**California Department of Education**

# Report to the Legislature: Teacher Credentialing: Teacher Preparation Outside of the United States and H-1B Work Visas



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**California Department of Education**

**Report to the Legislature:** **Teacher Credentialing: Teacher Preparation Outside of the United States and H-1B Work Visas**

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## Executive Summary

This report is required by California *Education Code* Section [44275.6](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=44275.6&lawCode=EDC). This statute was added by Assembly Bill 681 (Chapter 199, Statutes of 2017), which created a pathway for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to determine whether the national teaching credential standards of another country are equivalent to United States/California standards and expedited the credentialing process for
out-of-country prepared teacher candidates. This report summarizes the H-1B work visa data collected annually from school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools. This data includes the number of teacher visa applications for persons excluded from the term “immigrant” for purposes of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act (Section 1101 of Title 8 of *United States Code*) pursuant to Section 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of Title 8 of *United States Code.*

This report contains the H-1B work visa data from the 2023–24 school year provided by California local educational agencies (LEAs). The H-1B federal program was created to assist employers who cannot otherwise obtain needed skills and aptitudes from the United States workforce by sanctioning the temporary employment of experienced individuals who are not otherwise permitted to work in the United States.[[1]](#footnote-1) California LEAs epitomize the type of employer that may benefit from this federal program.

In the 2023−24 school year, 89 LEAs submitted a request for H-1B teacher work visas in California. A total of 317 work visas were requested by LEAs, and 287 work visas were granted. Only 30 requests for H-1B teacher work visas were denied in 2023−24. Similar to the prior year (2022−23), the majority of submissions were generated by school districts. Specifically, in 2023−24, school districts accounted for 53 out of the 89 LEAs that requested teacher work visas.

You can find this report on the California Department of Education Recruiting Teachers of Color web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/divteachrecruit.asp>. If you have any questions, please contact Alexis Clift, Education Programs Consultant, Teacher and Leader Policy Office, at 916-319-0452 or aclift@cde.ca.gov.

### Assembly Bill 681 and Legislative Reporting Requirements

On September 1, 2017, Assembly Bill (AB) 681 (Chau) was chaptered and placed in the California *Education Code* (*EC*), which created a pathway for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to determine whether the national teaching credential standards of another country are equivalent to United States/California standards in order to expedite the credentialing process for out-of-country prepared teacher candidates. The bill authorized the CTC to determine that the national standards for coursework, programs, or degrees in a country other than the United States are equivalent to those offered by a regionally accredited institution in the United States.

The legislation specifies that if the CTC determines that the other country’s national standards are equivalent, an individual who holds or is eligible for a credential in that country is presumed to have satisfied specified requirements for obtaining a credential. This bill requires a local educational agency (LEA) to obtain proof that the holder has obtained a credential, certificate, or permit authorizing the performance of services in public schools from the CTC before issuing a temporary certificate or providing for the registration of a valid certification or other document authorizing the holder to serve in a position requiring certification qualifications as an employee of the school district.

Moreover, AB 681 created requirements for school districts, county offices of education (COEs), and charter schools to annually report to the California Department of Education (CDE) the number of visa applications for certain persons excluded from the term “immigrant” for purposes of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act, pursuant to Section 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of Title 8 of *United States Code* that the school district, COE, or charter school applies for on behalf of potential employees and the number of those visa applications that are granted. Moreover, *EC* Section 44275.6(b)(1) includes the requirement of an annual report from the CDE to the California State Legislature summarizing the number of H-1B work visa applications that are granted each year.

### Introduction: H-1B Work Visa Program

The H-1B Work Visa Program applies to employers seeking to hire persons excluded from the term “immigrant” for purposes of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act, pursuant to Section 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of Title 8 of *United States Code,* as workers in specialty occupations of distinguished merit and ability. Specifically, a specialty occupation is one that necessitates the application of highly specialized knowledge and the possession of at least a bachelor’s degree or its educational equivalent. The overall objective of the H-1B program and its provisions is to aid United States employers who cannot otherwise acquire highly qualified and skilled domestic workers. Expressly, the program assists employers in acquiring individuals with desirable and necessary skills and abilities from outside of the United States workforce by authorizing the temporary employment of these qualified individuals who are not otherwise authorized to work in the United States.[[2]](#footnote-2) California LEAs embody the type of employer that may benefit from this federal program. California teachers meet the basic eligibility requirements of the
H-1B program because teachers must hold a minimum of a bachelor’s degree or its equivalent, and there is currently an extensive shortage of qualified educators in the state.

