



November 20, 2019

Dr. Tine Sloan, Chair  
California Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
1900 Capitol Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95811

**RE: Agenda Item 3E: Further Discussion of Candidate Assessment Options for the Teaching of Reading and Developing Literacy**

Dear Chair Sloan:

We represent a coalition of educational equity, civil rights and community-based organizations committed to improving outcomes for California students and write to express serious concern regarding the Commission on Teacher Credentialing’s Item 3E for the November 2019 meeting.

After reviewing the results from the October 30<sup>th</sup> release of the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) scores and results from California’s statewide assessments in English/Language Arts, we have an even greater sense of urgency to address California’s dire reading student outcomes and persistent unacceptable reading performance achievement gaps given the confirmed science on the teaching the foundations skills of reading.

Reading is the gateway skill to learning all core content in K12, and yet the NAEP results indicate nearly 70 percent of all California’s fourth graders are not reading proficiently at grade level. The

results also reveal that the 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading performance gap between California's low-income children and their more affluent peers is not significantly different from the gap that existed in 1998 – that's over two decades with no significant change in equity of opportunity.

Fortunately, there is scientific consensus: the report from the National Reading Panel is definitive in outlining what is necessary for successfully teaching early reading. Unfortunately, the proposals in Item 3E eliminate or diminish California's current requirement that teachers – the most important factor in student achievement – know that scientific consensus as a condition of licensure to teach students in California public schools.

Eliminating the demonstration of competency of teaching foundational skills in reading as a prerequisite to licensure would remove a constitutional protection for California's children at a time when the majority of the state's children aren't reading at grade level. Instead, California should be a leader in the settled science of teaching reading and ensure all its children who need to learn how to read and become fluent readers for meaning are being taught by a teacher who knows how to teach reading with scientifically proven methods.

Preparation programs should be aligned to impart pedagogical approaches backed by scientific evidence of effectiveness, including explicit, structured, systematic, and evidence-based foundational reading skills. Unfortunately, such programs are only reviewed by the Commission on a seven-year cycle and are not currently explicitly reviewed for ensuring all multiple subject candidates and education specialists are provided explicit training in the science of reading. Item 3E's modified Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) addressing the teaching of reading do not expressly include the requirement to master structured, explicit teaching of foundation skills, nor is there an explicit link between the TPEs and accreditation reviews of programs.

Rather than eliminating the demonstration of competency of teaching foundational reading skills as a prerequisite for teacher licensure, we believe the Commission should focus on enhancing the reliability and validity of the assessment instrument itself and work to better understand the range of passing rates among teacher preparation programs through accreditation and other review processes. Science-based systematic and explicit reading instruction is useful for the entire population, and not only students on a spectrum of dyslexia or other struggling readers.

To move from today's overall low and stagnant achievement in literacy with massive achievement gaps will require California to embrace proven science in reading in the preparation of candidates, licensure requirements, curriculum frameworks and support of novice teachers.

While we recognize this stakeholder input is arriving in the same week of the hearing before the Commission, we note that the details of proposed options were not available until after close of business last Friday. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and for your consideration of these comments.

Respectfully,

Katie Braude  
Executive Director  
SpeakUP

Barbara Langeloh  
President  
International Dyslexia  
Association – Los Angeles

Steve Mayo  
President  
International Dyslexia  
Association – San Diego

Emma Elizalde  
President  
International Dyslexia  
Association –  
Northern California

Seth Litt  
Executive Director  
Parent Revolution

Tobie Meyer  
State Director  
Decoding Dyslexia California

Margaret Goldberg  
Co-Founder  
Right to Read Project

Bill Lucia  
President  
EdVoice

Regina Richards  
Organizational Vice President  
International Dyslexia  
Association – Southern  
California Tri-Counties

Alma Marquez  
Founder  
La Comadre

Cc: Mary Vixie Sandy, Executive Director, Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
Teri Clark, Director, Professional Services Division, Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
Anthony Williams, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Jennifer Johnson, Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Jeff Bell, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance  
Lynn Lorber, Chief Consultant, Senate Education Committee  
Roger Mackensen, Republican Policy Consultant, Senate Education Committee  
Tanya Lieberman, Chief Consultant, Assembly Education Committee  
Robert Becker, Republican Policy Consultant, Assembly Education Committee