

From BTSA to Induction:  
The Changing Role of School Districts  
in Teacher Credentialing

**Paula Lovo**

*Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office*

**Lynne Cavazos**

*Santa Barbara County Education Office*

**& David Simmons**

*Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office*

A 2<sup>nd</sup> year BTSA teacher, Sarah, called the county BTSA program director to ask how to complete the two-year Induction Program in four weeks. The program director explained that according to program records she had not fully participated in Year 1 and could not complete two years in four weeks. Sarah said that she had not participated in Year 1 because her BTSA support provider told her it wasn't important. Sarah was assured that the district portfolio required for all probationary teachers was more important than BTSA. The district portfolio was a requirement to keep her job. And since no one ever checked the BTSA box, the support provider urged her to throw away all the "the BTSA crap." But now Sarah was ready to finish induction quickly, because her district sent her a letter stating that to move from one salary column to another she would need to complete induction for a Professional Clear Credential. This would increase her annual income by approximately \$3,800. Sarah was informed by the BTSA program director that she had received incorrect information and would have to complete the two-year program.

This true story highlights challenges that occurred as successful

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*Paula Lovo is director of Teacher Support Services with the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office, Camarillo, California; Lynne Cavazos is director of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program with the Santa Barbara County Education Office, Santa Barbara, California; and David Simmons is director of the Teacher Support Program with the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office, Camarillo, California.*

Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Programs, state-wide, transitioned to SB 2042 Induction Programs. In this article the authors, who direct two large county BTSA consortia, describe how the transition from BTSA to BTSA Induction has dramatically changed the roles and responsibilities of school districts, BTSA Induction Directors, and the educational communities they serve. The authors will discuss four primary themes which surfaced in Sarah's story and illustrate why the transition has been difficult, and what future changes need to be made to ensure that SB 2042 Induction Programs will be successful in meeting the needs of new teachers. They are:

1. The evolving nature of California's landscape of support for new teachers;
2. System wide communication to all stakeholders;
3. Redirecting and redefining norms within a mature BTSA community; and
4. Protecting the integrity of BTSA and the induction requirements while promoting the success of beginning teachers.

The article will conclude with thoughts concerning the future of teacher preparation, including California's BTSA Induction Program.

From 1988- 2005:

The Seventeen-Year Evolution to BTSA Induction

***Background:  
The California Beginning Teacher  
Support and Assessment Program***

In 1992, the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) grant program was established to provide funded opportunities for first- and second-year teachers having completed a preliminary or professional clear multiple/single subject, credential. Matriculating from a teacher preparation program to the classroom, they were ready to "expand, enrich and deepen their teaching knowledge and skill through collegial reflection as well as continued instruction and study" (Director's Guide, 2000). Collegial reflection was accomplished with veteran educators while continued instruction and study occurred during ongoing district-based professional development coupled with a formative assessment system of inquiry. The BTSA program was designed to provide a smooth transition into the complex responsibilities of teaching, seeking to increase the retention of beginning teachers and improve learning opportunities for their K-12 students.

*Issues in Teacher Education*

Unlike other State-sponsored programs, BTSA is co-sponsored by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the California Department of Education. The BTSA Task Force, or governing body, is comprised of an equal number of members from each agency. For administrative purposes, California's 58 counties are "clustered" into six groupings, each supported by two Cluster Regional Directors. These regional directors provide BTSA program directors with information about reporting timelines, leadership training opportunities, and upcoming legislative and policy initiatives. In addition, they facilitate communication throughout the BTSA community. Local BTSA programs may be comprised of a single school district within a county, an entire county, or a consortium of county offices of education and/or school districts.

### ***Legislative Foundations of Induction***

In 1988, California began to address the crucial induction period for beginning teachers by funding a pilot program called the California New Teacher Project (CNTP). Under the CNTP, teacher induction is loosely defined as that stage after pre-service training when a beginning teacher assumes full classroom responsibilities.

With positive findings from the CNTP, Senate Bill 1422 (Bergeson, 1992) created a new system of new teacher support—the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Program. The legislation endorsed:

- (a) A gradual phase-in of support and assessment for all beginning teachers in California;
- (b) A comprehensive review of teaching credential requirements; and
- (c) Inclusion of induction programs for all new teachers in a restructured credential system.

