

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 8, 2009
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 13, 2009
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 6, 2009
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 25, 2009
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009—10 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 544

**Introduced by Assembly Member Coto
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Ammiano, Brownley, Buchanan,
Carter, Eng, Miller, Nestande, Portantino, and Solorio)**

February 25, 2009

An act to add Section 44262.5 to the Education Code, relating to teacher credentialing.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 544, as amended, Coto. Teaching credential: American Indian languages.

Existing law authorizes the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, among other things, to establish professional standards, assessments, and examinations for entry and advancement in the education process. The commission is authorized to issue an eminence credential to any person who has achieved eminence in a field of endeavor taught, or service practiced, in the public schools of California.

This bill would require the commission, upon recommendation by a tribal government of a federally recognized Indian tribe in California, to issue an American Indian languages credential to a candidate who has demonstrated fluency in that tribal language, and met other requirements. The bill would authorize the holder of an American Indian

languages credential to teach the American Indian language for which the credential was issued in California public schools in preschool, kindergarten, grades 1 to 12, inclusive, and in adult education courses, and would make the holder of that credential eligible for a professional clear teaching credential upon completion of a specified period of time and application and consultation as specified. The bill would encourage each federally recognized American Indian tribe to develop a written and oral assessment that should be successfully completed before an applicant is recommended for an American Indian languages credential.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares the following:
- 2 (a) Teaching American Indian languages is essential to the
- 3 proper education of American Indian children.
- 4 (b) Preserving American Indian languages is an important part
- 5 of our national heritage and can be of value to all Americans.
- 6 SEC. 2. Section 44262.5 is added to the Education Code, to
- 7 read:
- 8 44262.5. (a) Upon recommendation of the tribal government
- 9 of a federally recognized Indian tribe in California, the commission
- 10 shall issue an American Indian languages credential to a candidate
- 11 who has met the following requirements:
- 12 (1) Demonstrated fluency in that tribe’s language based on an
- 13 assessment developed and administered by that federally
- 14 recognized Indian tribe pursuant to subdivision (e).
- 15 (2) Successfully completed a criminal background check
- 16 conducted under Sections 44339, 44340, and 44341 for
- 17 credentialing purposes.
- 18 (3) Submitted an application, fee, and recommendation for the
- 19 credential to the commission through the federally recognized
- 20 Indian tribe.
- 21 (b) The American Indian languages credential shall authorize
- 22 the holder to teach the American Indian language for which the
- 23 credential was issued in California public schools in preschool,
- 24 kindergarten, grades 1 to 12, inclusive, and in adult education
- 25 courses.

1 (c) The holder of an American Indian languages credential who
2 does not also have a valid teaching credential issued by the State
3 of California shall not teach in a public school, including a charter
4 school, any subject other than the American Indian language for
5 which he or she is credentialed.

6 (d) Each American Indian languages credential shall be issued
7 initially for a two-year period and may be renewed for a three-year
8 period upon recommendation of the tribal government. Upon
9 completion of the three-year period, the holder of an American
10 Indian languages credential shall be eligible for a clear teaching
11 credential for that language upon application and the
12 recommendation of the tribal government, in consultation with the
13 applicant's public school employer.

14 (e) (1) Each federally recognized American Indian tribe is
15 encouraged to develop a written and oral assessment that should
16 be successfully completed before an applicant is recommended
17 for an American Indian languages credential.

18 (2) In developing the language assessment, an Indian tribe
19 should determine all of the following:

20 (A) Which dialects of the tribal language will be included in
21 the assessment.

22 (B) Whether the Indian tribe will standardize its writing system.

23 (C) The standard of knowledge and fluency required to qualify
24 for an American Indian languages credential in that tribal language.

25 (D) Standards for effective teaching methods to be evaluated
26 in the classroom.

27 (3) The assessment should be administered at an appropriate
28 location that does not create hardship for members of the Indian
29 tribe administering the assessment.

30 (f) Upon agreement by the tribe, a tribe recommending a
31 candidate for an American Indian languages credential shall
32 develop and administer a technical assistance program guided by
33 the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. ~~The~~ *To the*
34 *extent feasible, the* program shall be offered by teachers
35 credentialed in an American Indian language who have three or
36 more years of teaching experience. The technical assistance
37 program may consist of direct classroom observation and
38 consultation, assistance in instructional planning and preparation,
39 support in implementation and delivery of classroom instruction,
40 and other assistance intended to enhance the professional

1 performance and development of the American Indian language
2 teacher.
3 (g) Public school personnel responsible for evaluating teachers,
4 in accordance with local governing board policy, shall provide
5 individuals employed to teach on the basis of the American Indian
6 languages credential with information on the teaching personnel
7 evaluation process and the California Standards for the Teaching
8 Profession.

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