



**ACADEMIC SENATE
Executive Committee
REFERRAL FORM**

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

Date:	11/19/2025
To:	Academic Programs Committee
From:	Academic Senate Executive Committee
Subject:	Academic Senate Referral
Classification	AP-010-256
Title of Referral:	<u>Early Childhood Studies, B.A. - Integrative Teacher Education Program Education Specialist: Extensive Support Needs Option Discontinuation</u>
Background:	See attached referral request form. Additional background provided by the Executive Committee: None.
Recommended resources:	See attached referral request form and supporting documentation. Additional resources recommended by the Executive Committee: None. For the Committee's Report on this referral, please list in separate sections, the resources recommended, and resources actually consulted. If a resource was not consulted, briefly state why.
Review and recommend:	Review and recommend as appropriate.
Date required for presenting committee report to the Executive Committee:	3/11/2026

Your Name: Ashley Ly

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Title of Referral: Early Childhood Studies, B.A. – Integrative Teacher Education Program Specialist:
Extensive Support Needs Option Discontinuation

Names and Titles of Proponents:

Keywords: Early, Childhood, Studies, Integrative, Teacher, Education, Program, Specialist, Extensive,
Support, Discontinuation, Needs, Option

In there a deadline by when this referral needs to be considered by the Academic Senate?

Deadline Date:

Justification for Deadline:

Background:

The Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) for Education Specialists in the Early Childhood Studies (ECS) Department was developed in response to California's growing need for qualified special education teachers. This intensive four-year undergraduate program prepares students in ECS to become inclusive, tech-literate professionals equipped to support students with disabilities and their families.

Over the past eight years, the ITEP team has worked collaboratively to build a program that reflects a commitment to equity, inclusion, and excellence in teacher preparation. With initial grant funding, the ECS and Education Specialist programs developed a structured four-year roadmap that required ITEP students to complete 133 units of coursework. To meet this timeline, students were advised to take summer courses or enroll in more than 18 units per semester. While a few students successfully followed this rigorous path, the majority struggled to graduate within four years due to the program's intensity.

The ITEP model, though well-intentioned, has proven challenging for our non-traditional student population. Many students faced barriers such as missing credential admission deadlines, being unable to enroll in required Education courses, or dropping out due to the demanding schedule. These issues often resulted in delayed graduation and interrupted progress.

Financial constraints have further impacted student success. Many ITEP students lack the resources to afford summer courses, which are essential for staying on track. Additionally, federal financial aid options such as the Pell Grant and TEACH Grant are no longer available for post-baccalaureate credential candidates, as Cal Poly Pomona offers an undergraduate pathway for special education credentials. Compounding these challenges, grant funding for the ITEP program is set to expire this year.

Another significant concern is the impact on post-graduation salary. ITEP graduates complete fewer post-baccalaureate units compared to those in traditional credential pathways, which may result in

lower starting salaries. School districts typically base salary scales on post-graduate coursework, and ITEP graduates may be placed at a disadvantage due to fewer qualifying post-baccalaureate units. As a department deeply committed to equity, including pay equity and equal opportunity, we have made the difficult decision to discontinue the Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) for Education Specialists. While the program was initially designed to address California's urgent need for special education teachers, its structure has not sufficiently supported the diverse needs of our student population.

Despite the program's ambitious goals, the intensive nature of the four-year roadmap proved challenging for many students, particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds. Issues such as limited access to summer funding, missed credential deadlines, and scheduling conflicts have contributed to student attrition and delayed graduation timelines. Additionally, the program's structure has inadvertently impacted graduates' earning potential due to fewer post-baccalaureate units, which are often used by school districts to determine salary placement.

Moving forward, our department is committed to refining our approach to teacher preparation. We aim to develop sustainable, equitable pathways that better serve future educators and reflect our values of inclusion, access, and professional advancement and upward mobility.

The ECS program is designed to support individuals pursuing careers as early childhood educators. Our mission is to prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to make a meaningful impact in the lives of children from infancy through age eight, as well as their families. We are dedicated to cultivating a student-centered, experiential learning environment that thoughtfully integrates theory, research, and practice through a social justice lens. Our approach embraces inclusivity and diversity, and champions the empowerment of individuals from historically underrepresented ethnic/racial, gender, and other identity groups.

The discontinuation of the Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) will not diminish the quality of the ECS program. On the contrary, this change will allow us to strengthen our focus on the three remaining teaching pathways: **Teaching**, **Multilingual Teaching**, and **PK-3 Teaching**. By streamlining our program offerings, we can better support students in developing their professional identities as early childhood educators and provide more targeted, relevant preparation that aligns with their career goals and life circumstances. Furthermore, there are fewer extensive support classrooms in comparison to mild/moderate classrooms. Which is mirrored in our ITEP ECS program.