

Occupational Therapy Credential in California Public Schools – AB 2386 (Rubio) *Issue Statement*

SUMMARY

The Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC) supports AB 2386 (Rubio), which would direct the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to determine the qualifications and process required for occupational therapists who work in public schools to obtain a Services Credential. The proposed credential would ensure continued and future high-quality occupational therapists who can positively impact the education and future of California's diverse students, schools, and communities.

BACKGROUND

Occupational therapists have been providing educationally related services to students in public schools since the 1970s. Occupational therapy (OT) services are mandated under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and designed to help children develop, improve, or restore functional and academic skills to support access and progress in their education. OT services can be essential for students as it promotes function and engagement in everyday routines preparing children to be college and career ready. There are approximately 16,000 occupational therapists currently licensed in California, of which nearly 20% (3,200) are estimated to practice in school-based settings.

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) is the governing body that grants credentials for school employees in the state of California. Examples of credentialed personnel are teachers, school psychologists, school counselors, social workers, nurses, audiologists, and speech and language pathologists. General requirements in order to obtain these credentials include: a) baccalaureate degree or higher, b) specialized and professional preparation, c) possession of a valid license, certificate, or registration, and d) mentored practical experience. These requirements are met in occupational therapy professional preparation through accredited programs.

PROBLEM

The CTC offers a wide variety of credentials to ensure high-quality instruction, intervention, and opportunities to serve students. Under Education Code provisions, occupational therapists do not have an option to obtain a credential and have not been included in the credentialing process. Credentialing affords an OT with the professional status that is commensurate with their knowledge base and education.

In order to pursue an administrative credential, educators need to have a prerequisite credential. Under current law, occupational therapists do not have a prerequisite credential option thus limiting opportunities to assume leadership roles, which would be of benefit to schoolwide student outcomes.

SOLUTION

The CTC has the authority to determine what requirements will be necessary for an OT to be credentialed in the schools. AB 2386 will direct the CTC to work with a group of stakeholders to develop the recommended requirements for an OT credential by July 1, 2020 and report these recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor.

Occupational therapists have a proven ability to augment student outcomes within the school-based setting while serving as integral and collaborative team members at all levels. With clear direction from the CTC, the Legislature can then move forward with providing OTs with authorization to become credentialed with the CTC.

—END—

OTAC Vision

A world where
all people participate
in meaningful occupations
to optimize their life experience.



P.O. Box 276567
Sacramento, CA 95827

Phone: 916/567-7000

Fax: 916/567-7001

E-mail: info@otaonline.org

Web site:

www.otaonline.org