The H-1B work visa is a feasible option for primary, secondary, college, and/or university teachers with the required expertise and training. The H-1B work visa offers non-native professionals the ability to work temporarily in the United States if they possess special skills and hold specific degrees and/or licenses.[[3]](#footnote-3) California teachers qualify for the H-1B Work Visa Program if they satisfy all of the following conditions:

* Possess a bachelor’s degree or higher for entry into teaching. However, an elementary school teacher, for example, would not require the same level degree as a university professor.
* For degrees obtained outside of the United States, they must be the equivalent of a United States bachelor’s degree. This degree may also be subject to additional evaluation and/or verification.
* Retain and maintain any required licenses, certifications, and/or authorizations to work within their educational sector. If the teacher has not procured their license prior to arriving in the United States, they may have the ability to prove that they meet all the current conditions for credentialing/licensing.
* The LEA or employer is required to submit a Labor Condition Application from the Department of Labor. This is to guarantee that the teacher will be treated fairly and paid at a wage rate equivalent to those paid to domestic workers with parallel experience, education, and/or credentials.[[4]](#footnote-4)

The H-1B visa is one of the most requested visas among non-native professional workers. This is due to several factors such as its convenience and overall benefits. However, it is important to note that there are some limitations associated with the H-1B Visa Program. The program includes a limit of 65,000 visas each year. This mandate was established by Congress and is administered by the Department of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Further, 20,000 visas are directly reserved for non-native national applicants with a United States master’s degree or higher. It is important to note that when the number of applications submitted is greater than the established numerical limit, the Department of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services randomly selects 65,000 applications submitted by regular applicants and an additional 20,000 applications by advanced degree applicants (a total of 85,000 applications) through its computerized lottery system.

LEAs apply for the H-1B visa on behalf of their non-native teacher candidates. Due to the numerical limitation and the current teacher shortage crisis, many United States employer school districts, COEs, charter schools, and institutions seek special H-1B visas exempt from the visa cap. Currently, there are three types of employer organizations that may seek the H-1B cap-exempt work visa: a nonprofit or government research organization, an accredited college or university, and a nonprofit organization affiliated with a college or university. Many LEAs successfully establish an H-1B exempt status to hire teachers since most schools are public and qualify as a nonprofit organization.[[5]](#footnote-5)

### Monitoring Tool: The California Basic Educational Data System

The California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) is a system for collecting information about schools and school districts as well as some aggregate data on students and classified staff in the California public kindergarten through grade twelve school system. CBEDS data is collected once a year on the first Wednesday in October, which is designated as “Information Day.” CBEDS is the system and monitoring tool used to collect H-1B work visa information as required by [*EC* Section 44275.6](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=44275.6&lawCode=EDC).

The data is collected from three different forms. Each LEA completes the County/District Information Form, which provides information about classified staff, estimated teacher hires, and H-1B work visa applications. Each public school completes the School Information Form (SIF), which provides information about classified staff, kindergarten program types, educational calendars, and multilingual instructional programs. Charter schools also report information on the SIF regarding H-1B work visa applications and estimated teacher hires. Districts participating in the District of Choice (DOC) Program complete the DOC Supplemental form to provide select information about their DOC Program.

CBEDS data is used to produce state and federal reports required by the California *EC* and by federal statutes. CBEDS data is also made available for other uses by schools, districts, parents, government groups, control agencies, CDE staff, the media, and the public. The public can view data in a variety of formats from the CDE Accessing Educational Data web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/index.asp>. The CDE takes the H-1B teacher work visa information submitted by LEAs and collected via CBEDS to evaluate teacher work visa data and to compile reports for the California State Legislature.

### 2023–24 H-1B Work Visa Information

**Table 1: H-1B Visas Requested and Granted for 2023–24**

| Total LEAs | Districts | Charter Schools | Total Requested Work Visas | Granted Work Visas | DeniedWork Visas |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 89 | 53 | 36 | 317 | 287 | 30 |

In the 2023−24 school year, districts accounted for most of the H-1B teacher work visa denials with 22 out of the 30 total denials, while charter schools accounted for eight denials. Three districts (West Contra Costa Unified School District [USD], Pasadena USD, and Jefferson Elementary USD) represented the bulk of the denials. West Contra Costa USD requested 28 work visas and was granted 20 (8 were denied). Pasadena USD requested 11 and was granted 7 (4 were denied). Jefferson Elementary USD requested 5 work visas, and 1 was granted (4 were denied). Moreover, Kern COE requested 3 work visas (all were denied), Los Angeles USD requested 17 work visas (2 were denied), and Ontario-Montclair USD requested 2 work visas (1 was denied). The reason(s) for the denials are unknown.