According to CA Education Code SEC 44279.1 (a) "It is the intent of the Legislature that the commission and the superintendent *develop new policies* to govern the support and assessment of beginning teachers, as a condition for the professional certification of those teachers in the future." Implementation of this intent was repeated in AB 1266 (Mazzoni, 1997) and codified the following year in SB 2042 (Alpert, 1998) with a simple change in language from "develop new policies" to "develop and implement policies" foretelling change for BTSA Programs across the state.

The legislative intent stated in SB 1422 (1992), AB 1266 (1997), and SB 2042 (1998) that the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment System (BTSA) was to "*eventually support and assess beginning teachers as a condition for a Professional Clear Credential*" (BTSA Task Force, 2004) was

a departure from the previous credential structure. Under the earlier Ryan legislation and ensuing regulations, a teacher candidate could receive a professional clear credential as an initial credential document without first applying for a preliminary credential and without having been a teacher of record. The SB 2042 credential structure would ensure that only those teachers who had demonstrated success in both these requirements would be recommended for a professional clear credential.

### ***A Standards-Based Support and Assessment System***

AB 1266 (1997) further detailed a system ensuring teacher induction program efficacy that led to the creation and approval in July 1997 of “The Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Programs.” For the first time BTSA programs would articulate their work within standards-based language and use those same standards to benchmark achievement. The 13 BTSA Standards addressed “an intensive induction experience consisting of formative assessment, individual support, advanced study, and frequent reflection on the practice of teaching” (BTSA Standards, p. 3).

BTSA programs were well suited to providing formative assessment and individual support through the collegial coaching of a veteran teacher. Additional professional development was implemented in a variety of venues, including university “5th year classes.”<sup>1</sup> Formative assessments and the use of an individual induction plan provided ample opportunity for frequent reflection on the practice of teaching. The BTSA community embraced these standards, instituting both formal and informal peer reviews. Programs took satisfaction in meeting the standards and providing evidence of high quality support for retention of new teachers. In 2004, data collected indicated that 84% of the beginning teachers who completed a two-year BTSA induction remained in teaching for five-years while 50% of those who did not participate in BTSA left the profession within the first two years of teaching (BTSA Task Force 2004).

Having successfully targeted retention policymakers then focused on demonstrating that BTSA program participation made a positive difference in classroom practices. A 2003 study by Educational Testing Service (ETS) examined student achievement for BTSA participating teachers using the California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers (CFASST). The study indicated that students of beginning teachers who consistently used CFASST showed greater achievement than those whose teachers did not (Thompson, Ponte, & Paek, 2003).

However, the expressed legislative intent of SB 1422 and AB 1266 to use induction as a condition for professional certification was not

addressed in the BTSA standards. While district and county consortium based BTSA programs were successfully nurturing and retaining their new teachers and positively impacting student learning outcomes, not all were aware of the language in the legislation which requires a transition from a beginning teacher support and assessment program to a beginning teacher induction credentialing program.

Most of the existing BTSA programs provided beginning teachers with a repertoire of well-honed professional development strategies, which allowed for teacher growth through self-assessment and inquiry, and resulted in higher levels of new teacher retention. and the promise of increasing student achievement. During the 10 years between the enactment of SB 1422 and the approval of the SB 2042 Induction Standards, studies in both California and nationally have identified the need for induction programs.

### ***Key Changes from BTSA Programs to Professional Teacher Induction***

The original intent of SB 2042, passed in 1998, was to create a new two level credential program which included an induction program in order to receive a professional clear credential. There were 4 key changes necessary to move the statewide BTSA system to Professional Teacher Induction:

1. Linking funding to the development of a CTC- approved program of Professional Teacher Induction.
2. Replacing the formal and peer review processes developed in collaboration with local programs, cluster leadership, and the BTSA task force with periodic site visits for program approval. (This process, transitioning from program approval to program accreditation, is under discussion by the CCTC Committee on Accreditation.)
3. Introducing induction as the third professional phase of the Learning-to-Teach Continuum, following subject matter preparation and professional teacher preparation.
4. Requiring collaboration between IHE professional teacher preparation programs and K-12 BTSA programs.

