

Timing Is Everything:
Building State Policy on Teacher Credentialing
in an Era of Multiple, Competing,
and Rapid Education Reforms

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Artist, teacher, and poet M. C. Richards once said, "Let no one think that the birth of humanity is to be felt without terror. The transformation that awaits us costs everything in the way of courage. Let no one be deluded that a knowledge of the path can be a substitute for putting one foot in front of the other" (Richards, 1989).

I first encountered this quote when reviewing applications from individuals seeking to serve on an Advisory Panel to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The year was 1995, and the panel was being organized to conduct a comprehensive review of California's teacher credentialing system. In using this quote, the applicant espoused a view of the project that resonated with me then, and inspires me now. As I consider the work launched in response to Senator Marion Bergeson's omnibus reform legislation of 1992 (SB 1422, Chapter 1245, Statutes of 1992), which led to the reforms of Senate Bill 2042 (Alpert and Mazzoni, Chapter 548, Statutes of 1998), there is no question that a substantial transformation in California's teacher education and credentialing system is underway.

An examination of credentialing reform over the last fifty years in California reveals a tumultuous history, filled with political intrigue, vision, idealism, and compromise. At the core, however, is a persistent

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belief in the importance of teachers and teaching in our society. Irving Hendrick, in his review of policies and forces shaping California teacher credentialing, reminds us that

Most of the important issues concerning the preparation and credentialing of teachers in California have arisen repeatedly over the past 140 years. Early and late there have been disagreements about which group of educators—or the state—should exercise primary control over teacher quality and entry into the profession. Early and late there have been disagreements over the efficacy of teacher examinations as a requirement for teacher credentials. Early and late there have been disagreements over the relative value of pedagogical knowledge and academic content knowledge as paramount objectives for credentialing teachers. Perhaps all of this was inevitable. Since public education had emerged in America primarily as a state responsibility, in the absence of any generally apparent need to enforce agreed-upon standards of technical competence, it followed that the states and their citizens would assert responsibility over the qualifications of public school teachers. But how best to pursue that responsibility became the subject of continuing controversy, debate and policy shifts. (Hendrick, 2004)

The credentialing reforms introduced in Senate Bill 2042 follow in this tradition and stake their own claims regarding the locus of control over teacher quality, the role of teacher examinations, the balance point between pedagogical knowledge and academic content knowledge, the need for sustained preparation over time and mentored induction into teaching. This reform movement has the potential to bring to fruition ideas about learning to teach that have been evolving for some time in California's policy environment. This article reviews the major legislative changes and policy underpinnings that have driven the SB 2042 reforms.

Chronology of Previous Reforms

The seeds of SB 2042 were sown in previous reform efforts dating as far back as the Licensing and Certificated Personnel Law of 1961, also known as the Fisher Act. The primary shift in teacher licensure brought about by the Fisher Act was the introduction of a new focus on subject matter preparation. Based on this law, all candidates for a teaching credential were required to complete an academic undergraduate major in their teaching field rather than an education major. Fisher also introduced the “diversified major” as a required course of study for future elementary teachers. For secondary teachers, the Fisher Act aligned the courses they could be assigned to teach with a candidate's major or minor, thereby limiting school districts in their ability to assign teachers to any classroom. For colleges and universities, these changes shifted a great

deal of the coursework and responsibility for teacher preparation to the academic departments and reduced the amount of coursework in education and pedagogy. The “fifth-year” of post baccalaureate study was also introduced in the Fisher Act as a requirement for full teacher certification (Inglis, 2004a). The fifth-year was intended to provide teachers with flexibility in the pursuit of a program of study reflective of their professional interests or need for advanced preparation (State of California, 2005).

