

Evaluation of the California Community College Teacher Credentialing Partnership Pilot Program

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SUMMARY

State Has Many Teacher Preparation Programs. California’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) accredits about 100 institutions—mostly public and private universities—to operate teaching preparation programs. Most programs provide coursework to teacher preparation students (all of whom already have a bachelor’s degree) in an in-person format, though some offer instruction online. Though many individuals complete their teacher preparation program prior to their first teaching job, individuals under certain conditions may complete those programs while being employed as a teacher. Under state law, community colleges are not permitted to offer teacher preparation programs.

Pilot Authorized Community Colleges to Serve as Points of Access to Online Teacher Preparation Programs. In 2018, the Legislature authorized a pilot seeking to increase individuals’ access to teacher preparation programs. Chapter 603 of 2018 (SB 577, Dodd) authorized the California Community Colleges (CCC) Chancellor’s Office and CTC to award up to three grants of \$500,000 each to community colleges that formed collaboratives with universities offering teacher preparation instruction via distance learning (typically online courses). Students in the collaboratives were to travel to a community college and access their teacher preparation coursework in a technology-supported classroom. Grant funds were to cover costs such as equipping CCC classrooms with Wi-Fi, providing technology support to students, and providing professional development to university faculty teaching online courses. The 2019-20 budget provided CCC with \$1.5 million one-time Proposition 98 General Fund for the pilot. Chapter 603 required the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) to evaluate the pilot and report to the Legislature and Department of Finance by April 1, 2023. This report fulfills that statutory requirement.

Pilot’s Three Grantees Implemented Program in Similar Ways. A total of three community college districts—Feather River, Monterey Peninsula, and Yuba—applied for and were awarded grants in fall 2020. Due to the pandemic, the Chancellor’s Office and CTC allowed grantees to rethink their original proposals and consider implementing a new program model—one that did not necessarily involve teacher preparation students coming to a community college campus to access teacher preparation courses remotely. Monterey Peninsula and Yuba decided on a new approach focused on providing various support services to prospective and current teacher preparation students. Feather River did not clarify whether it pivoted to a new approach, but data it provided to our office show that its collaborative provided a similar set of services. Feather River concluded its pilot in January 2023 while Monterey Peninsula and Yuba have until summer 2023 to complete their pilots.

Chapter 603’s Program Model Has Key Drawbacks, Recommend Not Bringing to Scale. We find no compelling evidence that Chapter 603’s program model helped meet the state’s core objective of increasing access to teacher credentialing programs. Online teacher credentialing programs already operate in the state and fully online programs have capacity to serve more students. Moreover, in large part due to recent legislative investments in broadband, statewide access to internet service is widespread and improving. Furthermore, individuals are likely to be able to access online coursework in more convenient locations than community colleges, including at their homes, local libraries, or schools of employment. For all of these reasons, we recommend the Legislature not bring the pilot to scale and not provide any more funding for it. We would note, however, that the state has provided considerable funding the past few years for other initiatives designed to improve access to teacher preparation programs.

INTRODUCTION

State Created Pilot Seeking to Improve Access to Teacher Credentialing Programs.

In 2018, the Legislature enacted Chapter 603, which created the CCC Teacher Credentialing Partnership Pilot Program (pilot). The legislation aimed to address a concern that some individuals in certain areas of the state might not have sufficient access to teacher education programs, which might be inhibiting the supply of teachers in those areas. The pilot specifically sought to improve access to teacher preparation programs by encouraging community colleges to partner with universities. Under the legislation, up to three community colleges were authorized to offer on-site classrooms from which students could access university teacher preparation programs via distance learning (such as through online courses).

The 2019-20 budget package provided \$1.5 million one-time Proposition 98 General Fund for the pilot.

