

## Information/Action

### *General Session*

#### Report of the Statewide Special Education Task Force

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**Executive Summary:** This agenda item presents the recommendations of the Statewide Special Education Task Force.

**Policy Question:** Are the recommendations within the Task Force Report concerning educator preparation consistent with Commission direction? Does the Commission wish to provide staff direction on moving forward with any of the recommendations and, if so, prioritizing the identified recommendations?

**Recommended Action:** That the Commission discuss the recommendations and potentially provide direction concerning prioritizing the applicable recommendations for changes to educator preparation in California.

**Presenters:** Teri Clark, Director, and Sarah Solari, Consultant, Professional Services Division and Maureen Burness and Vicki Barber, Co-Directors Statewide Special Education Task Force

#### Strategic Plan Goal

##### ***II. Program Quality and Accountability***

- b) Effectively and efficiently monitor program implementation and outcomes, hold all approved educator preparation programs to high standards and require continuous improvement through the accreditation process.

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# Report of the Statewide Special Education Task Force

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## Introduction

This agenda item presents a summary of the recommendations for educator preparation and professional learning as a result of the work of the Statewide Special Education Task Force. The recommendations from the Task Force discussed in this agenda item are specific to educator preparation and professional development and are part of a larger report that provides comprehensive recommendations concerning the education of California public school students with disabilities.

## Background

The Statewide Special Education Task Force was formed in 2013 to study the causes of the state's poor outcomes for students with disabilities. The establishment of the Task Force was prompted by Michael Kirst, President of the State Board of Education, and Linda Darling-Hammond, Chair of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and included stakeholders from throughout California. The work of the Task Force was supported by the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation, the Stuart Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation.

The Task Force membership included parents, teachers, school and district administrators, university professors, members of the policy community and other stakeholder groups. A complete list of members is available at <http://www.smcoe.org/about-smcoe/statewide-special-education-task-force/task-force-members.html>. The full report, *One System, Reforming Education to Serve all Students*, identifies seven distinct yet interconnected aspects of the educational system as being critical to effectively educating students with disabilities:

- early learning
- evidence-based school and classroom practices
- educator preparation and professional learning
- assessment
- accountability
- family and student engagement
- special education funding

The full report can be found at <http://www.smcoe.org/about-smcoe/statewide-special-education-task-force/>.

## Overview of the Task Force Process

In order to gather input from a broad representation of stakeholders from throughout California, the Task Force held both public forums and Task Force meetings. Seven public forums held throughout the state resulted in significant input from the field, which helped to organize the

work of Task Force committees focused on the broad categories listed above. The Task Force committees gathered, researched and honed recommendations specific to each subcommittee content area, which were then presented and discussed with the full group of Task Force members at the Task Force meetings. This work culminated in committee reports and included final recommendations from each committee, which were then organized into the final report.

A full schedule of Task Force meetings and public forums, including agendas and minutes, is available at <http://www.smcoe.org/about-smcoe/statewide-special-education-task-force/task-force-members.html>.

Since the main focus of this agenda item centers on the recommendations concerning Educator Preparation and Professional Learning, a brief summary of other Task Force recommendations is provided below for information. Italicized language indicated a quote taken directly from the Task Force report.

**Early Learning Recommendations** (The full subcommittee report for the recommendations on early learning can be found at <http://www.smcoe.org/about-smcoe/statewide-special-education-task-force/>.)

*The availability of quality services and places in high-quality preschools and care settings for toddlers should not depend on geography. And given the return of these services on the dollar, the state cannot afford **not** to provide them. Indeed, federal Medicaid law requires states to provide them; yet in many parts of California they are not available. In recognition of the importance of coordinated, early intervention to children's futures, to their families, and to the fiscal health of the state's schools, California should ensure that all students, but especially those with disabilities, have access to high-quality infant and toddler programs and preschools, including the diagnostic and intervention services described. In support of that vision, the state needs policy change to ensure the following:*

- Improved access to and coordination of high-quality early care and preschool for all students, but particularly for children with disabilities, children who grow up in poverty, and children who are dual language learners, with the access not dependent upon geography or service provider.*
- An increase in the funding formulas to provide equitable financial support for high-quality early care and education and to support equity in access throughout the state.*
- Clearly articulated and family-friendly protocols for transition between Part C and Part B services.*
- Program standards that all providers must use and that reflect evidence-based, developmentally appropriate practice.*
- Common assessments that are based on common standards, inform instruction in real time, accurately monitor student/child growth, and are educator-friendly.*
- Clear, specific competencies that are part of all early childhood educator preparation programs and that are part of required professional development training and technical assistance for educators already in the field.*

**Evidence-Based School and Classroom Practices Recommendations** (The full subcommittee report for the recommendations on evidence-based practices can be found at <http://www.smcoe.org/about-smcoe/statewide-special-education-task-force/>.)

*The application of Universal Design for Learning in all of its inclusive implications sets the foundation for a coherent system of education that provides instruction, services, and supports to students as they are needed—through a multi-tiered system of supports that incorporates response to intervention (including early intervention in its broadest sense) and social and emotional learning. Access to this system, however, now requires knowledge of technology and computers—which are now ubiquitous in schools, curriculum, and assessments and which have become essential for success in adult life as well as in school. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, arguably our most vulnerable students, deserve equal access to this system, as well as the best supports and assessments possible to ensure they too benefit from school and have every chance of realizing a productive adult life.*

*In support of these changes, California should ensure the following:*

- *Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is understood, is established as a key area of professional learning for educator training, and is implemented in all schools.*
- *A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is developed throughout the state, incorporating robust and aligned systems at all organizational levels that support response to instruction and intervention (RtI2) approaches and systematic programs of behavioral, social, and emotional learning.*
- *Social-emotional learning supports, which are provided through a system that is comprehensive and blended, are available in all schools and districts; these supports include lessons of self-management, social interaction, and social responsibility that are infused in daily curriculum; these supports increase collaboration with community mental health resources in a structured, data-driven, and evidence-based way.*
- *General education resources are used to intervene as early as possible (infant/toddler/preschool/elementary) with evidence-based and multi-tiered social-emotional supports prior to referral to special education services.*
- *Technology support is provided at the state, regional, district, school, and classroom levels to ensure the successful implementation of the CCSS and use of its assessments, and to ensure that students with disabilities have and can use the assistive devices they need in order to learn.*
- *All students with disabilities have access to comprehensive and effective transition services and programs; model programs are identified, implemented, and aligned around college/career/independent living standards and expectations; collaboration among Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) and Regional Occupation Programs (ROPs) is expanded so that students with disabilities are included in Regional Occupation and Career Technical Education programs, including Pathway grants, as well as in other local options.*

**Assessment Recommendations** (The full report for the recommendations on special education can be found at <http://www.smcoe.org/about-smcoe/statewide-special-education-task-force/>.)

*As California schools continue to expand their implementation of the Common Core State Standards, it is imperative that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process evolves and adapts to the changing expectations for all students. The IEP should be as coherent as the system it reflects. IEP team discussions about student expectations, performance, and progress should be guided by the new standards; and ultimately all IEPs should become aligned with the new standards. Assessments, which reflect the success of the IEP, must be selected with great care, their effectiveness monitored, and their alignment with curriculum and instruction secured for all students.*

*In support of this vision, the state and LEAs need changes in policy and practice to ensure the following:*

- *IEPs consist of goals that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards.*
- *Parents are kept informed of changes in standards, the rationale for those changes, the implications for IEPs and courses of study, and strategies for supporting their children at home.*
- *An assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities is selected to replace the CAPA and is directly and rigorously aligned with the Common Core State Standards.*
- *Teachers and schools are accountable for the progress that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities make in meeting the standards.*
- *Samples of standards-aligned IEPs are created and disseminated, along with comprehensive training on adapting those examples or models for use in IEP meetings.*
- *The Smarter Balanced assessments, especially the use of the “Designated Supports” and “Accommodations” for students receiving special education services, are carefully and thoroughly reviewed for effectiveness and accessibility.*
- *A common data-gathering system is created to record and report on student IEP goals, monitor progress toward goals, and evaluate implementation of standards-based IEPs statewide.*

**Accountability Recommendations** (The full report for the recommendations on special education can be found at <http://www.smcoe.org/about-smcoe/statewide-special-education-task-force/>.)

*Systems of accountability serve the critical function of strengthening all aspects of educational programming for students as they inform, direct, and support teacher preparation, classroom instruction, individual-goal setting, and meaningful assessment. Before California can implement a rigorous and seamless outcomes-based accountability system for students with disabilities, it must redress disjointed patterns and systems by collaborating to establish the most effective accountability system possible.*

*In support of this vision, the state needs policy change to ensure the following:*

- *A consolidated and integrated special education data system that identifies and eliminates duplicate reporting, especially in the areas of suspensions, expulsions, and postsecondary outcomes.*

- *An outcomes-based accountability framework that mirrors federal policy (i.e., the Results Driven Accountability framework) and state policy (i.e., LCFF and LCAP) to evaluate the compliance and performance of public schools throughout the state in educating students with disabilities. Accountability efforts are congruent: efficient, non-duplicative, and integrated (e.g., using the LCAP to meet the Results Driven Accountability framework).*
- *Closely integrated and coordinated state and federal monitoring, data collection, and technical assistance and support efforts from all state agencies and divisions: the Governor's Office, the State Board of Education, the Department of Finance, the Department of Education (both General Education and Special Education divisions), the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the Department of Rehabilitation, the Department of Developmental Services, Division of Juvenile Justice/Department of Corrections, Juvenile Court Schools, and the Department of Managed Health Care.*

**Family and Student Engagement Recommendations** (The full report for the recommendations on special education can be found at <http://www.smcoe.org/about-smcoe/statewide-special-education-task-force/>.)

*Parents and family members are critical to the school and life success of their children with disabilities. In successful schools, they are asked to contribute their insights about how their children learn, and they work with educators to construct useful strategies for home and school. They receive frequent reports on their children and how their needs are being addressed. Given the importance of family involvement—in terms of later learning and employment options for students, in terms of their improved life satisfaction and capacity for community and social involvement, and in terms of the savings to public benefits when people become employed to their fullest capacity and live as independently as possible—all efforts to inform and effectively support parents who have children with disabilities and to enhance their involvement in the special education process should be expanded. As well, students must be heard and included in decisions about their education in every way that is appropriate for their age and their ability. In school they must be given every opportunity to learn how to become independent adults.*

*In support of improved family and student engagement, the state needs policy change to ensure the following:*

- *Fully funded Family Empowerment Centers (FEC) statewide, as already legislated in SB 511, so that each of the 32 FEC regions has a center.*
- *Increased funding to Family Resource Centers (FRC).*
- *Established data-collection systems to monitor the work done by the FRCs/FECs.*
- *Clear and specific guidelines and reinforcements for teacher-parent-school collaboration and interaction.*
- *Clear and specific guidelines and reinforcement for student involvement in their own IEP meetings and student-led IEPs.*
- *Coordinated systems of cross-agency and community-based trainings that focus on collaborative, efficient, and effective services in a seamless delivery system that supports parents and students.*



**Special Education Financing Recommendations** (The full subcommittee report for the recommendations on special education financing can be found at <http://www.smcoe.org/about-smcoe/statewide-special-education-task-force/>.)

