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Information/Action

Legislative Committee

Re-affirm the Commission's Legislative Guidelines and Adopt a New Advocacy Policy for Legislation

Executive Summary: Staff will present the Commission's Legislative Guidelines, adopted in 1995, for review and reaffirmation.

Recommended Action: That the Commission re-affirm their commitment to the Guidelines and authorize staff to work with the Commission Chair and Vice Chair on strategic messaging regarding pending legislation between Commission meetings.

Presenter: Jonathon Howard, Government Relations & Public Affairs Manager, Administrative Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal

Continuous Improvement

- **Goal 8.** California's policies impacting the education workforce are coherent and effective.
  R. Advise the Governor, Legislature, and other policy makers regarding issues affecting the quality, preparation, certification, and discipline of the education workforce

Re-affirm the Commission's Legislative Guidelines and Adopt a New Advocacy Policy for Legislation

Background

The history of Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) is intrinsically tied to the California State Legislature. From its groundbreaking establishment by the Ryan Act in 1970 as the nation's first independent standards board for educators, the Commission's fundamental responsibilities: licensing, credentialing, enforcement of professional practices, and discipline of educators has been continuously shaped, expanded, and refined by a succession of legislative acts.

Each significant legislative milestone, from the Fisher Act's initial emphasis on subject matter preparation to the Ryan Act's creation of an autonomous professional body, and through the comprehensive reforms introduced by the Bergeson Act and Senate Bill 2042, has directly influenced how teachers in California are prepared, evaluated, and certified. The Commission, in its capacity as the primary implementing agency, has consistently translated these legislative intentions into actionable standards, rigorous preparation programs, and robust accountability mechanisms. This process has not been without its challenges, as evidenced by periodic legislative oversight and the practical constraints imposed by budgetary realities on the full implementation of mandated reforms.

In 1995 the Commission adopted new legislative guidelines, with the goal of transforming their advocacy into a structured, responsible, and effective function that benefited the Commission, the teachers it licenses, and the public. The guidelines ensured that the Commission's legislative advocacy work advanced its core values of ensuring high-quality educators for California's diverse students, schools, and communities.

The Guidelines

1. The Commission supports legislation that proposes to maintain or establish high standards for the preparation of public school teachers and other educators in California and opposes legislation that would lower standards for teachers and other educators.

2. The Commission supports legislation that proposes to maintain or establish high standards of fitness and conduct for public school educators in California and opposes legislation that would lower standards of fitness or conduct for public school educators.

3. The Commission supports legislation that reaffirms that teachers and other educators have appropriate qualifications and experience for their positions, as evidenced by holding appropriate credentials, and opposes legislation that would allow unprepared persons to serve in the public schools.

4. The Commission supports the maintenance of a thoughtful, cohesive approach to the preparation of credential candidates and opposes legislation that would tend to fragment or undermine the cohesiveness of the preparation of credential candidates.

5. The Commission supports legislation that strengthens or reaffirms initiatives and reforms that it previously has adopted and opposes legislation that would undermine initiatives or reforms that it previously has adopted.

6. The Commission supports alternatives to existing credential requirements that maintain high standards for the preparation of educators and opposes alternatives that do not provide sufficient assurances of quality.

7. The Commission opposes legislation that would give it significant additional duties and responsibilities if the legislation does not include an appropriate source of funding to support those additional duties and responsibilities.

8. The Commission supports legislation that affirms its role as an autonomous teacher standards board and opposes legislation that would erode the independence or authority of the Commission.

In most instances, on the first day of the start of each two-year legislative session, the Assembly and Senate adopt rules for their internal procedures, including the legislative calendar and bill deadlines which describe the days of the year the legislature is not in session and the dates for various legislative deadlines, such as passage out of a fiscal committee and passage from the house of origin. These rules are generally contained in a concurrent resolution bill. The legislative calendar and deadlines for the 2025-26 Legislative Session may be found in SCR 1 (McGuire) of 2025. Outside of constitutionally imposed deadlines these dates may have a great deal of variability.

The Commission meets for two days every two months. Rarely does the Commission's meeting schedule and the Legislature's align. In practical terms this limits the Commission's ability to provide input that can shape pending legislation. Staff rely on these legislative guidelines to represent the Commission's priorities when providing technical assistance to bill authors, sponsors and legislative staff.

Staff Recommendation
Staff recommends that the Commission reaffirm the legislative guidelines adopted by the Commission in 1995 and authorize the staff to work with the Commission Chair and Vice Chair on strategic messaging regarding pending legislation between Commission meetings.

Next Steps
Commission staff will continue to provide the Commission with legislative updates at Commission meetings. These updates allow the Commission to provide their expertise and input on the legislative items brought to them. Staff will also continue to use the legislative guidelines as the basis for providing technical assistance on pending legislation.