



ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

POSITION PAPER IN RESPONSE TO CTC REVIEW OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES CREDENTIAL

Ten years ago, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) initiated a multi-year study of administrator preparation that resulted in the adoption of Standards of Program Quality and effectiveness for Administrative Services Credential Programs. These standards now govern all administrator preparation programs in California. In light of recent statewide educational reforms such as increasing emphasis on strengthening accountability for student achievement and many other changes in the public schools, the Commission decided in June 2000 to review the current standards for the Administrative Services Credential as well as the structure of the credential.

CTC has initiated a Task Force consisting of representatives of various agencies, organizations and the public. CTC has also conducted forums throughout the state to obtain input from interested parties. The Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) has representatives serving on the Task Force and ACSA members have also involved themselves in the Forums. Because this is of major importance to the membership, ACSA developed this paper so that it might communicate our organization's position clearly to the Commission as it considers revisions in both the standards and structure of the Administrative Services Credential.

ACSA Position on the Restructuring of the Administrative Services Credential

1. Standards Based Credential

ACSA supports the development of a standards-based credentialing system. To that end, ACSA is submitting its ACSA Board-Adopted California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders for the Commission's consideration. These standards are the result of a two-year effort on the part of ACSA in collaboration with leaders from the California School Leadership Academy (CSLA), higher education, and a representative from the Commission staff. We believe that these standards are challenging, rigorous, focused on student learning and represent the current research, theory and best practices of educational leadership.

2. Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (Tier I)

ACSA advocates that the training and experiences for this preliminary credential should be based upon the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. This credential should be clarified and strengthened. The Credential should be balanced between the theory and the practice of administrative leadership. There should be an increase in the amount of practice and on-the-job application of the theory, skills, and knowledge of school administration and educational leadership. The focus of this credential should give the candidate the knowledge and skills to support and enhance student learning through the leadership and management of a site or department. This credential should have flexibility so that the candidate's work toward the credential can be designed to promote the skills and knowledge of the administrator as he/she works in his/her current administrative position.

The program and its experiences should be geared to entry-level site or entry-level central office positions.

3. Professional Administrative Services Credential (Tier II)

ACSA strongly advocates a radical restructuring of the second level of the current Professional Administrative Services Credential. The preparation for this credential should include experiences similar to a teacher induction program and contain heavily job imbedded training and support. The characteristics of the second level experience should focus on an administrator further refining his/her skills, knowledge and practice of the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders.

The work toward this credential should be characterized by a great deal of flexibility. As administrators are assessed as to their current skills and as their current job requirements are considered, the program that is designed to complete this credential should be tailored to the standards for the credential, the skills of the individual candidate and the requirements of the current job.

The characteristics of this program should include:

- CTC adopted standards and certification of provider programs. The development and implementation of the programs should remain with the certified sponsoring agency. A school district, county office of education, consortium, institution of higher education, professional organization, state agency or for-profit organization may become a Professional Credential Sponsoring Agency if they meet CTC certification standards.
- The recognition that some administrative positions have no job precursor. For many school principals, there is no preliminary administrative position that they hold prior to their appointment as principal. These candidates have the full responsibility for student learning, organizational leadership and management while they are in the first years of an administrative position. The same is true for a number of entry-level central office positions.
- Practical application of the theory, research and best practice of educational leadership.
- A program that balances the demands of the job with the program of induction.
- Job imbedded training.
- Conducting a standards-based formative assessment of each administrative candidate.
- The direct involvement of the school district and the administrator candidate in the development of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The ILP should be shaped to the actual job activities and needs of the candidate. The focus of this credential should be on the refinement of the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders as they directly relate to the current position of the candidate.
- Support to the candidate that is meaningful, relevant and both time efficient and effective.
- Multi-year induction opportunities.
- A menu of providers who can offer training and support experiences for the Professional Level Credential. These providers might include, but are not limited to, school districts, county offices of education, consortia, institutions of higher education, professional organizations, other state agencies like CSLA or for-profit organizations.
- Selection criteria for coaches with financial resources provided for the training and evaluation of the coaches.
- The candidate should have a choice of the program that he/she will join.
- Sufficient fiscal resources to assess, support, coach, and provide professional development to the candidate similar to a BTSA program for teachers.
- An equitable distribution of time and resources for the participation of all candidates.

ACSA recognizes that administrators as well as all educational professionals need to be involved in continuous learning. It acknowledges that the learning and support needs for a novice administrator will be different and more intense than that of an experienced administrator. It advocates the concept that all leaders should continue to renew and upgrade their skills as they work to lead the instructional programs of youth. Retention of administrators in leadership roles as well as the identification and training of new administrators is a major concern to ACSA. To that end, ACSA recognizes that there must be ongoing support for all administrators.

ACSA recognizes that there is legislation being considered that may call for extensive professional development of all administrators. ACSA encourages all state legislators and agencies to recognize that the time available for administrator professional development is limited. There are no substitute administrators as there are for teachers. Parents, staff and boards of trustees expect administrators to be active and engaged at their job sites. Any program that is developed must take into account that the administrator will be completing the Professional Credential or a professional development program while working full time in a highly demanding and time-intensive job.

Attachment: California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

SR/Ig 4/23/01