Statute Requires Our Office to Evaluate the Pilot. Chapter 603 requires the LAO to evaluate the pilot and report to the Legislature and Department of Finance by April 1, 2023. Chapter 603 contains no specific evaluation requirements for LAO, other than reporting on “implementation of the program.” This report fulfills that statutory requirement. The report has five main sections. In the first section, we provide background on teacher credentialing requirements and programs. In the second section, we describe Chapter 603’s requirements. In the third section, we provide our findings on implementation of the pilot. In the fourth section, we assess the pilot and in the final section we make an associated recommendation.

BACKGROUND

In this section, we provide a list of key requirements to become a credentialed teacher, give an overview of teacher credentialing programs in California, and describe how individuals may teach temporarily without a credential. Under state law, community colleges generally are to provide lower-division instruction to undergraduate students and are not authorized to offer teacher preparation programs.

Individuals Must Meet Various Requirements to Become a Credentialed Teacher. In California, there are several pathways to becoming a credentialed teacher but all of them require candidates to meet certain requirements. The required knowledge and skills often are demonstrated by passing certain assessments. In addition to passing a criminal background check and meeting certain other requirements, individuals must:

- Hold a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college.
- Demonstrate basic proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics, which can be done

by passing the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST).

- Demonstrate knowledge in the subject or subjects they intend to teach, which can be done by passing the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET).
- Enroll in a CTC-approved teacher preparation program and complete all coursework and clinical practice hours required by the program. Statute requires individuals to complete a minimum of 600 hours of in-classroom clinical time with K-12 students under the supervision of a credentialed teacher.
- Demonstrate the ability to instruct and assess students by passing a Teaching Performance Assessment.

“Fifth-Year” Program Is State’s Traditional Route to Becoming a Teacher. The most common pathway to becoming a credentialed teacher in California is for an individual to obtain a bachelor’s degree, demonstrate basic proficiency (and sometimes subject matter competency),

and then enter a one-year postbaccalaureate teacher preparation program at a CTC-accredited institution. These fifth-year programs typically require individuals to first take coursework covering various topics such as lesson planning and classroom management, then complete a semester of student teaching (which is unpaid). This traditional pathway is offered at 32 public universities (all California State University [CSU] campuses and all University of California [UC] general campuses) and about 50 private (mostly nonprofit) universities. Universities often offer different types of teacher preparation programs, including multiple subject credentialing programs for elementary school teachers and various single subject credentialing programs for high school (and often middle school) teachers. Some teacher preparation programs are offered online, though programs offered in-person are more common.

Intern Programs Allow Individuals to Get Paid as Teachers While They Complete Coursework. The next most common teacher pathway is for individuals to obtain their bachelor's degree, demonstrate basic proficiency as well as subject matter competency, and then complete their teacher preparation program while teaching full time. CTC authorizes 60 public and private universities, along with 19 local educational agencies (primarily county offices of education), to administer teacher preparation intern programs. These programs allow individuals to be employed as a paid teacher in a local school

and simultaneously take coursework toward a full credential. During their program, these individuals teach on what is known as an "intern credential," which typically is valid for two to three years while they finish their coursework and obtain a regular credential. As with traditional fifth-year programs, there are internship programs that allow interns to teach various grades levels and subject areas. Though most intern programs provide coursework on an in-person basis, some intern programs are online.

In Certain Cases, State Allows Districts to Hire Teachers Who Are Not Credentialed.

When districts are unable to hire a credentialed teacher for immediate staffing needs, they may request permission from CTC to hire individuals on emergency permits. Permits typically are valid for only one year. Two of the most common emergency permits are the Provisional Internship Permit (PIP) and Short-Term Staff Permit (STSP). These permit holders have a bachelor's degree and have demonstrated basic proficiency but typically have not yet demonstrated subject matter competency, such as by passing the applicable CSET. Because individuals teaching with a PIP or STSP are already employed and teaching at a school, their typical teacher preparation pathway is to enroll in an intern program once they pass the CSET. The intern option allows them to continue teaching during the day and take the required program coursework (either in-person or online) after hours.

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

In this section, we provide a summary of Chapter 603's requirements.

