

Date of Hearing: April 17, 2012

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Marty Block, Chair
AB 1853 (Bonilla) – As Amended: March 29, 2012
AS PROPOSED TO BE AMENDED
RN 1209999

SUBJECT: Teacher credentialing.

SUMMARY: Requests the California Teachers Commission (CTC) convene a workgroup to develop program standards for the issuance of a recognition of study for transitional kindergarten (TK) competence for holders of a multiple subject teaching credential who will be teaching pupils enrolled in TK programs.

- 1) Requests CTC convene a workgroup to develop program standards for the issuance of a recognition of study for transitional kindergarten (TK) competence for holders of a multiple subject teaching credential who will be teaching pupils enrolled in TK programs, which shall include, but is not limited to, the following representatives:
 - a) The State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI).
 - b) Approved teacher preparation programs, including at least one representative from the California State University (CSU), the University of California, California Community Colleges, and independent institutions of higher education. To the extent practicable, representatives should have an academic interest or prior experience in preparing teachers to teach in TK programs.
 - c) A researcher from a higher education institution who has expertise in early learning.
 - d) School districts, county offices of education, and charter schools that have implemented TK programs.
 - e) A TK teacher who has kindergarten teaching experience.
 - f) Practicing TK teachers.
 - g) Other organizations deemed appropriate by CTC.
- 2) States legislative intent that a successful candidate for a recognition of study developed in TK pursuant to this bill demonstrate appropriate knowledge, as determined by CTC based upon the recommendations of the workgroup.
- 3) Encourages CSU and other teacher preparation institutions to establish goals for increasing the number of teachers prepared through TK programs with respect to any recognition of study in TK issued pursuant to this bill.
- 4) Encourages beginning Teacher Support and Assessment programs to provide appropriate support, mentoring, and assistance to beginning teachers who are teaching in TK programs.

- 5) Authorizes CTC to work with the SPI to gather and post, on an appropriate Internet Web site, best practices from school districts and schools on curriculum development and professional development relating to implementing and sustaining TK programs.
- 6) Prohibits the holder of a multiple subject teaching credential receiving a recognition of study in TK pursuant to this bill to teach English learners unless he or she holds an appropriate authorization or is employed on the basis of a local assignment option.
- 7) Prohibits any recognition of study in TK issued pursuant to this bill from being considered a type of authorization, from being used as a condition of employment, from replacing a subject matter competence requirement, and from being used to make employment decisions pursuant to existing law, as defined.
- 8) Defines the following terms:
- 9) “Recognition of study in transitional kindergarten” is a statement added to a multiple subject teaching credential that the credential holder has completed a commission-approved program in TK teaching methods that can be applied to the academic instruction authorized by his or her credential. A recognition of study in a TK teacher preparation program may be offered as part of an initial teacher preparation program or as a separate program for previously credentialed teachers.
- 10) “Transitional kindergarten programs” are programs described in Section 48000(d).

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Authorizes the CTC to issue a multiple subject credential and defines multiple subject instruction to mean the practice of assignment of teachers and students for multiple subject matter instruction, as is commonly practiced in California elementary schools. Authorizes a school district governing board to authorize the holder of a multiple subject teaching credential or a standard elementary credential to teach any subject in departmentalized classes to a given class or group of students below grade 9, provided that the teacher has completed specified coursework. (Education Code § 44256)
- 2) Defines TK as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. [Education Code § 48000(d)]
- 3) Specifies, as a condition of receipt of apportionment for pupils in a TK program, a school district or charter school shall ensure the following:
 - a) In the 2012–13 school year, a child who will have his or her fifth birthday between November 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a TK program maintained by the school district.
 - b) In the 2013–14 school year, a child who will have his or her fifth birthday between October 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a TK program maintained by the school district.

