
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Josh Newman, Chair

2023 - 2024 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1106	Hearing Date:	June 21, 2023
Author:	Soria		
Version:	March 30, 2023		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Ian Johnson		

Subject: PK-3 early childhood education specialist credential: grant program.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes a grant program for institutions of higher education (IHEs) to establish programs of professional preparation that lead to more credentialed teachers obtaining the pre-kindergarten through grade three early childhood education specialist credential. (PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential)

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to award the following types of credentials to applicants whose preparation and competence satisfy its standards:
 - a) Basic teaching credentials for teaching in kindergarten, or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, in public schools in the state.
 - b) Credentials for teaching adult education classes and vocational education classes.
 - c) Credentials for teaching specialties, including, but not necessarily limited to, bilingual education, early childhood education, and special education. The CTC may grant credentials to any candidate who concurrently meets the CTC's standards of preparation and competence for the preliminary basic teaching credential and the preliminary specialty credential.
 - d) Credentials for school services, for positions including, but not necessarily limited to, administrators, school counselors, speech-language therapists, audiologists, school psychologists, library media teachers, supervisors of attendance, and school nurses.
- 2) Authorizes the CTC to issue single subject teaching credentials in agriculture, art, biological sciences, business, chemistry, dance, English, geosciences, health science, home economics, industrial and technology education (ITE), mathematics, music, physics, physical education, science (various subjects), social science, theater, and world languages (English language development and

languages other than English).

- 3) Authorizes the CTC to issue a multiple or single subject teaching credential with a specified concentration in a particular subject based upon the depth of an applicant's preparation in an important subject of the school curriculum in order to ensure excellence in teaching in specific subjects.
- 4) Authorizes the CTC to issue credentials for teaching specialties, including bilingual education, early childhood education, and special education (education specialist). Requires education specialist teaching credentials to be based upon a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, completion of a program of professional preparation, and standards that the CTC may establish.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the CTC to develop and implement a program to award, on a competitive basis, planning grants of up to \$250,000 each to regionally accredited IHEs for the development of plans to guide the creation of programs of professional preparation that lead to more credentialed teachers obtaining the PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential and a bilingual authorization.
- 2) Requires the CTC to develop and implement a program to award, on a competitive basis, implementation grants of up to \$500,000 each to regionally accredited IHEs for the implementation of programs of professional preparation, that lead to more teachers with the PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential and a bilingual authorization.
- 3) States that a regionally accredited IHE awarded a planning grant may use the grant funds to create a new four-year integrated program of professional preparation, adapt an existing integrated program of professional preparation, or establish a stand-alone program of professional preparation.
- 4) Requires the CTC to give priority to grant applications that propose to allow candidates to earn the PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential and a bilingual authorization at the same time.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "California is home to approximately 2.5 million multilingual learners, more than any other state. Despite the high need, the state is facing a low supply of bilingual educators. 76% of children aged 0-4 in California are children of color and yet only 39% of the current TK-12 workforce are teachers of color (CDE, 2020).

"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) ***PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential.*** According to the CTC, California is making historic investments that will increase access to transitional kindergarten (TK) for all four-year-old children in the state. Recent estimates from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley indicate a need for between 8,000 and 11,000 new teachers in a K-12 system that is already struggling with critical teacher shortages across the state. The proposed PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential is specifically designed and intended to meet this demand for a qualified, diverse workforce of ECE teachers to serve children and their families/guardians from three years to third grade. The proposed credential will provide accelerated pathways for current Multiple Subject Credential holders as well as for Child Development Teacher Permit holders with a bachelor's degree. The PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential is an opportunity to advance best practices in child development in the current TK-12 education system. The PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential is a unique opportunity that has not been available in California for decades and may not be again.

Current early childhood educators who want to work in TK classrooms and those teachers and teachers-to-be who want to teach preschool to grade 3 in public schools are potential candidates for PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential. While Multiple Subject Credential holders are already authorized to serve in grades PK-3, this credential will be available to help them meet a requirement that they complete 24 units of child development or ECE coursework required to teach in TK. This credential will also be an option for Child Development Teacher Permit holders as well as other individuals interested in a career in teaching in ECE who want to teach in grades PK-3. Beginning in early 2023, CTC accredited institutions may apply to offer a PK-3 Specialist Instruction Program.

