The Florida Teacher Education Division (FTED) of the Council for Exceptional Children appreciates the opportunity to provide input for discussion of Exceptional Student Education teacher certification. The paragraphs that follow provide points FTED believes are important for consideration. FTED comments focus on content of teacher preparation programs, certification endorsements related to working with students with disabilities, implications for the Florida Teacher Certification Exams, and flexibility for teachers and districts in the current certification structure.

FTED Executive Board

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**Teacher Preparation Program Considerations**

FTED views the following as positive aspects of the current ESE certification structure:

* The broad focus of the current structure provides opportunities for teacher candidates to see and experience students with disabilities in numerous settings and in the full range of grades in public schools.
* Teacher preparation programs address general strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
* Attention on the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices within existing programs addresses teaching to mastery of all students.
* Institutions of Higher Education are able to offer teacher preparation programs that address the critical shortage of special education teachers making more efficient use of personnel and financial resources.

FTED views the following as concerns with the current ESE certification structure:

* It is difficult to prepare teacher candidates for such a broad spectrum of students considering both age and disability related needs.
* Initial teacher preparation as well as teacher professional development may be more focused when not addressing such a broad range of students with disabilities.

**Endorsements**

FTED recognizes the benefit of endorsements addressing specialized needs of some students with disabilities (e.g. ASD, severe and profound disabilities, etc.).

FTED recognizes potential difficulties inherent with the increase of "support facilitation" as a service delivery model. We believe that attention should be given to possibilities endorsement, policies, case load requirements, etc. to guide implementation of this model.

FTED believes additional areas for consideration include:

* Potential endorsements, competencies, etc. for leaders in ESE and/or Directors of ESE
* Potential leadership endorsement in ESE
* Necessary knowledge and skills, especially to prepare teachers at the secondary level for college and career ready, UDL, accommodations, technology, etc. to assure increases in graduation rates.''

**Florida Teacher Certification Exams**

FTED recognizes that the current certification structure requires K-12 ESE teachers must take and pass the Florida Teacher Certification Exam subject area exam to be highly qualified and

Considerations regarding the FTCEs include:

* Content of the newly-approved, "Best Practices in Inclusive Education" (BPIE) as content within the FEAPs and assessed on the Professional Education Exam
* Newly-approved competencies as an "Intervention Specialist" from CEC to develop knowledge, skills, and competencies of educators within the MTSS structure

**Flexibility for Teacher Candidates, Teachers, and Districts**

FTED recognizes that the current structure of ESE certification provides flexibility for teacher candidates, practicing teachers, and school districts.

* Many teacher candidates do not know what teaching experiences they want to pursue. In fact, some might not be fully aware of the possibilities that exist in school settings. The K-12 structure gives them exposure to a variety of grade levels.
* Employment opportunities for teacher preparation program graduates and for practicing teachers holding K-12 certification are expanded.
* Teacher applicants and practicing teachers can search for and choose from a wider variety of available teaching positions at the time of initial hiring and for transferring to different positions.
* School districts have maximum flexibility when hiring and placing teachers meeting requirements for highly qualified teachers.