*California needs a system of financing that provides the resources necessary to meet the needs of all students with disabilities, encourages greater coherence between general education and special education, is sensitive to changes in enrollment, and invests in the systems and provides incentives for practices that will lead to greater success for students. Those recommended changes that will cost money—essentially anything that effectively supports the learning and development of children with disabilities—have been shown to be solid investments that provide a solid return in the form of productive, tax-paying citizens and in the avoidance of more intensive—and expensive—services and supports that would be needed later.*

*In support of an effective and efficient special education funding system, this Task Force recommends the following:*

*Recommendations for State-Level Change*

- *Equalize the state's support for special education across California by overhauling the system of special education financing to give schools and districts more control over how they spend their money and to hold them accountable for adequately meeting the needs of students with disabilities (a model distinct from but coordinated with and similar to the LCFF).*
- *Ensure the availability of early intervention programs and services for all eligible students with disabilities and address the disparity of early intervention programs and services among early childhood care and education entities.*
- *Fund SELPAs based on ADA, but increase the amount allocated per ADA so that SELPAs are more equitably funded.*
- *Revise the special education funding formula so that the growth or decline in the enrollment of multi-district SELPAs is based on the growth or decline of ADA for each individual district, charter school, or county office of education instead of on these changes in the SELPA as a whole.*
- *Secure the integrity of specific special education dollars, especially the money that small SELPAs need in order to operate, as well as funds for educationally related mental health care services and for out-of-home care services.*
- *Update the electronic data systems that account for special education income and expenditures, thus allowing current CDE fiscal staff to devote more time to analyses, while also allowing SELPA fiscal staff to be more efficient.*
- *Use the broader federal definition of "low-incidence" disabilities and increase allocations of low-incidence funding to SELPAs.*
- *Increase the funding for WorkAbility programs so that all SELPAs are receiving adequate WorkAbility funds.*
- *Provide to LEAs sufficient funds to meet their mandated special education transportation costs.*

- *Expand alternative dispute resolution resources, supports, and services throughout the state.*
- *Mandate collaborative efforts among school districts, charter schools, county offices of education, and SELPAs whenever a new school is being planned or a modernization project is being developed to ensure that facilities are available to students with moderate to severe disabilities.*
- *Require and support availability of facilities that serve infants and toddlers with disabilities in preschool settings.*

#### *Funding Recommendations for Federal-Level Change*

- *Work statewide and nationally to increase the federal share of the excess costs of serving students with disabilities to 40 percent.*
- *Determine how to break down the barriers that are preventing education entities from accessing and increasing Medi-Cal and Medicaid (LEA, MAA, and EPSDT) services and reimbursements.*
- *Clarify eligibility for college scholarships, under federal guidelines, to include students with disabilities who have received a certificate of completion.*

### **Discussion of Task Force Recommendations Pertaining to Educator Preparation and Professional Learning**

#### ***Introduction***

Information previously presented to the Commission in a January 2013 information item concerning Special Education authorizations and assignments in California is foundational to understanding the implications of the Statewide Special Education Task Force recommendations concerning Educator Preparation and Professional Learning. (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2013-01/2013-01-3C.pdf>) A brief summary of the preparation for Special Education teachers is provided next.

Prior to the 1996 program standards, the credential to teach students with disabilities was an advanced credential in California. Individuals who wanted to become a teacher for students with disabilities needed to earn a general education teaching credential first and then complete preparation to earn the special education teaching credential. With the 1996 program standards, the Education Specialist became an initial teaching credential. This change was made partly because of the shortage of special education teachers. The standards adopted by the Commission in 2008-09 continued the current structure and the Education Specialist credential is still an initial teaching credential.

There are both similarities and differences in the preparation of general education (Multiple Subject and Single Subject) teachers and special education teachers. Both general and special education teachers must hold a bachelor's degree, satisfy the basic skills requirement, complete the background check, meet the subject matter requirement, and complete a Commission-approved preparation program. Both Multiple Subject and Education Specialist candidates must complete coursework and field work addressing the teaching of reading and pass the Reading



Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA). All general education and special education teachers must complete coursework and field work on teaching English learners and using technology to assist learning as well as focus on creating healthy learning environments.

As specified in California's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) compliance plan, all prospective multiple subject teachers are required to pass the California Subject Examinations for Teachers: Multiple Subjects (CSET: MS) as the means of meeting California's subject matter competency requirement. The CSET: MS covers a range of academic content areas typically taught in a multiple subjects setting such as English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and other core curriculum content areas. In contrast, prospective Education Specialist teachers may satisfy the subject matter requirement in one of two ways: either completing a Commission-approved subject matter program or passing the CSET in one of the following NCLB subjects: English, art, mathematics, foreign/world language, music, science, or social studies.

Another key distinction between the requirements for preparation of general education and special education teachers is the amount of subject specific pedagogy the candidate must demonstrate and passage of a Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA). Each general education candidate must complete coursework and field work in the subject specific pedagogy for the content area(s) which the individual will be authorized to teach—for Multiple Subject teachers this means English Language Arts and Reading, Mathematics, Science, History/Social Science, Physical Education, and the Arts. For Single Subject Teachers the requirement addresses the content area of the single subject credential. All general education candidates must pass a Commission-approved TPA prior to being recommended for the Preliminary Teaching credential. Prospective Education Specialist teachers are not required by the Commission to pass a TPA or to complete coursework and field work in subject specific pedagogy in the content areas the individual will teach. Instead, all prospective Education Specialist teachers must complete coursework and field work in assistive technology, transition, Individualized Education Program/Individual Family Service Plan (IEP/ISFP) processes, typical and atypical development, behavioral, social and environmental supports for learning, curriculum and instruction of students with disabilities, and providing services across the range of service delivery options.

Currently Education Specialist teaching credentials may be earned as initial teaching credentials in seven different specialty content areas:

- Mild to Moderate Disabilities (K-12 to Age 22)
- Moderate to Severe Disabilities (K-12 to Age 22)
- Early Childhood Special Education (Birth to Pre-K)
- Language and Academic Development (Pre-K to Age 22)
- Visual Impairments (Birth to Age 22)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Birth to Age 22)
- Physical and Health Impairments (Birth to Age 22)

Each of the seven Education Specialist teaching credentials authorizes the individual to teach students with disabilities in the specific federal disability categories shown in Appendix A, page

23 of this agenda item. The age and grade level authorizations differ slightly among the seven specialty authorizations. An individual holding an Education Specialist teaching credential is currently authorized to teach any content area.

The overarching theme of the Task Force recommendations relating to educator preparation and professional learning focuses on the need to create one unified student education system, grounded in expertise, responsive to students' needs, and focused on results. The Task Force members concluded that substantial shifts would need to occur to ensure the majority of students with disabilities are educated with their general education peers in general education classrooms. The primary premise of the report advocates that general education and special education cannot be two separate systems. This premise relates directly to the content and focus of educator preparation in California.

Two broad recommendations would directly impact educator preparation at the preliminary and clear levels. The first recommendation suggests that general education and special education preparation programs should contain a common foundation in fourteen specified areas and provide candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their competence in these areas using evidence-based practices. The second recommendation addresses induction in educator preparation and further extends into professional learning after the completion of the clear credential program. This recommendation identifies eight areas to address, some of which may fall under the purview of the Commission. Appendix B provides the full text of the Educator Preparation and Professional Learning subcommittee report. Text in italics in the discussion of Task Force recommendations below is taken directly from the subcommittee report.

#### **Task Force Recommendations Pertaining to Educator Preparation and Professional Learning**

*The Educator Preparation subcommittee based its work on the following problem statements summarizing the Task Force's view of the current status of Special Education preparation and professional learning in California:*

- 1. Students within all eligibility categories of disabilities are served less within general education (with specialized intervention and supports as per their Individual Education Programs {IEPs}) than in most states. California data for the federal marker for "Least Restrictive Environment" have not demonstrated significant progress over the past decade.*
- 2. Current data on the academic performance outcomes for students receiving special education services are poor overall in comparison to other states.*
- 3. General educators report that they lack preparation in educating or co-educating students with disabilities.*
- 4. General and special education teacher preparation is typically separate or "siloe" at the pre-service level, and within much of professional learning as well.*
- 5. Special Education teacher preparation often lacks essential general education competencies, and is "siloe" as well within special education. For example, a clear "moderate" common*

*trunk for Specialists obtaining preparation in Mild-Moderate or Moderate-Severe Disabilities is lacking in many programs. Preparation primarily by eligibility category is not supported by research and also has a major, sometimes negative, impact on student placement, specifically on student access to, support within and learning within general education.*

- 6. Funding at the university level, particularly in California State Universities, is in short supply for critical activities such as: program re-design for cross department collaboration among general, special education and educational leadership; incentives and support of highly qualified master-cooperating teachers; new faculty positions to replace retirements, particularly with low incidence expertise; high levels of Intern support, and partnerships with multiple school districts/Local Education Agencies (LEAs).*
- 7. At the LEA level, Professional Learning requires prioritization within Local Control and Accountability Plans to ensure both evidence-based beginning teacher support /induction and assessment (BTSA) as well as ongoing job-embedded professional learning for educational leaders and all teachers, which is guided by the state-adopted Quality Professional Learning Standards (QPLS).” (pages 3-4)*

Based on its work to address the problem statements listed above, the Subcommittee issued a report with specific recommendations concerning educator preparation. Excerpts from the Subcommittee Report are provided below. Implementing some of these recommendations would require developing new standards, promulgating regulations, or other policy work for the Commission. A summary table of the Subcommittee’s recommendations, whether the recommendation is within the Commission’s purview, and the possible steps implement the recommendation is provided beginning on page 19 of this agenda item.

### ***Educator Preparation Subcommittee Recommendation 1A***

*Subcommittee Recommendation 1.A: General and special education teacher preparation will be redesigned to ensure a robust and rigorous common ‘trunk’ or foundation within the credential system for all P-12 California educators, to include candidates’ demonstration of competence in Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) including:*

- Collaborative, research-based General Education-Special Education service delivery approaches to educating all students with general education peers*
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and Differentiated Instructional Design including Assistive Technology*
- Digital Literacy*
- Communication and collaborative skills demonstration across school personnel and with students’ families including cultural competence with diverse students and families*
- Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and interventions, Response to Intervention (RTI):*
- Social-Emotional Learning including embedded social skills instruction with individualized Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)*
- Child and Human development and interaction with learning*
- English Learners: culturally appropriate, responsive and evidence-based assessment and intervention, effective instruction of diverse learners across all areas of curriculum including*

*English Language Development (ELD)*

- *Appropriate adaptation strategies including accommodations and modifications and instruction in their use and assistive technology for UDL*
- *Reading - Common Core English Language Arts Standards and the New English Language Development Standards*
- *Math Common Core Standards*
- *Teamwork (general and special educators and parent/student) roles, responsibilities, development of IEPs that will result in clear “educational benefit”*
- *Self-determination/student voice and family voice*
- *Knowledge of California state and federal education laws and principles and application to programs and instruction*

*This Common Foundation will occur in the context of and be concurrent with ongoing, intensive supervised fieldwork and student teaching experiences with master/cooperating teachers who meet specific criteria, and where candidates are expected to demonstrate progressive mastery of these competencies over successive fieldworks/student teachings where students with and without disabilities are educated together. Student teaching/fieldwork will be integrated with coursework and signature or key assignments/evaluations, including, Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) for all. (Subcommittee Report pages 10-12)*

**Staff Analysis of Subcommittee Recommendation 1A:**

The report recommends that all educators in California should share and benefit from a common foundation within each credential program that includes evidence-based practices such as Universal Design for Learning; information on child and human development, social and emotional learning, and digital literacy; how to address the instruction of English learners; principles of effective curriculum design; and how to provide full inclusion to students with disabilities. The report concludes that if all educators in California have the knowledge, skills and abilities to provide appropriate interventions and strategies to students early in a student’s educational career, then the Pre-K-12 system will be better designed to meet all students’ needs within the general education classroom. Essentially, the Task Force asserts that this model of educator preparation would be more supportive of full inclusion at the outset of a child’s education and would provide teachers with the appropriate skill sets to more effectively address every student’s needs.