- 3) ***Learning Policy Institute (LPI) report.*** The LPI's 2016 report, "Addressing California's Emerging Teacher Shortage: An Analysis of Sources and Solutions" included the following summary: "After many years of teacher layoffs in California, school districts around the state are hiring again. With the influx of new K-12 funding, districts are looking to lower student-teacher ratios and reinstate classes and programs that were reduced or eliminated during the Great Recession. However, mounting evidence indicates that teacher supply has not kept pace with the increased demand." The report included the following findings:
 - a) Enrollment in educator preparation programs has dropped by more than 70 percent over the last decade.

- b) In 2014-15, provisional and short-term permits nearly tripled from the number issued two years earlier, growing from about 850 to more than 2,400.
- c) The number of teachers hired on substandard permits and credentials nearly doubled in the last two years, to more than 7,700 comprising a third of all the new credentials issued in 2014-15.
- d) Estimated teacher hires for the 2015-16 school year increased by 25 percent from the previous year while enrollment in the University of California and the California State University teacher education programs increased by only about 3.8 percent.

The LPI report offered several policy recommendations for consideration, including the creation of more innovative pipelines into teaching.

- 4) ***Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) assessment.*** As part of the Proposition 98 Education Analysis for the 2016-17 Governor's Budget released in February 2016, the LAO included a section on teacher workforce trends in which it examined evidence for teacher shortages in specific areas, identified and assessed past policy responses to these shortages, and raised issues for the Legislature to consider going forward in terms of new policy responses. In the report, the LAO indicated that the statewide teacher market will help alleviate existing shortages over time and that the shortages may decrease without direct state action. However, the LAO noted there are perennial staffing difficulties in specific areas, such as special education, math, and science, for which they encouraged the Legislature to address with narrowly tailored policies rather than with broad statewide policies.
- 5) ***Already weak teaching pipeline further damaged by COVID-19 education disruptions.*** A March 2021 report by the LPI raised concerns about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the teacher shortage in California:
 - a) Teacher shortages remain a critical problem. Most districts have found teachers to be in short supply, especially for math, science, special education, and bilingual education. Shortages are especially concerning as a return to in-person instruction will require even more teachers to accommodate physical distancing requirements. Most districts are filling hiring needs with teachers on substandard credentials and permits, reflecting a statewide trend of increasing reliance on underprepared teachers.
 - b) Teacher pipeline problems are exacerbated by teacher testing policies and inadequate financial aid for completing preparation. Many districts attributed shortages to having a limited pool of fully credentialed applicants, with more than half reporting that testing requirements and lack of financial support for teacher education pose barriers to entry into teaching.

- c) Teacher workload and burnout are major concerns. The transition to online and hybrid learning models has had a steep learning curve and poses ongoing challenges that have been a primary contributor to some teachers' decisions to retire earlier than previously planned. With district leaders estimating that teacher workloads have at least doubled, many were concerned that the stressors of managing the challenges of the pandemic on top of the challenges of an increased workload could lead to teacher burnout and increased turnover rates.
 - d) Growing retirements and resignations further reduce supply. In some districts, retirements and resignations are contributing to shortages, while in others, these retirements and resignations offset the need for anticipated layoffs due to expected budget cuts this school year. District leaders anticipate higher retirement rates next year, which could exacerbate teacher shortages.
- 6) **Technical amendments.** The author has proposed, and staff concurs with, the following technical amendments that address concerns expressed by the California Department of Education:
- a) Remove the language about priorities from sections (a) and (b) and instead use sections (e) and (f) to describe the first and second priorities.
 - b) Add linguistically responsive pedagogy in the statutory language for faculty being hired and trained for programs funded through this grant.
 - c) Add language on academic supports and tuition and non-tuition assistance for teacher candidates in the planning grants.

SUPPORT

The Education Trust - West (sponsor)
California Association for Bilingual Education
Californians Together
Catalyst California
EdVoice
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Peach
Unite-LA

OPPOSITION

None received

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