



To: **County Superintendents of Schools**
From: **Derick Lennox, Senior Director of Governmental Relations and Legal Affairs, California County Superintendents**
Subject: **Qualifications for the Office of County Superintendent of Schools**
Date: **December 18, 2025**

This memorandum discusses how county election officials may verify the credential qualification requirement for a person desiring to run for the office of county superintendent of schools. If a candidate fails to provide proper qualification documentation *at the time of filing*, the individual's name must not be printed on the election ballot.

I. Credentialing Qualification for Office of County Superintendent

No person shall be elected to the office as county superintendent of schools who does not possess a "valid administrative credential issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing."¹

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing defines a valid administrative credential to mean "either a valid *preliminary* administrative services credential, or a valid *clear* administrative services credential."² No other kind of certification authorizes administrative services. In contrast, an "administrative services *certificate of eligibility*" does not authorize administrative services, and thus does not satisfy the requirements of Education Code Section 1208.³

In 2023, the Legislature amended the Education Code to further clarify this point by aligning the county superintendent's statutory qualification for office with current terminology used by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.⁴

1. Education Code Section 1208; *see also* Section 1206. Note that these sections apply to county "classes" (1) to (8), inclusive, which includes all counties in California.

2. Letter from Mary Vixie Sandy, Executive Director of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, to Karen Staph Walters, May 14, 2024 (emphasis added), <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O1wMGyMNbla91DYkdAB2jwuRcqQzt9Sa/view?usp=sharing>.

3. *Id.* (emphasis added).

4. Statutes of 2023, Chapter 273 (Assembly Bill 872 authored by the Assembly Committee on Education) (replacing "a valid certification document authorizing administrative services"

Whether a person possesses a valid administrative credential is publicly available information. A county elections official may verify whether an individual has a valid preliminary or clear administrative credential using the Commission on Teacher Credentialing's website.⁵

II. A Person Lacking a Valid Administrative Credential Shall Not Appear on the Ballot

To make certain that no person may be elected who fails to have the required credential, the Legislature, effective January 1, 2024, requires that "a person shall not be considered a legally qualified candidate for any of the offices set forth in subdivision (b)"—which includes the county superintendent of schools—"unless that person has filed [...] [d]ocumentation that establishes that the person meets each qualification established for service in that office[...]."⁶

If a candidate fails to provide proper qualification documentation at the time of filing, the "candidate's name shall not be printed on the ballot to be used at the direct primary[...]."⁷

It is not sufficient that a candidate is merely eligible for the required credential, or that the candidate has applied for the required credential and is hoping to possess it by the date of taking office. A prospective candidate must possess a valid administrative credential at the time of filing.

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with "a valid administrative credential issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing").

5. <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/lookup>.

6. Elections Code Section 13.5.

7. Elections Code Section 8020.