

Date of Hearing: April 19, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Chris Holden, Chair

AB 1106 (Soria) – As Amended March 30, 2023

Policy Committee: Education

Vote: 6 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes, upon appropriation, a grant program for institutions of higher education (IHEs) to establish teacher training programs that award a new teacher credential: the pre-kindergarten through grade three early childhood education specialist credential (PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential).

Specifically, this bill requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to (a) competitively award grants of up to \$250,000 to an IHE applicant to plan to offer the new credential and (b) competitively award implementation grants of up to \$500,000 to an IHE applicant to offer the new credential program. CTC is to give grant preference to applicant that also plans to offer a bilingual teaching authorization at the same time as the new credential.

The bill also requires CTC to annually report to the Legislature on grants provided and other data from grantees, including outcome data. The bill specified CTC may use up to 1.5% of funding appropriated for the grant program for administrative costs, subject to Department of Finance approval.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Unspecified one-time costs, likely General Fund, for the grant program. If CTC awarded 10 planning grants and 10 implementation grants, costs would be \$7.5 million.
- 2) Ongoing costs, likely General Fund, to CTC of \$174,000 a year over the life of the grant program to hire a staff person to administer grants, collect data, and produce a report annually. The bill allows CTC to use up to 1.5% of grant funds for program administration.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

California has made significant investments towards the goal of expanding transitional kindergarten (TK) to all 4-year-olds in the state by the 2025-26 school year, consistent with the state's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care. The expansion of TK has created demand for new teachers in public school classrooms. To meet the demand, districts will need to hire between 11,000 and 15,600 TK teachers on top of the state's existing shortage.

AB 1106 establishes a one-time grant program, administered by Commission on Teacher Credentialing, to IHEs to incentivize development and implementation of the PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential pathway and support program development that is rooted in best practices to support diverse candidates.

- 2) **Background.** California is experiencing teacher shortages, especially for math, science, special education, and bilingual education. Several variables have contributed to California's current teacher shortages, including teacher burnout and retirement. In addition, California recently added a new grade to its K-12 system: transitional kindergarten (TK). TK is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program. Though state law established TK in 2010 for four year olds with birthdays during certain months of the year, the Budget Act of 2021 phases in TK for all four-year-olds by the 2025-26 school year. The addition of a new grade requires an influx of teachers. The Learning Policy Institute estimates full TK implementation will require an additional 11,900 to 15,600 credentialed teachers.

Current law requires a TK teacher to hold a Multiple Subject Credential and complete 24 units of early childhood education coursework or child development coursework. CTC also recently authorized the PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential, which would qualify teachers to teach TK, as well as kindergarten through grade three. CTC-accredited IHEs currently offer various teacher credentialing programs and, beginning in early 2023, may apply to CTC to offer a PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential program.

This bill would provide funding to IHEs to plan and implement teacher training programs that would award PK-3 ECE Specialist Credentials.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 1555 (Quirk-Silva) of this legislative session extends the deadline by two years, from August 1, 2023, to August 1, 2025, for teachers assigned to TK classrooms to meet specified credentialing requirements. The bill is pending in this committee.

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