

April 19, 2021

Keely Martin Bosler, Director
Department of Finance
Room 1145, State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: SUPPORT IF AMENDED – TBL Golden State Teacher Grant Program

Dear Director Bosler,

On behalf of the undersigned educational organizations, we respectfully request an amendment to the proposed 2021-22 trailer bill language (TBL) relating to the Golden State Teacher Grant Program at Education Code § 69617. We strongly support the Golden State Teacher Grant Program and appreciate the state's investment in ensuring educators enter high-need fields at priority schools. [The proposed TBL](#), however, would restrict grant recipients to only those who complete their teacher preparation program through an institution of higher education (IHE) and would make teacher candidates who complete their credential through a Local Education Agency (LEA) pathway ineligible to receive grant funds.

Given the connection between teacher quality and student outcomes, the Golden State Teacher Grant Program is a powerful policy initiative that directly benefits the students in priority schools. Unfortunately, excluding LEA pathways from the Grant Program undermines those equity aims in several ways, both for students and their new teachers.

1. Excluding LEA credentialing pathways punishes teaching candidates by their choice in a credential pathway even though IHE and LEA programs undergo the same rigorous accreditation system for program approval by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) to offer preliminary credentials.
2. LEA-prepared programs help recruit educators. "Grow your own" programs, which have been cited as providing a more diverse, stable workforce, would be unable to offer this incentive to their preliminary teachers pursuing credentials in high-need fields.

3. LEA-programs help retain educators. Many of the LEA-prepared teacher candidates are already working in priority schools. The proposal hurts students since priority schools would have less continuity with their LEA-prepared teacher candidates; these candidates would not be incentivized to commit to the four-year longevity commitment offered under the Grant.
4. The LEA pathway is often the preferred pathway for career changers and other working professionals seeking a teaching career because these individuals need steady employment to make ends meet.
5. LEAs in more remote or rural locations who have offered a credential pathway because they are not near a traditional IHE option will be harmed by virtue of not having this grant opportunity as an incentive available to candidates.
6. The demand for new teachers continues to grow as the number of teacher retirements during the second half of 2020 increased 26 percent over the same period in 2019.

At a time when California faces a dire shortage of teachers — especially in high-need subjects and at schools with high rates of English learners and low-income students — the state should support LEA teacher preparation programs in addition to IHE pathways. The proposed TBL would leave behind the [539 LEA-prepared candidates](#) who, in 2019-20, entered the profession. California should support the various pathways to address the workforce demands facing our classrooms.

We propose amending the TBL at paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Education Code section 69617, as follows:

Under the program, the commission shall provide one-time grant funds of up to twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to each student enrolled on or after January 1, 2020, in a professional preparation program ~~within an accredited California institution of higher education~~ leading to a preliminary teaching credential, approved by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, if the student commits to working in a high-need field at a priority school for four years after the student receives the teaching credential.

In order to ensure that all preliminary credential candidates who teach in high-needs fields at priority schools be eligible for Golden State Teacher Grant funds, no matter if they were prepared by an LEA or IHE, we respectfully urge an amendment to the above TBL in the May Revision. Please feel free to contact Derick Lennox (dlennox@ccsesa.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,



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California County Superintendents Educational
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