San Bernardino COE and Palmdale Elementary School District had the largest number of H-1B teacher work visa requests. West Contra Costa USD had the greatest number of denials. San Bernardino COE requested 34 teacher work visas, and all 34 were granted. Similarly, Palmdale Elementary requested 34 work visas, and all 34 were granted. Therefore, the two LEAs, San Bernardino COE and Palmdale Elementary together requested and obtained 68 teacher work visas, or 24 percent of the teacher work visas permitted in California during the 2023−24 school year.

The northern portion of the state accounted for most requests for H-1B teacher work visas. Fifteen more Northern California LEAs submitted requests for work visas (with a total of 52) than Southern California LEAs (with a total of 37). To view the data for all LEAs in 2023–24, please see Appendix 1.

### Trends in Data: 2018–24

**Table 2: H-1B Visas Requested and Granted for** **2018–19**

| Total LEAs | Districts | Charter Schools | Total Requested Work Visas | Granted Work Visas | DeniedWork Visas |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 58 | 36 | 22 | 193 | 151 | 42 |

**Table 3: H-1B Visas Requested and Granted for** **2019–20**

| Total LEAs | Districts | Charter Schools | Total Requested Work Visas | Granted Work Visas | DeniedWork Visas |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 59 | 41 | 18 | 143 | 128 | 15 |

**Table 4: H-1B Visas Requested and Granted for** **2020–21**

| Total LEAs | Districts | Charter Schools | Total Requested Work Visas | Granted Work Visas | DeniedWork Visas |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 44 | 26 | 18 | 108 | 102 | 6 |

**Table 5: H-1B Visas Requested and Granted for 2021–22**

| Total LEAs | Districts | Charter Schools | Total Requested Work Visas | Granted Work Visas | DeniedWork Visas |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 65 | 42 | 23 | 179 | 154 | 25 |

**Table 6: H-1B Visas Requested and Granted for 2022–23**

| Total LEAs | Districts | Charter Schools | Total Requested Work Visas | Granted Work Visas | DeniedWork Visas |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 73 | 44 | 29 | 223 | 193 | 30 |

**Table 7: H-1B Visas Requested and Granted for 2023–24**

| Total LEAs | Districts | Charter Schools | Total Requested Work Visas | Granted Work Visas | DeniedWork Visas |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 89 | 53 | 36 | 317 | 287 | 30 |

H-1B teacher work visa data was collected for the first time in 2018–19. Data from 2018 through 2021 (2018−19, 2019−20, and 2020−21) was covered in the 2021 legislative report. In observing the H-1B work visa data from 2018 through 2024, various insights and patterns emerge. Over the past six years, more Northern California LEAs have submitted requests for H-1B teacher work visas compared to Southern California LEAs.

The last six years of data shows that the total number of requests for work visas have been increasing each year from 2018 to 2024, other than the 2020–21 school year, which may be due to the number of school closures and decreased in-person instruction for that particular school year. Moreover, last year (2023−24) included the highest number of LEAs submitting H-1B work visa requests (317 requests). Overall, there were 89 LEAs that submitted a request (compared to 73 from 2022−23). It is also significant to note that the highest number of work visas was granted this year (287).

In addition, the data over the six-year period clearly illustrates that school districts are much more likely to have their work visa requests denied. Over the last six years (from 2018 through 2024), only 17 charter denials have occurred overall. Thus, while the charter schools did not submit as many requests for teacher work visas compared to school districts, it is important to note that they are still far less likely to receive denials and much more likely to receive an approval when compared to school districts.