### System Wide Communication to All Stakeholders

### ***Equivalency of the Old and the New Standards***

In March 2002, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing adopted and State Superintendent of Instruction approved the Standards of

Quality and Effectiveness for Professional Teacher Induction Programs. With this adoption, it became clear that at the local district level, there were many who needed further clarification about the difference between the original BTSA programs and the new induction programs. An induction program is “a well-defined 2-year program of situated learning for preliminary credentialed teachers; guided by professional Teacher Induction Standards, the California Standards for the Teaching Profession, and the K-12 student academic content standards; and culminating in fulfilling the requirements for attaining a professional clear credential” (Directors Guide, 2001). Simply stated, induction is BTSA and more—specifically it includes the requirement for attaining a professional clear credential.

Much of the new language was familiar to the BTSA community as it incorporated the most critical elements of support and assistance—support providers and provision for their professional development; working contexts and the role of the site administrator; the development and use of the individual induction plan; and formative assessment. There was not a one-to-one match between the two sets of standards, but Table 1 illustrates that the BTSA program standards were broadly subsumed into the new set.

While the standards' titles were familiar to those in BTSA, the text called for substantive changes. One such example is description of the role of the of site administrator. BTSA Standard 5: *Roles and Responsibilities of Site Administrators*, assumes that site administrators understand new teachers' needs and acknowledge the importance of the principal in the life of a new teacher. Going back to the initial example, the fact was that Sarah's assistant principal had attended BTSA training and knew that he was to “create a positive climate” for BTSA activities to occur. This was made possible through grant-funded release time for observations and consultations with her support provider.

Induction Standard 11: *Roles and Responsibilities of K-12 School Organizations* makes fewer assumptions about the knowledge, understanding, and positive intentionality of site administrators. There is, for example, a requirement (11d) that site administrators commit to help support the induction candidate at the school site. Under these standards, Sarah's assistant principal would now be responsible to “create a culture of support within the school” to facilitate the work of the support provider. The culture of support is clearly delineated. Sarah's assistant principal would be directly responsible for “Ensuring that site-level professional development activities related to induction occur on a consistent basis (11(d) (iv).” This example highlights the importance of accurate communication flow between the district BTSA coordinators and stakeholders

(assistant principal, support provider, and induction teacher) to support timely completion of credential requirements.

Unfortunately, the communication flow was often uneven. Sarah was assured that the district portfolio required for all probationary teachers was more important than completing the BTSA/Induction requirements. While the time spent on the district portfolio was meaningful for employment, it did not secure a professional clear credential for Sarah. Based on this experience, Sarah's district now accepts the induction portfolio in lieu of the district portfolio required of all teachers who are being evaluated. This change ensures that induction candidates are able to complete both processes with one set of evidence.

**Table 1**  
**Comparison of BTSA Program Quality Standards**  
**and SB 2042 Induction Standards**

<b>BTSA Program Quality Standards</b>	<b>Induction Standards</b>
Standard 1: Sponsorship and Administration of the Program	Standard 1: Sponsorship, Administration and Leadership
Standard 2: Program Rationale, Goals and Design	Standard 10: Program Design
Standard 3: Collaboration	Standard 7: Collaboration
Standard 4: School Context and Working Conditions Standard 5: Roles and Responsibilities of Site Administrators	Standard 11: Roles and Responsibilities of K-12 Organizations
Standard 6: Selection of Support Providers/Assessors	Standard 8: Support Provider Selection and Assignment
Standard 7: Provision of Professional Development for Support Providers	Standard 9: Support Provider Professional Development
Standard 8: Formative Assessment of Beginning Teacher Performance	Standard 13: Formative Assessment Systems for Participating Teachers
Standard 9: Development and Use of Individualized Induction Plans Standard 10: Provision of Individualized Assistance and Support by Support Providers/Assessors Standard 11: Design and Content of Formal Professional Development Activities for Beginning Teachers	Standard 12: Professional Development Based on an Individual Induction Plan
Standard 12: Allocation and Use of Resources	Standard 2: Resources
Standard 13 Program Development, Evaluation and Accountability	Standard 4: Evaluation

