



Members of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing-

We write to you in support of item 4B: Adoption of Teaching Performance Expectations and Program Standards for the PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential. Since our founding in 2010, California Education Partners has supported over 100 districts serving over 2 million California students. Currently we are working with 25 districts to implement transitional kindergarten and create coherence for students, preschool through third grade, in the areas of early math and early literacy.

In our support of districts, we have experienced the challenge that most teachers of young children are currently not being prepared to teach their students the kind of conceptual understanding of mathematics that is required to master more advanced math. This is critical because the math children do learn in early childhood serves as the foundation for future math learning.

We believe strongly that attention to early math is an equity issue – there is already a significant achievement gap in math skills before children enter kindergarten, and multiple studies have demonstrated that this gap does not close as students progress through the grade levels in our state. In addition, children's math skills in early childhood are highly predictive of their math achievement throughout school.

Limiting opportunities for our youngest learners to be successful in mathematics will mean that doors are closed to them as they move through school. Math achievement is a gatekeeper and difficulty with math is a major cause of dropping out of community college. A recent survey of high school students found that about 50 percent of students don't pass college algebra with a grade of C or above and that 71 percent of high school students failed geometry exams, and 68 percent flunked Algebra 1 final exams. While math achievement is a challenge nationwide, it is important to note that among the states, California is considerably below average, and sometimes in the lowest quartile, in a number of national assessments of math proficiency.

As members of the Commission, you have the opportunity to take an important step in addressing this challenge for California's youngest learners. We urge you to vote yes on item 4B: Adoption of Teaching Performance Expectations and Program Standards for the PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "PHALP", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Philip Halperin
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SK", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Steven Kellner Ed.D.
Director of Program Sustainability & Growth