### Appendix 1: Table 8: 2023–24 H-1B Work Visa Data

| **County-District- School Code** | **County Name** | **District Name** | **School Name** | **Submitted** | **Granted** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1100170124172 | Alameda | Alameda County Office of Education | Yu Ming Charter | 1 | 1 |
| 1611920000000 | Alameda | Hayward Unified | District Office | 2 | 2 |
| 1612590000000 | Alameda | Oakland Unified | District Office | 5 | 5 |
| 1612590108944 | Alameda | Oakland Unified | Lighthouse Community Charter High | 1 | 1 |
| 1612590111476 | Alameda | Oakland Unified | Achieve Academy | 3 | 3 |
| 1612590115592 | Alameda | Oakland Unified | Learning Without Limits | 1 | 0 |
| 1612590134015 | Alameda | Oakland Unified | Lodestar: A Lighthouse Community Charter Public | 2 | 2 |
| 1612596117972 | Alameda | Oakland Unified | North Oakland Community Charter | 1 | 0 |
| 4100410000000 | Butte | Butte County Office of Education | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 7617960000000 | Contra Costa | West Contra Costa Unified | District Office | 28 | 20 |
| 9618380137919 | El Dorado | Buckeye Union Elementary | Buckeye Union Mandarin Immersion Charter | 6 | 6 |
| 9619030000000 | El Dorado | Lake Tahoe Unified | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 9619520000000 | El Dorado | Placerville Union Elementary | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 10624140000000 | Fresno | Sanger Unified | District Office | 5 | 5 |
| 15101570000000 | Kern | Kern County Office of Education | District Office | 3 | 0 |
| 15101570119669 | Kern | Kern County Office of Education | Wonderful College Prep Academy | 1 | 1 |
| 15637760000000 | Kern | Southern Kern Unified | District Office | 3 | 3 |
| 16101650000000 | Kings | Kings County Office of Education | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 19101990135368 | Los Angeles | Los Angeles County Office of Education | Alma Fuerte Public | 1 | 1 |
| 19645500000000 | Los Angeles | Garvey Elementary | District Office | 5 | 5 |
| 19645680000000 | Los Angeles | Glendale Unified | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 19647250000000 | Los Angeles | Long Beach Unified | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 19647330000000 | Los Angeles | Los Angeles Unified | District Office | 17 | 15 |
| 19647330127886 | Los Angeles | Los Angeles Unified | City Language Immersion Charter | 1 | 1 |
| 19647330129858 | Los Angeles | Los Angeles Unified | Everest Value | 1 | 1 |
| 19647330140004 | Los Angeles | Los Angeles Unified | El Rio Community | 1 | 0 |
| 19647900000000 | Los Angeles | Monrovia Unified | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 19648160000000 | Los Angeles | Mountain View Elementary | District Office | 10 | 10 |
| 19648570000000 | Los Angeles | Palmdale Elementary | District Office | 34 | 34 |
| 19648570140889 | Los Angeles | Palmdale Elementary | Palmdale Academy Charter | 2 | 2 |
| 19648810000000 | Los Angeles | Pasadena Unified | District Office | 11 | 7 |
| 19649070000000 | Los Angeles | Pomona Unified | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 19769680000000 | Los Angeles | SBE - Academia Avance Charter | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 19769680109926 | Los Angeles | SBE - Academia Avance Charter | Academia Avance Charter | 1 | 1 |
| 20651930000000 | Madera | Chowchilla Elementary | District Office | 2 | 2 |
| 24658620000000 | Merced | Weaver Union | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 27102720000000 | Monterey | Monterey County Office of Education | District Office | 4 | 4 |
| 27660350000000 | Monterey | Greenfield Union Elementary | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 27660500000000 | Monterey | King City Union | District Office | 3 | 3 |
| 27660920000000 | Monterey | Monterey Peninsula Unified | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 27661590000000 | Monterey | Salinas Union High | District Office | 2 | 2 |
| 27754730000000 | Monterey | Gonzales Unified | District Office | 5 | 5 |
| 28662660000000 | Napa | Napa Valley Unified | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 30103060139469 | Orange | Orange County Department of Education | International School for Science and Culture | 1 | 1 |
| 30103060140822 | Orange | Orange County Department of Education | Irvine International Academy | 1 | 1 |
| 30665970000000 | Orange | Newport-Mesa Unified | District Office | 2 | 2 |
| 33103300125385 | Riverside | Riverside County Office of Education | Imagine Schools, Riverside County | 3 | 3 |
| 33670330000000 | Riverside | Corona-Norco Unified | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 33670900000000 | Riverside | Jurupa Unified | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 34674390000000 | Sacramento | Sacramento City Unified | District Office | 4 | 4 |