Redirecting and Redefining Norms  
within a Mature BTSA Community

***Letting Go of a Long Held BTSA Norm—Confidentiality***

Over a ten-year period, the BTSA community had established several accepted behavioral norms. One such norm was that of confidentiality between the individual participating teacher and support provider. While the 13 standards in the old system are broadly subsumed within the 20 standards in the new system (Table 1), three induction standards specifically run counter to previous practice: Standard 5: *Articulation from Professional Teacher Preparation Programs*; Standard 6: *Advise and Assistance*; and Standard 14: *Program Completion*.

To articulate across the newly established learning-to-teach system and conceptually advance the two level credential, induction programs are to “establish specific linkages with local professional teacher preparation programs...” (Induction Standard 5). This level of collaboration was new to both the districts and the universities. Prior to induction, when new teachers were employed, the district enrolled them in BTSA with little regard to university program, credential qualifications, or depth of learning. Now, districts are allowed no more than 120 days to review the credential qualifications of all new teachers and inform those teachers of their induction requirements. It is required that induction program leaders use the summative performance assessment from the new teacher’s preparation program in part to determine professional development opportunities offered to the candidate. Under the old system, work completed within the teacher preparation program was rarely shared with potential employers and local BTSA directors. However, Induction Standard 5 requires a review of the assessment of each candidate’s teaching performance, thus setting a baseline for growth beyond what was demonstrated for the Preliminary Credential.

While the mandate for support and formative assessment has not lessened, programs are now required to provide on-going advice and assistance as a candidate moves from preliminary to professional clear credential status (Standard 6). This standard goes to the heart of the differences between BTSA and Induction: programs now have defined timelines and legal responsibilities to inform candidates of credential completion requirements. This standard takes the program director beyond the role of nurturer, advocate, and professional developer to one of credential expert and verifier of appropriate documentation for completion of credential requirements. The BTSA community is redefining “confidentiality” and looking for ways to serve the formative needs of

participating teachers while collecting summative evidence of completion. BTSA Program Standard 5.5 *Roles and Responsibilities of Site Administrators* further delineates respect for confidentiality between the support provider and the beginning teacher as necessary to promote a trusting relationship. While Induction Program Standard 13 explicitly prohibits the use of evidence from a beginning teacher's *formative* assessments as part of the employment process, there is no ban on the dissemination of *summative* assessment evidence. Initially, many BTSA directors had uncomfortable conversations regarding the words "*summative*" and "*completion*"; however, given that Induction Program Standard 14: *Completion* is infused with words, such as, "documentation," "demonstrated application," "demonstrated knowledge," and "evidence," it is clear that program directors must determine whether completion and demonstration of knowledge has in fact occurred. To do so, there must be information sharing between the participating teacher and program staff. In addition, program staff may be appropriately asked to share credential completion information with employing districts to ensure that new teachers are making timely progress toward securing a credential within the two-year funding window.

In the story of Sarah, she and her support provider were working under the assumption that BTSA was a voluntary program and completion of formative assessment documents was optional. The operational mode was one of strict confidentiality between support provider and new teacher. This paradigm limited the BTSA program's ability to seek documented evidence of new teacher growth; site-administrators were limited in their ability to address progress toward completion. Redefining and redirecting long-held beliefs and practices would take time. In the meantime, candidates such as Sarah were caught in the transition.

### ***Individual Participant Choice vs. Prescribed Professional Development***

BTSA programs have historically provided high quality professional development for new and veteran teachers within a context of individual choice. BTSA Program Standard 11 provided for beginning teacher professional development activities, designed around the CSTP, and "responsive to *the* individual [emphasis within standard] and to local priorities." A reference to individual choice for professional development is mentioned approximately 11 times within the standard statement, rationale, and factors to consider. BTSA individual new teacher growth was centered on the development of an individual induction plan (IIP) with areas of focus chosen by the beginning teachers.

