
3C

Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Recommendation Regarding Accreditation Implications for Programs that Do Not Complete SB 488 Literacy Certification

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents a recommended course of action for consideration and potential approval by the Commission for any programs that have not yet completed the SB 488 Literacy Certification process and been formally certified by the October 23-24, 2025 Commission meeting.

Recommended Action: That the Commission take action to direct the Committee on Accreditation, at its October 30, 2025 meeting, to place probationary stipulations on any institution with programs that have not yet completed the SB 488 certification process. The stipulations shall include required close cooperation with Commission staff to address any programmatic issues or gaps in evidence related to the requirements of SB 488, with the goal of bringing each program into full compliance with the law and support lasting improvement in literacy preparation.

A progress report will be presented to the Commission at its December 2025 meeting providing the status of all institutions not previously certified and whether they are now ready to be certified. At that time, the Commission may take any action within its authority regarding the accreditation standing of programs or institutions that remain uncertified under the SB 488 literacy certification process, ensuring accountability for meeting state standards and equipping teachers with the skills to achieve strong literacy outcomes for students.

Presenters: Cheryl Hickey and Miranda Gutierrez, Administrators, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal

Educator Preparation and Advancement

- **Goal 1.** Educator preparation programs hold candidates to high standards and adequately prepare them to support all students by using culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining practices in equitable, inclusive, and safe environments.
 - A. Set and uphold rigorous standards for educator preparation programs
 - C. Enact a rigorous accreditation process that ensures programs meet standards and are effective in preparing educators for public schools

Recommendation Regarding Accreditation Implications for Programs that Do Not Complete SB 488 Literacy Certification

Introduction

This agenda item presents a recommended course of action for consideration and potential approval by the Commission for any programs that have not yet completed the SB 488 Literacy Certification process and been formally certified by the October 23-24, 2025 Commission meeting.

Background

Senate Bill (SB) 488 (Chap. 678, Stats. 2021) amended Education Code (EC) [§44283](#) and [§44283.2](#) and added [EC §44259\(b\)\(4\)\(A\) and \(B\)](#) to require the Commission to complete a series of actions related to literacy instruction. These sections of statute specify that the study of effective means of teaching literacy and evidence-based means of teaching foundational reading skills are included as part of the minimum requirements for a Preliminary Multiple Subject (MS) credential, Single Subject (SS) credential in English, and Education Specialist (EdSp) credential.

The statute further mandates that the study of the effective means for teaching literacy also be aligned with the current State Board of Education (SBE) adopted [English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework](#) and incorporate the [California Dyslexia Guidelines](#). Additionally, following the implementation of the new Literacy standards and related TPEs as specified in SB 488, certification by the Commission is required to ensure that all approved programs are in compliance with the specific language required by [EC §44259\(b\)\(4\)\(A\) and \(B\)](#).

Pursuant to SB 488, all approved Teaching Performance Assessments (TPAs) must include a literacy component that meets the requirement of SB 488 by July 1, 2025, as a replacement for the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) requirement. This ensures that new teachers have demonstrated knowledge and skills necessary to teach every student to read, holding programs accountable for candidate readiness and strengthening the quality of literacy preparation in schools.

SB 488 Literacy Certification Process

The Commission and the field have engaged in the Literacy Certification process since October 2024. A total of 95 institutions submitted literacy coursework for 229 programs. These 229 programs were offered through 520 different pathways, each of which required review.

Programs were peer reviewed by external literacy experts and staff (where appropriate) using an iterative process. Once a program was deemed to have addressed all SB 488 requirements, it was forwarded to the Commission for consideration and formal action. Commission staff put forward programs that completed the review process at the April, June, and August 2025

Commission meetings for formal Commission action. Any remaining programs will be brought forward at the October 2025 meeting.

The literacy performance assessment is scheduled to be opened in late September 2025; therefore, the timeliness for completing the SB 488 certification process is important to ensure that candidates receive the preparation they need to be successful on this new assessment. Concerns have been raised about programs that may not complete the certification process in a timely manner and whether there are accountability measures available to the Commission to ensure compliance. While the SB 488 statute is silent on the precise measures for accountability it is reasonable to conclude that because the components of SB 488 have been incorporated into Standard 7: Effective Literacy Instruction for programs – which programs were required to incorporate by July 1, 2024 – ensuring that all programs demonstrate alignment with SB 488 is an accreditation function and would fall under the Committee on Accreditation’s purview. This approach allows the Commission to uphold accountability, maintain high program standards, and confirm that candidates are prepared to deliver effective literacy instruction to all students.

Because the number of programs determined to be ready for certification is constantly changing as the review process progresses, staff cannot predict at the time of the posting of this agenda item the number of institutions that will not be certified as of the August Commission meeting. Progress slowed over the summer months as many faculty were unavailable to respond to requests for additional information and fewer numbers of reviewers were available. Work continued, nevertheless, to review all submissions and hold frequent office hours for programs needing additional assistance. However, there remains a concern that *all* programs may not be certified in a timely manner consistent with the statutory requirement.

Staff Recommendation

Staff discussed this matter with the Committee on Accreditation (COA) at its August 8, 2025 meeting. The COA agreed that the accreditation system is the appropriate mechanism to ensure compliance with the new standards and, if directed by the Commission, the COA could serve the Commission by continuing to monitor the remaining programs to ensure their completion of the certification process. The COA recommends the Commission consider the following action:

- Any program that has not received literacy certification by the Commission’s October 23-24, 2025 meeting shall be reported to the COA at its October 30, 2025 meeting.
- At its October 30, 2025 meeting, the COA will take action to place probationary stipulations on these institutions. These stipulations could be removed at the next regularly scheduled COA meeting after it has been deemed that the program has completed the review process and is ready to be certified.
- The stipulations will include required close cooperation with Commission staff to address any programmatic issues or lack of evidence for meeting the requirements of SB 488. Continued work would take place to complete the literacy certification process.
- A progress report will be provided to the Commission at the December 2025 meeting

which will include the status of all institutions not previously certified and whether they are now ready to be certified.

- At its December 2025 meeting, the Commission may take any action within its authority directing the COA regarding the accreditation standing of programs/institutions that remain uncertified under the SB 488 literacy certification process.

In addition to the action above, the COA discussed the importance that any programs still not certified after October 2025 be provided peer to peer assistance. In particular, they discussed how beneficial it could be for individuals from institutions with strong literacy instruction programs to provide advice and guidance to these non-certified programs. While there is no current formalized mechanism to do so, Commission staff could certainly seek volunteers from institutions to do this.

And lastly, the COA asked that a more detailed plan be presented at its October meeting outlining specific actions or expectations once probationary stipulations have been placed on an institution for the purposes of SB 488 alignment. If the Commission approves the course of action contained in this agenda item, Commission staff will begin working on this plan.

Next Steps

Commission staff and literacy experts from the field will continue to work with institutions with programs that have not yet been certified by the Commission and bring as many of the remaining programs to the Commission's October meeting for certification. If the Commission approves the recommendations, any remaining institutions/programs will undergo the process outlined in this agenda item.