This recommendation is in alignment with the direction of the work of the Preliminary Program Standards Task Group working within the *Strengthening and Streamlining the Commission’s Accreditation System* process. Agenda item 4B, also on the Commission’s April 2015 agenda, provides an update on the draft revisions to the Preliminary Program Standards and to the *Teaching Performance Expectations* for Commission consideration. The Program Standards Task Group work is aligned with the recommendation from the Special Education Task Force that all general education teachers need to have deeper understandings of the topics identified in the Special Education Report.

In addition to ensuring that general educator preparation programs include multiple strategies and demonstration of evidence-based practices, the report further recommends that all special education teachers need to be authorized to instruct in both general education and special education contexts. The Task Force states that this recommendation would create greater flexibility for local educational agencies and teachers to better meet identified needs and provide appropriate support. If all special education teachers also hold a general education teaching credential, then the challenges of staffing intervention programs would be reduced for employers.

Fully implementing this recommendation would mean that in the future all special education teachers to concurrently earn both the general education and the special education teaching credential or would hold a general education credential before beginning the special education preparation program. This was the model in California before 1996. Although the credential structure was changed in 1996 partly to address the shortage of special education teachers, the shortage of special education teachers has continued even though an initial California credential in Special Education has been available for almost 20 years.

The table below provides an illustration of what the credential structure might look like if the Task Force’s recommendations were to be fully implemented.

**Possible Revised Credential Structure**

<b>Level of Preparation</b>	<b>Focus of Preparation</b>	<b>Content of Preparation</b>	<b>Authorization</b>
Initial Teaching Credential	Multiple Subject  Single Subject	Initial preparation for all prospective teachers. All candidates complete current Gen Ed preparation <b>with</b> an enhanced focus on UDL*, MTSS*, PBIS*, and IEPs* across content areas, an increased focus on the importance of connecting with community and family, and collaboration across all educators.	Multiple Subject— Self-contained teaching in all content areas  Single Subject— Departmentalized teaching in specified content area
Advanced Teaching Credential	Special Education— <i>(It is unclear if there would be only 1 Special Education credential or if the current Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe Disabilities would be retained)</i>	Advanced Special Education content and field work across service delivery approaches with emphasis on less restrictive environments. Content beyond what is completed for Gen Ed credential including enhanced focus on guiding and working with other educators (Gen Ed teachers and other school personnel). Possible common trunk preparation for Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe disabilities with additional preparation in areas/types/levels of need.	Special Education— Teaching all students with disabilities –not based on federal disability categories <i>(Can only be added to a Gen Ed or earned concurrent to a Gen Ed credential)</i>

\*UDL = Universal Design for Learning

\*MTSS = Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

\*PBIS = Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

\*IEPs = Individual Education Plans

The current low incidence disability credentials—held by teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, have visual impairments, or have physical or other health impairments—would be maintained but the Task Force sees that these could be optional advanced authorizations for teachers holding general education teaching credentials.

#### Low Incidence Special Education Credentialing

Level of Preparation	Focus of Preparation	Content of Prep	Authorizes
<i>Additional Authorization that may be added to a <b>Gen Ed Credential</b></i>	DHH Disabilities	Only the specialty content area standards would be addressed in the additional authorization preparation	Teaching students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
	VI Disabilities	The teacher would hold a Gen Ed credential and have completed the more intense preparation identified in the first row of the table above	Teaching students with Visual Impairments
	PHI Disabilities		Teaching students with Physical or other Health Impairments

The proposal that general education teachers who have specialized knowledge and skills to teach students who are deaf or hard of hearing, have visual impairments, or physical or other health impairments has a logic to it in that the general education teacher would have the content knowledge and the teaching strategies to support the students' attainment of college and career standards as well as the specialized knowledge to work with the students' auditory, visual or physical impairment. A question could be raised if there would be a sufficient number of individuals who have the interest or the specialized skills to earn these additional authorizations if the population of eligible teachers is the general education teacher population rather than the current special education teacher population. Allowing teachers to earn authorizations in DHH, VI, or PHI as added authorizations to a General Education credential, rather than as freestanding initial Special Education credentials may have an impact on who decides to pursue this authorization.

There is currently work taking place in California through a small federal subgrant from the CEEDAR Center (Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform) at the University of Florida to prepare teachers—general education and special education—and leaders to understand each other's roles and work more collaboratively together. Through this subgrant, six California universities— Brandman University, CSU Fresno, CSU Long Beach, CSU Los Angeles, Loyola Marymount University, and San Francisco State University—are working together to develop teacher and leader preparation that is inclusive and spans general and special education. The CEEDAR institutions will be sharing what they have learned and best practices in the 2015-16 year.



***Subcommittee Recommendation 1B:*** All current school administrators, general education teachers, education specialists, and support personnel (school psychologists, counselors, teacher librarians, academic coaches, teachers on special assignment) will receive on-going, sustained, and job-embedded Professional Learning aligned with the Quality Professional Learning Standards (QPLS) and be able to demonstrate competence in the same evidence-based areas listed under 1.A. (Subcommittee Report pages 12-13)

**Staff Analysis of Subcommittee Recommendation 1B:**

Recommendation 1B focuses on professional learning for inservice educators; the Commission has no authority over professional learning for credentialed educators. See the staff analysis of the recommendation on professional learning beginning on page 18 of this agenda item.

***Subcommittee Recommendation 2:*** All Education Specialist teachers prepared under the Common Foundation and with related competencies will be qualified with a General Education teaching credential (Multiple Subject or Single Subject) and/or concurrently complete both general education and special education authorizations through dual, merged and/or integrated general-special education programs. (Subcommittee Report page 13)

**Staff Analysis of Subcommittee Recommendation 2:**

The CEEDAR work described above is in the area addressed in this recommendation. If the Commission's standards required all individuals seeking a teaching credential in Special Education to either already hold or concurrently earn a General Education teaching credential, the individuals would be authorized to teach both general education and special education students.

***Subcommittee Recommendation 3:*** Redesign the Education Specialist credential structure to provide for greater scope and increased flexibility that will enable the holder of the credential to facilitate evidence-based delivery of instructional services.

*In addition, the impact of the Added Specialist Authorizations requires review, since they are matched with the disability category of the student rather than their needs or types of needs, and these "populations" needs should be addressed and embedded within a revised Specialist structure rather than as add-ons later. (Subcommittee Report pages 13-14)*

**Staff Analysis of Subcommittee Recommendation 3:**

Currently California's authorizations to teach students with disabilities are based on the twelve federal disability categories and the authorizations span Birth, Pre-K, or K-12 up to age 22 (Appendix A). The newest of the specialty area authorizations, the Education Specialist: Language and Academic Development teaching credential, crosses the federal disability areas, as the individual is authorized to teach any student with academic communication and language needs. The current authorization statement for Education Specialist teachers allows individuals to provide service in a variety of settings: special day classes, special schools, home/hospital

settings, correctional facilities, nonpublic schools and agencies and resource rooms. The authorization does not allow the individual to teach in general education settings and with the focus on the least restrictive environment, many more students with disabilities are in general education settings. There are models in other states that also cross federal disability areas and additional information could be gathered if the Commission would like to examine this recommendation in more depth.

Subcommittee Recommendation 3 also proposes that the revised preparation requirements should take into consideration the recommendations from the Task Force's Evidence-Based Practices Subcommittee. This information has already been provided to the Preliminary Standards Task Group working within the Commission's current efforts to strengthen and streamline its accreditation system. There is a challenge, however, as to how much can be required of candidates to master in an initial preparation program and how much an individual can reasonably be expected to learn and know how to do prior to earning his or her initial credential.

The Added Authorizations in Special Education (AASE) are also addressed by Recommendation #3. The AASEs are shown on page 24 of this agenda item. The AASEs were developed to permit a fully prepared special education teacher to add a limited authorization to allow the individual to teach students in an additional federal disability area—for example, a teacher with an Education Specialist Teaching Credential in Mild to Moderate Disabilities could earn an authorization to teach students with orthopedic impairments by earning the Added Authorization in Orthopedic Impairments (AASE OI). Prior to the development of the added authorizations, the only option was for the individual to earn a full second Education Specialist credential in Physical and Health Impairments.

The prior Education Specialist program standards and authorizations addressed the teaching of students on the Autism Spectrum only for Moderate to Severe Disabilities and Early Childhood Special Education teachers. None of the other Education Specialist teachers were required to complete preparation nor were they authorized to teach students on the Autism Spectrum. With the significant increase in the identification of individuals on the Autism Spectrum, the Added Authorization in Autism Spectrum Disorders (AASE ASD) program has been completed by a significant number of special education teachers who hold teaching credentials in Mild to Moderate Disabilities (or the former Learning Handicapped teaching credential). In the current structure, all special education teachers are prepared and authorized to teach students on the Autism Spectrum so there is no need for the teacher to complete the AASE in ASD.

The other AASE programs (Deaf-Blind, Emotionally Disturbed, Other Health Impairments, Orthopedic Impairments, and Traumatic Brain Injury) address very specialized authorizations. A special education teacher would only need one of these added authorizations if one or more students in the class have been identified with a disability in that federal disability category. Fewer teachers have needed to add these authorizations and there are fewer programs. If in the future, the authorization for special education teachers were to be focused on the level of support or the services the student needs, then the additional authorization programs that are

based on the specific federal disability the students would no longer be necessary. If California's Special Education authorizations were modified to allow services across federal disability categories as has been recommended, there might not be a need for the Added Authorizations in Special Education for new Special Education teachers.

***Subcommittee Recommendation 4:*** *The State of California should provide incentive grants to preparation programs, e.g. universities, districts, county offices, etc. for research- based collaborative general/special education program development, redesign and/or revision, and to prospective teachers pursuing these credentials. (Subcommittee Report page 15)*

**Staff Analysis of Subcommittee Recommendation 4:**

Similar recommendations were made in the *Greatness by Design* report. However, the Commission does not have authority over or a fund source to supply incentive grants for institutions, programs, districts, county offices, or prospective educators.

***Subcommittee Recommendation 5:*** *Maintain the multiple pathways available to general and special educators, all of whom will obtain the common foundation, including: undergraduate blended programs including all coursework and student teaching only, as well as post-graduate programs with both part or full-time internship and student teacher options, where appropriate. (Subcommittee Report page 15)*

**Staff Analysis of Subcommittee Recommendation 5:**

Multiple pathways to a California teaching credential have been in place for many years. The Commission has discussed undergraduate blended teacher preparation, intern programs, student teaching programs, and post baccalaureate programs and affirmed the variety of pathways to a teaching credential as important to retain.

***Subcommittee Recommendation 6:*** *The subcommittee recommends that the Commission clarify the competence and authorization of current teachers who possess the existing Education Specialist K-22 credentials in mild-moderate and moderate-severe disabilities for the instruction of Reading/ELA to both students with and without Individual Education Programs, based upon the Specialists' required Reading coursework completed and passage of the RICA. (Subcommittee Report page 15)*

**Staff Analysis of Subcommittee Recommendation 6:**

The Commission's policy has been to design program requirements to ensure that an individual is prepared to teach or provide the services authorized on the credential the individual earns. All Education Specialists, except for teachers who hold the Early Childhood Special Education credential which authorizes teaching students with disabilities from birth to age 5, are prepared to teach reading/English Language Arts to the same degree as a multiple subject teacher, as the program standards are the same. Prospective Multiple Subject and Education Specialist teachers are both required to take and pass the Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA). Thus it is logical to authorize current Education Specialist teachers to teach reading in the same

manner as Multiple Subject teachers. Modifying an authorization would involve amending Title 5 regulations.

