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Information

Certification Committee

Roadmap to Education Careers Initiative Update

Executive Summary: This agenda item provides an update on the ongoing work related to the Roadmap to Education Careers Initiative as established by Assembly Bill 178.

Recommended Action: For information only

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Roadmap to Education Careers Initiative Update

Introduction

This agenda item provides an update on the Roadmap to Education Careers Initiative and showcases new resources designed to provide career information and guide prospective educators into the profession. The item also details efforts to meet the goals of the initiative via upgrading the online credentialing and chat systems, providing direct guidance to potential educators, and providing enhanced resources to better explain and clarify credential requirements.

Background

The Roadmap to Educational Careers Initiative (Roadmap Project) was established by Assembly Bill (AB) 178 (2022-2023 Budget Trailer Bill) with the goal of helping to guide and explain pathways for individuals interested in a career in education. This initiative is a direct response to the teacher shortage affecting all parts of California and bolsters the Governor's ongoing efforts to support education in the state. Such efforts include but are not limited to grant investments of \$350 million to support Teacher Residency Programs; \$184 million to support Residency Programs specifically for School Counselors; expanded funding of an additional \$125 million to expand the California Classified School Employees Teacher Credentialing Programs; and \$20 million to support development of additional Integrated Undergraduate Teacher Preparation grants.

The Roadmap Project builds upon the effectiveness and impact of these grant investments by providing the Commission with the resources necessary to provide direct, real-time support to individuals who are interested in becoming educators. The Roadmap Project, using fiscal support and additional personnel resources provided by the Governor's budget, also allows the Commission to expand upon its current web platform through the creation of a multifaceted web portal that will help credential candidates more easily navigate the licensure process. To this end, the Commission was given \$1,400,000 and 9 positions to support the Roadmap initiative, with 8 positions dedicated to "serve as career guidance counselors, credential experts, subject matter experts, and resource specialists for individuals seeking to make the transition into a PK-12 educational career," and one position to "assist with development and maintenance of a multifaceted web portal on the Commission on Teacher Credentialing's website and social media connection and presence."

Given these historic and significant targeted investments in teacher recruitment and guidance into the profession, the Certification Division has identified four primary goals to support these efforts:

- **Goal 1: Provide Education Career Counseling and Support** - Provide direct, individual and personalized counseling on navigating the certification process to help a diverse population of individuals understand and meet the requirements to become educators in California's public schools.

- **Goal 2: Improve Credential Information Web Resources** - Improve upon and/or expand the Commission’s existing candidate guidance resources for how to complete preparation requirements and apply for licensure to ensure that materials are clear, accessible, and compelling in order to simplify credentialing terminology and the multiple steps within the certification process.
- **Goal 3: Improve Messaging and Outreach to Promote the Profession** - Reorient messaging about the value of becoming a teacher and the multiple options and pathways available for candidates to meet credential requirements to encourage growth and strengthen the pipeline of educators for the future through collaboration and advertisement of opportunities that will better appeal to potential candidates.
- **Goal 4: Further Upgrade the Commission’s Web-Based Systems** - Improve upon the Commission’s existing web-based systems to help expedite credential processing and ensure that potential educators can navigate the credentialing process seamlessly and quickly.

These four goals serve as the guide for the Certification Division’s efforts to build upon the State’s education investments and ensure that California has a robust, well-prepared educator workforce. How the Commission will implement strategies for meeting each of these goals is discussed in greater detail below.

Meeting Goal 1: Provide Education Career Counseling and Support

The first goal of the Roadmap Project is to expand on the ways in which individuals interested in becoming educators can learn more about the profession by significantly improving on the Commission’s typical communication methods to better appeal to today’s candidates. The tools traditionally used by the Certification Division to provide customer service and guidance to all interested parties have been primarily to provide web-based documents such as informational leaflets and news alerts, and to directly respond to inquiries and provide guidance through email and live online chat services.

Both communication methods have unique limitations, however. For example, emails are answered daily by Certification Analysts, and responses are typically made within one business day. This approach is effective when answering most of the questions the division receives about credentialing requirements or the status of an application. But for more complex questions, multiple emails are often required to fully explore the individual’s unique situation and determine the most appropriate response. This type of back-and-forth communication can stretch across several days, thus increasing the time it takes for an individual who may need time-sensitive information in order to apply for an open position or enroll in a preparation program, to receive that information.