Ten years later, the Ryan Act updated and focused the reforms of the Fisher Act and established an independent standards and licensing board for teachers, the first of its kind in the nation. The reforms launched by Leo Ryan in 1970 reflected a renewed commitment to subject matter preparation. For the first time, candidates for a teaching credential were allowed to demonstrate their competence by passing an examination or by completing an approved subject matter program. The examination route allowed candidates to add areas in which they could teach without taking additional college coursework. The credential itself was shifted from a grade level focus to a focus on the subject matter to be taught. All credentials issued under the Ryan act authorized service in K-12 settings: the multiple subjects credential authorized service in self contained classrooms, while the single subject credential authorized service in departmentalized settings. Maintaining the fifth year of study introduced by the Fisher Act, Ryan also made it possible for teachers to complete preparation with a four-year college degree (Inglis 2004b). Both Fisher and Ryan had in mind a two-tiered credential structure, whereby candidates would complete their undergraduate major and professional preparation to earn a preliminary credential, then complete a full year of post-baccalaureate study to earn a professional credential. In practice, many teachers completed their major in four years, followed by a year of professional education coursework that included specified courses and earned a professional clear teaching credential as their first credential.

The teacher licensing reforms of the 1980s were smaller in scale than those of prior decades, but have had an equally important and sustained impact on the preparation and certification of teachers. In 1983, Senator Hart and Assembly Member Hughes authored Senate Bill 813, which, in addition to many other reforms, introduced basic skills testing into the teacher licensing system and retired the Life Credential by instituting credential renewal requirements. In 1987, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing adopted the first Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Multiple and Single Subject Credential Programs, moving away from guidelines and a compliance orientation to program approval that had been the norm for many years. These standards were used for the

qualitative review and approval of teacher preparation programs until 2001, when new standards were adopted by the Commission, pursuant to SB 2042.

In 1988, Senator Bergeson authored legislation (SB 148, Chapter 1455, Statutes of 1988) creating the California New Teacher Project (CNTP), a pilot program intended to examine the value and viability of providing beginning teachers with systematic support to increase both teacher effectiveness and retention in the profession. California was experiencing a teacher shortage exacerbated by a problem with teacher retention, especially in large urban schools. The purpose of the CNTP was to experiment with different types of mentoring and support systems for new teachers in order to improve teaching and teacher retention rates. This project was so successful that Senator Bergeson authored legislation five years later, Senate Bill 1422, which converted the CNTP from a pilot program into the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA). The intent of Senator Bergeson and the policy community was to make new teacher induction a requirement for earning a teaching credential. In attempting to make this substantial change in licensing requirements, however, it became clear to policy makers that the whole credentialing system was in need of review and evaluation. The “system” consisted of a collection of educational experiences that had been added legislatively to the licensure mix over a period of years and lacked coherence. So instead of making new teacher induction a requirement for teacher licensure in 1992, the legislation called for the Commission to conduct a comprehensive review of the requirements for earning a teaching credential in California. The review called for in Senate Bill 1422 was conducted between 1992 and 1997, and laid the groundwork for the reforms adopted pursuant to Senate Bill 2042 in 1998.

SB 1422: A Blueprint for the Next Round of Credentialing Reform

In August 1997, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing received the final report of the statutorily mandated Advisory Panel on Teacher Education, Induction, and Certification for Twenty-First Century Schools, entitled: *California's Future: Highly Qualified Teachers for All Students* (CCTC, 1997). This twenty-four member Advisory Panel, which was broadly representative of the education stakeholder community, began its work in 1995 and was charged with reviewing all requirements for earning and renewing teaching credentials. The Panel held 18 meetings between September 1995 and June 1997. During the course of the review, the Panel reviewed a substantial body of information, discussed a wide range of policy issues with a broad spectrum of constituents from schools,

colleges, universities and the general public, developed policy recommendations intended to improve the credentialing process, and submitted a report with findings and recommendations to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The Panel established the following four goals to organize their work and final recommendations:

1. Improve teacher recruitment, selection and access to the profession;
2. Establish clear standards for new teacher preparation;
3. Increase and improve professional accountability; and
4. Increase and improve professional collaboration and system evaluation.

