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Information

Educator Preparation Committee

Student Teacher Stipend Program: Implementation Overview and Related Statewide Initiatives

Executive Summary: The 2025-26 Budget Act appropriated \$300 million to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for the Student Teacher Stipend Program and provided \$5 million to the Kern County Superintendent of Schools for related activities, including a grants management system, a statewide multimedia campaign, and an independent evaluation of these coordinated state efforts to recruit, prepare, and retain educators. This item provides a concise overview of these efforts and is accompanied by a joint presentation with additional detail.

Recommended Action: For information only

Presenters: Adam Ebrahim, Chief Deputy Director; Amarjot Biring, Director, Division of Technology and Innovation; Cara Mendoza, Administrator, Division of Standards, Accreditation, and Workforce Investments; and Anita Fitzhugh, Public Information Officer, Executive Office; Carlos Rojas, Chief Governmental Relations Officer, and Robert Meszaros, Senior Director of Communications, Kern County Superintendent of Schools; Jim Damian, Founder & Managing Partner, Linean; Jonathan Bolivar, Senior Vice President, Digital Media Services, Mediasol

Strategic Plan Goal

Educator Preparation and Advancement

- **Goal 2.** Prospective educators have multiple pathways to explore and access careers in education and advance in the profession.
 - E. Provide clear information and guidance about how to enter and advance in the education profession

Student Teacher Stipend Program: Implementation Overview and Related Statewide Initiatives

Introduction

This item provides an overview of educator recruitment and retention efforts funded in the 2025-26 Budget Act and is accompanied by a presentation by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) and the Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS).

Background

The Budget Act appropriated \$300 million in one-time General Fund support to the Commission for the Student Teacher Stipend Program, with funds available for encumbrance through June 30, 2030. It also provided \$5 million to KCSOS for related activities, including development of a grants management system, implementation of a statewide multimedia campaign, and a comprehensive independent evaluation of these coordinated state efforts to recruit, prepare, and retain educators. Under statute, the Commission administers the Student Teacher Stipend Program, and KCSOS carries out related statewide implementation activities in coordination with the Commission.

This work is being undertaken by Commission-KCSOS teams for the grants management system, multimedia campaign, and evaluation, with regular coordination and collaboration across components. The stipend program, grants management system, and multimedia campaign implementation efforts are now underway. The independent evaluation has a separate timeline and a required report to the Legislature on or before July 1, 2029.

Student Teacher Stipend Program

The Student Teacher Stipend Program (STSP) is the central investment established through this appropriation. It provides financial support to eligible prospective educators during student teaching and, where authorized, during the initial phase of a qualified teacher apprenticeship program. For candidates completing student teaching, the program helps reduce a significant financial barrier to preparation and entry into the profession. For qualified teacher apprenticeship programs, the statute authorizes use of funds to offset wage costs during the initial phase of the apprenticeship, before the apprentice becomes the educator of record. Under the program, local educational agencies provide \$10,000 stipends to eligible prospective educators completing 500 or more hours of student teaching during the school year in which they are completing that requirement. Funds are available for encumbrance through June 30, 2030. Initial implementation is aligned to the 2026-27 academic year.

Grants Management System

The grants management system is being developed to streamline application and program administration across all Commission-administered teacher recruitment and retention programs. Initial implementation is focused on the Student Teacher Stipend Program for the

2026-27 school year, followed by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification Incentive Program beginning no later than April 1, 2027. As additional programs are incorporated over time, the system is expected to improve user experience, reduce administrative burden, and support more consistent administration, data collection, and reporting across Commission-managed educator workforce investments.

Multimedia Campaign

KCSOS is leading implementation of the statewide multimedia campaign, which begins no later than April 1, 2026, and ends no sooner than July 1, 2028. The campaign is being developed in coordination with the Commission, relevant state partners, and educator workforce interest holders and will provide information and resources to support outreach by local education agencies, institutions of higher education, and educator pipeline organizations. Campaign activities may include digital and social media outreach, a public-facing microsite, and related video, print, and other communications designed to raise awareness of available pathways and supports. Outreach materials must also include information regarding student aid, loan repayment options, and other state educator investments.

Independent Evaluation

KCSOS will contract for a comprehensive independent evaluation of the STSP, related statewide implementation activities funded through this initiative, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification Incentive Program. Findings from the evaluation are to be reported to the Legislature on or before July 1, 2029. This component has a longer timeline than the other activities described in this item and is being developed in coordination with the Commission as part of the broader implementation effort. The evaluation will assess program effectiveness in influencing enrollment in student teaching, increasing completion of student teaching, increasing completion in high-need credential areas, improving educator retention during the first two years of employment, and documenting participant demographics. This work will help inform future policy and program decisions.

Together, these efforts support the educator pipeline through direct candidate support, improved administrative infrastructure, expanded outreach, and longer-term evaluation of outcomes. The accompanying presentation will provide additional information on these initiatives and on the coordinated roles of the Commission, the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, and implementation partners.

Next Steps

Staff will continue implementation of the Student Teacher Stipend Program and associated activities in partnership with the Kern County Superintendent of Schools and contracted partners and will return to the Commission with updates on implementation progress, timelines, and early outcomes.