To achieve Goal 1, the Certification Division has created a new avenue of communication in which prospective educators will be able to get direct, personalized, and in-depth assistance navigating entry into teaching, as follows:

a. Enhancements to Live Chat

The Certification Division has launched a new chat platform to enhance communication with external users. Moving to the new chat system provided several key upgrades to the prior chat system. Now, after initiating a chat, a user is asked a series of questions that provide crucial information to analysts in the Certification Division, reducing the time required to provide an accurate answer. The initial screening questions also prompt a new chat feature which provides automated responses linking users to information and resources on the Commission’s website which directly address specific topics. Many chat users receive the necessary information via the automated messages and disconnect before reaching the front of the chat queue. Chat users can now save the chat discussion for future reference, including any links provided by the analyst. The chat system now also allows analysts to assist more than one user at a time, greatly increasing the number of individuals who receive help daily.

The updated chat system had an immediate impact on the ability of Certification staff to address the number of questions answered and candidates helped, since more candidates can now be helped by the chat system itself and not need to talk directly to an Analyst. Table 1 displays the reduction in emails answered by the Certification Division between the launch of the new system in October 2022 and the end of June 2023. This reduction of 10.39 percent can likely be attributed to the new, enhanced chat system allowing individuals to connect with an analyst and obtain the information they need in real time.

Table 1: Emails Answered by Certification Division

	October – June 2021-22 (before new chat system)	October – June 2022-23 (after new chat system)	Percent Change from 2021-22
Total Emails Answered	53,001	47,493	-10.39%

b. Establishing Education Career Counseling

While the enhanced chat system has greatly benefited current educators and educational partners, the agency has recognized that new potential educators may need more direct assistance than a live chat session can provide. The Roadmap Project has given the Commission the resources needed to establish a program dedicated to this kind of hands-on guidance. The Education Career Counselor (ECC) program is the first step in establishing such direct communication for individuals interested in the becoming educators. The ECCs act as career guidance counselors, credential experts, subject matter experts, and resource specialists for individuals seeking PK-12 education careers and are uniquely experienced with credentialing knowledge as they are former Certification Analysts, former teachers, and former School District Human Resources Specialists. These staff members’ prior extensive background and experience greatly increase their ability to provide guidance from multiple perspectives as well as to provide accurate, relevant information for each individual served.

The ECCs are able to offer appointments via video chat or phone to discuss questions related to entering the education profession. Through appointments and follow-up emails, information can be provided at all stages of an individual’s career, ranging from assistance for potential

candidates with understanding the overall process and choosing a preparation program to discussing potential growth options with veteran California educators. ECCs will also be prepared to serve as a resource at in-person and virtual job fairs, adding face-to-face assistance to the communication efforts.

Meeting Goal 2: Improve Credential Information Web Resources

Historically, the Commission has relied on informational leaflets published on the Commission’s public website to serve as the primary way that credentialing process information is shared with the public. These resources have always been written in a detailed, technical style that interprets and explains statutory and regulatory requirements for licensing. While this style works well for a seasoned credential analyst or education professional, they can seem overcomplicated and confusing to a potential educator who is not familiar with legal and technical credentialing terminologies. Presenting information in such a technical way could be a potential barrier for entry into the profession for some individuals looking to explore teaching as a potential career. The content and amount of information can be overwhelming, leaving candidates few options outside of direct contact with Commission staff to help understand requirements.

For example, the informational leaflet on the [Basic Skills Requirement \(BSR\)](#) provides details on eight options to meet this requirement, each with unique details and rules for submission. Additional complexity is added to understanding the eight options since recent legislation also allows for mixing and matching of most of these options. Providing technical leaflets with complex information is not necessarily the ideal way to present critically needed information to candidates and the general public. As part of the Roadmap Project efforts, the Certification Division has developed new, user-friendly resources regarding credential requirements that are easy to understand and geared to all audiences. These resources are further described below:

a. Basic Skills Calculator Tool

The first of these resources is a web-based tool called the “[Basic Skills Calculator](#)” which was launched in June of 2023. This new, easy to use tool was created to help people understand the multitude of options available for meeting the Basic Skills Requirement. Certification staff worked closely with the Commission’s IT Division to create the Basic Skills Calculator which is an interactive tool that outlines the eight options to meet the Basic Skills Requirement. The tool is especially useful in understanding the “mix and match” option, which has been fully mapped and implemented in the calculator. If a user selects an invalid option, the calculator alerts the user to prevent a potential submission error. The calculator guides the user through the options delineated by the three required Basic Skills content areas: reading, writing, and mathematics, and also allows the user to explore important details about each option.

