



STATEWIDE SPECIAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

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

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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 "siloe-d" 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-d" 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 30th 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 (RtI²)/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)
 - 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 QPLs 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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