In August 1997, the Panel placed 16 general policy recommendations and 110 specific recommendations for structural changes in credentialing before the Commission, as depicted in the following:

Recommendations of the Advisory Panel on Teacher Education,
Induction, and Certification for Twenty-First Century Schools
(SB 1422)

Goal 1: Improve Teacher Recruitment, Selection, Access

Policy Recommendation 1: Recruit greater numbers of talented individuals into teaching who reflect greater diversity.

Policy Recommendation 2: Select teachers carefully to ensure a qualified workforce.

Policy Recommendation 3: Provide multiple, flexible routes to an initial teaching credential.

Policy Recommendation 4: Increase access to teacher preparation so greater numbers of new teachers can learn to teach effectively.

Goal 2: Teaching Standards and Program Content

Policy Recommendation 5: Adopt candidate standards that define professional practice.

Policy Recommendation 6: Establish a credential structure that recognizes the complexity of learning to teach.

Policy Recommendation 7: Require teacher preparation programs to address the learning needs of children and youth in California.

Policy Recommendation 8: Establish levels of standards that ensure the development of teaching competence over time.

Policy Recommendation 9: Establish accreditation standards that ensure opportunities to learn teaching.

Policy Recommendation 10: Give special attention to the preparation of teachers for early adolescents.

Policy Recommendation 11: Improve teacher accountability in credential renewal that involves career-long professional development.

Policy Recommendation 12: Establish and implement a Professional Services Certificate.

Goal 3: Increase Professional Accountability

Policy Recommendation 13: Require broader and more rigorous assessment of teacher candidates.

Policy Recommendation 14: Require more rigorous accreditation of programs for all routes into the teaching profession.

Goal 4: System Evaluation

Policy Recommendation 15: Require collaborative governance at all levels of the new teacher preparation and certification system.

Policy Recommendation 16: Institute new measures of accountability for the overall system of teacher certification.

The Panel proposed that the credential system reflect a learning to teach continuum that incorporated recruitment into the profession, subject matter preparation during the undergraduate sequence, professional preparation either blended with subject matter preparation or taught intensively following subject matter preparation, induction into the profession, ongoing professional development, and advanced levels of preparation and certification to support higher levels of teacher leadership. The system as understood by the Panel was developmental in nature, insofar as each phase of preparation built on the prior phase. The credential itself was intended to be two-tiered, with a Level I or Preliminary Credential being issued following initial preparation (student teaching or internship models), and a Level II or Professional Credential being issued following completion of a two-year induction program. Through this structure, the Panel intended to ensure that all teachers spent time teaching and reflecting on their practice with a seasoned mentor prior to earning their professional credential. The Panel affirmed the practice of holding teachers to some set of professional growth requirements for credential renewal, but proposed changes that would bring greater relevance and focus to professional development.

During the early years of BTSA, the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* (CSTP) were developed and widely adopted by the K-12 and higher education communities, the California Department of Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing as a consensus statement about the nature of effective teaching practice (CCTC and CDE, 1997). The CSTP were intended by the SB 1422 Panel to guide every aspect of the learning to teach continuum: linking the stages of teacher preparation and licensure through the CSTP would provide conceptual coherence to the credentialing system. In practical terms, the Panel viewed the CSTP as incorporating the essential domains of teaching effectiveness that should guide the professional development of teachers throughout their careers. To support the development of

candidate competence in the domains of the CSTP, the Panel made the following recommendations regarding the content of teacher preparation:

To provide optimal conditions for children to learn, preparation for a teaching credential must include the following:

- ◆ knowledge and understanding of the ability levels, languages, and cultures that children and youth bring to the learning process;
- ◆ a broad base of knowledge and skill in pedagogy, curriculum design, student assessment, instructional planning and classroom management;
- ◆ effective practical preparation that is well integrated with principles for teaching the subjects authorized by the credential;
- ◆ preparation for instruction in reading, critical thinking, and the classroom uses of technology; and
- ◆ preparation for the social and environmental conditions that are prevalent in California's K-12 schools. (CCTC, 1997, p. 26)

