



Commission on Teacher Credentialing

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Certification Division

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 19, 2022

TO: California Education Specialist Teaching Credential Authorizing Early Childhood Special Education

FROM: Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Certification Division

The Commission is aware of the growing concern related to the fact that Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) credential holders are not currently authorized to teach Transitional Kindergarten (TK), as it is defined by CDE as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program. The current authorization for ECSE credentials allows the holder to teach special education students age birth through pre-kindergarten. With the movement of four-year-olds into the TK-12 space, the Commission understands that this is a concern for both educators and Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

Recent actions taken by the Commission related to updating the Education Specialist Teaching Credentials do help address this concern. First, the Commission approved updates to special education program standards and Teaching Performance Expectations. With this, the Commission has submitted regulations that, once approved, will allow educators who earn the ECSE credential under these new program standards to teach both special education TK and Kinder assignments. Additionally, as we know that this change will not apply to existing ECSE teachers, the Commission also approved regulations that would allow a current ECSE credential holder to upgrade to the new ECSE authorization that allows teaching TK and Kinder. Existing ECSE credential holders would only need to verify that they have met the new Teaching Performance Expectation (TPE) content to apply for the expanded ECSE authorization. Completion of this content can be verified by completion of coursework, professional development, or demonstrated competence and experience. An employer, preparation program, or statewide agency such as a SELPA can verify completion of the content. If the proposed regulations are approved by the Office of Administrative Law, this option will be available as of July 1, 2022, and the Commission will release additional guidance on how to complete the bridge authorization application process at that time. However, the Commission recommends that current ECSE credential holders who may wish to upgrade to the new authorization begin the process of meeting the new TPE areas so that they can upgrade as soon as the option is available. Details on which TPEs would need to be met can be found in [Pathways for Current Education Specialist Credential Holders Interested in Earning the New Education Specialist Credential](#).

In the meantime, current ECSE educators can work with their employers to apply for a Special Education Limited Assignment Permit (SELAP) in Mild/Moderate or Moderate/Severe Disabilities to expand their ability to serve in a TK classroom. Details on applying for this emergency document can be found at [Special Education Limited Assignment Permit \(CL-889\)](#). This one-year permit would allow the ECSE credential holder to serve special education students in a TK classroom. Employers should note that although the CL-889 leaflet indicates that there is a requirement to verify coursework or experience in the specialty area requested (requirement #4), current ECSE credential holder would not have to submit such verification, as they have completed this requirement through their initial preparation for the ECSE credential. Instead, current ECSE credential holders need only to submit the items identified in requirements 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7.