
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 163
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Urgency: No
Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo
Hearing Date: June 10, 2015
Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Teaching credential: American Indian language-culture credential

SUMMARY

This bill renames the existing American Indian languages credential as the American Indian Culture teaching credential and establishes new requirements for the credential.

BACKGROUND

Existing law authorizes the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to issue credentials for teaching specialties, including bilingual education, early childhood education, and special education. Education specialist teaching credentials are to be based upon a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, completion of a program of professional preparation, and standards that the commission may establish. Existing law prohibits multiple and single subject teacher credential programs from including more than one year of professional preparation, including student teaching.

Existing law authorizes the CTC to issue an American Indian languages credential to a candidate who has been recommended by a tribal government of a federally recognized Indian tribe in California if the candidate has completed specified requirements. Existing law also authorizes the CTC to establish and implement guidelines for alternative assessments for languages other than English performed by organizations that are experts in the language and culture assessed.

The Native American Languages Act of 1990 states it is the policy of the United States to “allow exceptions to teacher certification requirements for Federal programs and programs funded in whole or in part by the Federal government, for instruction in Native American languages when such teacher certification requirements hinder the employment of qualified teachers who teach Native American languages, and to encourage State and territorial governments to make similar exceptions.”

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Renames the existing "American Indian languages credential" as the "American Indian language-culture credential."
- 2) Requires the CTC to issue an American Indian language-culture credential upon recommendation by the tribal government of a federally recognized Indian tribe in

California if a candidate meets the following requirements for the American Indian culture authorization:

- a) Demonstrates knowledge in that tribe's culture based on an assessment developed and administered by that federally recognized Indian tribe.
 - b) Successfully completes a criminal background check for credentialing purposes.
 - c) Submits an application, fee, and recommendation for the credential to the commission through the federally recognized Indian tribe.
- 3) Specifies the American Indian language-culture credential shall authorize the holder to teach the American Indian language, or culture, or both, for which the credential was issued in California public schools in preschool, kindergarten, grades 1 to 12, inclusive, and in adult education courses.
 - 4) Specifies the holder of an American Indian language-culture credential who does not also have a valid teaching credential issued by the State of California shall not teach in a public school, including a charter school, any subject other than the American Indian language, or culture, or both, for which he or she is credentialed.
 - 5) Requires each American Indian language-culture credential to be issued initially for a two-year period and may be renewed for a three-year period upon recommendation of the tribal government; and, requires upon completion of the three-year period, the holder of an American Indian language-culture credential to be eligible for a clear teaching credential for that language upon application and the recommendation of the tribal government, in consultation with the applicant's public school employer.
 - 6) Encourages each federally recognized American Indian tribe to develop a written and oral assessment that should be successfully completed before an applicant is recommended for an American Indian language-culture credential.
 - 7) Specifies that in developing the culture assessment, an Indian tribe should determine all of the following:
 - a) The candidate's understanding of the tribe's culture and its practices, including, but not limited to, ceremonies and traditions, social institutions and relationships, holidays and festivals, health practices and traditions, patterns of work and leisure, and culinary traditions and practices.
 - b) The standard of knowledge required to qualify for an American Indian culture authorization in that tribal culture.
 - c) Standards for effective teaching methods to be evaluated in the classroom.
 - 8) Specifies the assessment should be administered at an appropriate location that does not create hardship for members of the Indian tribe administering the assessment.

- 9) Requires, upon agreement by the tribe, a tribe recommending a candidate for an American Indian language-culture credential to develop and administer a technical assistance program guided by the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.
- 10) Requires, to the extent feasible, the program to be offered by teachers credentialed in an American Indian language, or culture, or both, who have three or more years of teaching experience and specifies the technical assistance program may consist of direct classroom observation and consultation, assistance in instructional planning and preparation, support in implementation and delivery of classroom instruction, and other assistance intended to enhance the professional performance and development of the teacher of an American Indian language, or culture, or both.
- 11) Requires public school personnel responsible for evaluating teachers, in accordance with local governing board policy, to provide individuals employed to teach on the basis of the American Indian language-culture credential with information on the teaching personnel evaluation process and the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.
- 12) Requires candidates meeting the requirements of both the language and culture requirements be granted both the American Indian language and the American Indian culture authorizations; and, specifies for a candidate who has already received an American Indian languages credential before the effective date of this bill, the tribe that recommended the candidate for the American Indian languages credential shall determine if the candidate may add the American Indian culture authorization to the preexisting languages credential, or if the candidate must reapply for the American Indian culture authorization as a new initial credential.
- 13) Makes legislative findings and declarations that teaching American Indian language and culture is essential to the proper education of American Indian children and, preserving American Indian language and culture is an important part of our national heritage and can be of value to all Americans.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author's office, the Native American Languages Act of 1990 was created to alleviate the mistakes of the past regarding the preservation of Native American languages. Additionally, it allows for exceptions to teacher certification requirements for federal programs and programs funded in whole or in part by the federal government, for instruction in Native American languages. The author's office indicates there are at least 109 federally recognized tribes in California, and under the provisions of this bill, each tribe would have the authority to create their own assessment system for their culture. The ability of these tribes to develop their own assessments is important to maintain the integrity of each of their differing cultural characteristics. Further, this bill builds on the provisions of AB 544 (Chapter 324, Statutes of 2009) and allows further alignment with federal law to ensure that experts in American Indian culture are allowed to serve as the teacher in this subject area.
- 2) ***Teacher shortages.*** The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) is required to report to the Governor and the Legislature each year on the number of teachers

who received credentials, certificates, permits, and waivers to teach in California. The most recent report was released in April of 2015 and includes the type and number of documents issued authorizing service to teach in California schools for the 2013-14 fiscal year. The report indicates that California saw a decrease of three percent in the number of newly issued credentials, which is a decrease across all type of preliminary teaching credentials (i.e., multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist) and represents the tenth consecutive year in which the total number of initial teaching credentials issued has decreased. Additionally, there has been a 26 percent decline in the past five years in the number of initial and new type teaching credentials issued.

- 3) ***Related and prior legislation.*** AB 544 (Coto, Chapter 329, Statutes of 2009), required the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to issue an American Indian language credential, upon recommendation of the tribal government of a federally recognized Indian tribe in California.

SUPPORT

California Association for Bilingual Education
California Nations Indian Gaming Association
California Teachers Association
Morongo Band of Mission Indians
Ramona Band of Cahuilla
Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians
Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (sponsor)
Smith River Rancheria
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation

OPPOSITION

None received.

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