The 1422 Panel also recommended the creation of two new credentials: one for middle grades teachers and one for teacher leaders. The proposed Middle Grades Credential was intended to provide focused preparation to teachers of early adolescents, and to mirror the middle school reforms that had been enacted in the 1990s. The proposed Professional Services Certificate was intended to recognize teachers with advanced expertise and authorize them to provide specialized services to other instructional personnel. Examples of teacher leadership identified by the Panel included service as a support provider for beginning teachers in an induction program, supervision of student teachers and interns, and service as a professional growth advisor (CCTC, 1997, p. 34). The Panel had in mind the creation of a career ladder for teachers that would enable skilled veteran teachers to move into leadership roles without leaving teaching altogether. Further, the Professional Services Certificate supported the proposed changes in the credential structure, which would rely heavily on the existing members of the teaching profession to support, develop, and supervise the incoming workforce.

Neither the Middle Grades Credential nor the Professional Services Certificate recommendations were included by the Commission in their sponsored omnibus reform bill, SB 2042. The Middle Grades Credential proposal failed to gain the support of the Commission largely because employers expressed serious concerns about their ability to staff classrooms. Restricting the authorization of a credential holder to specific grade levels, it was argued, would constrict an employer's ability to

recruit from the broadest possible applicant pool. The state was just entering into the implementation of class size reduction as the Commission was considering the SB 1422 Panel recommendations, and supply and demand issues were of paramount concern within the broader stakeholder community.

The recommendation to create a Professional Services Certificate was met with some level of concern by teachers themselves. Creation of this certificate was viewed as an attempt to establish a hierarchy within the teaching ranks, which introduced a wide range of other questions related to compensation, authority, and contract negotiations. Employers expressed concern as well, primarily in relation to a perceived loss of flexibility in filling positions that would require this new level of certification. The lack of a strong consensus from the field about the need for and desirability of a new level of teaching authorization derailed this recommendation.

In addition to these structural changes in the system, the SB 1422 Panel recommended that the state “increase accountability in teaching by establishing rigorous candidate-based assessments and more comprehensive program evaluation and accreditation systems” (CCTC, 1997, p. 35). In their review of then-current practices and requirements, the Panel found teacher assessment to be inadequate, and recommended that systematic assessment of teaching performance occur at the end of pre-service, at the end of an internship program, and at the end of induction. The Panel called for these assessments to meet a high standard of reliability and validity, and for the results of these assessments to be used as “one source of information about the quality and effectiveness of programs” (CCTC, 1997, p. 38). The Panel’s recommendations about improving accountability in teacher education resonated with policy makers. The K-12 standards and accountability movement was gaining momentum, and public concern about the quality of California public education, characterized by a growing lack of confidence in teaching, teachers, and teacher preparation, was blossoming. The Panel’s recommendation to establish a Level I Assessment leading to the Preliminary Credential and a Level II Assessment leading to a Professional Credential was directly responsive to the perceived need for greater accountability in teacher licensure.

The proposal to assess teachers at the end of their induction program, after they had been credentialed and had begun teaching, met with a great deal of resistance from the teacher associations and some other stakeholders, however. Ultimately, the Commission chose to move forward legislatively with a proposal to assess the teaching performance of every prospective teacher prior to the issuance of a Preliminary

Credential. It was determined that a summative, high stakes assessment placed at the end of pre-service or internship preparation would serve to “filter” less than fully qualified teachers out of the pool before they began teaching. The Commission put the proposal for a second level of assessment at the end of induction on hold, and expressed their intent to reevaluate the need for additional assessment after the first assessment had been put in place and evaluated.

Between August 1997 and January 1998, the Commission engaged in extensive public discussion and debate on the SB 1422 Panel recommendations, leading to the development of language for its sponsored legislation. Most of the structural recommendations coming out of the SB 1422 work were incorporated into SB 2042, which was signed into law in September, 1998, sweeping in the most far reaching changes in credentialing and teacher preparation in close to 30 years.

