

# SI&A Cabinet Report

## Research shows student scores unaffected by teacher certification

By Tom Chorneau  
Friday, December 11, 2009

Student achievement appears largely unaffected by the certification path of the classroom teacher, a national researcher told members of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing Thursday.

In the ongoing debate over traditional certification versus alternative pathways, a study funded by the U.S. Department of Education and carried out by Mathematica Policy Research would tend to quell concerns that new teachers prepared through internship programs are not as qualified as novice teachers certified through traditional programs.

But the study findings also cast doubt on expectations that the alternative certification programs will attract a lot of mid-career professionals into the teaching profession – especially new teachers with a technical background that could teach math and science.

The presentation came during the commission's regular two-day, December meeting that was also highlighted by an annual reports on the status of accreditation programs, a summary of teacher misconduct cases as well as an update on a proposed revision of the mathematics specialist credential.

The presentation, delivered by Jill Constantine, associate director of research at Mathematica, comes as the status of teachers trained in alternative pathway programs are under the intense scrutiny of the federal court.

In a case with national implications, the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals is reconsidering a July ruling that left intact federal regulations allowing participants in alternative certification programs to meet the definition of 'highly qualified' under the No Child Left Behind Act.

The Mathematica study, released earlier this year, found no statistical difference in reading and math scores by teachers trained in either system.

The study compared 87 pairs of novice teachers, side-by-side, in the same schools in 20 different districts located in California, Texas, New Jersey and to a lesser extent in Illinois, Wisconsin, Georgia and Louisiana. There were a total of 38 teachers participating from California.

Meanwhile, the CTC reported conducting 15 accreditation site visits in 2008-09. The results

were five institutions received accreditation status with the remaining ten receiving a decision of “Accreditation with Stipulations.”

Those institutions granted “Accreditation with Stipulations” will have one year to address the stipulations and COA will consider the removal of the stipulations at that time.

The commission also reported opening a total of 4,309 misconduct cases in 2008-09 – the latest year that data is available. That number represented a drop of 10 percent from 2007-08.

From that total, the commission revoked 88 certificates, which was almost a 13 percent increase over 2007-08.

Finally, a panel of experts assigned to evaluate an update of the mathematics specialist credential told the commission that a specialist that would work with both K-12 students and teachers would need a wide expertise.

The specialist would need to complete advanced preparation and fieldwork in math content and the pedagogy of mathematics – well beyond what is required for the multiple subject teaching credential.

Expectations are that the panel will report back again to the commission early next year.

Care to Comment?

Send response of any length to: [editor@sia-us.com](mailto:editor@sia-us.com). We will publish all appropriate reactions.