
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Josh Newman, Chair

2023 - 2024 Regular

Bill No: AB 238
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Urgency: No
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Fiscal: Yes

Subject: California Student Teacher Support Grant Program.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the California Student Teacher Support Grant Program to compensate teacher credential candidates during required student teaching.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to establish standards for the issuance and renewal of credentials, certificates, and permits. Requires the CTC to adopt standards for the accreditation of postsecondary teacher preparation programs. Prescribes “clinical practice” as one of the CTC-adopted standards and requires that teaching credential candidates perform 600 hours of clinical practice throughout the candidate’s teacher preparation program. (Education Code (EC) 44300 and the CTC’s Teaching Performance Expectations)
- 2) Requires the 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; and
 - 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. (EC 44225)

- 3) 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). (EC 44257)
- 4) 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. (EC 44257.2)
- 5) 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. (EC 44274.2)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Establishes, subject to an appropriation of one-time funds for this purpose, the California Student Teacher Support Grant Program, under the administration of the CTC, to compensate teaching credential candidates during the student teaching component of the 600 hours of clinical practice that is required as part of the candidate's teacher preparation program.
- 2) Requires the CTC to issue a request for applications to all local educational agencies (LEAs) to solicit applications for funding.
- 3) Requires the criteria adopted by the CTC for the selection of LEAs to participate in the program to include passage of a criminal background check.
- 4) Requires an applicant to certify that it has received a commitment from each participant that the participant will accomplish both of the following:
 - a) Complete all of the requirements for, and obtain, a multiple subject, single subject, or education specialist teaching credential.
 - b) Complete the 600 hours of clinical practice that is required as part of the candidate's teacher preparation program.
- 5) Requires, on or before January 1 of each year, the CTC to report to the education policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature regarding the status of the program, including, but not limited to, the number of student teachers paid, the degree to which the applicant meets the teacher shortage needs of the school district, charter school, or county office of education (COE), and the ethnic and racial composition of the participants in the program.

- 6) Defines LEA as a school district, charter school, or COE.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “The state’s ongoing educator and workforce shortage has only increased as a result of the pandemic. Schools are having trouble finding appropriately credentialed teachers, especially in STEM and special education fields. AB 238 helps relieve the teacher shortage by establishing the California Student Teacher Support Grant Program, which compensates student teachers during their required student teaching hours to help alleviate financial stress at an important time in the teacher preparation process.”
- 2) ***Required clinical practice for teachers.*** According to the CTC, the CTC’s adopted standards for preliminary multiple and single subject teacher preparation programs set forth the expectations for programs to provide candidates with appropriate supervised clinical practice. In adopting the program standards related to supervised clinical practice, the CTC signals the critical role that a high quality and extensive clinical practice experience plays in preparing effective educators. The standards related to clinical practice are at times specific and directive, while also allowing for flexibility for institutions to design experiences that work well for their candidates and the TK-12 schools they serve.

The program’s clinical practice experiences are designed to provide the candidate with a developmental and sequential set of activities that are integrated with the program’s coursework and extend the candidate’s learning through application of theory to practice with TK-12 students in California public school classrooms. Clinical practice is a developmental and sequential set of activities integrated with theoretical and pedagogical coursework, and must consist of a minimum of 600 hours of clinical practice across the arc of the program. The range of clinical practice experiences provided by the program includes supervised early field experiences, initial student teaching (co-planning and co-teaching with both general educators and education specialists, as appropriate, or guided teaching), and final student teaching. Student teaching includes a minimum of four weeks of solo or co-teaching or its equivalent. For interns, early field experience would take place in an experienced mentor’s classroom. In most cases, clinical practice hours are unpaid. AB 238 will compensate student teachers during their required student teaching hours.

- 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 (UC) and the California State University (CSU) 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.

SUPPORT

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California Charter Schools Association
California Federation of Teachers
California Music Educators Association
California Teachers Association
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OPPOSITION

None received

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