Chapter 603 Sought to Increase Access to Teacher Preparation Programs. Chapter 603 authorized CTC, in coordination with the CCC Chancellor's Office, to award up to three grants not to exceed \$500,000 each. Chapter 603 specified these grants be provided to collaboratives, with each collaborative consisting of at least one community college and at least one teacher preparation program. The legislation specified that CSU, UC, and private nonprofit institutions (located

in the state) offering teacher preparation programs could be part of the collaboratives. Though not explicitly mentioned in statute, the administering agencies decided to allow local educational agencies with CTC-approved teacher intern programs also to be part of the collaboratives. The program model was for teacher preparation programs to offer coursework through distance education (typically online) and for students in the pilot to travel to a community college to access that instruction remotely in a technology-enhanced classroom or laboratory. In so doing, the

legislation sought to bring teacher credentialing programs to areas of the state that lacked such educational opportunities.

Chapter 603 Set Forth Certain Program Requirements. First, grantees must include as a “primary target population to take courses under the pilot program” individuals currently teaching on a PIP or STSP. Also, teacher preparation programs cannot charge students in the pilot collaboratives more than their standard tuition and fee rates. Additionally, teacher preparation programs participating in the collaboratives must use current faculty teaching courses that they already offer to regular teacher preparation students.

Chapter 603 Specified How Collaboratives Could Use Grant Funds. Under the legislation, collaboratives could use grant funds to cover various startup costs to develop and implement the pilot. These activities included outreach to recruit students, funding to equip community college classrooms with means to facilitate online instruction (such as Wi-Fi),

professional development for teacher preparation faculty teaching courses online, and a CCC assistant to staff the classroom (such as to unlock classroom doors for students and help them access the internet). **Figure 1** summarizes all the allowable uses of the funds as specified in Chapter 603. Chapter 603 did not appropriate funding for the pilot. Instead, it stated that grants only can be awarded to the extent funding is provided through the budget process. The 2019-20 budget package subsequently provided CCC with \$1.5 million one-time Proposition 98 General Fund for the pilot.

Figure 1

Chapter 603 Identified Several Allowable Uses of Grant Funds

As Ordered in Statute

- Professional development for teacher preparation program staff on teaching online.
- Compensation for CCC assistant assigned to monitor classroom.
- Technology upgrades for CCC classrooms where teacher preparation courses are offered remotely.
- Student outreach and retention services.
- Data collection.
- Cross system alignment.
- “Other” startup costs related to the pilot program.

FINDINGS

In this section, we describe the grant award process, highlight grantees’ major activities, and provide available data on pilot outcomes.

Grant Award Process

Three Community College Districts Applied to Be Part of the Pilot. As the first step in implementing the pilot, the Chancellor’s Office and CTC issued a request for proposals in March 2020. The proposals were due to the Chancellor’s Office and CTC by July 2020. Three community college districts— Feather River, Monterey Peninsula, and Yuba— submitted applications. The Chancellor’s Office and CTC staff reviewed the proposals. In August 2020, the Chancellor’s Office and CTC announced intent to award grants to all three applicants. The CCC Board of Governors approved these three grant recipients at its September 2020 meeting.

Figure 2 shows each of the CCC grantees and their teacher preparation partners in the pilot. Monterey Peninsula’s and Yuba’s collaboratives included

Figure 2

Grantees Formed Collaboratives With Teacher Preparation Partners

- Feather River CCD:**
Butte County Office of Education
San Diego State University
- Monterey Peninsula CCD:**
CSU Monterey Bay
Monterey County Office of Education
- Yuba CCD:**
CSU Chico
Lake County Office of Education
William Jessup University
- CCD = Community College District.

both traditional and intern pathway options for various credential programs (including multiple and single subject). Feather River did not specify in its application the pathway or pathways to be offered but indicated its collaborative would offer both multiple and single subject credential programs focusing on teaching English learners.