Another factor to be considered is the NCLB Highly Qualified Teacher requirements. The Multiple Subject teacher has demonstrated content knowledge of reading and English language arts by passing the CSET: MS. If an Education Specialist teacher satisfied the subject matter requirement by passing the CSET: MS, then he or she would be prepared in an equivalent manner as a Multiple Subject teacher and logically the authorization to teach reading should be the same as for the Multiple Subject teacher. If the Education Specialist teacher satisfied the subject matter requirement by completing a Commission-approved program in art, mathematics, foreign/world language, music, science, or social studies, then that individual has not been assessed relative to the academic content standards in English Language Arts and the individual would not meet the same HQT requirement.

***Subcommittee Recommendation 7:*** *Change the CTC Education Specialist credential authorization settings in the Education Code section to reflect and add services to students in the context of general education as well as the specialized settings now listed. (Subcommittee Report pages 15-16)*

**Staff Analysis of Subcommittee Recommendation 7:**

Currently there are significant differences in what a prospective general education teacher and a prospective special education teacher is required to do to earn the preliminary teaching credential. The Multiple or Single Subject general education teacher is required to satisfy the subject matter requirement in the subject or subjects he or she will teach. A prospective general education teacher has significant theoretical instruction and practice in field work with unit planning, lesson planning, whole group instruction and classroom assessment.

A prospective special education teacher is required to demonstrate subject matter knowledge in any one of the NCLB content areas. The special education teacher is then authorized to teach all subjects. The prospective special education teacher is prepared, however, to have a deep understanding of accommodations and modifications for individual learners, knowledge of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process, using educational and assistive technology, communicating and collaborating with families, students with disabilities, other teachers including general education and special education, other school personnel, and transitions from one school level to another and across the student's educational career. These teachers are not prepared to teach every content area.

There are, however, also significant similarities in the preparation of general and special education teachers. As mentioned in the discussion of Subcommittee Recommendation 6, the preparation to teach reading is identical for Multiple Subject teachers and special education teachers. The preparation to teach English learners and the requirements for creating healthy learning environments are consistent across general education and special education preparation.

The recommendation from the Subcommittee is that the authorization for a special education teacher should include “Providing instruction and intervention in general education classrooms.” Interventions are most often focused in reading or mathematics. The recommendation, if implemented, would likely mean that the special education teacher would be authorized to provide instruction in both elementary schools and secondary schools. It is not clear how this would work for technical or advanced classes such as Computer Programming or AP Calculus, where advanced subject matter knowledge would be required. Staff suggests that additional conversations should take place to fully understand the range of this recommendation before analysis of the impact if it were to be implemented can take place. It may be possible to authorize the individual holding the special education credential to provide interventions with both general education students and students with disabilities, but the broad statement that the individual may provide instruction may need to consider the content area or areas where the individual has demonstrated that he or she has the content knowledge required of an individual holding a general education credential in that content area.

***Subcommittee Recommendation 8: Caseload/Workload Guidance.*** *During the Implementation phase for the adopted Special Education Task Force recommendations, we strongly encourage the Implementation Team to form a stakeholder committee including individuals with expertise on caseload/workload issues and models, parents, teachers and administrators to review current staffing ratios for special educators in California. (Subcommittee Report pages 16-17)*

#### **Staff Analysis of Subcommittee Recommendation 8:**

The Commission has no authority regarding caseload and does not provide any guidance on workload of educators. The Commission’s sections of the Education Code include §§ 44200-44468. The caseload limits for Resource Specialist teachers are addressed in Education Code §56362.

#### **Subcommittee Recommendations Addressing Professional Learning**

The Subcommittee report also addressed the topic of professional learning for inservice teachers, as follows:

*“The Committee acknowledges that, even with future credentials redesigned for a common foundation, the majority of teachers for some years to come will be teaching under current or prior standards, and will be encountering the same challenges referred to above, unless professional learning does enter into the equation. This will be the case as well for educational leaders/administrators who have not experienced the revised foundation during their teaching or leadership credential programs, or who come to administration from a non-teaching (e.g. school nurse or CTE credential) role. We have employed the recently adopted Superintendent’s seven Quality Professional Learning Standards....*

*This stance coincides with our recommendations that job-embedded school-wide and therefore school-based professional learning, which includes both general and special educators together with their site administration, and which cultivates the potential leadership within the teaching staff, begin the leadership preparation process before formal preparation, and continuing it*

afterwards, as is supported by the adopted QPLS, as well as by the recent work of others in the area of de-siloization and movement toward seamless services delivery for all students....

*The Superintendent's QPLSs make an important distinction between decades of traditional and typically ineffective, episodic "inservice" or "professional development" and the adopted professional learning standards that employ evidence supporting PL as a 'lever' to improve one's teaching practices **and student results**. The QPLSs complement each other in meeting these criteria and need to be seen in their full context. Examples of their alignment with critical Common Foundation elements follow." (Subcommittee Report pages 17-18)*

### **Staff Analysis of the Subcommittee Recommendations Addressing Professional Learning**

Professional learning for inservice educators is not within the authority of the Commission. The Commission discussed the Superintendent's Quality Professional Learning Standards at its December 2014 meeting (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2014-12/2014-12-3G.pdf>) and interest was expressed in working with stakeholders to discuss and plan for meaningful professional learning for California's educators.

The Special Education Task Force recommendation that professional learning should be job-embedded, school-wide, and inclusive of all adults working with students aligns with the discussion that took place at the Commission meeting. At this time, professional learning is the responsibility of the individual educator and the district that employs the educator.

### **Relationship of the Task Force Recommendations to Commission Work**

Currently, the work of the Commission's Accreditation Advisory Panel is focusing on strengthening and streamlining the Commission's standards and accreditation system. This work includes revising the Preliminary Preparation Program Standards to refocus on essential elements of program quality as well as the *Teaching Performance Expectations* (TPEs). As a summary, the recommendations, a statement about the Commission's responsibilities, and possible steps to implementing the recommendation are provided in the table below:

<b>Special Education Task Force Recommendation</b>	<b>Locus of Responsibility and Possible Steps to Implementation</b>
<b>Educator Preparation</b>	
<b>1A:</b> <i>General and special education teacher preparation will be redesigned to ensure a robust and rigorous common 'trunk' or foundation within the credential system for all P-12 California educators, to include candidates' demonstration of competence in Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)</i>	<p>This recommendation is within the Commission's purview.</p> <p>The recommendation is being discussed by the Commission's Accreditation Task Group. To implement the recommendation, revised program standards for both general education (Multiple and Single Subject) and special education preparation programs would need to be developed and adopted by the Commission.</p>



<b>Special Education Task Force Recommendation</b>	<b>Locus of Responsibility and Possible Steps to Implementation</b>
<b>1B:</b> <i>All current school administrators, general education teachers, education specialists, and support personnel (school psychologists, counselors, teacher librarians, academic coaches, teachers on special assignment) will receive on-going, sustained, and job-embedded Professional Learning aligned with the Quality Professional Learning Standards (QPLS) and be able to demonstrate competence in the same evidence-based areas listed under 1.A</i>	<p>This recommendation is not within the Commission’s purview.</p> <p>(See also the “Professional Learning” row at the bottom of this table)</p>
<b>2:</b> <i>All Education Specialist teachers prepared under the Common Foundation and with related competencies will be qualified with a General Education teaching credential (Multiple Subject or Single Subject) and/or concurrently complete both general education and special education authorizations through dual, merged and/or integrated general-special education programs.</i>	<p>This recommendation is within the Commission’s purview.</p> <p>This recommendation addresses the future preparation of special education teachers if recommendation 1A is implemented. The Commission would be able to implement the recommendation through adoption of program standards and Preconditions and by amending Title 5 Regulations.</p>
<b>3:</b> <i>Redesign the Education Specialist credential structure to provide for greater scope and increased flexibility that will enable the holder of the credential to facilitate evidence-based delivery of instructional services.</i>	<p>This recommendation is within the Commission’s purview.</p> <p>To implement this recommendation discussion would need to take place with employers and those who prepare special education teachers to develop the appropriate credential structure. Once the structure has been determined and adopted by the Commission, Title 5 Regulations would need to be promulgated to implement the changes to the credential authorizations.</p>
<b>4:</b> <i>The State of California should provide incentive grants to preparation programs, e.g. universities, districts, county offices, etc. for research- based collaborative general/special education program development, redesign and/or revision, and to</i>	<p>This recommendation is not within the Commission’s purview.</p> <p>Incentive grants could be developed as part of the legislative or budget process.</p>

<b>Special Education Task Force Recommendation</b>	<b>Locus of Responsibility and Possible Steps to Implementation</b>
<i>prospective teachers pursuing these credentials.</i>	
<b>5:</b> <i>Maintain the multiple pathways available to general and special educators, all of whom will obtain the common foundation, including: undergraduate blended programs including all coursework and student teaching only, as well as post-graduate programs with both part or full-time internship and student teacher options</i>	This recommendation is within the Commission's purview as far as what an individual holding an Education Specialist Credential is authorized to do. To add an authorization to teach reading to general education students would require amending Title 5 Regulations.
<b>6:</b> <i>... clarify the competence and authorization of current teachers who possess the existing Education Specialist credentials in mild-moderate and moderate-severe disabilities for the instruction of Reading/ELA to both students with and without Individual Education Programs, based upon the Specialists' required Reading coursework completed and passage of the RICA.</i>	<p>This recommendation is within the Commission's purview as far as what an individual holding an Education Specialist teacher is authorized to do.</p> <p>To add an authorization to teach reading to general education students would require amending Title 5 Regulations.</p> <p>(Note: If the special education teacher did not satisfy the subject matter requirement by passing the CSET:MS, the individual would not meet the Highly Qualified Teacher requirements of NCLB because the individual would not have demonstrated knowledge of the content (English language arts/reading) he or she would be teaching.)</p>
<b>7:</b> <i>Change the CTC Education Specialist credential authorization settings in the Education Code section to reflect and add services to students in the context of general education as well as the specialized settings now listed</i>	<p>This recommendation is within the Commission's purview.</p> <p>However, the authorization for the Education Specialist teaching credential is not in the Education Code so the Education Code would not need to be modified but current regulations would need to be amended.</p>
<b>8:</b> Caseload/Workload Guidance	This recommendation is not within the Commission's purview.
<b>Professional Learning</b>	
<i>...the majority of teachers for some years to come will be teaching under</i>	This recommendation is not within the Commission's responsibilities. Professional learning has been

<b>Special Education Task Force Recommendation</b>	<b>Locus of Responsibility and Possible Steps to Implementation</b>
<i>current or prior standards, and will be encountering the same challenges referred to above, unless professional learning does enter into the equation. This will be the case as well for educational leaders/administrators who have not experienced the revised foundation during their teaching or leadership credential programs...</i>	decoupled from credential requirements and is currently locally determined by the educator and his or her employer. The Special Education Task Force recommends professional learning for current educators to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills identified by the Special Education Task Force. This recommendation should be addressed across a range of stakeholder groups and agencies.

### **Requested Direction to Staff**

Staff requests that the Commission discuss the recommendations of the Statewide Special Education Task Force and, if appropriate, provide direction to staff concerning any desired modifications or changes in direction of current work relative to these recommendations.

