of School Business Officials California Teachers Association Decoding Dyslexia CA Edvoice Los Angeles Unified School District Office of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools San Diego Unified School District Teach Plus

Oppose

California Association for Parent-Child Advocacy Grupo De Autismo Angeles

Analysis Prepared by: Tanya Lieberman / ED. / (916) 319-2087