Original Plan Was for Grantees to Begin Implementing Pilots by Fall 2020. Monterey Peninsula’s and Yuba’s proposals, budgets, and work plans assumed the original intent of Chapter 603—that teacher preparation students would travel to one of the participating community colleges to access online coursework. Feather River’s application did not specify whether its program model included an in-person component at the college. The Chancellor’s Office and CTC’s original plan was for grantees to begin their pilot activities in fall 2020—with grantees enrolling the first cohort of students as early as January 2021—and to conclude those activities by the end of 2022. The final report on pilot activities and outcomes (including program completion rates) was to be due to the Chancellor’s Office by early 2023.

Due to the Pandemic, Grantees Were Permitted to Change Program Design and Timing. Given COVID-19 and widespread physical-campus closures in fall 2020 (with considerable uncertainty about when campuses might be able to reopen), the Chancellor’s Office and CTC agreed to give grantees an extra year to plan. In addition, grantees were permitted to rethink their original proposals and consider implementing a new program model—one that did not necessarily involve teacher preparation students coming to a community college campus to access teacher preparation courses remotely. The Chancellor’s Office and CTC did not require grantees to resubmit proposals or workplans reflecting any new approach they might choose.

Grantee’s Major Activities

Grantees Pivoted to Different Program Model Focused on Providing Student Support.

After consulting and planning with their teacher preparation partners, Monterey Peninsula and Yuba decided on a new approach. These two collaboratives began providing support services to students in fall 2021 and early 2022. Feather River did not clarify whether it pivoted to a new approach, but data it provided to our office show that its collaborative provided similar services.

Figure 3 shows the various ways the three college grantees have used their funds. All three grantees chose to provide services to prospective teacher preparation students as well as students already in teacher preparation programs. As the figure shows, services have included tutoring for students on their teacher credentialing coursework and providing test vouchers for the CBEST, CSET, and other tests.

Grantees Took Somewhat Different Approaches on Allocating Funds Within Collaboratives.

Yuba decided to give each of its three teacher credentialing partners (Chico State, Lake County Office of Education, and William Jessup University) \$100,000 to spend. The college used the remaining funds for administrative and program staffing costs. Monterey Peninsula took a different approach by spending the funds directly on behalf of its partners (such as by contracting with a third-party tutoring firm to provide services to teacher preparation students). Feather River did not identify what approach it used in allocating funds among its partners.

Figure 3

Recipients Have Used Grant Funds for Various Purposes

- Assist individuals with application process for teacher credential program.
- Provide guidance to participants on developing educational pathways plan.
- Provide vouchers for various teacher-related exams.^a
- Fund tutoring and other assistance for teacher-related exams and credential-related coursework.
- Provide peer-to-peer mentoring services.

^a Including California Basic Educational Skills Test, California Subject Examinations for Teachers, and Teaching Performance Assessment.

Program Data

Monterey Peninsula and Yuba Have Preliminary Data on Students Served. In fall 2022, Monterey Peninsula and Yuba requested, and the Chancellor’s Office and CTC approved, an extension to continue program operations through June 2023. Based on data reported to the Chancellor’s Office and CTC as of the end of June 2022 (the most recent data available), Monterey Peninsula had served 58 students and Yuba had served 113 students. As of that initial reporting period, neither grantee had reported any of those students earning a teaching credential.

The grantees’ final report with updated program data is due to the Chancellor’s Office by July 2023.

Feather River Just Completed Its Final Report. In contrast to Monterey Peninsula and Yuba, Feather River opted to maintain the original pilot and reporting time line, which required it to conclude the pilot by January 2023 and provide a final report to the Chancellor’s Office and CTC by February 2023. In its final report, Feather River reported serving a total of 17 students, with 10 of them earning a teaching credential. Of the ten completers, seven continued teaching at their same school and three found a job teaching at another school.

ASSESSMENT

In this section, we provide our assessment of the pilot.