Image 1: Basic Skills Requirement Calculator

Reading Writing Mathematics Results

Please select from the options below indicating how you passed the Reading portion of the Basic Skills Requirement.
To see important details about each BSR option, select the ? icon next to each choice.

- College Course (3 Semester Units or 4 Quarter Units) ?
- California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST) ?
- CSET: Multiple Subjects Subtest I (Test Code 101) ?
- Qualifying Score on the ACT ?
- Qualifying Score on the SAT (taken before 2016) ?
- Qualifying Score on the SAT (taken after 2016) ?
- College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Examinations - English ?
- CSU Early Assessment Program ?
- CSU Placement Examinations ?
- Basic Skills Examination from Another State ?

[Start Over](#)

b. Career Pathways Wizard Tool

Entering a career in education can be a daunting task. Those potentially interested in this career, whether coming at it new or as an experienced out of state educator, must initially figure out where to find information, and once guided to the Commission’s website, need next to navigate unknown terminology and decipher complex certification, program, and assessment requirements. These kinds of access barriers are unnecessary, and they disincentivize individuals and have a negative impact on the already strained available educator pool.

The Commission’s accomplishments under Goal 2 of the Roadmap Project remove this long-standing access barrier in the following ways:

- Certification staff have “decoded” technical education terminology into more common, universally understood terms, and have incorporated this understandable language.
- Existing resources on the Certification website, such as technical leaflets and other complex informational pieces, have been revised to incorporate more commonly understood language.
- New easy to understand resources have been developed to help candidates understand the multiple preparation pathways, routes, and requirements for earning a credential. These resources have then been published on the Commission’s public website and serve as a more inviting, accessible and user-friendly entryway for candidates and members of the public.
- An interactive “[Career Pathways Wizard](#)” tool has been created to help users apply the knowledge provided by the more simplified and easily accessible informational documents.

For example, users with no knowledge of credentialing or users coming from outside California could incorrectly believe that they need to earn the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential because their goal is to teach more than one subject in a high school. A plain reading of credential titles does not always convey the same meaning to every individual. By presenting a series of questions, the [Career Wizard tool](#) leads users through their options. Ultimately, users will reach a final webpage describing the credential or permit which is best suited to the user’s interests and goals.

The Career Wizard also guides users to additional information related to earning the desired credential, along with resources for finding and contacting a Commission-approved teacher preparation program when appropriate. Similar to the Basic Skills Calculator Tool, every page of the Career Pathways Wizard contains embedded question mark icons which can be activated by hovering the cursor to display more information about each listed option. In the examples shown below, Image 2 displays the main landing page of the Career Pathways Wizard and the various plain text options that guide the user through the process. Image 3 shows the view after initially clicking the Classroom Teacher option. From here, users are still not given the full title of a particular credential, such as the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, but instead are shown the plain language “Elementary School Teacher” as an option. This language choice is designed to be universally understood by the widest range of users. Only when they reach an end point will they be shown the official title of the appropriate technical credentialing document, by which point they will have gained a basic understanding of the purpose and scope of that option. Individuals considering a career in education as well as those who are prepared and credentialed outside the state can use this wizard to understand the options, terminology, and next steps for the most common credentials and permits offered by the Commission.