### **Next Steps**

A number of the systemic changes proposed within the report may require action by the Legislature, the Commission, and/or one or more state agencies. Staff would work to implement any direction that may be provided by the Commission that is within the Commission's purview.

## Appendix A

Federal Disability Categories	Specific Learning Disability/ Mental Retardation (Mild/Moderate)	Mental Retardation (Moderate/Severe)	Emotional Disturbance	Multiple Disabilities	Autism	Speech or Language Impairment	Deafness or Hearing Impairment	Deaf-Blindness	Visual Impairment Including Blindness	Orthopedic Impairment	Other Health Impairment	Traumatic Brain Injury
Credential Authorization												

**Education Specialist Instruction Credentials-** also authorizes service as a resource specialist across all disability areas at the grade level of the document.

Mild/Moderate (K-12 to Age 22)	X		X		X <sup>1</sup>						X	
Moderate/Severe (K-12 to Age 22)		X	X	X	X			X				
Language and Academic Development (Pre-K to Age 22)	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>
Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing (Birth to Age 22)					X <sup>1</sup>		X	X				
Physical & Health Impairment (Birth to Age 22)				X	X <sup>1</sup>					X	X	X
Visual Impairment (Birth to Age 22)					X <sup>1</sup>			X	X			
Early Childhood Special Education (Birth to Pre-K only)	X	X	X	X	X						X	X

- 1 Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) content is included in all preliminary Education Specialist Teaching Credential programs in all specialty areas. The preliminary credential will authorize the holder to provide autism instructional services to students within the specialty area(s) of their credential. The additional ASD authorization is for California-prepared special educators. The ASD authorization will appear as a separate authorization on the Education Specialist Teaching Credential document.
- 2 The Language and Academic Development Education Specialist Credential authorizes services for ages preschool to age 22 across disability areas **limited to** students identified with academic communication and language needs in the following areas: language development, school readiness and social skills, and literacy development addressing competencies across the curriculum in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and academic areas.

## Appendix A

Federal Disability Categories	Specific Learning Disability/ Mental Retardation <i>(Mild/Moderate)</i>	Mental Retardation <i>(Moderate/Severe)</i>	Emotional Disturbance	Multiple Disabilities	Autism	Speech or Language Impairment	Deafness or Hearing Impairment	Deaf-Blindness	Visual Impairment Including Blindness	Orthopedic Impairment	Other Health Impairment	Traumatic Brain Injury
Credential Authorization												

### ***Added Authorizations in Special Education - AASE (initially issued effective July 03, 2009) \*\****

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)					X							
Deaf-Blind (DB)								X				
Emotional Disturbance (ED)			X									
Other Health Impairment (OHI)											X	
Orthopedic Impairment (OI)										X		
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)												X
Early Childhood Special Education Added Authorization (ECSE) (Birth- Pre -K only) <sup>3</sup>	X	X	X	X	X						X	X

**\*\*** Holder is authorized to conduct assessments, provide instruction, and special education related services to individuals within disability across the continuum of special education program options at the grade and age levels authorized by the prerequisite credential.

<sup>3</sup> An individual must hold a valid prerequisite special education teaching credential (Mild/Moderate or Moderate/Severe); the added authorization authorizes services for ages birth to pre-K only.



# **STATEWIDE SPECIAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

## **Educator Preparation and Professional Learning: Framework and Recommendations 2014-2015**

Ann T. Halvorsen and Victoria Graf, Committee Co-Chairs  
Committee Members

Marta Anchondo, Mark Archon, Carolyn Nunes, Barbara Schulman, Nancy Snodgrass



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## **Goal**

All California students will have well-prepared educators who will provide them with access to and participation in the academically and socially rich curriculum, and will have instructional supports to ensure that learning outcomes result in all being career, community, and/or college ready.

## **Committee's Guiding Problem Statements**

The Subcommittee identified and refined the following problem statements to guide our work, which began in December of 2013. Data and research supporting these statements and the recommendations that follow can be found in multiple sources referenced, including Parrish (2012) as well as within the California Special Education Annual Performance Report on the CDE website.

1. Students within all eligibility categories of disabilities are served less within general education (with specialized intervention and supports as per their Individual Education Programs {IEPs}) than in most states. California data for the federal marker for "Least Restrictive Environment" have not demonstrated significant progress over the past decade.
2. Current data on the academic performance outcomes for students receiving special education services are poor overall in comparison to other states.
3. General educators report that they lack preparation in educating or co-educating students with disabilities.
4. General and special education teacher preparation is typically separate or "siloed" at the pre-service level, and within much of professional learning as well.
5. Special Education teacher preparation often lacks essential general education competencies, and is "siloed" as well within special education. For example, a clear "moderate" common trunk for Specialists obtaining preparation in Mild-Moderate or Moderate -Severe Disabilities is lacking in many programs. Preparation primarily by eligibility category is not supported by research and also has a major, sometimes negative, impact on student placement, specifically on student access to, support within and learning within general education.
6. Funding at the university level, particularly in California State Universities, is in short supply for critical activities such as: program re-design for cross department collaboration among general, special education and educational leadership; incentives and support of highly qualified Master-Cooperating teachers; new faculty positions to replace retirements, particularly with low incidence expertise; high levels of Intern support, and partnerships with multiple school districts/ Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

7. At the LEA level, Professional Learning requires prioritization within Local Control and Accountability Plans to ensure both evidence-based beginning teacher support /induction and assessment (BTSA) as well as ongoing job-embedded professional learning for educational leaders and all teachers, which is guided by the state-adopted Quality Professional Learning Standards (QPLS).

## **INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT AND RATIONALE**

### **California Students with Disabilities and Access to General Education**

California schools have a critical need for educators who are well prepared to address all aspects of student diversity, including diversity related to disability (cf. Oyler, 2011). When we examine the instruction of our diverse students whose disabilities are labeled from moderate to the most severe, or who have intensive instructional support needs, California data illustrate the fact that these students are the most at risk of being educated in separate settings without access to general education content, teachers or peers (Data Accountability Center, 2012; Parrish, 2012). California's federally required Annual Performance Report (APR) data for the Least Restrictive Environment Indicator 5 show that the state has not met its projected LRE targets both at state and the majority of district levels, since the inception of the State Performance Plan (SPP) –Annual Performance Report (APR) system. As of the APR posted in 2013 for 2011-12, California reported only 52% of students with IEPs being educated in general education 80% or more of their time, 5% below the 2007 national average baseline data; nearly 10% below the current national mean of 61.4% (Parrish, 2012), and significantly below the 76% target set in the current State Performance Plan (CDE, 2014, retrieved 4/21/14 <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/qa/index.asp>.)

The picture for students in eligibility categories that reflect students with more severe disabilities is significantly worse: only 6% of students with intellectual disabilities (ID) are in general education 80% or more of their instructional time; 5% of students with multiple disabilities (MD); 25% of students with emotional disturbance (ED); 27% of students with orthopedic impairments (OI), and 33% of students with Autism (www.IDEAdata.org). It is not only students with these low-incidence disabilities who are being segregated: only 55% of students with Learning Disabilities are instructed within general education 80% of their time in school. When we consider the group categorized as having LD in conjunction with the low incidence groups above, these students comprise about half (more than 160,000 in the Low Incidence categories, another 154,000 in LD category) of all students with IEPs in California, and their opportunities to access core curriculum and learn with their general education peers are severely limited in the majority of schools (Data Accountability Center, retrieved 2/2/2013, <http://www.ideadata.org>). The 80% federal marker for time in general education provides for the equivalent of a day a week of separate instruction, if necessary interventions cannot be provided within general education with supplemental supports and services, and yet barely a majority of students with Learning Disabilities are provided with this level of access and participation.

An examination of these data in comparison to national data contained in the 30<sup>th</sup> Report to Congress in **2008**, demonstrates again California's contrast with national improvement trends: seven years ago, the national **average** of 16% of students with intellectual disability in general education 80% of the time was 2 1/2 times our current 6%; 13% of students with multiple disabilities, 47% of students with orthopedic disabilities and 35% of students with emotional disturbance were educated in general education 80% of their instructional time. (Report to Congress, 2008, retrieved 4-21-13 from: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/2008/parts-b-c/index.html>).

The Committee attributes part of this lack of inclusive specialized services in less restrictive environments to the current preparation of general and special educators - and by extension the preparation of administrators as well - at both pre-service levels and in professional learning contexts (Bellamy, Crockett & Nordengren, 2014; Billingsley, 2010; Billingsley, McCleskey & Crockett, 2014; Burrello, Sailor & Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2012; Pugach & Blanton, 2011). This lack of service provision within general education is not only counter to IDEA requirements and federal- state targets; it is also associated with lower proficiency levels on statewide assessments of the performance of students with disabilities (Parrish, 2012).

### **Outcomes Associated with Time and Access to Learning within General Education Contexts**

Parrish (2012) described the statistically significant association of time in general education with academic proficiency in correlational studies conducted in Massachusetts and Illinois, and the positive association found within California's district level data as well. The Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) LRE data on percentages of students served in the most inclusive placement category of general education 80% or more time, ranges from 27% of students to 80% of students, and is not a function of district poverty levels. While Parrish cautions us regarding the correlational nature of the data, he states that the highest performing California districts "tend to be high inclusion" (2012, p 41), noting at the same time the essential need for professional learning and support to occur with inclusive reforms. In his 2012 study, conducted for the WestEd Comprehensive Center, Parrish states that the data suggest that inclusive service delivery also does not appear to be associated with higher costs (2012). He provided the examples of Sanger and Val Verde Unified School Districts, which have engaged in major systems change efforts utilizing Response to Intervention (RtI) and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) over periods of several years, increasing students' academic proficiency across all subgroups, including students with disabilities. Additional methodologically sound studies documenting district and school level student progress in inclusive settings abound (e.g. Cole, Waldron & Majd, 2004; Cosier, Causton-Theoharis, & Theoharis, 2013; Sermier Dessemontet, & Bless, 2013; Walsh, 2012).

## **Educator Preparation as Reform Facilitator**

The primary focus of the proposed subcommittee recommendations is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and collaborative, problem-solving expertise of all educators in order to increase the number of highly qualified general and special educators and administrators, so that schools and district systems can engage in systems change processes toward collaborative evidence-based inclusive practices that will lead to desired positive student outcomes and inclusive reforms.

In designing an innovative educator preparation program at New York's Columbia University, Oyler (2011) described its background and mission:

The reality of this era of public schooling is that most teachers have an exceedingly wide range of human diversities—many of which bear directly on teaching and learning—in all classrooms. In our program, we take these differences as a given, and work toward preparing teachers to assume difference, and urge them to teach inclusively—not in spite of these differences but because of these differences (p 206).

The 2011 policy brief of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) echoed this focus as a national priority (Blanton, Pugach and Florian, 2011), citing the current “siloization” of teacher preparation which is mirrored in the fragmented service delivery to students with additional instructional and support needs (Burrello et al, 2012; Sailor, Dunlap, Sugai & Horner, 2009, p. 664). They noted that the separateness of teacher preparation communicates the concurrent assumption of the need for separate expertise in practice; in other words: “You (the general education teacher) cannot possibly take on this student’s education in any way; you do not have the competencies required.” It should be no surprise that general educators report feeling unprepared to teach to the broad range of students’ diversity, particularly students who have disabilities, when less than a third reported formal requirements for working with students who have disabilities within their student teaching experiences in 2009 (Government Accountability Office {GAO}). Teacher preparation structures and licensure/credentialing require reform in order to effect expectations of and improved outcomes for students with disabilities in terms of access and achievement (Brownell et al; Cole et al, 2004; Cosier, Causton-Theoharis & Theoharis, 2011; Thurlow, 2014). Similarly, Lynch (2012) reported that only eight states include special education information or performance requirements for school administrators, and 18 states have a special education separate administrative license or credential.