Questionable Need for Program Model Given Widespread Access Provided by Online Programs. Chapter 603 sought to increase access to teacher credentialing programs by creating collaboratives that allowed students to receive instruction via distance learning at a community college campus. California already has a number of teacher preparation programs, however, that students can access via distance education. CSU’s CalStateTEACH, which was launched in the late 1990s, offers a multiple subject credentialing program and was created to serve both rural and urban areas of the state. CalStateTEACH staff reports it has capacity to enroll more students and rarely turns away eligible applicants. CSU East Bay, meanwhile, has a fully online single subject credential program. Based on our review, a number of other teacher preparation institutions in the state—public as well as private, and in traditional fifth-year as well as intern pathways—have fully online programs.

Vast Majority of Californians Have Access to Internet. Chapter 603 is predicated on community colleges needing to serve as points of access to online instruction because many individuals lack sufficient internet connectivity. Over past several years, though, the state has invested in expanding access to broadband. While some Californians still

lack connectivity, the vast majority have access. According to an April 2022 report by the California Public Utilities Commission, as of December 2020, about 350,000 households in the state were considered “unserved” (defined as either having no internet service available to them or speeds that are too slow to support a reasonable service level). This represents 2.6 percent of all households in the state. The rate is an improvement from three years earlier, when about 465,000 households (3.5 percent) were identified as unserved. For those individuals who do not have access to internet service and seek to take teacher preparation coursework online, traveling to a community college to access online instruction may not be the best solution. Other locations may be more convenient to more Californians. For example, the state has invested in broadband expansion at local libraries, which are more ubiquitous in the state than community colleges and have tens of thousands of computers available to the public.

Program Model Is Unlikely to Benefit Individuals Teaching on Permits. Chapter 603 sought for the pilot to focus on individuals teaching on emergency permits. Given these individuals are currently teaching at a school (which very likely has internet access), it is unclear why they would find it convenient to drive to a community college to access online instruction. If individuals are not near an in-person teacher credentialing program,

accessing online instruction from their home or place of employment (school site) when not working (such as before or after school or during lunch break) likely would be more convenient. To this point, grantees we spoke to at Monterey Peninsula and Yuba indicated that even when community colleges began reopening their physical campuses, they decided not to implement their originally planned program model given the prevalence of internet access already available to students.

Superfluous Role for Community Colleges.

As discussed above, multiple indications suggest that community colleges are not needed as a point of access to remote instruction for teacher

preparation students. Furthermore, it is unclear how community colleges (with oversight by the Chancellor's Office) are uniquely positioned to administer support services to students in teacher preparation programs. These students are not community college students and community colleges lack expertise on coursework, teacher testing, and other fundamental aspects related to recruiting and retaining teacher preparation students. If the Legislature is seeking to address these issues, CTC and teacher preparation programs themselves would be a more direct and better focus.

RECOMMENDATION

Do Not Bring Pilot to Scale. We find no compelling evidence that Chapter 603's program model helped increase access to teacher credentialing programs. Online teacher credentialing programs already operate in the state and fully online programs like CalStateTEACH have capacity to serve more students. Statewide access to internet service is widespread and improving. Moreover, individuals on emergency permits already teaching in schools have internet access at their school sites as well as at other typically convenient sites such as local libraries. In addition, teacher preparation (including student recruitment, instruction, and retention) is unrelated to community colleges' mission and expertise. For all of these reasons, we recommend the Legislature not bring the pilot to scale and not provide any more funding for it.

State Has Funded Other Initiatives Aimed at Improving Access to Teacher Training Programs. We would note that the state has provided considerable funding the past few years for other initiatives designed to improve access to teacher preparation programs as well as improve their affordability. Notably, the state is providing planning grants for universities to streamline teacher education pathways by allowing students to earn an undergraduate degree and teaching credential within four years. The state also is funding the Golden State Teacher Grant program, which provides up to \$20,000 to eligible students enrolling in teaching preparation programs. Additionally, in 2022-23 and 2023-24, the state is waiving fees for exams required as part of the teacher (as well as administrator) preparation process.

LAO PUBLICATIONS

This report was prepared by Paul Steenhausen, and reviewed by Jennifer Pacella and Anthony Simbol. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) is a nonpartisan office that provides fiscal and policy information and advice to the Legislature.

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