Image 2: Career Pathways Wizard

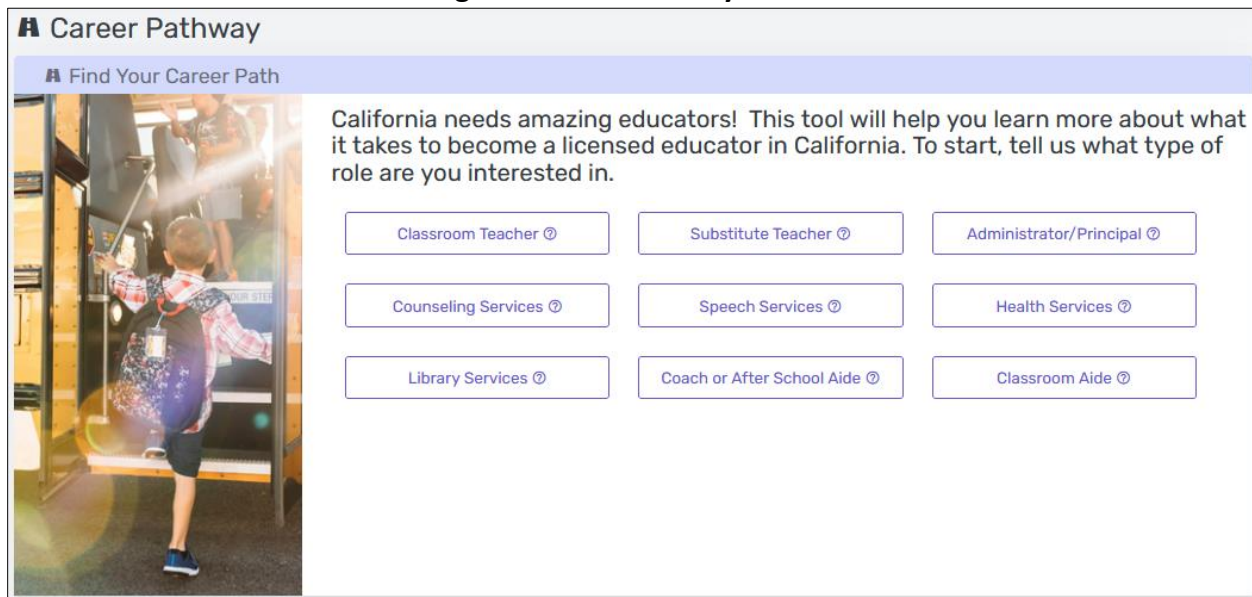
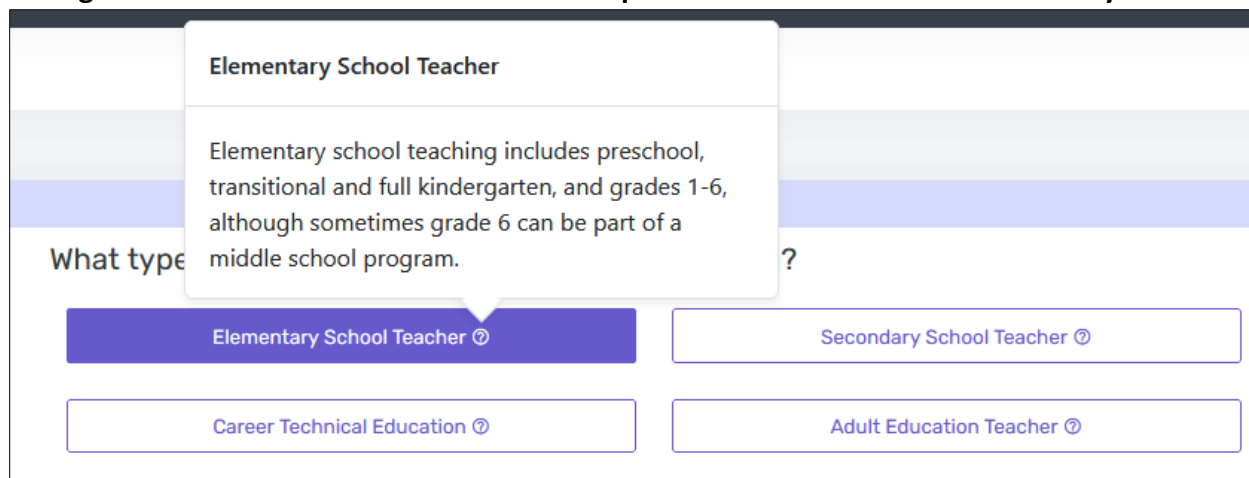