Senate Bill 2042

Senate Bill 2042 established, after ten years of research, analysis and consensus building within the policy and stakeholder communities, a two-tiered teaching credential based in a developmental theory of learning to teach. The overall framework inherent in the SB 2042 system advances the following policy objectives:

- ◆ Prospective teachers should begin their preparation to teach with an intensive development of subject matter knowledge;
- ◆ Pedagogical training should be built upon a subject matter foundation, and focus on effective teaching;
- ◆ Subject matter and professional preparation for teachers should be explicitly aligned with the standards and frameworks that govern the K-12 public school curriculum, textbooks and assessments;
- ◆ Assessment of teaching performance should be conducted in valid and reliable ways prior to a teacher beginning professional practice;
- ◆ Teachers who complete subject matter preparation and professional preparation and demonstrate through a Teaching Performance Assessment their readiness to begin teaching should earn a *preliminary credential*;
- ◆ A professional credential should not be conferred upon any teacher until they have served for at least two years as a teacher of record and completed a structured program of beginning teacher induction; and
- ◆ All phases of learning to teach and routes into teaching should be governed by coherent standards developed and informed by the profession.

SB 2042 established multiple, standards based routes into teaching;

called for a uniform set of standards to govern all routes and phases of preparation; required that preparation programs leading to a preliminary credential incorporate a teaching performance assessment (TPA); and brought induction into the licensing system. The TPA and induction provisions of the law were subject to the availability of funding in the Annual Budget Act, however, and for a time these two key aspects of the reform agenda appeared to be at risk. Full funding for the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program was provided in the Annual Budget Act beginning in 2003-04, which allowed the Commission to fully implement that requirement. A Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement grant from the United States Secretary of Education allowed the Commission to move forward with the development of a TPA prototype. Full funding for implementation of the TPA has yet to emerge.

SB 2042 was implemented in two phases between 1998 and 2005. In Phase I, standards were developed for subject matter programs and examinations, professional preparation programs leading to the Preliminary Credential, and induction programs leading to the Professional Clear Credential. Assessment Quality Standards were also developed to govern the validity and reliability of teaching performance assessments. Consistent with the provisions of SB 2042 and the recommendations of SB 1422, these new standards are aligned and congruent with the K-12 Academic Content Standards for Students and the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. Also consistent with the recommendations of the SB 1422 Panel, standards for subject matter preparation, professional preparation and induction articulate with one another and treat the content of learning to teach recursively, such that knowledge developed early in the preparation sequence is revisited during subsequent phases and applied in the evolving teaching contexts teachers experience. Phase II occurred between 2002 and 2005. All institutions and local education agencies offering teacher preparation and induction programs revised their programs according to the new standards and underwent peer review in a process sponsored by the Commission.

The only piece of the system enacted in SB 2042 that has not been fully implemented is the teaching performance assessment requirement. Subject to the availability of funds in the Annual Budget Act, institutions are required to embed in their preparation programs an approved teaching performance assessment that meets assessment quality standards adopted by the Commission. Though the CCTC developed standards for these assessments and was moving forward with plans for implementation, lack of sufficient funds to support the administration of the TPA resulted in a suspension of this requirement in 2003. SB 2042 allowed institutions to meet this requirement in one of three ways:

institutions could adopt a TPA developed by the CCTC and administer it within their programs; institutions could develop their own TPA and submit it for review and approval to the Commission; or institutions could request that the CCTC administer the TPA to candidates. The CCTC used its Title II grant to develop a prototype, and contracted with Educational Testing Services (ETS) to create the CA TPA. This model was fully developed by the middle of 2003, and is currently being piloted and used by many institutions. A group of research universities—including Stanford University and all campuses of the University of California—developed an alternative TPA, the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) which has also been extensively piloted in California institutions. These assessment systems are substantially different than prior assessments in that they are designed to be administered in a consistent, valid, and reliable manner. The Assessment Quality Standards adopted by the Commission in 2002 (and suspended in 2003) call for institutions to attend to the psychometric quality of assessment practices in ways that are unprecedented in California's credentialing system.