With the inclusion of the “advanced courses of study” defined by SB 2042 language as “...areas of study listed starting in professional preparation and continuing through induction,” an ongoing concern to local programs has been how to continue providing beginning teachers with individually chosen professional development opportunities while demonstrating proficiency in the SB 2042 subjects of advanced preparation: health education, teaching students with exceptional needs, computer-based technology, and teaching English learners (Induction Standards 15-20):

Sarah’s support provider assisted her in the development of an IIP, which she felt was responsive to Sarah’s need to retain employment and the district’s priority for its portfolio. On the other hand, the support provider failed to communicate the significance of attendance at the advanced courses of study and ensuing demonstration of knowledge and classroom applications. While this experienced support provider was convinced that she had done well by her new teacher, Sarah was left without the evidence needed to demonstrate completion of induction.

Although the term “advanced study” appears in the BTSA Program Standard Booklet in the *Purposes and Uses of the Program Standards* section (p. 3), many BTSA program directors and districts appeared unaware of its significance. Previously, the district’s expectation was that advanced courses of study were to be completed within the “5th year” program at a local university. Initially, induction programs were unprepared to provide the standards-based professional development on the advanced content. After an early sputtering, induction programs have been able to meet the requirements for standards-based courses in a variety of ways, by working through universities and county offices of education, as well as developing local courses with district staff developers. Through these partnerships, BTSA/Induction Programs are providing choices for individual participants while maintaining rigorous standards.

### Protecting the Integrity of BTSA and the Induction Requirements While Promoting Beginning Teachers’ Success

#### ***Induction Program Responsibilities***

Prior to the implementation of SB 2042, most BTSA directors had extensive backgrounds in professional development, curriculum and instruction; few had experience in human resources, teacher preparation program development, and California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) processes and procedures. For that reason, district induction directors now had to acquire new skill sets and take on functions previously provided by district personnel and university credential offices.

Induction Standard 6: *Advice and Assistance* requires that “Induction program staff advises participating teachers about ... credential completion requirements.” During the transition period some teachers whose preliminary credentials had been obtained under the previous credential structure were permitted to use induction as a vehicle to earn their professional clear credential. Under certain conditions, teachers trained outside-of-California were required to use induction to earn a professional clear credential. For the first time local program directors had to carefully examine transcripts and work histories to determine; (1) whether a given participant could be served by BTSA; (2) whether that participant could receive a credential as result of participation in an induction program; and (3) whether that participant, if licensed under previous credential structures, would need to meet additional requirements to clear his or her credential.

Induction Standards 10 and 14 are often called the “twin” standards, addressing many of the same issues: Providing opportunity to learn, verifying completion and documentation necessary to recommend “for the professional credential only those participating teachers who have met all requirements” (Standard 14(b)). Standard 10 describes an induction program’s responsibility to inform participants of how to complete induction, while Standard 14 lists what participants need to gather as evidence of completion. To meet Standard 10, local programs had to develop new credential completion policies and procedures that were transparent, valid, and reliable. Failure to recommend a participant for a credential could violate that participant’s due process rights unless documented in a legally defensible manner. Standard 14 states the minimum components that constitute completion, providing program directors with a summative checklist of those elements each new teacher needs to meet in order to be recommended for the credential.

Practically, few BTSA program directors had ever prepared a credential application packet for the CCTC. Now directors had to know which fees and forms were applicable for particular candidates; whether certification for CPR was required to clear a particular credential; and which transcriptable courses the Commission would accept. California even has rules about how to attach documentation to the application (one staple only, in the top left corner). To meet these new demands, directors had to obtain knowledge of California’s complex credential structure and its various codes; hire additional staff capable of providing such advisement; and/or create new relationships with other in-house staff (personnel, human resources) who were aware of CCTC procedures.

One of the authors provided training to BTSA directors entitled “Credentials 101.” The training was sponsored by the six Cluster Regional

Directors and presented at two statewide conferences. Cluster Regional Directors held ongoing meetings and fielded individual questions as people sought to gain knowledge of a complex credentialing system. In doing so, they also gained an appreciation of the consequences of poor credential advisement. For candidates, poor credential advisement can result in paycheck delays and loss of wages, or even the loss of a job. In Sarah's case, it resulted in the loss of \$3,800 per year—significant for a new teacher.

