

A Policy Briefing on Credentialing and Professional Development

California's high standards for the teaching profession and for student performance set the stage for educational excellence. All staff has the right to high-quality professional development that will help them more ably address all students' needs.

Teacher Preparation

The California Standards for the Teaching Profession and the Common Core State Standards are the foundation for all teacher preparation and professional development programs. The standards for teacher preparation programs should be developed by professionals in the field, involving classroom teachers, certificated support services personnel, and higher education faculty members who currently work with teacher credential candidates in an instructional capacity. Any phase of teacher preparation or beginning teacher induction shall not be subject to changes in credential requirements during that period of completion. Teacher preparation programs must offer strong practicum experiences. The teacher shall be granted a clear credential upon successful completion of the first two years of full-time teaching. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) approved alternative credentialing programs shall be equal in rigor and quality to existing credential programs.

Credentials: Qualified Instructors

A "fully credentialed," "fully qualified" or "qualified teacher" is an individual who holds a credential or certificate issued by an independent credentialing board. Teachers should be recognized as highly qualified in their authorized areas because they have demonstrated teaching competence by meeting the training standards for their credentials. No teacher should be assigned to teach outside his/her credential authorization.

Professional Development: Certificated

Educators have the responsibility and the right to continually enhance their craft to stay current in subject-matter and pedagogical approaches by reflecting and acting on feedback received, accessing professional development opportunities provided and collaborating with colleagues to enhance instruction. Professional development consists of activities undertaken by an individual educator to improve himself/herself. Meaningful teacher-driven professional development is essential to help educators more ably address the learning needs of every student and to help develop, refine and expand pedagogical repertoire, content knowledge and the skill to integrate both. It is the right of all certificated staff to participate in meaningful teacher driven professional development. Every effort should be made to identify and support research-based strategies to improve student learning, programs, schools and the professional practice of teaching. Effective professional development is closely tied to current instructional assignments and circumstances and to new state programs and mandates, the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) and is consistent with current research, and is based on the needs of students and school programs as determined by the on-site educators. For professional development to be effective there must be continued, systematic, coherent attention to the needs of both individual educators and the schools in which they work. The state must provide financial resources to enable direct support and assistance to new teachers.

Beginning Teachers: Induction

Effective and professionally supported induction is an important process that will help beginning teachers learn how to analyze their practice, explore alternatives for content delivery, and make professionally autonomous decisions about their teaching practice. Induction/early career support programs are essential to supporting and retaining quality teachers. These programs must be funded and provided at no cost to the teacher.