Image 3: Detailed view of information from question mark icon in Career Pathways Wizard

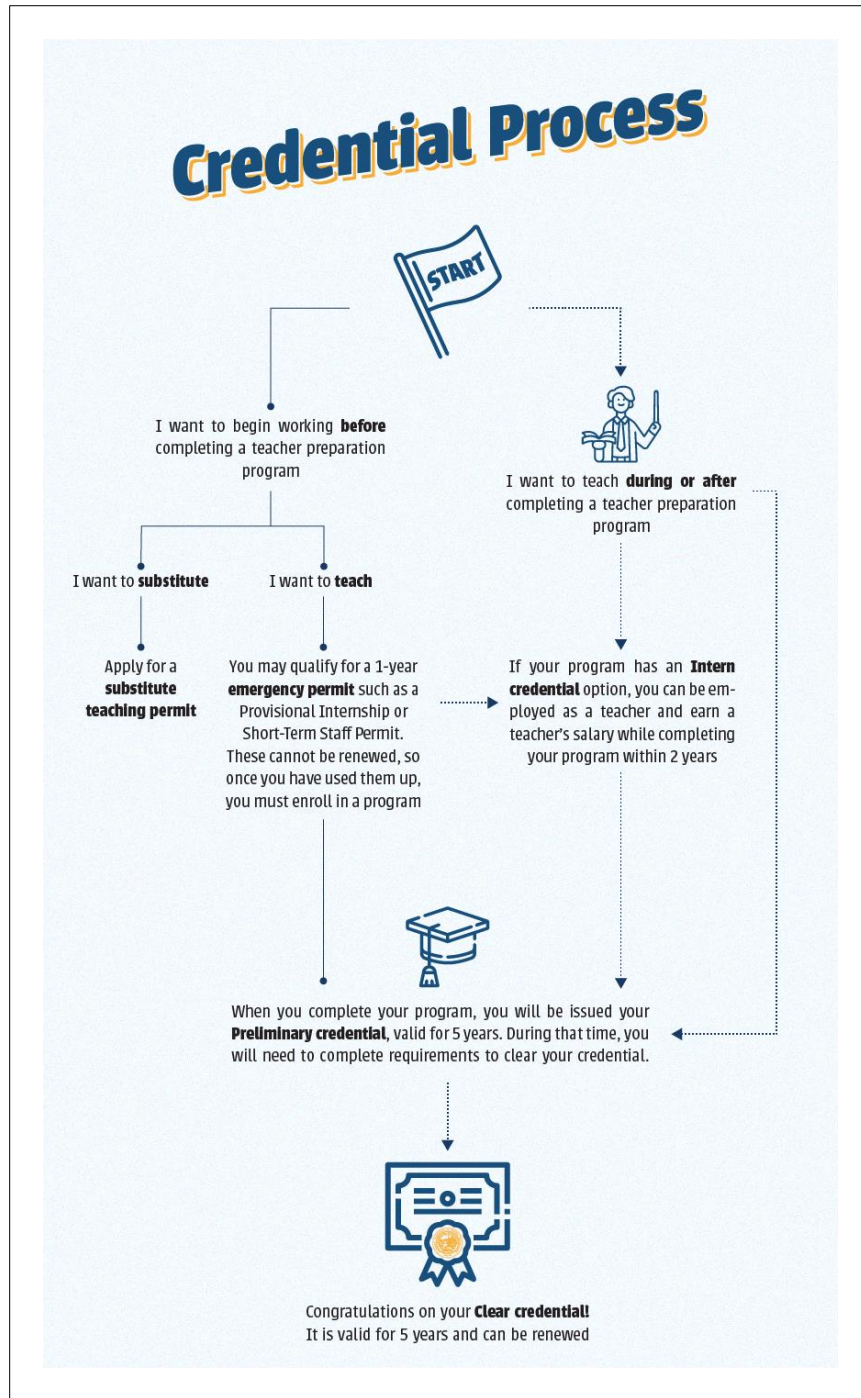


A new series of visually appealing and understandable advanced level resources has also been created by Certification staff in areas of critical information in addition to certification-related requirements such as explaining the different characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of the multiple teacher preparation program pathways so that candidates can make an informed decision about what type of educator preparation program best suits their needs, and understanding the credential process as a whole, from start through preparation to ultimately earning a California credential. These resources' understandability may also be enhanced through the use of simplified graphics to aid understanding. Two samples of these types of easier to understand documents are provided below in Images 4 and 5:

Image 4: Sample of Pathways to Credentialing Resource



Image 5: Graphic Showing Snapshot of Credential Process



Sometimes, the informative graphics can be an effective mechanism for comparing multiple options within credentialing. Image 6 and Image 7 provide an “at a glance” comparison of two of the available teacher preparation pathways, the residency pathway to earn a teaching credential and the traditional pathway. Without having to read detailed text, users can gather from these graphics that the residency pathway has a longer student teaching component with a stipend as compared to the traditional pathway. Graphics such as these advance the goal of approachability of information and the speed at which important details can be absorbed.

Image 6: Residency Pathway Graphic

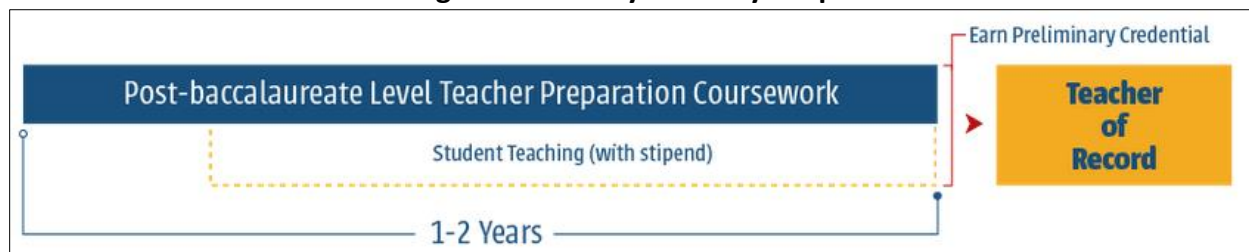
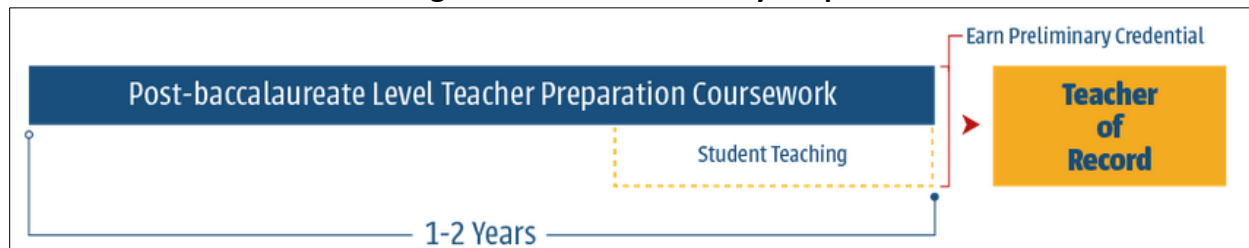


Image 7: Traditional Pathway Graphic



Meeting Goal 3: Improve Messaging and Outreach to Promote the Profession

California is one of the most diverse states in the country, and, like many other states, faces a critical need to attract diverse educators into the profession. This huge challenge also represents a much-needed opportunity to reorient the public narrative and discourse to attract and encourage diverse potential educators to consider this rewarding career path. In Goals 1 and 2, the Commission has addressed the tools, materials, and processes that can make a career in education seem attainable to individuals of diverse backgrounds and circumstances. Goal 3 builds upon this effort by helping potential candidates as well as the public make that choice to become an educator. Commission staff have created enticing and interesting public facing materials that promote teaching as a career. Putting education, the needs of our diverse students, and a clear focus on how rewarding this career can be in clear vision of everyone is what Commission staff are working hard at accomplishing under Goal 3.

Here are some of the activities Commission staff are undertaking to promote teaching as a career, and change the public dialog in the process:


a. Creating New Attractive, and Easy to Access Informational Web Pages

The Commission has already launched [new web pages](#) with a more user-friendly focus and tone to be more accessible, more approachable, and more inviting to read.

Here's a sample extract from one of the new webpages:


California needs educators. That's where you come in.