For districts there were equal consequences. Since California law requires a licensed teacher as a prerequisite to classroom funding, poor credential advisement could result in a loss of per pupil funding, as well as non-compliance. This educational process is ongoing as positions are vacated and then filled with new individuals.

### ***Obvious Benefits from the Transformation***

A highly qualified, skillful teacher in every classroom is the overarching goal of the Learning-to-Teach System. How we will accomplish this goal in California will depend on our ability to establish strong collaboration between all of the stakeholders involved in the preparation and retention of K-12 teachers and commitment on the part of policymakers to create and support reform measures that will help the nation achieve this goal.

The implementation of the "Learning-to-Teach System" highlights the importance of extending teacher preparation beyond university/college based credential programs. By clearly identifying the stages of growth that a potential teacher moves through, from pre-professional to preliminary to clear to an experienced educator, the system acknowledges that learning to teach is a life-long process. When teachers are provided support and professional development, they are better able to move from novice to expert status over time.

Since each stage of the Learning-to-Teach System has a prescribed set of eligibility requirements, district personnel are required to examine carefully a potential teacher's credentials and determine their level of preparation. Prior to implementation of SB 2042, district and site level administrators were less aware of the need for differentiating support and professional development for their teachers and often were unaware of a teacher's credential qualifications to teach a particular subject or grade level. In particular, district and site administrators did not set the expectation that new teachers would acquire a professional clear credential during their first two years of teaching. The five-year time limit for clearing a preliminary credential was viewed as the reasonable time frame for achieving professional status.

A new wave of thinking about the importance of having a professional clear credential” is illustrated by one district’s contract language. To highlight the importance of acquiring this credential within two years, the district’s negotiated bargaining agreement states that an employee will not move over on the negotiated salary schedule until the individual has obtained this Credential. In other districts, specific contract language requires that a new teacher participate in a state approved induction program as a condition of employment, thus ensuring that they receive both support and opportunities to improve their practice.

### ***Unintended Consequences***

As with all new reform initiatives there are expected outcomes and unexpected consequences. SB 2042 is no exception, although the consequences are magnified given the impact of federal “No Child Left Behind” legislation and a number of other state mandates. For public school districts, the most significant of the unintended consequences are linked to school accountability, student achievement, and teacher quality.

The impact of state accountability measures is felt most strongly in districts where a number of schools have been designated as low performing Program Improvement Schools based on Academic Performance Index (API) scores and by not attaining their Academic Yearly Progress (AYP) target. In an effort to improve test scores in these schools, teachers are required to attend extensive professional development seminars and implement new instructional strategies designed to increase the learning of lower quintile students. As one might expect, many new teachers are given teaching assignments in program improvement schools and expected to attend mandated district professional development as well as the seminars required for induction program completion. Needless to say, many new teachers are involved in hours and hours of intense professional development with little time to reflect and apply their new learnings. To correct this unintended consequence, districts and BTSA Induction Programs will need to collaborate more closely and find ways to align these requirements.

With the implementation of SB 2042, the minimum time for completing both the preliminary and professional clear credentials has been extended to three years. A new teacher must now obtain a preliminary credential before being eligible to participate in a two-year induction program. By the time new teachers fulfill their induction requirement, and obtain a professional clear credential, they are eligible for permanent status. This has given way to a statewide debate reexamining the number of years needed to gain permanent status. It would be most appropriate

to include the BTSA Induction community in that debate, compelling a discussion on how to support and mentor some teachers beyond what is currently funded.

### ***A Sustainable System?***

The passage of SB 2042 in 1998 was the first in a series of steps needed to completely transform the teacher credentialing system in the State of California. The transformation took over five years because the “learning to teach system” required institutions of higher education (IHEs) to revamp their credential programs to meet a new set of program standards, for BTSA Induction Programs to incorporate extensive professional development with strong emphasis on content standards, and for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) to establish new credentialing requirements.

