

SI&A Cabinet Report

Autism training for special ed teachers offered

By Claire Hanrahan
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A campaign to train within the next year 25,000 veteran special education teachers for the rigors of dealing with autistic students was announced last week.

The California Teacher Corps, a leader in providing alternative certification programs, announced the effort that will be taken up in partnership with local school districts and county offices of education.

The initiative comes in the wake of new autism authorizations approved last year by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing aimed at expanding the number of teachers available to deal with the crisis surrounding autistic students.

Catherine Kearney, president of California Teacher Corps, said that their already established partnerships with school districts statewide will streamline their ability to create individualized programs.

“The requirements of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and really our own programs, allow us to look at prior experience and training when developing an autism authorization certification program, said Kearney. “Our goal is to help provide targeted and specific training to meet school districts’ needs.”

According to the California Department of Education’s website, the number of autistic students receiving special education services has grown from 24,943 in 2004 to 53,183 in 2009.

Last year the CTC added 6 new authorizations for the special education credential.

The special education add-on teaching authorizations are intended to expand the scope of instruction for teachers that currently hold a special education credential and thus expand the number of instructors available to serve the growing population of students that need specialized care.

A recent report to the Legislature from the CTC noted that the number of students requiring services for autism spectrum disorders has risen 88 percent during the past five years.

The six new authorizations are: autism spectrum disorders; deaf-blind; emotional disturbance; traumatic brain injury; orthopedically impaired; and other health

impaired.

A CTC-approved program is approximately 12 semester units of coursework and supervised field study. It isn't mandatory for a special education teacher to earn the added authorization unless they want to, or they are providing services not authorized by their current credential.

For more information visit: <http://www.cateachercorps.org/>