There have never been more opportunities than there are now to become an educator in California. What are you waiting for? To make this process as easy as possible, you can find links to everything you need to know about becoming an educator on this page.




Need help? We've got you covered.

- > Roadmap to Teaching
- > Becoming a Teacher in California
- > Teaching in California - Prepared in Another State
- > Basic Skills Requirement (BSR) Calculator
- > Find Your Career Path

 [Connect with us!](#)

Don't know where to start?

The Find Your Career Path tool will help you learn more about what it takes to become a licensed educator in California, depending on the type of role you are interested in.



Ready to teach?

- > **You have never completed any teacher credentialing program before, are currently in a California teacher credentialing program now, or have already completed one**

Some highlights of the new webpages include:

- Modifying the tone of the new webpages to make what used to seem complicated information less dense and clear, using updated graphic design and visuals to convey information quickly and clearly.
- Expanded information for both new and veteran educators about topics such as education opportunities of interest, training and promotional opportunities, career fair announcements, interactive tools to better understand requirements and preparation options, and information on job-related aspects of the education profession such as hiring practices.
- New job-related information such as pathways that allow candidates to serve as a substitute teacher as part of experiences leading to full certification.
- Informational pages, in collaboration with outside education partners, that will help focus the Commission's current and future efforts on advancing Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (EID) in the educator population.

Image 8 shows an example of updated language and the simplified, welcoming tone being implemented throughout. Visitors to the webpages should feel welcomed and informed without being overwhelmed with technical language which can be off-putting.



Image 8: Roadmap to Teaching Homepage Sample

California needs educators. That's where you come in.

There have never been more opportunities than there are now to become an educator in California. What are you waiting for? To make this process as easy as possible, you can find links to everything you need to know about becoming an educator on this page.

Don't know where to start?

The Find Your Career Path tool will help you learn more about what it takes to become a licensed educator in California, depending on the type of role you are interested in.

 Find your Career Path 

b. Education Partner Collaborations with WestEd and the California Department of Education

Recruiting and attracting candidates to choose a career in education is not a one-agency responsibility. Certification staff have established an effective and collaborative working relationship with partners at WestEd to access their professional knowledge about effective ways to enhance the form and the format of information provided to potential educators. Collaboration on language usage and understandable, meaningful presentation of data is ongoing and will be incorporated into the new webpages and Career Pathways Wizard as these continue to evolve. WestEd's mission to promote excellence in education and promote equity is well-aligned with the Commission's continued efforts to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity for the educators of California. One area of particular interest and discussion across the two agencies is the cost of becoming a teacher.

For many potential teachers, including candidates of color, the cost of completing a teacher preparation program may seem out of reach and thus present a barrier to expanding access to the profession. To help address that information barrier about how to help mitigate the costs of become a teacher, the Commission, along with WestEd and the California Department of Education (CDE), have worked to jointly produce an inclusive guide to candidate funding options, including but not limited to state grant funding provided through the Commission, the Student Aid Commission, and the CDE as well as programs that provide a "learn while you earn" opportunity. This [guide](#), while focused on the pathways for teaching in grades preschool through third, presents financial support opportunities that can be leveraged for preparation in all types of teaching. These types of collaboration are intended to continue over the coming years, and to result in continually updated information for candidates about options for helping address the costs of educator preparation.

As part of the specific collaboration with WestEd, the ECCs will access WestEd's expertise to create additional wizard tools to provide ongoing guidance to potential educators. Future projects include a wizard about preparation programs that can help incoming candidates determine the most appropriate teacher preparation model to meet their needs, as well as tools to determine the financial costs of becoming a teacher based on the selected preparation pathway. Leveraging the Commission's new wizard technology with WestEd's expertise will help distill the information from our partnership into easily accessible pieces, make the whole

process of becoming an educator clearer, and help grow the pool of future educator candidates.

c. Additional Efforts to Support Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (EID)

Through discussions with colleagues at CDE, staff have identified additional opportunities to advance EID through the Roadmap Initiative. One of the new webpages maintained by the ECCs is an Educational Opportunities Board to promote efforts in the field for recruitment and support, especially for educators of color. The Educational Opportunities Board will become a one-stop resource to highlight targeted recruitments, trainings, financial support, and professional development opportunities offered by educational organizations, districts, counties, colleges and universities. An example of the opportunities that are highlighted on this page is provided below from our partners at the California Teachers Association (CTA):