The sustainability of this well-designed, comprehensive teacher preparation and professional development is highly dependent on the long-term stability of several key elements. The first is the financial support needed to support a system that extends the teacher preparation to include a two-year induction program and requirements for high quality professional development. In 2005-06 the required two-year program for all new preliminary credentialed teachers cost the state over \$87 million dollars. If this funding were cut, public school districts would be unable to assume this cost given the current level of per pupil funding in California.

A second element is the viability of the newly adopted sequential two tiered credentialing system for K-12 teachers, which ensures that a teacher earns a professional clear credential only after working as a teacher of record. This is a critical component of the “Learning-to-Teach System.” If alternative credentialing options are introduced that circumvent the two-tiered system, it will weaken California’s efforts to prepare a highly qualified, skillful teacher for every classroom.

A third related element is the requirement that a two year induction program be started once a new teacher has secured a job and is in a position to continue learning to teach in a job-embedded learning environment with a qualified mentor or support provider. This issue came to light early on during the implementation of SB 2042 and was swiftly addressed by the passage of AB 2210 (Liu). This law states that those earning their preliminary credential on the basis of completion of an SB 2042 teacher preparation program on or after 8/30/04 may only earn a professional credential without induction, if their employer certifies that the beginning teacher is either: (1) Required under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to complete subject matter

course work; or (2) Eligible for induction but induction is not available (California Education Code 44259(c)(3)(B)).

Preparing Highly Qualified Teachers:  
Can the Learning-to-Teach System in California Survive and Thrive?

Over the past seventeen years, the State of California has made a serious commitment to the preparation and retention of high quality teachers for K-12 schools. The commitment has evolved with significant support from the state legislature in the form of financial backing; from creative and innovative policy-makers and educators who recognized the need for extended teacher preparation; from local school districts who were willing to establish partnerships with institutions of higher education; and culminating with induction programs intended to ensure new teachers are provided high quality support and professional development opportunities that meet their needs and extend their growth.

With all of the components of SB 2042—The Learning-to-Teach System—fully implemented and partnerships established, how can we maintain quality at this level of complexity? We must support and retain new teachers in the education profession; assist them to meet all of the credentialing requirements; and involve new teachers in professional development experiences that ensures that they are “highly qualified” and moving toward expert status. We are stretched by the intricacy of this challenge.

We believe, as Directors of two large county BTSA Induction consortia, that we can find and maintain the appropriate balance that will sustain our record of high retention of new teachers in California, while still meeting the personal and professional needs of new teachers, like Sarah, who must fulfill induction requirements to secure a professional clear credential and become the highly qualified, caring teacher students deserve and need—teachers who believe that all students can achieve their goals as learners to enhance every expectation for academic achievement. But BTSA Induction Programs and local districts cannot achieve this alone, nor can we be totally responsible for the retention of new teachers in California.

In its newly released book, *A Good Teacher in Every Classroom*, the National Academy of Education (2005), provides a series of policy recommendation that are designed to help this country and the State of California prepare the highly qualified teachers our children deserve.

The preparation of highly qualified teachers for America’s schools will require not only the involvement of teacher preparation programs [including Induction Programs] but also superintendents, principals,

and practicing teachers who join forces to insist upon solid professional learning opportunities before and during their careers; parents and community members who understand the critical importance of investment in professional preparation for educators of their children; university presidents, faculty, and trustees who commit to ensuring that education schools are central to the work of universities and comparable in quality to other professional schools; and policy makers who understand that if American public education is to meet the aspirations this nation has assigned to it, the preparation of excellent teachers is the central commitment without which other reforms are unlikely to succeed. (p. 69)

We concur. The future of teacher education in this country will depend on our ability as a nation to take seriously the commitment all stakeholders must make if we are to achieve the goal of a highly qualified, skillful teacher in every classroom in the United States.

### Note

<sup>1</sup> 5th year of study was required to include (1) completion of a course in health education; (2) completion of a course in Special Education; (3) completion of a course in advanced computer technology in educational setting; and (4) thirty (30) post-baccalaureate semester units.

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