- c) In the 2014–15 school year and each school year thereafter, a child who will have his or her fifth birthday between September 2 and December 2 shall be admitted to a TK program maintained by the school district. [Education Code § 48000(c)]

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: This bill was approved by the Assembly Education Committee on April 11, 2012, by a vote of 6-4, on the condition that amendments were adopted in the Assembly Higher Education Committee to remove the contents of the bill and substitute language to encourage the CTC to convene a workgroup of experts to develop program standards for a new "recognition of study" notation for a teaching credential in the area of TK. These amendments are attached and reflected in this analysis.

Background. SB 1381, Simitian, Chapter 705, Statutes of 2010, established the Kindergarten Readiness Act, which created TK and moved up the date by which a child must turn five for Kindergarten entry one month per year beginning with the 2012-13 school year for three years, from December 2 to September 2, in order to give these pupils the time to prepare and mature in order to academically succeed in Kindergarten. When SB 1381 was considered, there were anecdotal reports of an increasing number of districts experimenting with TK for children with fall birthdays. TK is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate.

Need for this bill. According to the author, the Kindergarten Readiness Act was passed to offer a different and appropriate curriculum for eligible four-year olds. However, no new formal opportunities were created or are currently available for teachers to prepare themselves to offer an "age and developmentally appropriate" curriculum. As educators across the state have begun transitional kindergarten implementation, teachers, administrators and teacher instructors have recognized the need for CTC to establish standards for a TK certification and specialization. With a number of school districts already offering TK and more than 120 districts moving forward with implementation, AB 1853 begins the process to offer the professional development many teachers will seek to teach TK effectively. The specialized teacher training will ensure teachers are prepared to deliver the age- and developmentally appropriate curriculum that will prepare TK students for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Who teaches TK now? According to the CTC, TK classrooms are appropriately staffed by the holder of a teaching credential or permit that authorizes general education instruction in a self-contained classroom for the grade level of Kindergarten. TK classrooms as defined in statute are not preschool classrooms or child development programs; therefore, holders of Children's Center Instructional or Child Development Permits including those with the school-age emphasis are not authorized to teach TK. Employing agencies should distinguish between those transitional preschool programs intended to support Kindergarten readiness from the TK classrooms mandated and delineated in statute. Credentials that authorize instruction in TK classrooms are as follows:

- 1) General:
 - a) Kindergarten-Primary (grades K-3)
 - b) Elementary (grades K-8)

- 2) Standard:
 - a) Early Childhood (grades preschool-3)
 - b) Elementary (grades K-9)

- 3) Ryan/SB 2042:
 - a) Multiple Subject (grades preschool, K-12 and adults)
 - b) Multiple Subject University Intern (grades preschool, K-12 and adults)
 - c) Multiple Subject District Intern (grades K-8)
 - d) Specialist Instruction Credential in Early Childhood Education

(A Multiple Subject General Education Limited Assignment Permit, Multiple Subject Short-Term Staff Permit or Multiple Subject Provisional Internship Permit authorizes the same service as a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential.)

Students identified as English learners in a TK classroom must have the same level of services as those in Kindergarten. Therefore, students identified as English learners that require instruction in English Language Development or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English services must have a teacher authorized to provide the appropriate English learner instructional services indicated.

Current TK programs. According to the California Early Learning Advisory Council in their August 2011 report entitled, "Findings from the Field," implementation of TK programs varies widely across the state. For example, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) had 36 TK classes in the Fall of 2010 and expects to have 135 classes in the Fall of 2012. LAUSD currently provides 3 days of professional development for TK teachers. Fresno Unified School District had one TK class in the Fall of 2010 and provided a 5-day Early Childhood Education training with California State University Fresno.

Existing professional development for TK. Loyola Marymount University currently offers a TK Teaching Certificate that is designed to provide TK teachers with expertise to create and design effective learning environments, curriculum, and instruction that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for young learners. The TK Teaching Certificate consists of a three-course program of study with a combination of real-time webinars and online sessions. This program expands the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of credentialed multiple subject educators.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.