

**Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy Credential Initiative California Public Schools**

**The Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC) and California Physical Therapy Association (CPTA) support inclusion in services credential. Inclusion in a service credential that would allow occupational therapists (OT) and physical therapists (PT) to obtain a Clinical or Rehabilitative Services Credential through the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC)**.

**RECOMMENDATION**

A credential allows representation of two essential professions to expand support of California's diverse students, schools, and communities with their unique medical and educational expertise. A services credential would provide the necessary reconciliation between the level of OT and PT Bachelor, Master and Doctorate education, preparation, and licensure status.

**BACKGROUND**

OTs and PTs have been providing educationally related services to students in public schools since the 1970’s and are the only IDEA mandated professionals who are not included in a credential opportunity afforded to teachers, school psychologists, school counselors, social workers, nurses, audiologists, and speech and language pathologists.

Professional accredited OT and PT program curricula, which include teaching and learning standards, meet the general requirements for a basic credential. Education Code 44268 states: “*The minimum requirements for a services credential in a specialization in clinical or rehabilitative services are: (a) A baccalaureate degree or higher degree from an institution approved by the commission. (b)A fifth year, or its equivalent, of college or university education. (c)Such specialized and professional preparation as the commission may require. a) baccalaureate degree or higher b) specialized and professional preparation c) possession of a valid license, certificate, or registration, and d) mentored practical experience*.” Credentialing affords the professional status that is commensurate with the current knowledge base and education of OTs and PTs.

**PROBLEM**

Students in the California public schools with a myriad of medical and educational needs are missing the expertise and influence of OTs and PTs in leadership positions. OTs and PTs have proven ability to augment student outcomes within the school-based setting while serving as integral and collaborative team members at all levels. The CTC offers a wide variety of credentials to ensure high quality instruction, intervention and opportunities to serve students. In order to pursue an administrative credential, educators need to have a prerequisite basic credential. Under current law, OTs and PTs do not have a prerequisite credential option thus limiting opportunities to assume leadership roles, which would be of benefit to school wide student outcomes.

**SOLUTION**

The CTC has the authority with existing Education Code and is being asked to expedite the inclusion of the professions of OTs and PTs for a basic service credential to better serve the ever-growing complex medical and educational needs of California students accelerating successful access to education.

OTs and PTs currently meet the requirements for a services credential. *The services credential shall authorize the holder to perform, at all grade levels, the service approved by the commission as designated on the credential.*