| 34674390135343 | Sacramento | Sacramento City Unified | Growth Public | 2 | 2 |
| 35674700000000 | San Benito | Hollister | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 36103630000000 | San Bernardino | San Bernardino County Office of Education | District Office | 34 | 34 |
| 36676780000000 | San Bernardino | Chino Valley Unified | District Office | 2 | 2 |
| 36678190000000 | San Bernardino | Ontario-Montclair | District Office | 2 | 1 |
| 36750773631207 | San Bernardino | Apple Valley Unified | Academy for Academic Excellence | 1 | 1 |
| 37683380111898 | San Diego | San Diego Unified | Albert Einstein Academies | 1 | 1 |
| 37683380118083 | San Diego | San Diego Unified | Innovations Academy | 1 | 1 |
| 37683383730959 | San Diego | San Diego Unified | Altus Schools Charter School of San Diego | 1 | 1 |
| 37683383731395 | San Diego | San Diego Unified | Altus Schools Audeo | 1 | 1 |
| 37683386039812 | San Diego | San Diego Unified | Keiller Leadership Academy | 1 | 1 |
| 38769270000000 | San Francisco | SBE - The New School of San Francisco | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 38769270132183 | San Francisco | SBE - The New School of San Francisco | The New School of San Francisco | 1 | 1 |
| 39686760117853 | San Joaquin | Stockton Unified | Dr. Lewis Dolphin Stallworth Sr. Charter | 1 | 1 |
| 39686760120733 | San Joaquin | Stockton Unified | Stockton Collegiate International Secondary | 1 | 0 |
| 41104130135269 | San Mateo | San Mateo County Office of Education | Oxford Day Academy | 1 | 1 |
| 41688900000000 | San Mateo | Cabrillo Unified | District Office | 4 | 4 |
| 41689160000000 | San Mateo | Jefferson Elementary | District Office | 5 | 1 |
| 41690050000000 | San Mateo | Redwood City Elementary | District Office | 14 | 14 |
| 41690470000000 | San Mateo | San Mateo Union High | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 41690700000000 | San Mateo | South San Francisco Unified | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 42692110000000 | Santa Barbara | Hope Elementary | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 43104390121483 | Santa Clara | Santa Clara County Office of Education | Alpha: Cornerstone Academy Preparatory | 1 | 1 |
| 43104390129213 | Santa Clara | Santa Clara County Office of Education | Alpha: Jose Hernandez | 1 | 1 |
| 43696170000000 | Santa Clara | Mount Pleasant Elementary | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 43696330000000 | Santa Clara | Orchard Elementary | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 43696660000000 | Santa Clara | San Jose Unified | District Office | 25 | 25 |
| 43696900000000 | Santa Clara | Sunnyvale | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 44698234430187 | Santa Cruz | Santa Cruz City High | Delta Charter | 1 | 0 |
| 45699480134122 | Shasta | Columbia Elementary | Redding School of the Arts | 1 | 1 |
| 48104880139030 | Solano | Solano County Office of Education | Elite Public | 3 | 0 |
| 48705400000000 | Solano | Fairfield-Suisun Unified | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 48705810000000 | Solano | Vallejo City Unified | District Office | 5 | 5 |
| 49708540000000 | Sonoma | Petaluma City Elementary | District Office | 2 | 2 |
| 49708546051981 | Sonoma | Petaluma City Elementary | Penngrove Elementary | 1 | 1 |
| 49708620000000 | Sonoma | Petaluma Joint Union High | District Office | 1 | 1 |
| 49709120125831 | Sonoma | Santa Rosa Elementary | Santa Rosa French-American Charter (SRFACS) | 3 | 3 |
| 50710680000000 | Stanislaus | Denair Unified | District Office | 2 | 2 |
| 50710680132662 | Stanislaus | Denair Unified | Denair Elementary Charter Academy | 1 | 1 |

1. . “H-1B Program: Overview.” *U.S. Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division*, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/immigration/h1b>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . “H-1B Program: Overview.” *U.S. Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division*, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/immigration/h1b>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . “H-1B Visas for Teachers: Position Specifications: H-1B for Teachers.” *Visa Nation*, <https://www.immi-usa.com/h1b-visa/h1b-visa-for-teachers/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. . “H-1B Visas for Teachers: The Complete Guide.” *Visa Nation*,

 <https://www.immi-usa.com/h1b-visa/h1b-visa-for-teachers/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . “H-1B Limitations.” *Teachers Council*, <https://teacherscouncil.com/h-1b-visa/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)