An important caveat that Blanton et al provided in their 2011 brief is the need to avoid teacher preparation that is based on students’ eligibility categories for special education. The authors’ argument is not unlike the popular social media statement credited to Lorna Wing: “When you have met a person with Autism, you have met one person with Autism”. We could substitute any one of a myriad of ‘conditions’ or “eligibilities” in place of Autism Spectrum Disorder in this statement. The essential caution here is that

eligibility categories do not define individual needs and skills. General educators as well as special educators require in-depth preparation in evidence-based frameworks and strategies starting with, as one example, Universal Design for Learning (e.g. Ayala, Brace & Stahl, 2012; Glass, Meyer & Rose, 2013; Rose & Meyer, 2002), that is folded within strong collaborative skill development across disciplines, with coursework, clinical fieldwork and student teaching experiences that demonstrate ‘de-siloization’ (Sailor, et al, 2009), engaging prospective teachers and teacher/specialists in data-based problem solving, and demonstrations of collaborative skills in these processes together to meet all of their students’ needs (Brownell, Sindelar, Kiely & Danielson, 2010; Hardman, 2009; Pugach, Blanton, Correa, McLeskey & Langley, 2009).

## **THE EXISTING CALIFORNIA EDUCATOR PREPARATION PICTURE IN BRIEF**

### **1. Current California Education Specialist (Special Education) Credentials**

In 1996, in an effort to address the continuing shortage of special educators in the state, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) eliminated the full general education credential prerequisite for Special Educators that had existed since Special Education licensure was first mandated. It is instructive to note that persistent shortages continued in spite of this deletion, as these shortages do in every state, including those where an undergraduate major in general or special education is permitted. Length or intensity of preparation appear to be unrelated to shortages. Twenty-four years of data from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Postsecondary Education attest to these persistent national shortages (Teacher Shortage Areas: Nationwide Listing, 2014). In addition, it is possible that teachers without general education credentials are more likely to leave the profession as they may feel less prepared, and also have fewer alternatives beyond special education roles. Our Committee has theorized that these shortages are due, at least in part, to poor social marketing. The potential educator “pool” is limited by the experience of its members: many people have not had a great deal of experience with individuals with disabilities in their own school years, and may feel that they have little understanding of the special educator’s role nor any desire to learn more; unless a particular experience, or interaction with students with disabilities leads them there. Committee members’ experiences with recruitment events for prospective applicants to credential programs is illustrative of this, with time inevitably spent dispelling many myths about students with disabilities, about the goals of special education services and the roles of special as well as general educators in their education.

### **2. Current Dual Credential Path Option**

In 2013, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing looked for university programs still requiring dual credentials (general and special education) of special educators and located very few among the California State Universities (CSU) and independent colleges. CSU Long Beach and Dominican University each offer a dual option, which has become quite popular in both places, but as yet these universities do



not require one to obtain both credentials. CSU East Bay is currently the one institution requiring general education credentials for all candidates for Education Specialist: Moderate-Severe Disabilities as well as those in Mild-Moderate Disabilities, and that provides a dual, collaborative, concurrent program across departments to accomplish this, since 1998. The rationale for developing this program at CSUEB was directly tied to the growing research base supporting more inclusive services for all students with disabilities, and the clear need for special educators to be well-prepared to work with general education standards, content, evidence-based practices and to do so collaboratively with their general education colleagues. The collaboration between the two separate ‘siloes’ departments was able to make this work. At CSUEB, credentialed general educators may also enter the Specialist portion to complete the Education Specialist requirements, and Multiple Subjects Candidates may obtain a Diverse Learners Specialist Focus by completing the first four quarters of seven with the “TED-SPED” cohort (<http://www20.csueastbay.edu/ceas/departments/epsy/SPED%20Degrees.html>).

Employers of the CSUEB graduates, as well as those dually-credentialed at Dominican University, have reported a higher level of satisfaction with the performance of these graduates in comparison to other special educators without general education credentials. These principals and administrators talk about the graduates’ skills in differentiation of instructional strategies and content across the full range of student abilities, in-depth experience and understanding of core curriculum and how to universally design lessons and units; develop and apply accommodations and modifications, provide positive behavior intervention and problem-solve collaboratively with general educators. Several area districts report looking first for dually credentialed teachers for any of their open special education positions. While the outcomes of this program are strong for the preparation of dual-credentialed special educators, many of whom have moved at some point in their careers to work for a time as inclusive general education teachers; it does not change the preparation of general educators, with the small exception of those Multiple Subjects candidates who complete all aspects of the first year of the program.

### **3. Overview of Current CTC Standards and Requirements for General and Special Educators**

The California credential requirements that all K-12 educators share were summarized by CTC for the Special Education Task Force (2014) and are abbreviated here as follows:

- a. All K-12 General Education and Special Education (K-22) candidates** must: complete coursework on teaching English Learners, understanding and respecting diversity, maintaining a healthy learning environment; using technology in the classroom, and have practice applying theory in the K-12 classroom through student teaching or as an intern. Both General Education and Special Education teacher preparation includes coursework and fieldwork supporting an authorization to teach English Learners in the content, grades or specialty content areas of the credential. Candidates for either a Multiple Subject or an Education Specialist teaching credential must also complete coursework and fieldwork on teaching reading and pass the Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA). For fieldwork and/or student

teaching within the Preliminary credentials programs, Special Education and General Education candidates must complete fieldwork in K-12 schools, which requires a variety of field experiences at different grade levels and/or different settings and includes work with English Learners and other special populations. Each individual must be supervised by the preparation program and by a district employed supervisor - either a master/mentor teacher or an intern mentor (for candidates serving on an Internship credential) (Clark, March 17, 2014).

**b. Additional specific standard areas for general education credential candidates that CTC shared (2014)** include: demonstrating the ability to plan lessons and units, teach a lesson, plan and give a student assessment relative to the lesson or the unit, analyze assessment results and student work, and reflect on the teaching experience. General education candidates must have opportunities to practice each of these skills and must take and pass a Commission-approved Teaching Performance Assessment (Clark, March 17, 2014). Notably, these are not standards that are specifically required of current Education Specialist programs.

**c. All Education Specialists for students ages 5-22 are currently required to demonstrate:** competence with the legal mandates of Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and the skills to work effectively with IEP Teams and in IEP conferences; to provide the necessary accommodations, modifications and specialized instruction/intervention to assist each student to be successful; to collaborate with parents/guardians, colleagues in general education and other specialists, supervise and train para-educator staff; work with outside agencies while advocating for their students, effectively use assistive technology to facilitate communication and curriculum accessibility and achievement, develop and implement augmentative and alternate communication systems and positive behavioral supports and intervention with IEP Team members, and develop and implement effective transition plans for all students, within IEPs from age 16, with their school, community staff and parents/guardians. Education Specialists must be prepared to accurately assess students' performance and needs with norm-referenced and additional relevant curriculum based and criterion-referenced measures, and be able to interpret the results, in order to gain and apply appropriate interventions. They must also be prepared to address any special health needs of their students. (Clark, March, 2014 and Education Specialist Standards, CTC).

## **MAJOR GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATOR PREPARATION REFORMS REQUIRED**

As the brief summary above indicates, there are minimal areas of overlap currently within the scope of competencies and standards necessary for all educators to effectively address aspects of student diversity related to disability and other potential risk factors. It is instructive to note that a decade ago, California's WestEd reported the teacher preparation goal of OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs) -funded Regional Resource Centers in concert with the Center for Improving Teacher Quality of the

Council of Chief State School Officers goal for teacher preparation as "...all teachers, both general and special educators...have the skills to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities" (2004, p.9). Brownell et al (2010) compare the need for realignment and common preparation of general and special educators with the Response to Intervention (RtI) process, utilizing their own and others' research to document that special educators need...

"...to develop an instructional repertoire that integrates domain knowledge with knowledge of intensive interventions and assessments...to develop such extensive expertise, special education teachers will require preparation in both general and special education. Research evidence has demonstrated that general education teachers with special education preparation are better prepared to meet the literacy and mathematics needs of students with disabilities than teachers who lack it" (Brownell et al, 2010, p 372).

These authors also recommended that at minimum, states should design and implement standards for credentialing that clearly state the knowledge and skills general education teachers will be required to demonstrate for teaching students with disabilities, and the knowledge and skills that special education teachers must obtain and demonstrate for providing both access to and achievement within the general education curriculum and more intensive, specialized instruction (Brownell et al, 2012).

To meet these needs, multiple researchers in teacher preparation support a full scale overall redesign of credential programs, as opposed to add-ons to current standards and programs; one which would result in an integrated, shared foundation where special and general educators obtain their initial credentials together in common course and fieldwork/student teaching experiences (see e.g. Blanton et al 2011; Brownell et al, 2010; Florian & Linklater, 2010; Florian & Rouse, 2009; Hardman, 2009; Oyler, 2011, Pugach and Blanton, 2009; 2011 and Savolainen, Englebrecht, Nei and Makinenen, 2012). Blanton et al's 2011 policy brief comes the closest to the Educator Preparation and Professional Learning Subcommittee's philosophy that has driven our conceptual framework since the first meeting in December, 2013. The primary focus of the Subcommittee's recommendations is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and collaborative, problem-solving expertise of all current and future educators in order to increase the number of highly qualified general and special educators and administrators, so that schools and district systems have the capacity to engage in systems change processes toward collaborative, evidence-based inclusive practices leading to desired positive student outcomes and inclusive reforms.

### **Common Foundation for all California Educators**

**Recommendation 1.A: General and special education teacher preparation will be redesigned to ensure a robust and rigorous common 'trunk' or foundation within the credential system for all P-12 California educators, to include candidates' demonstration of competence in Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) including:**

- Collaborative, research-based General Education-Special Education service delivery approaches to educating all students with general education peers (Friend & Cook, 2013)
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and Differentiated Instructional Design including Assistive Technology (Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2014)
- Digital Literacy - The appropriate use of instructional technology including assistive technology; requiring a level of competence that ensures educators are instructing with technologies while at the same time teaching students to be able to use technologies and access resources to master the Common Core Standards
- Communication and collaborative skills demonstration across school personnel and with students' families including cultural competence with diverse students and families (Friend & Cook, 2013; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2014)
- Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and interventions, Response to Intervention (RTI): Classroom and school level data-based collaborative structures and strategies for intervention and progress monitoring systems in academic areas is a fluid process and is fused with social-behavioral progress monitoring systems, utilizing research based co-teaching and other collaborative practices (e.g. Friend & Cook, 2013; Sailor, 2014; Sugai & Horner, 2009; Walsh, 2012)
- Social-Emotional Learning including embedded social skills instruction with individualized Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), School-wide PBIS through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), intervention, and wrap-around services
- Child and Human development and interaction with learning
- English Learners: culturally appropriate, responsive and evidence-based assessment and intervention, effective instruction of diverse learners across all areas of curriculum including English Language Development (ELD)
- Appropriate adaptation strategies including accommodations and modifications and instruction in their use and assistive technology for UDL
- Reading - Common Core English Language Arts Standards and the New English Language Development Standards: assessment, instructional design, intervention, reading across the curriculum; assessment data analysis and use; evidence-based reading instruction including addressing the needs of struggling readers, such as those with Dyslexia; differentiation and MTSS; and Intervention with progress monitoring

- Math Common Core Standards - assessment, instructional design, intervention, assessment data analysis and use; MTSS and progress monitoring and application of appropriate intervention (for Multiple Subjects, Math Single Subjects and all Special Educators); differentiation
- Teamwork (general and special educators and parent/student) roles, responsibilities, development of IEPs that will result in clear “educational benefit”
- Self determination/student voice and family voice
- Knowledge of California state and federal education laws and principles and application to programs and instruction

This Common Foundation will occur in the context of and be concurrent with ongoing, intensive supervised fieldwork and student teaching experiences with Master/Cooperating Teachers who meet specific criteria, and where candidates are expected to demonstrate progressive mastery of these competencies over successive fieldworks/student teachings where students with and without disabilities are educated together. Student teaching/fieldwork will be integrated with coursework and signature or key assignments/evaluations, including, Teaching Performance Assessment/Performance Assessment for California Teachers (TPA/PACT) for all.