Image 9 Opportunities Board Posting



The image shows a webpage from the California Teachers Association (CTA). At the top left is the CTA logo, which consists of the letters 'CTA' in a large, bold, blue font, with a graduation cap icon integrated into the letter 'A'. To the right of the logo, the text 'CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION' is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. Below the logo and text is the main title of the page: 'Navigating National Board BIPOC Cohorts' in a large, bold, blue font. Underneath the title is the subtitle 'California Teachers Association' in a smaller, blue, italicized font. The page content includes a 'Summary:' section with the question 'What is this?' followed by a paragraph describing the cohort. Below this is a 'What supports are offered?' section with a bulleted list of four items. At the bottom of the page, there are several lines of text providing registration information, application deadlines, and contact details, along with a 'Back to Top' link.

CTA CALIFORNIA
TEACHERS
ASSOCIATION

Navigating National Board BIPOC Cohorts

California Teachers Association

Summary:
What is this?

Are you an educator of color considering pursuing National Board Certification? Are you a CTA member looking to deepen your teaching practice and connect with other educators of color? The California Teachers Association (CTA), the UCLA National Board Project, and the National Board Resource Center at Stanford (NBRC) are partnering to launch a second fully-funded cohort of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) teachers committed to earning National Board Certification and serving as teacher-leaders in their communities.

What supports are offered?

- Regular BIPOC Cohort online community-building, mentoring, and support facilitated by National Board Certified teachers of color
- NBRC or UCLA's certification support group, including regular opportunities to work with a group of educators and a National Board Certified facilitator in your content area and gradespan.
- Asynchronous materials and resources designed specifically for candidates in the NBRC or UCLA National Board program.
- Individualized coaching on writing and artifact selection for the National Board portfolio components

Register [here](#) for an informational webinar on 8/16/2023 from 5:00-6:00 pm!
Applications are due 8/25/2023 at 11:59pm.
Additional information and the application are available [here](#).
Dates: 8/25/2023
Contact: <https://www.cta.org/nbct>

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Meeting Goal 4: Further Upgrade the Commission’s Web-Based Systems

Multiple divisions within the Commission have been working closely with the Commission’s IT staff on a multi-year effort to comprehensively upgrade the Commission’s current website, the

CTC Online recommendation system, and the internal database staff use to process credential applications. This future system, the “Educator Credentialing System” (ECS), is being designed from the ground up to enhance the work of the Commission. The ECS will automate the credentialing process, improve application processing times, and streamline the experience for credential applicants. Within Certification, the ECS system will enhance the current system and be built to maximize efficiency and reduce input errors. This will accelerate the application evaluation process and assist Certification in maintaining the 50-day credential application processing timeline established by law. The launch of ECS will also transition all credential, permit, and waiver applications online, which will benefit all applicants through faster processing, reduced errors, and faster response time to submission of initial and subsequent required information.

The enhanced system will also allow an educator to see which common requirements, such as Basic Skills and possession of a degree, they have fulfilled by securely logging in and viewing their personalized dashboard. When submitting online applications, detailed information on requirements will be presented in segments tailored to the individual document. This will allow the presentation of detailed guidance without being overwhelming and assist potential educators in submitting the correct materials the first time.

Continued Efforts for the Roadmap Initiative

The Certification Division is excited to focus future efforts on continuous improvement of the Roadmap Project work to date. The website enhancements described above will continue to be refined and polished as educator preparation evolves. The Education Career Counselors will continue to meet the needs of potential and current educators with updated guides, graphics, and pages. Through enhanced internal communication and discussion, staff will continuously improve the offerings in targeted ways that address gaps in information identified by credential candidates.

The areas of future work will not only be driven by direct interactions with candidates and educators, but also by improved coordination with our outside partners. As previously mentioned, WestEd’s collaboration will influence future crucial wizard tools, but this is only one potential product to come of this collaboration. Certification staff now has the tools necessary to disseminate information in multiple forms as best suits the topic. By providing multiple accessible communication modes for crucial information, Certification will continue to advance the web resources and messaging for the profession.