The SB 1422 goal for establishing systematic and psychometrically sound teaching performance assessments, which carried forward in the framing of SB 2042, was to confirm the quality of the teaching workforce and increase public confidence in teachers, teaching and teacher preparation. The standards developed pursuant to SB 2042 were intended to couple with assessments in a comprehensive accountability system. Through standards and accreditation, the Commission would have the ability to assure a high level of quality in preparation. Through rigorous candidate assessment, the Commission would have the ability to confirm a high level of teacher competence for licensure. At the close of 2005, these two critical aspects of the reform movement are on hold. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing, facing a severe shortage of financial resources, suspended the accreditation system in 2003, at the same time that it halted efforts to move forward with implementation of the TPA. Three years later, resources have still not been generated to put these pieces of the teacher education accountability system in play. Ensuring quality in preparation and in the teaching workforce has fallen to the sponsors of programs, with limited guidance or assistance from the Commission. This circumstance has given sponsors of teacher preparation time to deepen their understanding of standards and teaching performance assessments, to very good effect. But the absence of a firm commitment from the state to support and sustain this work will undermine its effectiveness and limit its impact over time.

The reforms of SB 2042 set forth an ambitious agenda for the revision of professional teacher preparation and licensure. More than 90 higher

education institutions and over 150 local education agencies participated in a complete overhaul of teacher preparation over the course of four years, during a time of shrinking resources and major shifts in the political winds. Four Governors presided over the state during the period of time that SB 1422 and SB 2042 were conceptualized, enacted, and implemented. Despite major political upheaval at the state and national levels, the education and policy communities in California established a new system characterized by a developmental understanding of the process of learning to teach, a commitment to embed preparation in sustained and guided practice, an understanding that systematic formative and summative assessment can substantially improve preparation, and a knowledge that mentored entry into the teaching profession makes a profound difference in a new teacher's ability to teach and willingness to make teaching a career. Herein lies the strong potential of SB 2042 to contribute to the transformation of teacher education.

SB 1422 and SB 2042 were about systemic reform, and require attentive, systematic implementation, guidance, support and evaluation in order to have a lasting impact on teacher preparation and licensure. The SB 1422 Advisory Panel recognized this need when they recommended that the Commission institute new measures of accountability for the overall system of teacher certification:

In order for teacher education policy and practice to achieve and maintain a high level of credibility within the education community and with the public, it must operate within a system of inquiry and self-evaluation. State policymakers must focus on increasing the levels of practice-based research and research-based practice so future recommendations for credential reform efforts can be well informed. The Commission should sponsor a variety of activities and research efforts focused on overall system accountability, and should exercise its leadership in advocating that new policies and procedures be left in place long enough so their effectiveness can be appropriately evaluated. (CCTC, 1997, p. 42)

The intent of California's reform work over the last decade has been to establish coherence in the system, introduce the learning to teach continuum as a basis for licensure, and implement systematic accountability in all aspects of the system. The teacher education community has been expanded to include K-12 in ways that are unprecedented. This expanded community, in the absence of sustained support, guidance or leadership from the State, has risen to the challenge of transforming the system. The reform work that was initially sponsored and led by the Legislature and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing is now owned and sustained by the profession. This is a good, if unanticipated outcome: true reform in the preparation, certification and ongoing development of

the education workforce will not succeed if it isn't owned by the participants in the system. The challenge that lies ahead is to re-engage the Commission and the policy community in the evolution of this work, and to get the remaining pieces—assessment and accreditation—moving forward. Nature, and the policy community in California, abhors a vacuum. The absence of a strong sense of purpose in the recruitment, preparation, induction and ongoing development of the teaching workforce could be the undoing of years of productive, transformative work.

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