**Recommendation 1.B: All current school administrators, general education teachers, education specialists, and support personnel (school psychologists, counselors, teacher librarians, academic coaches, teachers on special assignment) will receive on-going, sustained, and job-embedded Professional Learning aligned with the Quality Professional Learning Standards (QPLS) and be able to demonstrate competence in the same evidence-based areas listed under 1.A.**

This is essential to ensure that the current majority educator force will have parity in skills and information with their colleagues who are new to the profession. This professional learning needs to be a priority on par with English Learner competencies that have been brought to all current California teachers at the same time as new teachers were acquiring them within their initial preparation. The Subcommittee recognizes that these new areas of skill will enhance the significant body of current competencies that our highly qualified practicing teachers already possess. We have discussed ongoing professional learning requirements for credential holders’ renewal post-Clear credentials, as had existed at one time in the CTC structure. This renewal requirement may align well with 1B. A process for consideration of approaches to professional learning requirements, should include:

**All relevant stakeholders (i.e. California Teachers Association (CTA); California Federation of Teachers (CFT); the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), including district and county office administrative representation; the CTC) brought together to consider and select effective mechanisms and support for teachers and administrators that will ensure the**

**delivery of quality professional learning (QPLS, 2012) which is in line with the future pre-service common foundation of evidence-based practices.**

For real systems change to occur - given that the majority of teachers and administrators will be those in practice now for some years - California needs to provide resources and support for all educators to participate in professional learning (PL) that addresses these key areas. One mechanism for the local level aspects of this might be the district team process utilized for LCAP development. The highlighted evidence-based practices for PL would include: Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>)/MTSS, Universal Design for Learning, instructional technology including assistive technology, and principles of coherent instructional systems; assessment and differentiation between second language acquisition and a potential disability, as well as provision of culturally responsive pedagogy in order to reduce the disproportionality of English Learners and students of color who are inappropriately designated to receive special education services.

\*We note that several areas are addressed in each or one of the credentials now, but occur separately. In addition, **branches** for other subjects at Multiple Subjects (elementary) level; including Next Generation Science Standards, and specific subjects at Single Subject (secondary) levels as well as specialized competencies for special educators will follow the common foundation. The Committee currently views Early Childhood (both general and special education) as **roots** to the Common Foundation or trunk.

### **Education Specialist Preparation**

**Recommendation 2: All Education Specialist teachers prepared under the Common Foundation and with related competencies will be qualified with a General Education teaching credential** (Multiple Subject or Single Subject) and/or concurrently complete both general education and special education authorizations through dual, merged and/or integrated general-special education programs. Please see the relationship of this recommendation to Recommendation 1A, that this authorization occur through a common foundation for all educators.

**Recommendation 3: Re-design the Education Specialist credential structure to provide for greater scope and increased flexibility that will enable the holder of the credential to facilitate evidence-based delivery of instructional services.**

For example, instructional delivery might include co-teaching while integrating MTSS approaches in the most inclusive/least restrictive environment. Instructional delivery should ensure that specialist expertise to address all students' needs, **particularly those with intense and/or complex needs, will be met within the specialist credential structure and these students will have full access as well to the LRE.**

- NOTE: The recommendations of the re-design of the credential should be associated with the recommendations of the Evidence Based Practices Committee so there is alignment between educator preparation and service delivery.
- Special Educator Competency Areas



- These areas may be constructed around students’ need ‘types’ and intensity of support/specialized instructional needs vs. eligibility labels or setting types. Robust and rigorous evidence-based practice (EBP) focus for additional strategies and specialized instructional techniques for students who have disabilities, and who may have needs in the areas of:
  - Specialized assessment strategies
  - Augmentative and alternative communication systems-selection of systems based on comprehensive trans-disciplinary team student assessment processes including family involvement in decision and instruction in use
  - Individualized PBIS interventions and plans and focused social skill development/enhancement; development of relationships with peers with and without disabilities
  - Assistive technology and augmentative/alternative communication strategies/systems: individualized selection process for individual needs, intensive instruction in use, professional development for others, etc.
  - Organizational and executive functioning skills
  - Paraprofessional development/learning and supervision
  - Adaptation and modification when needed to extend beyond Direct Instruction and UDL instructional design
  - Alignment of and embedded instructional strategies for IEP academic and functional skill objectives with/within common core (Math, ELA) and other curricular (other subjects) frameworks (see e.g. Courtade & Browder, 2012; Hunt and McDonnell, 2012; Goalbook, [www.goalbookapp.com](http://www.goalbookapp.com))
  - Selection and application of specialized intensive instructional interventions and augmented curriculum supports
  - Planning for transitions from school to school levels and high school to post-secondary options
  - Legal requirements for specialized services under IDEA and CA law
  - Collaborative teamwork across disciplines
  - Interagency collaboration skills (school/Mental Health services/Rehabilitation/Regional Center/post-school support agencies/post secondary education, etc.)
  - Collaboration within the life of the school, to facilitate and support the data based RtI/MTSS process, progress monitoring and intervention decision-making committees, and/or Student Study Team, other grade level Professional Learning Communities or subject/grade level area groups and activities, etc.
  - Strong core of knowledge of research-based practices across specialized instruction/student grades/ages and need area

In addition, **the impact of the Added Specialist Authorizations requires review, since they are matched with the disability** category of the student rather than their needs or types of needs, and these “populations” needs should be addressed and embedded within a revised Specialist structure rather than as add-ons later.

**Recommendation 4: The State of California should provide incentive grants to preparation programs, e.g. universities, districts, county offices, etc. for research-based collaborative general/special education program development, redesign and/or revision, and to prospective teachers pursuing these credentials.** This type of supported planning should result in increased numbers of merged or integrated programs to help curtail overly long credential sequences. In addition, financial incentives will be needed and are strongly recommended to support the additional preparation required for Education Specialists as well as for district consideration of Education Specialists entering at a higher point on the salary scale, where these districts are also providing this type of incentive for other high-need areas, such as for Math, Science, Speech and Language Therapy, and for ‘hard to staff’ schools.

Financial incentives and pathways should also be provided for current general education teachers who wish to obtain an Education Specialist credential.

**Recommendation 5: Maintain the multiple pathways available to general and special educators, all of whom will obtain the common foundation, including:** undergraduate blended programs including all coursework and student teaching only, as well as post-graduate programs with both part or full-time internship and student teacher options, where appropriate.

**Recommendation 6: The subcommittee recommends that the Commission clarify the competence and authorization of current teachers who possess the existing Education Specialist K-22 credentials in mild-moderate and moderate-severe disabilities for the instruction of Reading/ELA** to both students with and without Individual Education Programs, based upon the Specialists’ required Reading coursework completed and passage of the RICA. The subcommittee cautions that this authorization does not substitute for a Reading Specialist certificate, nor does it mean that Education Specialists will be adding general education intervention responsibilities beyond their full-time caseload responsibilities for students with IEPs. Instead, we recognize the need for flexibility for schools that have developed evidence-based effective collaborative approaches, for example, a school where a current Special Educator’s caseload is low, resulting in half-time employment in special education, and where that school would like to employ the Specialist for the additional half time with their Reading intervention program.

**Recommendation 7: Change the CTC Education Specialist credential authorization settings in the Education Code section to reflect and add services to students in the context of general education as well as the specialized settings now listed (below).** Although one CTC document includes general education: “The service across the continuum of program options is the same for all Education Specialist Credential teaching authorizations including to serve students with special needs as follows: resource rooms or services; special education settings; **general education settings**; special schools; home/hospital settings; state hospitals; development centers; correctional facilities; non-public, non-sectarian schools and agencies as defined in Education Code Sections 56365 and 56366; and alternative and non-traditional instructional public school



settings other than classrooms.”; **at the same time, CTC currently states the following about Specialist credential authorizations on its website on the Special Education opening page (retrieved from <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/CREDS/special-ed.html> 10-21-14):**

“Special Education (Education Specialist Instruction) Credentials authorize the holder to teach in the disability areas of specialization such as Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Moderate/Severe Disabilities, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Visual Impairments, Physical and Health Impairments, and Early Childhood Special Education. One or more of the authorizations may be listed on the document for service in the following settings:

- Special day classes
- Special schools
- Home/hospital settings
- Correctional facilities
- Nonpublic schools and agencies
- Resource rooms

**The Subcommittee recommends the following addition to the Education Specialists’ authorization locations:** “Providing instruction and intervention in general education classrooms”, to be added as the first setting noted in the Specialist credential authorization Ed Code section and thus added to all Education Specialist K-22 authorizations.

**Recommendation 8: Caseload/Workload Guidance.** During the Implementation phase for the adopted Special Education Task Force recommendations, we strongly encourage the Implementation Team to form a stakeholder committee including individuals with expertise on caseload/workload issues and models, parents, teachers and administrators to review current staffing ratios for special educators in California, in comparison to approaches utilized by states that implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports effectively and more broadly. Currently, for special education teachers, the California Education Code has just a single caseload limit, and that is a maximum of 28 students for those Education Specialists who are called Resource Specialists, not for any other roles (EC 56362) except Language Speech and Hearing Specialists.

All Education Specialists prepared since 1997 are qualified as Resource Specialists, including those credentialed within either Moderate-Severe disabilities or Mild-Moderate disabilities. No other roles such as a Special Educator supporting students included within general education and delivering their specialized instruction primarily within general education, nor those who instruct students who spend large portions of instructional time in special education classes, have any limits or guidelines except whatever may be established through local teacher contracts. This stands in contrast to general education (See Ed Code Sections 41376, 41378: 29.9-33 students depending on grade level.) It is clear that those special educators, whose caseload includes at least some students with very complex needs, will not be able to appropriately support and instruct

or collaborate with general education teachers to support and instruct 28 students, let alone to collaborate and participate effectively in delivering MTSS to additional general education students. Giangreco, Hurley and Suter (2009) discussed the implications of Special Educator density in regards to total enrollment and its relationship to LRE nationwide. While the average is one special education teacher to every 120 students nationwide, it ranges from 1:80 in six states to a high of one special educator to 190 enrollment in seven states, including California, Idaho, Mississippi, Texas, Utah, Wyoming and Washington. Even including paraprofessionals, in 2009, California was in the bottom 10 states with 109 total enrollment per special education teacher and paraprofessional combined (Scull & Winkler, 2011). This is an issue both for delivery of appropriate services to students, as well as for recruitment of potential special educators and retention of those in the field.

Some states use student needs-based and/or teacher role types to guide caseload development. For example, in New York, special education co-teachers carry a maximum caseload of 12 students within a general education class where they co-teach full time with a general educator. Consultant teachers have a maximum of 20 students (NYSUT, 2011). Districts in Iowa are required to submit special education caseload design factors used and their implementation plans to the state department of education as a part of their service delivery plans. Rubrics of factors that may be considered in their development of caseloads include, for example: student-based needs such as behavior plans; extent of curriculum modification required, or use of augmentative devices; and/or collaborative requirements, such as the number of teachers with whom one co-teaches; the number of paraprofessionals, etc. (IA Department of Education, 2009). These and other approaches are designed to create flexibility in delivering effective services to students with disabilities through collaborative approaches designed to lead to increased opportunities and achievement for all students within general education, and increased possibilities for collaborative delivery of tiered supports within those settings.

## **Part II: FIT OF THE COMMON FOUNDATION WITH PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SYSTEMS CHANGE**

Our recommendations for **Educational Leadership** competency expansion and/or infusion in the area of diverse learners are focused primarily under the Professional Learning section of this framework given the recent credential changes and adoption of new CTC standards for educational leadership that occurred in 2014.

The Committee acknowledges that, even with future credentials redesigned for a common foundation, the majority of teachers for some years to come will be teaching under current or prior standards, and will be encountering the same challenges referred to above, unless professional learning does enter into the equation. This will be the case as well for educational leaders/administrators who have not experienced the revised foundation during their teaching or leadership credential programs, or who come to administration from a non-teaching (e.g. school nurse or CTE credential) role. We have employed the recently adopted Superintendent's seven Quality Professional Learning

Standards (QPLS) (December, 2013) based on the Greatness by Design (2012) report and on the work of Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009), to demonstrate alignment with the Common Foundation recommended above, and to make specific recommendations for addressing these areas through the professional learning lens of the QPLS, first through the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) vehicle for induction of both general and special educators, and continuing with school based job-embedded learning opportunities across teachers' and school leaders' careers.

In their current synthesis of the literature regarding preparing school leaders to “support every student’s learning, Bellamy, Crockett and Nordengren (2014) noted that

“...getting the new leaders schools need will require more than just changing formal preparation. By framing leadership development as a much longer process of job-based development of expertise for leadership, current theory and research reinforce some existing priorities for change while also pointing to new possibilities for improvement. We have emphasized opportunities that link formal preparation more closely to practice, deliberately position formal preparation to ensure that leadership preparation resources focus on emerging leaders who have invested the effort required for job-based development, and more systematically and deliberately support the early development of leadership capabilities by teachers and related service providers - and all school staff - well before formal leadership preparation typically begins (p. 48).”

This stance coincides with our recommendations that job-embedded school-wide and therefore school-based professional learning, which includes both general and special educators together with their site administration, and which cultivates the potential leadership within the teaching staff, begin the leadership preparation process before formal preparation, and continuing it afterwards, as is supported by the adopted QPLS , as well as by the recent work of others in the area of de-siloization and movement toward seamless services delivery for all students (Rolle, Harris, & Burrello, 2013).

Bellamy et al underlined the importance of school leaders’ roles, concluding that:

“...they work at the intersection of high standards for student learning, new expectations for practically universal proficiency, increasing student diversity, and school-level accountability for results. To succeed, principals must, from their very first day on the job, create a vision and direction that meaningfully includes all students, align capabilities and resources around that vision, and motivate the many members of a school community to work together” (p.48).

The Superintendent’s QPLSs make an important distinction between decades of traditional and typically ineffective, episodic “inservice” or “professional development” and the adopted professional learning standards that employ evidence supporting PL as a ‘lever’ to improve one’s teaching practices **and student results**. The QPLSs complement each other in meeting these criteria and need to be seen in their full context. Examples of their alignment with critical Common Foundation elements follow.

## **Professional Learning for School Leaders and all Educators**

**Data-based Professional Learning:** The first QPL standard (2014), **Data**, states: “Quality professional learning uses varied sources and kinds of information to guide priorities, design, and assessments” (p.6) The first element specifies: “Uses formative and summative student achievement data, disaggregated by race, gender, English language learner status, **special needs**, and/or poverty indicators, to identify critical student needs that require improved instruction, support, and leadership” (p.6).

The Data standard in itself ties in directly with the **Committee’s prioritization of a Multi-tiered System of Supports and Intervention structures** as a primary focus for both educational leaders and all teachers within any school. MTSS begins with a focus on student data, and students with identified disabilities as well as students at risk for academic and/or social difficulties must be included in the school-wide analysis, intervention structures stemming from the analysis, and ongoing progress monitoring. This is where professional learning needs to begin, as the inclusion of students with IEPs in school-wide intervention planning is too often not a priority. Professional Learning must be needs-based, unlike past “one-shot” assumptions of common needs across a school, and Element B of Data begins by directing schools to use “...data about educators’ knowledge, skills and dispositions to help determine strengths and gaps in content and pedagogical knowledge” (p.7). Additional elements address ongoing review of program quality through feedback loops and multiple data sources from students and families as well as educators, with impact review in terms of individual and collective practice as well as student outcomes. All of this fits well with collaborative focus on both general and special education.

**Content and Pedagogy:** This second standard requires that professional learning (PL) enhance students’ ability to learn and thrive through, e.g., building, deepening and extending educators’ knowledge and understanding of curriculum in their own and across disciplines, and use of “adaptive and linguistically and culturally responsive materials” (p.9). The element’s focus is on building educators’ repertoires for evidence-based practices with diverse student needs as well as using assessment to “...plan and modify content and instruction” while “building flexible pathways and processes for students; inclusive classrooms and alternative programs” (p.10). The Learning Support component of the standard requires that PL ensure that all students have differentiated support to meet content and performance expectations, and much more detail is provided on elements of content and pedagogy to be addressed through professional learning. This element is aligned as well with the evidence-based content and instructional components contained within the Committee’s defined **Common Foundation** (p 16-18 above), for example, Universal Design for Learning principles, differentiated instruction, modifications and accommodations.

**Equity:** The third standard frames much of the work that joins general and special education, in noting that quality PL ensures “...equitable access, opportunities, and outcomes for all students, with an emphasis on addressing achievement and opportunity disparities between student groups” (p. 11). This standard’s elements address academic,

systemic and climate equity and call on PL to “...develop educators’ repertoires of approaches to support the cultural, intellectual, social-emotional and physical development of each learner.” (p.12). It requires that we look at school/district policies that have led to systemic inequities and address how to change those, as well as to identify over- and under-represented groups in various educational programs and help educators work to change these inequities. Equitable PL “provides messages of high expectations...” and “creates opportunities for meaningful participation” and development of each student (p.12). Again, the Common Foundation’s key areas of teamwork, collaboration, MTSS and differentiated instruction, as well as its focus on social-emotional learning and School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports are fully aligned here with equity and excellence for all students.

**Design and Structure, and Collaboration and Shared Accountability:** These two content and process standards continue to align with the Common Foundation’s themes. First, Design and Structure calls for “focused, sustained learning” that is “job-embedded, that is, situated as realistically as possible in the work setting of the learner so that theoretical learning and its practical application are directly linked” (p.13). Some possible vehicles or forms suggested in the standard are:

“...study group, coaching network, web-based workshop, learning communities, collaborative committees, or curriculum development groups. They may vary in time duration, be scheduled within or outside of the regular school day, or be synchronous or asynchronous technology-based designs. However, all quality professional learning must provide for intensity, follow through, and continuity” (p.13).

The first indicator reiterates that the clearly identified purpose and needs are related to increasing educator capacity to increase student outcomes. The standard acknowledges the need for differentiation in PL according to stage of career for educators and the novice to accomplished veteran, thus making room for the needs of diverse educators in a school, as well as the educator’s primary subject/area focus, while maintaining its focus on school-wide student goals, and utilizing ‘read problems of practice’ as the base for new learning. The standard calls for educators to interact with both the content and each other in the PL process, and notes the need for dedicated time within the school schedule for learning, practice, collaboration, and reflection.

Professional Learning that meets this standard will accomplish this by having teams or groups at the site that include both general and special educators sharing in common goals through learning communities or study groups that may focus on, for example, moving to and continuing oversight of a school wide positive behavioral support and intervention focus within a MTSS structure, or a study group focused on a particular grade level of ELA Common Core Standards and how to ensure access and meaningful participation for all using the UDL planning framework with special educators working collaboratively with general educators in the classroom. Another PLC might choose to focus on designing and piloting special and general educator co-taught classrooms to address data-based needs at a particular level or subject area.

PL aligned with this standard can engender and be supported in turn by the **Collaboration and Shared Accountability standard**, something that general and special educators may not have had to date in some schools. The standard calls for the principal's leadership and participation as well as that of specialists and instructional support staff, in a collaborative culture supporting mutually agreed-upon student learning goals and outcomes (p.16). These two QPL standards underline both the importance of effective collaboration across educators' roles and diverse skills in a safe and supportive environment, and recommend evidence based structures to accomplish this, in a continuous cycle of improvement. Element A of Collaboration-Accountability also calls for transparency and experimentation with feedback, based in peer observation, with common planning time for educators engaged in these collaborative learning tasks.

**Resources:** The sixth standard reminds us that “...(to make) decisions about equitably allocating resources for professional learning, those responsible must have a thorough understanding of varied student and educator learning needs and thoughtfully consider which priorities will lead to improved outcomes for all students and educators” (p.19). It is at this point in the PL discussion that the needs of students with diverse disabilities and their primary educators have sometimes suffered, as a result of being viewed as separate entities from the school as a whole. However, if each of the previous standards is implemented as stated, then all educators and the school leadership will be making these decisions accordingly, rather than special educators ‘receiving professional development’ through the central office or in some way separately from the school community. There will be PL needs at many schools that are assisted with the addition of external expertise, as the QPLSs discussed under this standard in “Human Capital” (p. 20) as well as previous ones, but as noted, this should take place utilizing ‘rigorous criteria’ for vetting that need. Rather, funds are needed - as described in the standard - for increases in collaboration time for learning and planning; for cycles of activities spaced over time, including theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, reflection, and coaching, and for release time when required, for example, for observation and coaching pairs.

**Alignment and Coherence:** The seventh and final standard requires PL that “contributes to a coherent system of educator learning and support that connects district, school, and individual priorities and needs with state and federal requirements and resources” (p.25). The authors noted that “...the call for developing effective educators effectively and efficiently can be addressed when professional learning outcomes are aligned across state-level educator preparation and licensure programs, district-level induction practices, collective results from professional growth plans, and site-level personnel evaluation processes” (p.25). This is also our priority: that the professional learning that educators-principals, general and special educators - obtain in the future mirrors, complements and extends the Common Foundation that we have recommended that future pre-service preparation provide; and that such PL brings it to the school community level, where it can be deepened and extended through collaboration, and result in increases in academic as well as social-emotional learning for all students. This content and pedagogy will inform Induction processes of teachers as well as administrators, and continuous professional growth plans across educators' roles and careers.



**As noted under the Common Foundation, Recommendation 1 above,** the Quality Learning Professional Standards will be utilized with Common Foundation priorities in the design of professional learning for professional educators including school leaders, concurrently with the implementation of the Common Foundation at the pre-service level, and both these PL standards and areas of focus reviewed in this paper be built into school district Local Control and Accountability Plans for both Beginning Teacher Induction and Support individualized plans and ongoing professional learning school plans.

With the infusion of the Common Foundation into LEA and site level LCAPs and the outcome data demonstrating effectiveness for principal professional learning and its impact on school level student data across the state, we expect the standards and content of the Common Foundation would then be backward-mapped into the **Educational Leadership Tier 1** standards as well.

**In closing, we believe that robust, evidence-based pre-service preparation, coupled with evidence-based professional learning designed to provide a common foundation for all educators, will be an essential element of California’s work for significantly improved outcomes for all of our state’s diverse learners.**

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